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any future time. She was all open, with a high stern-wheel and a pulpit-like arrangement for the pilot far aft. And she was only fifty feet in length.

With Lieutenant Joseph C. Ives, U.S.A., in command, the little party left Fort Yuma on January 11, 1858, heading up the river. It took them until March 12 to get through Black Canyon, a matter of some three hundred miles; and it must have been quite a trip. At one point they hit a rock and bashed in the poor little *Explorer's* nose. In what must have been a minor classic of what we now call Damage Control, they got her fixed up and went on their way, finally reaching the mouth of the Virgin River, away up in Nevada. All the while, we can imagine that they were not too well pleased by their reception at the hands of the local citizenry—which consisted exclusively of aborigines in what today would be called a shocking state of deshabelle. The noble redskins trotted happily along the bank of the river; whenever the *Explorer* found a new mudbank, by the simple expedient of getting hung up on it, they would burst into gales of coarse laughter. This seems in time to have got on the nerves of the *Explorer's* people, as well it might. Not only is it unpleasant at best to be twitted by local hoodlums but in those days you never could tell when an Indian would decide that he was tired of the joke and would have at you with an assortment of sharp and blunt implements. At any rate, Lieutenant Ives, on his return to civilization, wrote an official report in which he hinted that so far as he was concerned the Colorado was no decent place for navigation. This cynical outlook may have been aggravated by the fact that as he returned down river, after many vicissitudes, he met one of Johnson's regular steamers going up. The Johnsonites made a bad matter worse by appearing to be mildly amused. That is about all there is to the history of the little *Explorer*. As she was a misfit and nobody wanted her, they tied her up to a tree—and one night the Colorado, as was its custom, grew tired of its old course and decided to move over a bit. The tree tumbled into the river and floated off, as did the *Explorer*. That was the last that anyone saw of her—or at least, so they thought at the time. But that is getting ahead of the story.

Meanwhile, there had been other developments. Along about 1864 Captain Thomas E. Trueworthy, who owned a big barge on the Sacramento, decided to get into the lucrative trade to Arizona Territory. So he had the barge stiffened a bit, rigged it as a four-masted schooner—probably the world's first vessel of this rig—and into her he loaded 450,000 board feet of lumber. He called the thing the *Victoria*, and set sail from San Francisco for Port Isabel. From San Francisco to Cape San Lucas is downhill all the way, in the matter of both wind and current; so they made it all right. Then they beat their way up the Gulf of California into the tortuous mouth of the Colorado and let go their anchor off Port Isabel. Apparently the great rise and fall of the tide was not taken into consideration, for on the next ebb the hapless *Victoria* sat down on the up-turned fluke of her own anchor, and holed herself pretty badly. The next few tidal "bores" of the Colorado did the rest, and there was lumber scattered all over the Delta. But her people got off safely—including a young A.B. named Jack Mellen. He decided that he would stay with the river, and stay with it he did, becoming one of the Colorado's most famous pilots and at last proud master of the river's biggest steamboat, the impressive two-stacker *Mohave*, which was built in 1876 and lasted for nearly a quarter of a century.

No river steamboat company ever existed for long, or made any amount of money, without having someone start up an opposition line, and the Colorado was no exception. Shortly after the *Victoria* debacle, Captain Trueworthy again appeared on the river, this time with the *Esmeralda*, late of the Stockton-San Francisco run. Not only did she make the trip all the way down the coast and up into the Gulf on her own steam, but at Yuma she picked up a barge and went right on, up to Callville, then a cargo-receiving point for the Mormon colony in southern Utah. Simultaneously the Philadelphia Mining Company brought out the *Nina Tilden*, and the two independent boats put up real competition for the wicked monopoly. At the end of a year the owners of the two boats found an optimistic soul who was willing to buy, and sold out. The new owner had but little better luck than the

original ones, and in 1867 Colorado Steam bought its erstwhile rival. That was the end of competition on the river. The *Esmeralda* had vanished from the *List of Merchant Vessels* by 1868; the *Nina Tilden* was not long in following her, and her demise was not without incident. The tidal "bore" of the Colorado, already mentioned, is a perilous thing; on the flood tide the flowing waters of the river meet the incoming ones from the Gulf to form a high wall of water which moves up the river with no mean force—which is not strange when one considers that 22-foot range of tide. One night in 1874 when the *Nina Tilden* was moored in the channel at Port Isabel her bow-line parted, her bow drifted out into the river, and the oncoming bore caught her and rolled her over, carrying away all of her upper works. During succeeding low tides her owners chopped away her bottom and took out her boilers and engines, leaving the shattered hull to drift away as it willed.

The transfer of the *Esmeralda* was not the only case of an interchange of equipment between the Colorado and the San Joaquin or the Sacramento. On the other side of the ledger, we have the case of the engines from the original *Cocopah*, which were taken out when she was dismantled in 1872 and sent north for the *Hattie Fickett*, then building for the Stockton run; also the engines from the first *Mohave*, dismantled in 1874, which three years later were placed in the *Onward*, to drive her to and from the river ports above San Francisco until around 1909.

Colorado steamboats were of typically Western design, much like the stern-wheelers used in later years on the rivers emptying into San Francisco Bay. They were flat-bottomed, and the boiler deck was entirely open, its forward part being used for cargo. On the upper deck there were staterooms—of a sort—and the galley and the dining room were located there also. Travel in these boats was something which was undertaken from necessity, generally speaking, and not for pleasure. Blistering heat, canned food, butter which was reduced to a gooey mess, and frequent strandings on the shifting bars marred the daylight hours; at night mosquitoes descended in fiendish glee upon passengers and crew, who made it a point to try to get under cover as soon as it got dark, and the

vessel was secured for the night. The river was, of course, innocent of any lighted navigational aids.

Callville petered out, as a town of any great importance, about 1869. In 1877 the Southern Pacific reached Yuma, and shortly afterward it bought out Colorado Steam. Port Isabel was abandoned in 1878 and, although river traffic from Yuma south to the Gulf of California was over, there continued to be quite a bit of trade to points to the north.

A little booklet whose cover is devoted almost entirely to its extensive title, *Croft's New Overland Tourist and Pacific Coast Guide for 1880*, gives us a hint as to what rates were charged on the river in those days. It lists the following: Yuma to Castle Dome, 35 miles, \$5.00; to Ehrenberg, 125 miles, \$15.00; to Aubry, 220 miles, \$28.00; to Camp Mohave, 300 miles, or Hardyville, 312 miles, \$35.00; and to El Dorado Canyon, a bit below Callville, and allegedly 365 miles from Yuma, \$45.00. The distances, incidentally, should be accepted with some reserve: take a pair of dividers and step it off on the map, and you don't get the same answer at all. In some cases, they seem to have used the mileage from Port Isabel, and the error in distance—always on the side of the steamboat people—sometimes was a hundred miles or more. Freight was \$47.50 a ton from San Francisco to Yuma by schooner and steamboat, and \$77.50 a ton to Fort Mohave. On the other hand, you could ship ore from Ehrenberg to San Francisco for \$15.00 a ton—less than a third of the rate on general cargo from San Francisco to Yuma; one is inclined to suspect that the mining people and the steamboat people were very good friends indeed. At the time when this schedule was published, steamers left Yuma each week for Aubry, at the mouth of Bill Williams' River, from the first Saturday in May until the end of October; then it dropped to every second Saturday for the rest of the year. Beginning in mid-January, there was a boat every fifth Wednesday to Camp Mohave, while intermittent service was maintained from May 1 to the last of October as far up as El Dorado Canyon, height of water permitting.

Mining machinery, provisions, and general merchandise made

up the bulk of the up-river trade, while ore provided most of the down-stream tonnage. Passengers were chiefly miners, or soldiers bound to or for the various outposts. It was rugged voyaging, and the tariff presents an interesting contrast to that of the big *Delta* boats on the Sacramento. There, traveling in comfort if not in downright luxury, you could make a run about as long as that from Yuma to Ehrenberg for comfortably less than \$10.00, including your fare, stateroom, superb meals, and the transportation of your automobile on the cargo deck below.

There still were fair-sized steamboats on the Colorado at the turn of the century. The *Mohave* occasionally shifted over from the role of freighter to that of excursion boat, making short runs with crowds of picnickers aboard, and others found a bit of tonnage here and there. But the backbone of the river business had been broken by rail competition, leaving only local or feeder trade for the steamers; an irrigation dam across the river ended it, once and for all, in 1908. The little *Searchlight*, built in 1903, was the last stern-wheeler to be launched on the river, and by 1909 she had disappeared from the shipping lists, as had the steel-hulled *St. Vallier*, built in 1899.

So ends a brief sketch of steamboating on that important stream, a subject on which, if all the yarns were dug up, much more could be written. Today there are many who are frankly surprised to learn that there ever were steamboats on the river which traverses not only the shimmering sands of the desert but also some of the most astoundingly magnificent scenery in the world. It was a distinct surprise, for instance, to the members of a survey party who in 1930 trudged along one of the river's long-abandoned courses some thirty miles southwesterly from Yuma, when they came upon a big, flat pan of rusting iron plates. It dawned upon them that they were looking at what once had been the hull of a steamboat; there it lay, forlorn and alone, in a meander of the river which long since had gone dry as the stream had cut itself a new course through the soft earth.

Yes, it was a steamboat, all right. It was the forgotten hull of Lieutenant Ives's poor little *Explorer*.