

Boulder City News

EVERY MORNING EXCEPT SUNDAY MONDAY
ONLY NEWSPAPER PRINTED AND PUBLISHED IN
BOULDER CITY UNDER GOVERNMENT PERMIT



Volume 9

BOULDER CITY, NEVADA. TUESDAY, JUNE 18, 1946

Number 120

Aleson, White Completing 81 Mile Drift Plans Today

Preparations for the 81 mile raft drift down the Colorado to the head of Lake Mead, by Harry Aleson and Georgie White are under way today at St. George, Utah.

They plan to leave St. George today, probably by truck of Reid Mathis, for the Shivwits plateau country, where they will locate lava and limestone for the memorial pyramid for the three men who were killed by Indians after separating from the Powell expedition.

They will then hike down Andrus and Parashont wash to the Colorado river, to a point at mile 198.5 below Lee's ferry.

In the 81 mile drift they expect to drop from elevation 1525, a drop of 325 feet, runing 70 or 80 rapids and riffles on the raft. They will visit the old Snyder mine for ore samples.

Arrangements have been made for Fremont Schaap, R. W. Brann and Bill Travis to meet them Saturday, June 29, at the head of the lake, presumably soon after noon.

Flyers Seek Sight of Aleson, Georgie White on Raft Drift in Canyon

No trace of Harry Aleson and Georgie White who are floating down the Colorado from Parashont to the head of Lake Mead on a raft was seen yesterday by a reconnaissance party which flew down the river from Grand canyon park to the lake, it was revealed last night by Ben Thompson, assistant superintendent of National Park service, one of the party.

The trip was made in a Desert Skyways plane, with Ted Swift, airport manager, at the controls and William Belknap, Jr., local photographer, along to take pictures in event the raft was sighted.

Thompson said that little anxiety was felt by the group at not sighting the raft, as it probably would have been impossible to see it or its occupants if they had been on the shore. The canyon is 5,000 feet deep along a good deal of the 81 mile stretch, and it was necessary for the plane to fly high enough above it to be safe from down-drafts and rough air.

They saw numerous rapids and a great amount of rough water, but felt that since Aleson had been over this route several times before and is quite familiar with the hazards that there is no reason to worry.

Aleson and the Los Angeles woman were scheduled to leave St. George, Utah, last Wednesday noon, by truck with Royal Blake, who was to take them to a point on the Shivwits plateau near Mt. Dellenbaugh, 100 miles or so south of St. George.

Aleson's plan was to find materials there to be used later for construction of a monument to memory of the three men who were killed by Indians after they broke away from the famous Powell expedition.

Then they were slated to hike down the Andrus and Parashont wash to the shore of the Colorado, 81 miles upstream from the head of Lake Mead.

They planned to build a log raft there, tying it together with wire.

They expected to start their drift through the rapids and riffles of the 81 miles about last Saturday.

After spending about a day walking to the Snyder mine and getting ore samples there, they planned to take to the raft again, planning to arrive at still water at noon next Saturday.

R. W. Brann and Bill Travis of the Boulder City News are scheduled to drive to Pierce Ferry Friday night, go up the lake with Fremont Schaap to meet the pair at noon Saturday where the moving water hits the still water.

It is possible others will make the trip, to take photographs and interview the pair.

Aleson and Georgie White planned to use U. S. Army air corps life preservers (pneumatic) and U. S. Navy kapok vest preservers, plus back packs. They will be prepared to abandon the raft on a second's notice, and try to recover it soon.

Last July Aleson and Georgie White made a 60 mile trip down the Colorado using Mae West life preservers, floating with these, air tight cans containing provisions strapped to their backs.

After three days of this they reached the head of Lake Mead July 4, telling of hairbreadth escapes in the whirlpools and rapids they traversed, bobbing like corks on the turbulent and silt-laden waters.

Mr. and Mrs. T. B. Lopas and son Tommy, have gone to Yuma for a week-end visit. Lopas is a BR ranger.

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LAKE MEAD: 116285 feet

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BOULDER CITY, NEVADA, THURSDAY, JUNE 27, 1946

Number 127

Air View of Aleson Raft Sought in Vain; Park Service Boat Leaves

The search by air for Harry Aleson and Georgie White who are descending 81 miles of the Colorado river to Lake Mead on a raft, continued yesterday with no trace of the pair or their raft being seen, it was learned from Guy Edwards, National Park service superintendent.

A second trip by plane was made yesterday when one of the Desert Skyways ships with Delbert Ballard at the controls carrying Donal Jolley, NPS chief ranger, and Wilbur Doudna, naturalist, flew up and down the river over the course to be traversed by the Aleson raft. The plane returned about 2 p.m. without any sign of the adventurers having been seen.

The first reconnaissance by plane was made Wednesday, with Ted Swift flying Ben Thompson, assistant NPS superintendent, and William Belknap, Jr., photographer, over the route. No trace of the raft or its occupants was sighted.

The National Park service boat left yesterday afternoon at one o'clock with the object of meeting the Aleson raft about noon today where the moving water of the river meets the still water of the lake. Aboard in addition to the pilot, Ray Poyser, were Ranger Philip Van Cleave; Robert Carter, publisher of the Boulder City News; William Belknap, Jr., photographer; and Miss Lynn Laughery, reporter for the Las Vegas Review Journal, all of Boulder City; and Ruth Lusch, publicity chairman of the Las Vegas chamber of commerce and her husband, and Mr. and Mrs. Doc Ladd, of Las Vegas. They plan to return tonight.

Early this morning R. W. Brann and Bill Travis of the News staff left by automobile for Pierce ferry and plan to leave there by boat with Fremont Schaap to meet Aleson and Mrs. White.

The original raft trip down the river in 1867 was made by James White and his partner, Strole, who built a raft when their boat was wrecked near the mouth of Parashont wash, and started floating down the river.

Strole supposedly drowned and White was picked up near Ft. Callville, about 15 miles upstream from the site of Boulder dam.

Nobody would believe his story that he had come down the wild and treacherous river on a makeshift raft. Aleson, on this trip, is attempting to prove that it can be done.

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BOULDER CITY, NEVADA,

SATURDAY, JUNE 29, 1946

Number 129

Wood Raft Was Failure In Colorado River Transportation, Aleson, Georgie White Find Before They Shoot Rapids on Rubber Airfloat

"Never again," said Harry Aleson as he boarded a National Park service boat on the Colorado river Sunday. "Never again, and I hope no man ever attempts to come down the Colorado river on a raft."

Aleson and Georgie White of Los Angeles were sighted about 9 a.m. Sunday at a point shortly above Emery falls, now above the inlet to Lake Mead.

The river was wide, smooth. As the one-man rubber liferaft bearing the pair neared the Park service cruiser there seemed no reason for Aleson's remark.

Not until one realized that this part of the Colorado was changed, heavily silted. Thirty miles above this point the river roared and plunged in all its traditional wildness.

Approximately a day later than scheduled, Aleson and Mrs. White told of their experiences as they sipped fresh milk and relaxed on the cruiser deck. For the first time in more than a week they were emerging from the mile-high confining walls of the lower Grand Canyon.

After a couple of days on the Shivwits plateau during which they climbed to the summit of Mt. Dellenbaugh, the couple rode horseback to the mouth of a canyon leading to Parashont canyon on the north rim of Grand Canyon Friday, June 21. They were accompanied by Slim Waring, who left them at that point.

The going down the canyon was plenty tough, said Aleson. Rationing a two-quart canteen at one swallow per hour, the water was gone by 7 p.m. When they camped at 8:30 their only bedding was one sheet each. Georgie chose the "soft" gravel of a wash, Aleson a huge boulder.

From 5 o'clock the next morning the search for water continued. About 9 o'clock they cut the top off a barrel cactus, chewed

the pulp soaked with lime juice as they hiked.

The cliffs steepened. They noticed wasps in a shady niche. After an hour's digging and fighting the yellowjackets, they found a trickle of brackish, muddy water caught in a natural tank. Settled, they made instant coffee or sipped it with lime juice and sugar.

Lower they found six potholes filled with water. They descended through narrow corkscrew passages, over small drops in limestone, reached Parashont canyon. There they camped. Sheets were bedding, navy life preservers their pillows.

Up early Sunday, they hiked 25 minutes, rested 10. They saw three burros; but no mountain sheep on the entire trip. They listened, uncertain whether they heard wind high on the canyon walls or the rapids of the Colorado.

One of the burros sighted wore a clapperless bell.

About 9 a.m. on June 23 (Sunday), Aleson and Mrs. White reached Parashont rapids.

"What a glorious experience to see so much water in this parched desert area," Aleson wrote in his diary. "After cooling down, we waded into the delicious, running waters. We make motion pictures of it. As far as I can see, two miles, there is a continuous rapid. We rest on shore, in the shade, swim again and again."

In the next seven days they were to see plenty of the "delicious" waters.

They gathered driftwood, made a raft of juniper and cottonwood lashed together with quarter-inch line. On a heavy plank they tied the army pack with invaluable hatchet and knife inside. If the raft should break up, this portion would drift.

But the raft would circle into the backwaters, could not be pushed into the current. And the material was too light for riding rapids.

"I didn't like it," said Georgie, "it might fly over and conk you. It was dangerous." She preferred a life preserver.

So they took to the life preservers, were pulled under water at the foot of rapids. Watching for suitable raft material, they drifted, walked around the worst rapids.

Tuesday, after a breakfast of rice, raisins candy and coffee, they reached the hugh rapids 205.1 miles below Lee's ferry. Almost impossible to ride, almost as bad to portage. They climbed high around it.

Wednesday they made another raft. They marked it with two axe cuts, set it adrift after sev-

eral trials. It also stayed in back-water too long to be feasible.

That day too, they saw the Desert Skyways plane carrying Ted Swift, Ben Thompson and William Belknap, Jr., They made 25-foot letters "O.K." in the sand, waved sheets. The plane continued on.

Thursday the pair took to the river again on life preservers. That day they finished all their food except soup cubes. Leaving Georgie at the river, Aleson attempted to reach the lost Snyder mine. Failing he returned at sundown. After dark they reached a food cache.

That forenoon, Aleson notes, a young eagle had followed them for some distance as they drifted. Packing Friday morning, Georgie found one of the small, tan vicious scorpins in her pack sack.

Sixty miles above the point they were due Saturday afternoon, they entered the river on the one-man rubber raft they had carried for emergency, steering it with sweeps made from two box ends and a couple of drift sticks.

They rode through seven rapids, portaged about a big one. There they made pictures of the ramp of old Lee's Ferry. There the cable had given way in the twenties, three men were lost.

The raft almost capsized just above the half-mile 15-foot drop of Diamond Creek rapids. From the top to Bridge Canyon rapids the river drops 100 feet in nine miles, greatest drop in the Grand Canyon, according to Aleson. They were surprised to find they could balance the small craft on 6- to 8-foot waves. That night they camped on a silt bar.

Saturday morning they reached the brink of Mile 232 rapids. "We felt that we slid down 10 to 15 feet in a short second," Aleson noted. "The big waves fell back over us and flipped the float upside down. From the heavy waves I saw Georgie hanging on the airfloat and in the back water.

"In three seconds we were 50 feet apart. As quickly we were out of sight. The roar drowned any effort to yell. In the next three miles were nine to twelve rapids. Repeatedly I was pulled under in waves and whirlpools. I took water in throat, nostrils. I gasped for air, choked, coughed out water—came close to drowning 10 to 20 times in those terrible three miles.

"Between rapids I lay on the water gasping in agony, hoping and praying I might hold my breath long enough to live through the coming rapids. To swim out was out of the question. Eventually a back water took me near the wall and I struggled to the black granite."

He looked for Georgie, finally sighted her as she came down the current riding the airfloat. She was swept past, entered a back-water below. Aleson climbed along the granite wall, reached her two hours later.

They reached a food cache, ate, rested, and broke away the damaged film in Aleson's camera. Uneventfully they then drifted 22 miles to Quartermaster canyon. It was hot, and Aleson was "done in." Too late to make the trip out of the canyon before nightfall, they rested until the morrow. Sunday morning they met the park service boat above Emery Falls.

The Park service boat piloted by Ray Poyser made two trips up the river about 11 miles above Pierce Ferry Saturday. Aboard were Ben Thompson, assistant NPS superintendent, Donal Jolley, chief ranger, Phillip Van Cleve, William Belknap, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Arden Lusch and Mr. and Mrs. "Doc" Ladd of Las Vegas, Robert E. Carter, R. W.

and Eleanor Brann and William Travis.

Aleson and Georgie White were met the following morning. "We've had enough of the water," they said, as they were brought to Boulder City by Travis and Brann. Mrs. White returned to her home in Los Angeles Sunday night.

Movie Camera View Finder Does Aleson Good Turn

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Gives Him First Sight of Companion After Separation in Rapids

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Life Raft Drifter Pours Water Out of Pack, Camera

A water blurred view in the view finder of Dr. F. B. Wheelwright's movie camera gave Harry Aleson his first glimpse of Mrs. Georgie White, his traveling companion on their recent harrowing 81 mile life-raft drift down the Colorado after their most difficult stretch, during which Aleson nearly drowned while they were separated.

Aleson, who arrived yesterday in Boulder City after a visit with relatives in California, revealed how they were separated for more than two hours in rapids 25½ miles above Quartermaster canyon, or 44½ miles above Grand Wash cliffs, 18 days ago.

It was Saturday morning, the day they had planned to be at the head of Lake Mead, and when they went into the first rapid the small life raft was upset and in a few seconds time Aleson, floating with his life jacket and life vest, could no longer see Mrs. White and the life raft, to which she was clinging in the water.

He was sucked into one rapid or whirlpool after another, hardly having time to recover his breath after getting to the surface before being punished with another submersion.

At last, so buffeted and winded he could but lie face up in the water and gasp for breath, he found himself at the left bank. He rested for a time in the water, then climbed out on the granite shore.

After this three mile drift alone, he looked about and could not see any sign of Mrs. White or the raft.

He opened his back pack, which had admitted some water, poured out the water and took out the movie camera loaned him by Dr. Wheelwright.

He poured water out of the camera, wondering whether it had ruined camera and film.

He raised the camera, to look through the eighth-inch view finder. Water blurred the view through the finder but, as he held it up there seemed a likeness there as of someone on a raft, tiny, far away, but a blurred image.

He lowered the camera and continued looking there without the finder. And there, quarter to half a mile away, was Mrs. White, bounding the waves on the raft.

At last she was opposite him, and he yelled. She replied but could not tell what he said nor locate him on the bank. He watched her go by and at last surmised she had also drifted over toward the left bank, farther downstream. He skirted the ledges and at last found her, about two hours after they had become separated in this worst experience of all their 81-mile Grand Canyon river drift to Lake Mead.

Aleson plans to leave, probably this afternoon, for Richfield, Utah, but expects to make three boat trips downstream from Hite, Utah, to Lee's Ferry in the near future, each to take two weeks.

He will take traveling companions with him on these trips, late in August, late in September and late in October.

Dr. Wheelwright's camera is said to have been undamaged by the water, and most of the film turned out all right, but Aleson sent the camera to be reconditioned by an expert.