

# Exploration of the Wilds of Southeastern Utah.

AN exploring expedition into the wildest, ruggedest, grandest part of Utah, from the viewpoint of scenic attraction, had its actual commencement in Salt Lake today, though the preparations and arrangements for it have been under way for some months.

As sponsor for it in no small measure, stands the Commercial club, which saw in it an opportunity to advertise Utah. The country to be penetrated is in the extreme southeastern portion of this state in the cul de sac formed by the junction of the Colorado and San Juan rivers. The men who comprise the expedition are Mr. H. L. A. Culmer of this city, Mr. S. T. Whitaker, ex-director general of the Utah-St. Louis world's fair commission, and Mr. Carlton Holmes, the latter a young man of 21 years of age, the son of Col. Edwin F. Holmes.

On reaching Thompson Springs tomorrow, over the Rio Grande Western railroad, they will proceed by team to San Juan county following the course indicated by the heavy broken lines of designation in the accompanying map. Ahead of them some days ago went the camp and other paraphernalia necessary to make of the undertaking as successful a venture as is possible in the six weeks that the expedition is to cover. And preceding the shipment of their roughing outfits were several young men whose scouting operations are to be directed in a general way by Al Scorp, the well known rancher and frontiersman of the San Juan country. In fact some of these young men have already been into the wilds to take photographs and make reports of the region to be explored, this information to be submitted to the explorers on their arrival, and from time to time, so they may go direct to the most interesting points of observation and research, with as little delay as possible.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT.

As a part of the equipment taken along will be surveyor's instruments for measuring purposes; an aneroid to determine the altitude of the most interesting objects, and an odometer obtained from government officials in this city, to record distances. Included in it are some of the best photographic devices ever brought to Utah, one being the telescopic or long distance camera costing \$1,500, the property of Mr. Whitaker, an expert in the work of handling it; also a panoramic camera, with a capacity for taking three sides of a section in one great sweep.

## PROTECTION AND RESEARCH.

Minor's tents, sleeping bags made of waterproof ducking, lined with blankets and laced at the tops so that the occupant might lie out of doors and defy the downpour of the most drenching rain are taken along as protection against the elements. Rifles and revolvers for wild game or purposes of defense are likewise carried. Picks, shovels, axes, rope ladders 500 feet in length, with hooks attached and made to grapple a body harness worn by each member of the party so that they may be let down over cliffs to enter the habitations of the ancients of these wild gorges, are all included in the shipment ahead.

## FOR PICTURES AND STORIES.

Speaking of the matter Mr. Culmer says that he is taking hives, pipes, and other contrivances to test the various kinds of metal that may be found. But primarily he expects to gather data for eastern magazine articles and to make sketches for some splendid pictures to be painted on his return home. "Aside from this, however," he said, "we are informed that there are some wonderful fossil remains of gigantic animals extinct ages ago, and numberless archaeological treasures there. It is reported that they are even greater than those dug from the mountains of Wyoming some years since and which so interested the scientific world for a time. We may or may not find them.

## THE WONDERS OF OUR STATE.

"We will seek out and attempt to portray the wonders of our state by picture and story. Here is an unexplored region 3,000 square miles in extent. It presents scenery that is incomparably unique in its character and extraordinary in its majestic proportions. And then it holds the ruins and records of a race long since but a memory, without doubt the Shoshone nations, the predecessors of the Indian tribes round about us. We shall scale the cliffs and go into the tombs of these people. We should like much to read—certainly we shall copy some of the records they have left on



the rocks—records that tell the story of their migrations and which form the epitaphs of their dead. Government and other scientists would have probably told long ago the story that we hope soon to tell, but for the inaccessibility of the whole section. Mighty mountains, box canyons, rushing and tumultuous rivers and sandy deserts almost entirely surround it. Deep chasms everywhere cross the path of the adventurer and cry halt to him, and as he usually has no business within, he has turned back through all the years that the white man has been an occupant of the west.

## "MORMON" SETTLEMENTS.

To the north and east where there are spots in the great wilderness that man can now inhabit are a number of isolated but prosperous "Mormon" settlements. But these are all on the outside of the unexplored country as are the miners who wash the sands of some of the streams for gold and who are making themselves rich in a small way. It is not an easy task to write a coherent and intelligible story in advance of what the work of the expedition is expected to reveal. But enough is already

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PICTURESQUE WATCH-TOWER  
Of the Ancient Inhabitants of the San Juan Country.

known to indicate an interesting if not an entrancing narrative of the wonders of Nature that some men have been permitted to view. Some idea of what they are may be gleaned from what follows:

## BEGINNING OF KNOWLEDGE.

It is less than 15 years ago that Horace J. Long was in the outskirts bor-

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## TWO YEARS AGO.

Comparatively few white men had even peeped into these wilds. Such as had dared to enter even for a short distance were either cowboys or outlaws. Just two years ago this spring Scorp and Long visited them. On the way in, at a point called Soldiers Crossing, they halted for a brief rest. There they discovered the graves of two of Uncle Sam's soldiers who had been killed years before, by the Ute Indians. A sand tombstone told the story and gave their names and the date of their burial as March 30, 1885.

## NATURE'S GREATEST BRIDGES.

The journey was continued to the objective point, which was reached with much difficulty. Miles of barren rock were crossed. Sometimes the course was up, sometimes down and occasionally over corrugated undulating surface, but always difficult. The wind, which sweeps in season through these wilds with the biting breath of winter and the torrid heat of summer had laid bare the face of the whole region. Scarcely was there soil enough left for even a sagebrush or mountain pine, but now and again one of these was encountered. When the Elk mountains were reached the explorers paused and looked upward toward their majestic heights and frowning face, furrowed with the erosion of ages and covered with pine and scraggy growths of underbrush. The place where they stood was about as uninviting as it could be, and of comfort it offered none at all.

## WITH THE CLIFF-DWELLERS.

In the White canyon are numerous evidences of the place once being inhabited by a prehistoric race. One of these was where Scorp and Long passed the night. It was but a short distance from the bed of the canyon, and on a ledge where the crude and crumbling habitation of a cliff-dweller remained to tell a story that has a mystery woven about it such as they sought in vain to explain to each other. It was much like the watchtower shown in this article though not so well preserved. Although injured to the hardships of the scout, the prospector and the frontiersman the night was not as pleasantly passed as might be imagined. The surroundings were not conducive to rest, nor did the anticipations of the morrow furnish specific potions to the weary and daring explorers.

## DISCOVERY AND CHRISTENING.

Early in the morning they were astride, both men apprehensive and doubtful as to the disclosures the day would bring forth. Scorp had once before glanced at the objects of their present search. He had told in glowing colors what they might expect to see. He didn't want Long to think he had over-estimated the case. The sequel shows that he could not well have done so, for before nightfall they had beheld three mighty natural bridges which are without counterparts in the discoveries of the world. They run from canyon's edge to canyon's edge in proportions so colossal and in heights so altitudinal as to cause man to wonder if nature has ever carved out any object as great or as wonderful as they are.

## SOME COMPARISONS.

The explorers carried no instruments with which they could accurately determine the height, length or breadth of these marvelous chain connections, but they had some, and with them made some calculations which show that the mighty capital building at Washington could be placed beneath

the span of the largest and its mighty dome still be far below the curve of the archway and that the largest of all the Egyptian pyramids would even fall short of reaching its level. It was estimated, too, that whole regiments of soldiers could march over it, many columns wide, and afford ample room for the execution of such a feat.

## THE BRIDGES NAMED.

This mighty structure was christened the "Augusta" in honor of the name of Mr. Long's wife. This ceremony did not take place, however, until the first bridge they beheld had been named the "Caroline," which was the name of Mr. Scorp's mother. The third bridge is called the "Little" bridge, and is in some respects the most picturesque of the group.

It is possible numerous other archways will be discovered by the expedition from Salt Lake. Perhaps some of them will be larger, perhaps smaller. The trip itself will have to tell that later on.

## MAJOR POWELL'S EXPEDITION.

There is in the annals of American exploration one document which deals with the country bordering upon that into which the Salt Lake party penetrates. But it is radically different from this one, in that it was entirely a water trip made in boats down the Green and Colorado rivers, leaving Green River City on the railroad. That expedition was under the charge of

J. W. Powell, who represented the Smithsonian Institute. His findings were published by the government and form an authoritative source of information today. The trip was planned to be an exploration of the Colorado river and its tributaries and the report on it was forwarded to Congress in 1874.

The party consisted of nine men, who manned four boats, made in Chicago. Their leader, Mr. Powell, kept a faithful diary which forms one section of his report. As their route lay along the southwest border of the unknown area now to be explored, extracts from their leader's narrative will prove of marked interest. The following are passages taken from the story, which illustrate the kind of country to be penetrated:

## IDEA OF GRANDEUR.

The high region on the east, north and west is set with ranges of snow-clad mountains, attaining an altitude above the sea varying from 8,000 to 14,000 feet. All winter long on its mountain crests rim snow falls filling the gorges, half burying the forests and covering the crags and peaks with a mantle woven by the winds from the waves of the sea—a mantle of snow. When the summer sun comes, the snow melts and tumbles down the mountain sides in millions of cascades. Ten million cascade brooks unite to form 10,000 torrent creeks; 10,000 torrent creeks unite to form 100 rivers beset with cataracts; a hundred roaring rivers unite to form the Colorado which rolls a mad, turbid stream into the Gulf of California.

Every river has cut itself a canyon, every lateral creek has cut a canyon; every brook runs into a canyon; every rill born of a shower and born again of a shower, and living only during these showers has cut for itself a canyon so that the whole upper basin of the Colorado is traversed by a labyrinth of these deep gorges.

Owing to a great variety of geological conditions these canyons differ much in general aspect. The Rio Virgin between Long Valley and the "Mormon" town of Schunesburg runs through Parunawap canyon, often not more than 20 or 30 feet wide and from 600 to 1,500 feet deep.

## TREELESS AND BARE.

Low mesas dry and treeless stretch back from the brink of the canyon, often showing smooth surfaces of naked, solid rock. In some places the country rock being composed of marls, the surface is a bed of loose disintegrated material, and you walk through it as in a bed of ashes. Often these marls are

richly colored and variegated. In other places the country rock is a loose sandstone, the disintegration of which has left broad stretches of drifting sand, white, golden and vermillion.

Where the sandstone is a conglomerate a paving of pebbles has been left, the drifting sands and glistening in the sunlight.

After the canyons the most remarkable features of the country are the long lines of cliffs. These are great geographic steps, scores or hundreds of miles in length, presenting steep and often vertical faces of rock.

## VOLCANIC PICTURES.

The region is further diversified by short ranges or eruptive mountains. A vast system of fissures—huge cracks in the rocks to the depths below—extend across the country. From these crevices floods of lava have poured, covering mesas and table land with sheets of black asphalt. The expiring embers of these volcanic agencies have piled up huge conical red, brown and black, naked of vegetation, and conspicuous land marks, set as they are in contrast to the bright, variegated rocks of sedimentary origin.

These canyon gorges, obstructing cliffs and desert wastes, have prevented the traveler from penetrating the country, so that until the Colorado River Exploring company was formed it was almost unknown.

## THRILLING EXPLORATION.

Early in the spring of 1899 a small party was organized for the purpose of exploring the country around the heads of the canyons leading into the Colorado. Boats were built in Chicago and transported to a point where the Union Pacific railroad crosses the Green river. With these we were to descend the Green into the Colorado and the Colorado down to the foot of the Grand canyon.

May 24, 1899.—The good people of Green River turn out to see us. We raise our little flag, push the boat from the shore and the swift current carries us down. Our boats are heavily loaded and it is with the utmost care is it possible to float in the rough river without shipping water.

A mile or two below town we run on a sand bar. The men jump into the stream and push the boats up and so that they drift over, and on we go. In trying to avoid a rock, an oar is broken on one of the boats, and our progress is retarded. The current is swift and she is sent reeling and breaking into the eddy. In confusion two others are lost overboard, and the men seem quite discomfited, much to the amusement of the other members of the party.

Catching the oars and starting again the boats are once more borne down the stream until we land at a small cottonwood grove on the bank and camp for noon.

## MOUNTAIN SHEEP KILLED.

May 25.—A flock of mountain sheep are seen on a cliff to the right. The boats are pulled up and three or four men go after them. In the course of two or three hours they return. The cook has been successful in bringing down a fat lamb. The unsuccessful hunters taunt him with letting it dead, but it is soon dressed, cooked, and eaten, making a fine 4 o'clock dinner.

May 26.—The morning Bradley and I cross the river and climb more than a thousand feet to a point where we can see the stream sweeping in a long, beautiful curve through the gorge below. Turning and looking to the west we can see the valley of Henry's fork through which for many miles the little river flows in a tortuous channel. Cottonwood groves are planted here and there along its course, and between them are stretches of grass land. The narrow mountain valley is inclosed on either side by sloping walls of naked rock of many bright colors. To the south of the valley are the Uintas, and the peaks of the Wasatch mountains can be faintly seen in the far west. To the north desert plains, dotted here and there with curiously carved hills and buttes extend to the limit of vision.

## SOME HAD INDIAN WIVES.

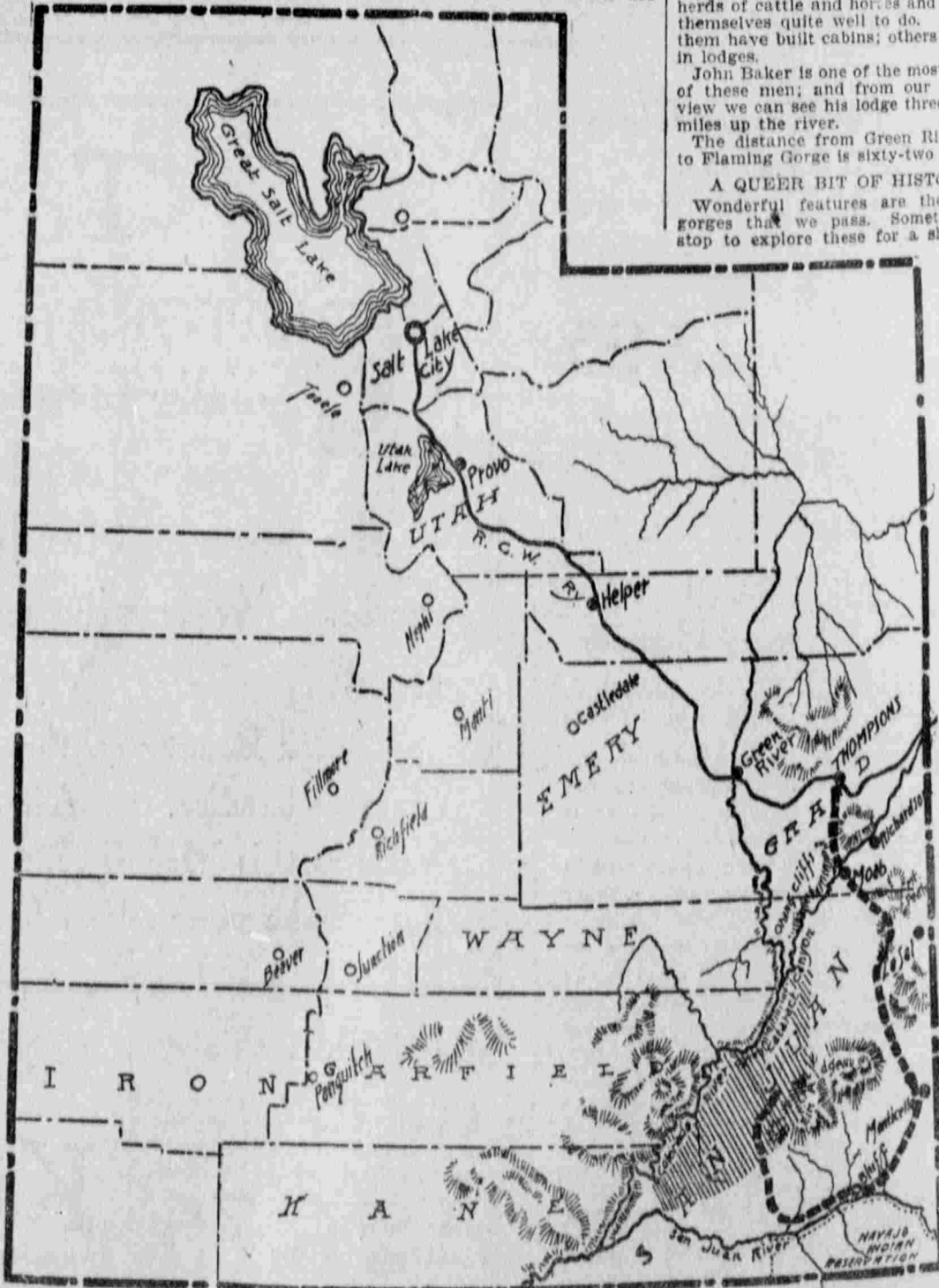
For many years this valley has been the home of a number of mountaineers, who were originally hunters and trappers, living with the Indians. Most of them have one or more Indian wives. They no longer wander about with the nomadic tribes in pursuit of the buckskin and beaver, but have accumulated herds of cattle and horses and consider themselves quite well to do. Some of them have built cabins; others still live in lodges.

John Baker is one of the most famous of these men; and from our point of view we can see his lodge three or four miles up the river.

The distance from Green River City to Fleming Fork is sixty-two miles.

## A QUEER BIT OF HISTORY.

Wonderful features are the many gorges that we pass. Sometimes we stop to explore these for a short dis-



MAP OF THE UNEXPLORED REGIONS OF SAN JUAN COUNTY.  
On Leaving the Railroad at Thompson's Springs the Explorers Will Proceed Over the Wagon Road and Trail Indicated by the Broken Heavy Lines in the Map Until They Reach That Portion of the Country Indicated in the Shaded Section Which is the Objective Point of the Party, and Where the Great Natural Bridges and Cliff Dwellers' Ruins are to be Found.



BLUFF CITY ON THE SAN JUAN RIVER, UTAH.  
Last Settlement at Which the Exploring Expedition Will Stop.