

# NUGGETS OF BOULDER COLOR

By Elton Garrett

## —AND THE RIVER OBEYED

She's a savage river, a wild stream—that Colorado.

Yet how docilely she acts when man gets the whip hand!

The first feat was when those construction men of Hoover dam shoved the river "half out of bed" and compelled her to flow down the Arizona side of the channel for a distance while the other half was excavated far below the level of the bottom of the river.

The second feat—not to mention the major feat of shunting the entire river three-quarters of a mile through solid rock cliff—was to make "the river flow backward in her channel," as one may say (using a sort of poetic license).

The third feat, one at which Hercules himself would stand aghast could he stand in Black canyon and hear it told, was accomplished yesterday, in a scant three and one-half hours.

When feat number one was accomplished, by building of that semi-circular dyke around the Nevada half of the upper cofferdam area, a great many men and a great many trucks, together with several big power shovels, were required for the work—and they

took many days.

And when feat number two was achieved, that water did not flow backward in the channel at the dam site at the bidding of one mere man. Those several still "lakes" of water between the various earth barriers across the canyon had been confined in their various spots in the channel by the labors of many men. The water had been pumped out of the upstream pools by the work of many pump men, shift after shift. So that when one of the barriers further downstream went out, allowing great quantities of water actually to flow "backward"—up stream in the channel of the Colorado—many men were in attendance to witness the operation.

But yesterday's feat was performed by one lone man.

Suppose Hercules had come back to earth, stood in Black canyon before man's hand had been put to the task of building the dam, and was told he must turn half of the river in less than five hours—he alone, with help from no other living being!

He would snort!

And suppose Ray Rosenbaum (who coaches the Boulder City

Avalanche basketball squad in the evenings) had been told when he first came to the project that some day in the future he would be required to change the course of half the flow of the Colorado—between the hours of 11 a. m. and 3:30 p. m. on a certain day. Or be regarded as a failure.

He'd have remarked: "Sez you!"

Yet's that's exactly what Rosenbaum did yesterday.

True, it was a technocratic achievement—a "cat" helped him scratch dirt to cover up this flow—yet, cat or no cat, it was a one-man job that might well go down in construction history as unique.

The entire river had been flowing for many weeks through diversion tunnels three and four, on the Arizona side. For some reason or other it was decided to shift the flow of the entire river to tunnel four.

At 11 a. m. Rosenbaum dug in with his bulldozer-equipped caterpillar, pushing dirt from the bank of the dirt fill just downstream from the upper portal of three. He pushed dirt into the water before the mouth—and drove the cat out on to the new-made fill, working thus right across the mouth of the tunnel, until a complete "dam" of dirt had stopped the entry of the west "half" of the Colorado river into that big concrete-lined bore.

At 3:30 p. m. the entire stream

was coursing through tunnel four!

On a day in the not distant future the flow will be controlled by huge plate steel gates, power operated. Even the "cat" can be put to scratching gravel somewhere else while the river is switched about on that day.