Hell Or High Water
Adams, Eilean

Published by Utah State University Press

Adams, Eilean.
Hell Or High Water: James White's Disputed Passage through Grand Canyon, 1867.
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Chapter Notes

These abbreviations refer the reader to appropriate sections of the bibliography:
(B) Book
(D) Documentary
(G) Government document
(L) Letter
(M) Manuscript
(N) Newspaper article
(P) Periodical article

Chapter 1  Callville

Callville. McClintock, Mormon Settlement in Arizona. (B)
This book provides an excellent description of the area, Callville’s relationship with Hardy and Hardyville, and the town’s demise in 1869.

followed suit with Callville. Paher, Callville—Head of Navigation. (B)

For many years, steamboats. Lingenfelter, Steamboats on the Colorado River. (B)
This is a marvelous history not only of the steamboats but the entire region during the years from 1852 to 1916.

Lieutenant Ives. Ives, Report on the Colorado River. (G)
Chapter 2  
Who Was James White?

15  Connecticut Yankees. James White’s statement in appendix B.
    This is essentially an autobiographical sketch requested by Thomas Dawson for Senate Document No. 42. White dictated it to his daughters, and it is the only complete statement he made on his personal history.

15–16  James’s father, Daniel, [and] James’s mother, Mary. This biographical information comes from the White family Bible. The flyleaf lists births from Daniel White (1796) through James White’s children (1892), along with some deaths.

17  Denver! It had everything. Dallas, Gold and Gothic. (B)

17–18  Virginia City, Nevada. Twain, Mark Twain in Virginia City. (B)
    This reprint of chapters from Roughing It is a captivating look into the time period which coincided with White’s miserable mining experience and desperate entry into the Union Army.

Chapter 3  
White’s War

19  “Ht: 5’ 7”” U.S. Army, Service Records. (G)


Chapter 4  
The Road to Gold

24–25  White continued along the Santa Fe Trail. James White’s statement in appendix B.

    A galley proof of this article published in The Colorado Magazine, was lent to me by Dock Marston in 1970. At that time, Dock proposed McConnell as a fourth contributor to a book by himself, Robert Euler, and me.

27–28  Indians . . . had stolen his horses. James White’s statement in appendix B.

28  shooting match between Joe Goodfellow and White. Ehrhart, Letter to Thomas F. Dawson. (L)
    This letter corroborates White’s statement about where he, Baker, and Strole were in the period just prior to White’s raft voyage. The letter was written fifty years after the fact, but there is no evidence that their presence in the San Juan area had ever been called into doubt before then.

Chapter 5  
The Rescue

32  “Haiko, haiko.” Tillman, Letter to George Davidson, 16 September 1897. (L)
Tillman explains, “This word ‘hico’ is a Mexican word for white man.” However, the consensus of Indian experts is that the word is Paiute for “white man” and is spelled in several ways. The Paiute language is related to other Uto-Aztecan languages, and variations are found in various parts of Mexico, so maybe both interpretations are right. I chose haiko for its phonetic value.


“By God, he’s some loco’d.” Tillman, Letter to George Davidson, 16 September 1897. (L)

Tillman’s recollection of White’s rescue is essentially the same as Wilburn’s and Ferry’s as reflected in the writings of Grandin, Kipp, and Beggs; he also recalls the Indians calling White Ya-Na, which means “locos” or “crazy.”

*a supper he remembered.* James White’s statement in appendix B.

Chapter 6  Downriver Crier

*Jacob Hamblin and a couple of other Mormon men.* Miller, *The Deseret News*. (N)

This article is a firsthand description of a voyage in a sixteen-foot skiff from one to one-and-a-half miles upstream of Grand Wash to Callville: “We calculated the distance . . . to be about 65 miles, 45 miles of which, from the mouth of the Grand Wash to the mouth of the Virgen [sic], it is presumed a white man has never passed down before.” To get to their starting point, the men launched their boat at the mouth of the Virgin, rowed upstream, then turned around and rowed downstream. The voyage took less than two days; they started on April 15 and reached Callville on April 16.

*Indians had taken his gun.* Tillman, Letter to George Davidson, 23 June 1897. (L)

Tillman clarifies the Paiutes’ meeting with White at the mouth of the Virgin River.


Chapter 7  The News Spreads East

*Hardyville*. Lingenfelter, *Steamboats on the Colorado River*. (B)

*he had a finger in every pie.* Hardy, Letter to George Davidson, 5 August 1897. (L)
Hardy displayed a faulty memory about White’s rescue: “Mr. Tillman, Wilber [sic] and eight other men . . . brought back with them Mr. White.” This implies either that Hardy was at Callville (which he was not) or that the men brought White to Hardyville (which they did not). Marston’s comment in a letter to “Canyoneer Bob” (Dr. Robert C. Euler) was “Hardy was selling . . . a bill of goods as he does not appear with those who pulled White from the river.”

John Marion. Lyon, “Gentlemen of the Editorial Fraternity.” (P)

John Marion’s reputation as a cantankerous, opinionated editor strongly suggests that he would never have published the story of James White in his paper if he had not supported its validity. He obviously believed that the Walapai would have been far more likely to kill White, had he traveled overland, than the Colorado River, however dangerous.

Now he was both owner and editor. Meacham, “To the Public,” Arizona Miner. (N)

This article contains the announcement of John Marion as the new proprietor and editor of the Miner, “the leading journal of the Territory.”

Marion was more than ready to accept. Ibid.

The Sharlot Hall Museum in Prescott, Arizona, was generous with its help on the history of both the paper and Marion, especially in allowing me to read the actual newspapers; it was impossible to restrict my reading to Beggs’s article.

“Navigation of the Big Cañon.” Beggs, Arizona Miner. (N)

A reprint of this article in the Deseret Evening News of 27 January 1868 adds this comment: “Honorable Erastus Snow, who has perused the account, says it is true that such a man did come down the river. He was seen by Brother Andrew S. Gibbons of St. Thomas and described the trip to him. Brother Gibbons is an Indian interpreter and had opportunities of knowing that he told the truth.” Such allusions to sources confirming White’s story abound throughout the literature and correspondence of the period without, for the most part, revealing specifically the identity of these sources. Erastus Snow, however, was a prominent Mormon apostle and one of the leaders in charge of settlements in the Virgin River basin; Andrew Gibbons was a Mormon leader at St. Thomas who had accompanied Jacob Hamblin on many of his explorations; these men were knowledgeable witnesses.

“Dear Brother.” For an edited copy of White’s letter, see appendix A.
Chapter 8  General Palmer and the Railroad Survey

53–54 General William Jackson Palmer. Fisher, A Builder of the West. (B)
54 Palmer led extensive surveys. Palmer, Report of Surveys across the Continent. (B)
56 “James—White—Kenosha Wisconsin.” Parry, notes from an interview, Bancroft Library. (M)

These notes were published first in Stanton’s book Colorado River Controversies and again in Lingenfelter’s book First Through the Grand Canyon. The notes and White’s original letter of 1867 were given to Lingenfelter by Parry’s heirs, and he donated them to the Bancroft.

Chapter 9  Dr. Parry’s Report

59–66 Parry’s report. This report is included in its entirety as it appeared in the Transactions of the St. Louis Academy of Natural Science, 2(1868). (P)

Chapter 10  Major Calhoun’s Version

68–75 “Twenty years ago.” Calhoun, “Passage of the Great Canyon of the Colorado River,” Wonderful Adventures. (B)
75 William Bell . . . included Calhoun’s account. Calhoun “Passage of the Great Canyon of the Colorado River,” New Tracks in North America. (B)

Later, probably inspired by the White voyage, Calhoun wrote a novel entitled Lost in the Canyon about a white man, a faithful Negro servant, a faithful Ute Indian guide, and a faithful dog, all of whom rafted down the Colorado River together. It is an exciting western adventure, complete with extravagant rhetoric, that bears a remarkable resemblance to his two accounts of James White.

Chapter 11  Major Powell

77–79 The second army official. Darrah, Powell of the Colorado. (B)
79 Byers’s newspaper published the major’s plans. Rocky Mountain News, 6 November 1867. (N)
79–80 “GENERAL: A party of naturalists.” Powell, Letter to General Grant. (L)

This letter was included in the Congressional Globe for 25 May 1868.
80 Powell dusted off his lobbying skills. Darrah, Powell of the Colorado. (B)
81–82 The Powell resolution. Congressional Globe, 40th Cong., 2d sess., 1868. (G)
“before even this experience was known.” Bowles, The Switzerland of America. (B)

Jack Sumner’s idea. Sumner, Letter to Frederick Dellenbaugh, 7 February 1904. (L)

This letter gave notice that Sumner had started to write his version of the “so-called Powell exploring expedition which will differ some from Powell’s report.” Thirty-five years is a long time to carry a grudge, but it’s not surprising if he believed that he, not Powell, had conceived the idea of exploring the Grand Canyon. Sumner was equally unlikely to credit James White’s voyage as the catalyst for the 1869 expedition.

Chapter Notes

Rumors of gold strikes up north. Simon, Letter to James White. (L)

Simon wrote to White in 1917 recollecting their friendship and experiences in Utah during 1867–68.

Along the way, they heard about the Union Pacific. James White’s statement in appendix B.

“Interesting Narrative.” Kenosha Telegraph. (N)

The first was written . . . by . . . Parry. Parry, “The Great Colorado of the West,” Weekly Gazette. (N)

The following excerpt was copied from the original newspaper at the State Historical Society of Iowa in Iowa City. It was written in Hardyville on 10 January 1868: “Judge then of my satisfaction in accidentally meeting on the banks of this very same river, a living man, who had made the passage through the entire length of this great cañon, alone—seeing the sole companion of his voyage sink into the whirlpool before his eyes; fleeing from the fearful fate of Indian warfare, trusted himself on a few frail timbers, and after a journey of over 500 miles, shooting over the rapids, submerged in a whirlpool, and entangled in eddies, was finally rescued and reached the settlement at the head of navigation at Callville. I, of course, eagerly drew from the man, his strange narrative, and have penned it down, an official report to the railroad company, in whose employ I now am, the results of which will of course be duly made accessible to the public.” This seems to indicate that Dr. Parry was a true believer.

others then cropped up sporadically . . . Lippincott’s Magazine. [Beggs], “A Terrible Voyage.” (P)

I have seen this article referred to many times but have never seen the article. The author is listed as John Clerke but is actually William Beggs. Its title, A Terrible Voyage, should have been a dead giveaway.
Rocky Mountain Herald. Beggs, “A Thrilling Adventure.” (N)

Our old friend Beggs was at it again. He dressed this article up by adding, “He was scarcely alive, and one of the first persons who saw him exclaimed, ‘My God, that man is a hundred years old!’” Beggs made more money out of White’s voyage than White ever did.

Chicago Tribune. “A Romantic Voyage” in “The Round Table.” (N)

It was claimed that this account sired the one in the Daily Pantagraph (see the next entry), but if so, the Bloomington author should be drummed out of the corps, for this version is totally different. The article is a paraphrased version of Parry’s report and was given to the Tribune by Samuel Bowles.

Daily Pantagraph, 24 May 1869. (N)

This account of White’s trip is highly inaccurate, and although the writer first says it was furnished by the Tribune, he later claims Lippincott’s Magazine as its source. The Pantagraph author identifies White’s point of embarkation as the San Juan River and quotes General Palmer (also incorrectly) as having conducted White’s interview in Hardyville and Fort Mohave. That’s enough evidence to convince us that whatever the source, the nineteenth-century media were worthy forerunners of today’s lot.

Rocky Mountain News, 23 June 1869. (N)

This article carrying another account of White and speculation about Powell appeared while Major Powell was in Cataract Canyon.


Possibly the most exaggerated account, this article purported to be an actual interview with White in Callville, complete with an old priest, “clay pipes and glasses.” The story is doubtless a spinoff from Calhoun, with variations, and adds an account of Powell’s expedition, including detailed descriptions of his boats.

Whatever the scenario. James White, Letter to Joshua White. (L)

Copies of this letter found their way into the Outing Magazine and the files of Robert Stanton; the original was lent in 1958 to Dr. Richard E. Lingenfelter, who, with the blessings of the Parry heirs, gave it to the Bancroft Library.

“On the coach.” Palmer, Letter to Queen Mellen. (L)

An account of the shooting. Ehrhart, Letter to Thomas F. Dawson. (L)

White stated only that Goodfellow had been shot. James White’s statement in appendix B.

“White said that Professor Powell.” Palmer, Letter to Queen Mellen. (L)

“was the very opposite.” Palmer, Letter to Robert C. Clowry. (L)
Chapter 13 Powell’s Conquest of the Grand Canyon

“How anyone can ride that on a raft.” Darrah, “J. C. Sumner’s Journal.” (P)

“This point has not been determined.” Darrah, “George Y. Bradley’s Journal.” (P)

“The major sought out James White.” Darrah, Powell of the Colorado. (B)

Powell’s . . . expedition began. Darrah, Powell of the Colorado. (B)

a visit recalled by Bill Hardy. Hardy, Letter to George Davidson, 12 August 1897. (L)

Two of the men left the river at Yuma. Darrah, Powell of the Colorado. (B) See also Sumner, Letter to Frederick Dellenbaugh, 15 February 1904. (L)

Darrah stated that Sumner left the river at Yuma, but Sumner maintained that he continued to the head of the Gulf of California—one of the many instances of the different stories and interpretations which emerged from this expedition.

“Colonel [sic] Powell pronounces the reported adventures.” Chicago Tribune, 16 September 1869. (N)

“It gives me great pleasure.” Palmer, Letter to Robert C. Clowry (L)

he published his account of his expeditions. Powell, Exploration of the Colorado River. (B)

“Had I the Space.” Dellenbaugh, Romance of the Colorado River. (B)

“The Major always treated the matter as a joke.” Dellenbaugh, Letter to Robert B. Stanton. (L)

This reference to Powell’s “meeting” with White continued, “We simply thought it preposterous. And I think so still.” Of course, Dellenbaugh was not on the first but the second expedition, and by then, Major Powell was singing an entirely different song.

“the biggest liar that ever told a tale.” Corle, Listen, Bright Angel. (B)

“Nobody has ever successfully traversed the Colorado.” Stanton, Engineering News, 21 September 1889. (P)

“The phase of the Major’s character,” Thompson, Letter to Frederick Dellenbaugh, 23 October 1902. (L)

Chapter 14 Enter Robert Brewster Stanton

Robert Stanton was a prodigious writer on the Colorado River and the Grand Canyon. Nevertheless, his two books, Colorado River Controversies (1932) and Down the Colorado (1965), were published posthumously, edited from a large, two-volume manuscript. This manuscript, plus a voluminous number of letters written by and to him, are in a collection in the New York Public
Library. All the Stanton letters here were researched by Dock Marston, and his original copies are in his collection in the Huntington Library. I received copies directly from Dock, except for the correspondence between Stanton and Edwards after the September interview; these letters were confirmed in the Huntington by Michael Clemans in 1995. References to the Marston Collection letters are asterisked.


103 In 1890, Stanton reappeared on the Colorado. Stanton, Colorado River Controversies. (B)

104 “As early as 1892, I set forth my position.” Ibid.


104 He . . . wrote to Stanton. Edwards, Letter to Robert B. Stanton, 1 April 1907. (L)*

104 Stanton . . . wrote to James White. Stanton, Letter to James White, 16 May 1907. (L)

104 “[I] would very much like to see you.” White, Letter to Robert B. Stanton, May 1907. (L)*

104 “veritable Munchausen.” Source unknown.

I cannot pinpoint this exact quote, although it probably came via one of Dock’s letters. It is a remark that carries Stanton’s literary flavor. There is a clue in Colorado River Controversies: Julius Stone’s foreword states, “The utter impossibility of such a journey as White claimed he had made at once convinced [Stanton] that White . . . was another Munchausen.”

104 He arrived in Trinidad. Lappin, Letter, Deseret Magazine. (P)

After reading an earlier article in Deseret Magazine, Lappin wrote a letter to the editor to claim acquaintance with White and Stanton: “I introduced [White] to Stanton who asked him if he was the James White who had been the first white man to run the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. Old Jim, dubious of Stanton, answered ‘Yep.’ He remained dubious until Stanton pressed a $20 gold piece into his hand. . . . I heard the old man relate his harrowing experience riding a raft down the Colorado. Believe me, it would be a thriller in today’s movies!”

105–7 The notarized transcript of this interview. Stanton, Colorado River Controversies. (B)

106 “you might have traveled on your raft.” Ibid.

In a letter written to Stanton on 22 September 1907,* Hiram Edwards discusses his own theory of White’s trip: “he [may have] crossed from below Bluff somewhere on the San Juan and struck
the Colorado somewhere between Hite and the San Juan as he makes no mention of Cataract Canyon at all and if he passed through there he would surely know it.” There is no evidence that Stanton paid any attention to Edwards’s opinions.

After the interview. Lappin, Letter, Deseret Magazine. (P)

Lappin states, “The interview took about an hour and a half, after which Stanton and I returned to my office, where I typed the story on 11 single-spaced pages. At 2:30 a.m. Stanton was on a Santa Fe limited headed for New York.”

a Santa Fe Railroad book.” Black, The Grand Canyon of Arizona. (B)

Seventeen men and one woman penned a series of essays on the beauties of the Grand Canyon; among them were such luminaries as Joaquin Miller, William Allen White, Thomas Moran, and, of course, Major Powell. Stanton signed the flyleaf with large, bold strokes: “To Mr. James White. Compliments of Robt. B. Stanton. Trinidad. Sept. 23rd ‘07.” Two flourished pen strokes, one above, one below, emphasized a slanted directive: “See Page 43,” which was Stanton’s own contribution.

As per your request.” Lappin, Letter to Robert B. Stanton. (L)*

wrote to White asking further questions. Stanton, Letter to James White, 3 October 1907. (L)*

having received no reply to his letter. Stanton, Letter to Roy Lappin, 12 October 1907. (L)*

On the same date, Stanton wrote a letter to Mr. Gibson* regarding Lappin and the White interview: “Took a stenographer with me and had a very extended and most interesting interview with him and got even a more wonderful story in regard to the impossible journey, which he never took by the way, than has ever been published before. I am writing this up with my personal information and comments on the same and it will form an amusing, if not wonderful, chapter in my forthcoming book” [italics added].

It was the mouth of the Green.” White, Letter to Robert B. Stanton, 24 October 1907. (L)

The reason I ask you to do this.” Stanton, Letter to Hiram Edwards, 1 November 1907. (L)*

On the same date, Stanton also wrote to Roy Lappin,* introducing Edwards as his messenger and asking, “Please be kind enough to comply with the request on the last page of this interview by properly certifying to the same.”

years ago, I knew White.” Stanton, Letter to Thomas F. Dawson. (L)*

I, Roy Lappin, being duly sworn.” Stanton, Colorado River Controversies. (B)
"You have won my everlasting gratitude." Stanton, Letter to Hiram Edwards, 13 November 1907. (L)*

But was it? Bell, Letter to Robert B. Stanton, 7 December 1907. (L)*

In response to a letter from Stanton attacking Calhoun's story, Bell states, "I shall be interested to hear what you gleaned from White himself, for it will give me some idea as to how much of Major Calhoun's story is to be relied upon." Bell had a stake in the accuracy of his publication; the 9th edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, published in 1892 (pp.163–64), appears to echo Bell's book: "The mysteries of the Great Cañon were first invaded by an unlucky 'prospector' James White, who along with a companion thought it safer to trust himself to the river than to the Indians." Later letters were not so generous.

Chalant's edited version. Stanton, Colorado River Controversies. (B)

Chapter 15  Senate Document No. 42

All letters written to and carbon copies of those written by the White family that are quoted in this chapter were originally in my mother's possession. They were given to Dock Marston and are now in his collection at the Huntington Library. All the other letter citations were provided directly to me by Dock Marston.

Dawson wrote to the Honorable Dan Taylor. Dawson, Letter to Mayor Daniel Taylor. (L)

Taylor advised Dawson to contact White. Taylor, Letter to Thomas F. Dawson. (L)

letter from an unexpected quarter. Bass, Letter to James White. (L)

Dawson finally wrote his letter. Dawson, Letter to James White. (L)

"My father is growing old." Esther White, Letter to Thomas F. Dawson, 2 August 1916. (L)

White obviously did tell his story to his children and friends, but my mother often said that he refused to go into the details of Baker’s and Strole’s deaths or anything associated with the rapids because it "upset" him; he would simply become silent if pressed. Not until the project for Dawson did my mother and aunt actually force their father into many recollections they had never heard before.

no mention of White’s Callville letter. Stanton, Letter to Thomas F. Dawson. (L)

Stanton told Dawson, "I have had in my possession White’s original letter written in 1867, the only statement on the subject White ever wrote." Dawson’s receipt of this letter coincided with his sending his manuscript to Esther.

"We followed the Mancos." James White’s statement in appendix B.
“My father was born in 1837.” Esther White, Letter to Thomas F. Dawson, September 1916. (L)


“Due to father’s age he does not remember.” Esther White, Letter to Thomas F. Dawson, December 1916. (L)

“a gentleman who has given much attention.” Dawson, Letter to Miss [Esther] White, 8 February 1917. (L)

“You will remember.” Dawson, Letter to Miss [Esther] White, 10 February 1917. (L)

“Recently when in Washington.” Stanton, Letter to Esther White, 19 February 1917. (L)

This letter was returned to Dawson and is missing from all files. Despite efforts to jog her memory, my mother either could not or would not recall its contents.

“I am enclosing . . . a letter.” Esther White, Letter to Thomas F. Dawson, 13 April 1917. (L)

“I have read your letter.” Esther White, Letter to Robert B. Stanton. (L)

“Dear Sir: I have come into knowledge.” James White, Letter to Thomas F. Dawson. (L)

Dawson was not so sure. Dawson, Letter to Robert B. Stanton. (L)

The tense and almost sinister atmosphere surrounding the Dawson-Stanton feud over White is illustrated by a couple of phrases in this letter: “While I engage in the confessions which you seem to require of me” and “for some reason unknown to me you seem to want to put me in the ‘hole’ with White.”

“He [Stanton] criticizes the booklet.” Dawson, Letter to Esther White, 1 September 1917. (L)

Chapter 16

Battle of The Trail

Senate Document No. 42. Bell, Letter to Robert B. Stanton, 2 October 1917. (L)

Stanton, still in pursuit of Dawson, wrote to Bell on 28 November 1917, asking questions about White, Calhoun, Parry, Palmer, and Powell. Bell responded, “I read Mr. Dawson’s pamphlet with great interest. It seems to remove every doubt, if any existed, as to whether White did pass through the Canyon or not.” Then he added, “It seems to me odd that some of Major Powell’s friends should think that the passage of a prospector unwillingly through the Grand Canyon previous to the Powell
expedition, could in any way detract from the great merit of the work done by him in its exploration.”

*Dellenbaugh, Letter to Robert B. Stanton.* (L)

Dellenbaugh tells Stanton, “We have not done [White] an injustice.”

*Stanton’s unrelenting opposition.* Stanton, Letter to Frederick Dellenbaugh. (L)

Stanton confides to Dellenbaugh that Dawson’s pamphlet is “pure trash—nothing more or less.”

Also see Bell, Letter to Robert B. Stanton, 21 February 1918. (L) Still pursued by Stanton’s letters, Bell states, “The serious fact remains—so far as I can judge—that none of the local folks in 1867–70, seem to have even suggested that Baker was killed less than a hundred miles from Callville, and that White took to the water only 60 miles above it—your starting point.” Bell appears to be wavering under Stanton’s insistence on Grand Wash Cliffs as White’s starting point, but he is not about to give in and is clearly annoyed: “Palmer’s acquiescence is criticized very unjustly in my opinion. So are my own suggestions; . . . the tone of your criticism generally is much to be regretted. These endless criticisms blur the outstanding facts which you wish your readers to grasp.” The tone of this letter is in considerable contrast to his letter of 7 December 1907.

*two articles about White.* Dawson, *The Trail.* (P)

I have not seen these articles, but Keplinger refers to one of them in a letter which appears under Correspondence in *The Trail,* December 1920. (P)

*Stanton’s response.* Stanton, “The Alleged Journey.” (P)

*denigrated all statements made by . . . Dr. William Bell.* Dawson, Letter to W.W. Bass. (L)

Marston made a copy of this letter on 7 December 1961 from an unknown source. In it Dawson discusses William Bell’s interesting opinion that White “embarked upon the Colorado at a point much below the mouth of the Grand . . . that White struck the river near Dandy, or Robbers’ Crossing,” another name for Hite.

All the correspondence and articles that continued for years after the publication of Senate Document No. 42 reveal the most explosive and ugliest aspects of the White-Powell controversy.

*Marston’s response.* Keplinger, Correspondence. (P)

Describing Dawson’s article as “containing a copy of a letter by Mr. White, dated September 26, 1867,” Keplinger trashes every
point that Dawson made and espouses Stanton’s views. This gentleman had been with Major Powell on his climb of Long’s Peak in 1868, which might explain his “expertise” on this subject. After Stanton’s article and this letter, Dawson must have wished heartily that he had never heard of James White.

126 the final word on the journey of James White. Stanton, Colorado River Controversies. (B)

The final word was evangelized in 1932 by James Chalfant, who edited portions of Stanton’s manuscript, beginning with the dedication: “To All Truthful Colorado River Voyagers.” A foreword by Julius Stone, the preface by Chalfant, and the introduction by Stanton (adapted from his manuscript) alluded sixteen times to the truths presented by the author and twenty-four times to the lies, inaccuracies, distortions, nonsense, and falsifications of history reported by other Grand Canyon travelers and historians. It is not surprising then that this book became something of a Bible for almost all the early Colorado River runners; it is even more impressive that it was reprinted as late as 1982 and still finds wide acceptance. The ultimate irony, however, is that a few months before his death in 1979, Dock Marston wrote a commentary for this edition and, despite having sparked and nourished my book, finally embraced Stanton and banished White to a river entry below Grand Canyon.

Chapter 17 The White Family and Dock Marston

Sources for this chapter are, as expected, mostly family documents and personal recollections; connections with outsiders are documented where possible by listed source material.

127 Dr. William Bell . . . came to Trinidad. Bell, Letter to James White. (L)

127 although it pleased the family. Emilia White, Letter to Thomas F. Dawson. (L)

127 Ellsworth Kolb also came to Trinidad. Kolb, Letter to L. R. Freeman. (L)

Kolb tells Freeman, “I would like to know the truth about White. I talked to him a few years before he died, but he was so childish it was impossible to make head or tail of his story.” Kolb does not say when he met White, but just five years before this letter, White was working with Dawson to produce Senate Document No. 42, and he was compos mentis then. Kolb’s statement, therefore, remains more confusing than enlightening.


129 “wedded to the river.” Lavender, River Runners of the Grand Canyon. (B)
had assigned White a point of embarkation. Lingenfelter, First Through the Grand Canyon. (B)
a review of Lingenfelter’s book. Bulger, “First Man through the Grand Canyon.” (P)
The review had been written in 1959. Euler and Dobyns, Review of First Through the Grand Canyon. (P)

Chapter 18  GRAND CANYON HISTORY: DISCOVERIES AND REDISCOVERIES

The most ancient history. Euler, The Grand Canyon Up Close and Personal. (B)
In the beginning. Hughes, The Story of Man at Grand Canyon. (B)
Lieutenant Ives and his steamboat Explorer. Ives, Report on the Colorado River. (G)
a few Mormon boatmen. Miller, The Deseret News. (N)
He claimed that he had . . . prepared. Thompson, Letter to Frederick Dellenbaugh, 21 October 1902. (L)
Thompson, who was Powell’s brother-in-law, confided to Dellenbaugh, “So far as I know the Major never had any idea of exploring the Colorado before 1868–69 . . . I think the idea grew up with him in 1868.” The Rocky Mountain News article of 6 November 1867 bears this out.

Only a handful of adventurous men. Lavender, River Runners of the Grand Canyon. (B)
 “[Brown’s] proposed railroad.” Darrah, Powell of the Colorado. (B)
In 1928, newlyweds Glen and Bessie Hyde. Dimock, Sunk Without a Sound. (B)
In 1937, however, . . . Buzz Holmstrom. Welch, Conley, and Dimock, The Doing of the Thing. (B)
“Stanton’s book concludes the argument.” Corle, Listen, Bright Angel. (B)
In 1922, a piece by J. Cecil Alter. Alter, “Tribune Travelogs.” (N)
Ives and Wheeler for taking government backing. Wheeler, Geographical Report. (G)
He also scolded George Wharton James. James, The Grand Canyon of Arizona. (B)
“[I didn’t get much of a] ‘hand.’” Alter, Letter to Otis Marston. (L)
“Riding a loosely-bound bunch of logs.” Freeman, The Colorado River, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. (B)
Another interesting critic. McConnell, “Captain Baker and the San Juan Humbug.” (P)
“To those who say that such a voyage.” Goldwater, Delightful Journey down the Green and Colorado Rivers. (B)
In 1948, he was still of that opinion. Goldwater, Letter to Harry Aleson. (L)

Goldwater told Aleson, “The matter of Jim White is getting to be like arguing religion. . . . I still say it could be done and with that I let the matter drop.”

“I don’t know where you get the information.” Goldwater, Letter to Otis Marston. (L)

“I understand you.” Goldwater, Letter to Eileen Adams. (L)

swam the Colorado. Beer, We Swam the Grand Canyon. (B)

experience of Manfred Kraus. Call of the Canyon (videotape). (D)

resurrected the accusation. Lavender, “James White: First through the Grand Canyon.” (P)

But only three years later. Lavender, River Runners of the Grand Canyon. (B)

Chapter 19  Bob Euler and Square One

first specific point of embarkation. Parry, “Account of the Passage through the Great Canyon.” (P)

White’s point of entry was Grand Wash Cliffs. Stanton, Colorado River Controversies. (B)

Howland brothers and Bill Dunn. Powell, Exploration of the Colorado. (B)

“It is one thing to say.” Lingenfelter, First Through the Grand Canyon. (B)

“Not having much success.” Bulger, First Man through the Grand Canyon. (P)

“toward White Canyon.” Ibid.

“In this general location there are two canyons through which they might have descended to the Colorado, Dark Canyon . . . and White Canyon. . . . Dark Canyon descends as a series of steps into which waterfalls have cut irregular grooves, so that it is quite difficult to traverse. At the mouth of Dark Canyon is a dangerous rapids, and there are a half dozen more . . . down stream . . . . Since White and his party encountered no rapids in the first three days of the voyage, we can rule out Dark Canyon as the one they descended. In fact, because of the complicated interlocking canyons between Dark Canyon and White Canyon they must not have wandered onto the Dark Canyon Plateau.” Bulger settled on White Canyon; Euler and Dobyns disagreed with this point of embarkation.

“White could not have entered the river.” Euler and Dobyns, Review of First Through the Grand Canyon. (P)

many terrifying “Walapai raids.” U.S. Congress, Walapai Papers, 74th Cong., Doc. 273. (G)
In October 1866, George W. Leihy, superintendent of Indian affairs for Arizona Territory, wrote that the Walapai tribe “occupies the country back of the Colorado river bottom, to and beyond the meridian of Prescott, ranging north to the Nevada line, and south nearly to the right bank of the Williams Fork. They have been considered as in a state of war with the whites for more than a year past.” Dr. Robert Euler, a preeminent expert on the Pai, assessed the situation this way: “From then until the Indians were finally defeated in 1869, no white man was safe in their territory. None would have been allowed to travel unmolested nor, do I believe, undetected through it.”

The area south of the south rim. Euler, personal communications from 1969 to the present; meetings from 1975 through 1992.

Chapters 21 and 22 Reference:

Chapter 21 Summary and Conclusions: Part A

Chapter 22 Summary and Conclusions: Part B

Chapter 23 Summary and Conclusions: Part C

Chapter 24 Resolution