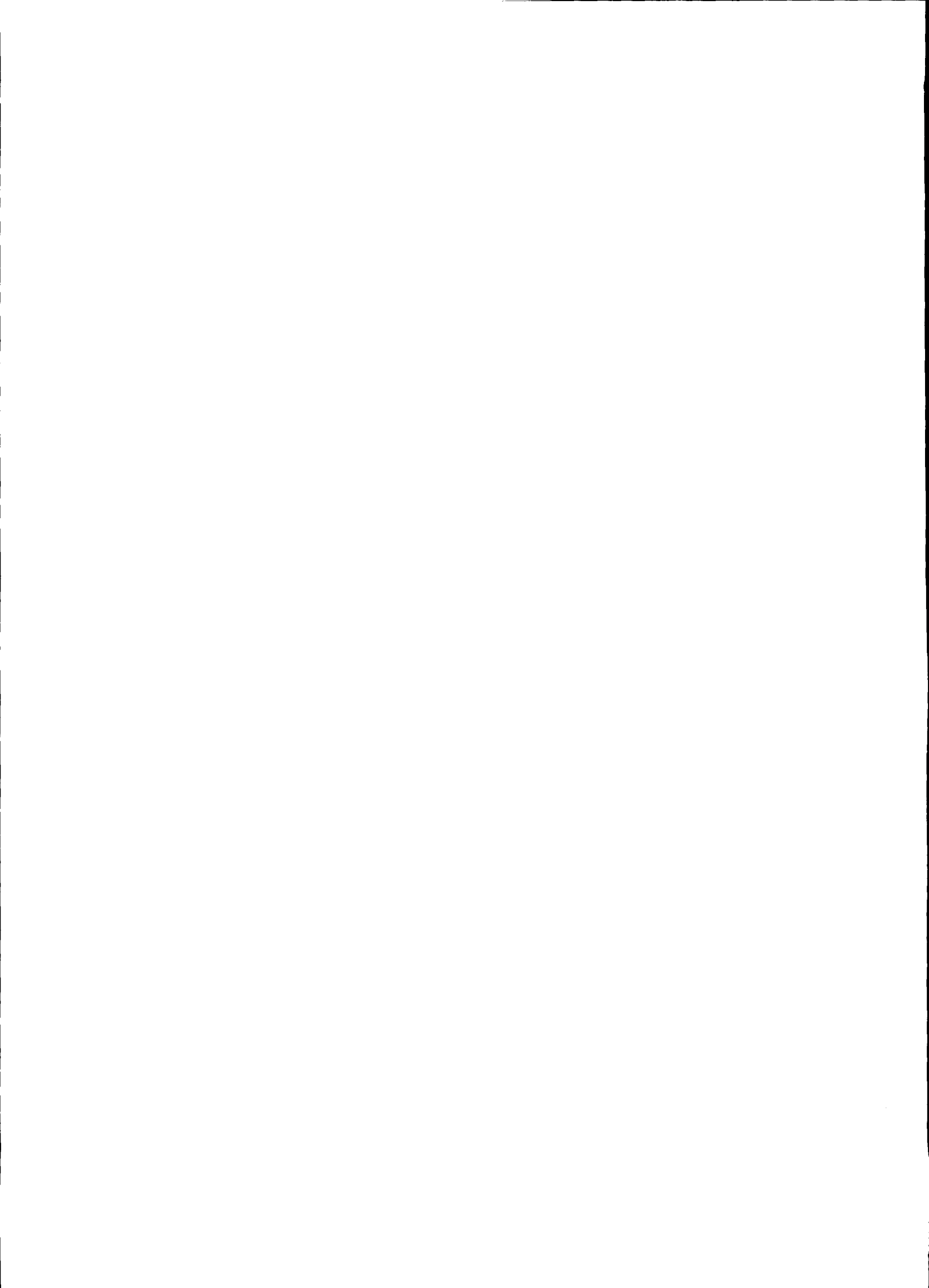


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The First Ninety Years of  
Adventure:  
The Green River 1776-1869



When I began this project, I was intending to write a paper dealing the history of Brown's Park. But as I got into the problem I was appalled at the wrong material dealing with the early history of the area. Much of what is in the files shows not only inert scholarship but in some cases outright plagiarism.

This paper attempts to correct this situation. It deals with the early history of the Green River - Lodore Area. It makes no claims to original scholarship nor to being the final word on this subject. A definitive complete and impartial history of this area is badly needed. The number of bad books and articles on this area, staggers the imagination.

I want to express my thanks to: Dale Thompson for suggesting this, Marion and Bruce Macleod for being so gracious and helpful, and of course my wife, who not only typed this, but had to live with me as I was writing this.

Despite the assistance, the interpretations of the data are strictly my own. The responsibility for the opinions expressed in this paper is also mine alone.

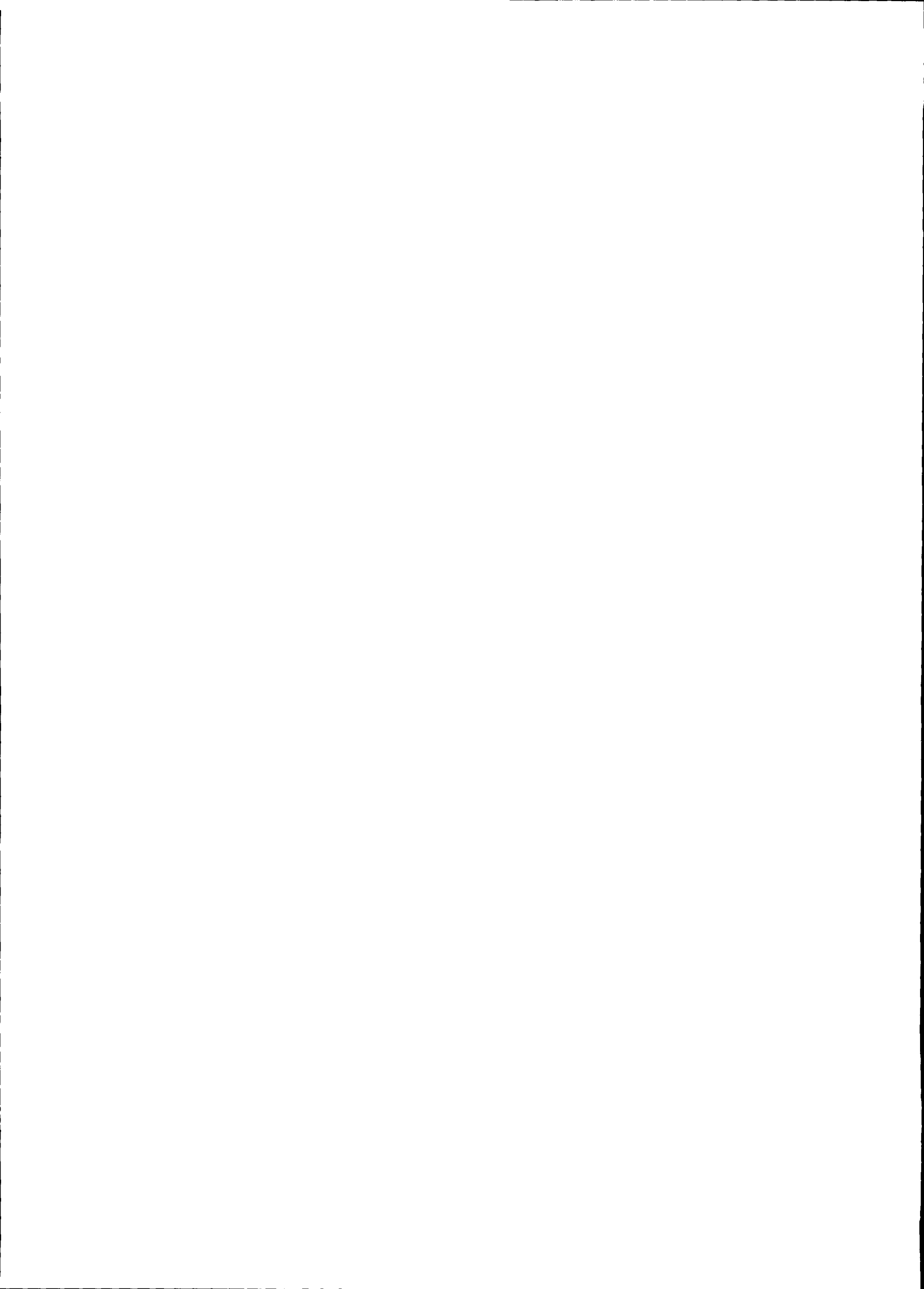
Lodore Ranger Station  
1966

F.A. Patterson

Seasonal Ranger/Naturalist

'66 '67 '68 '69

"Floyd"

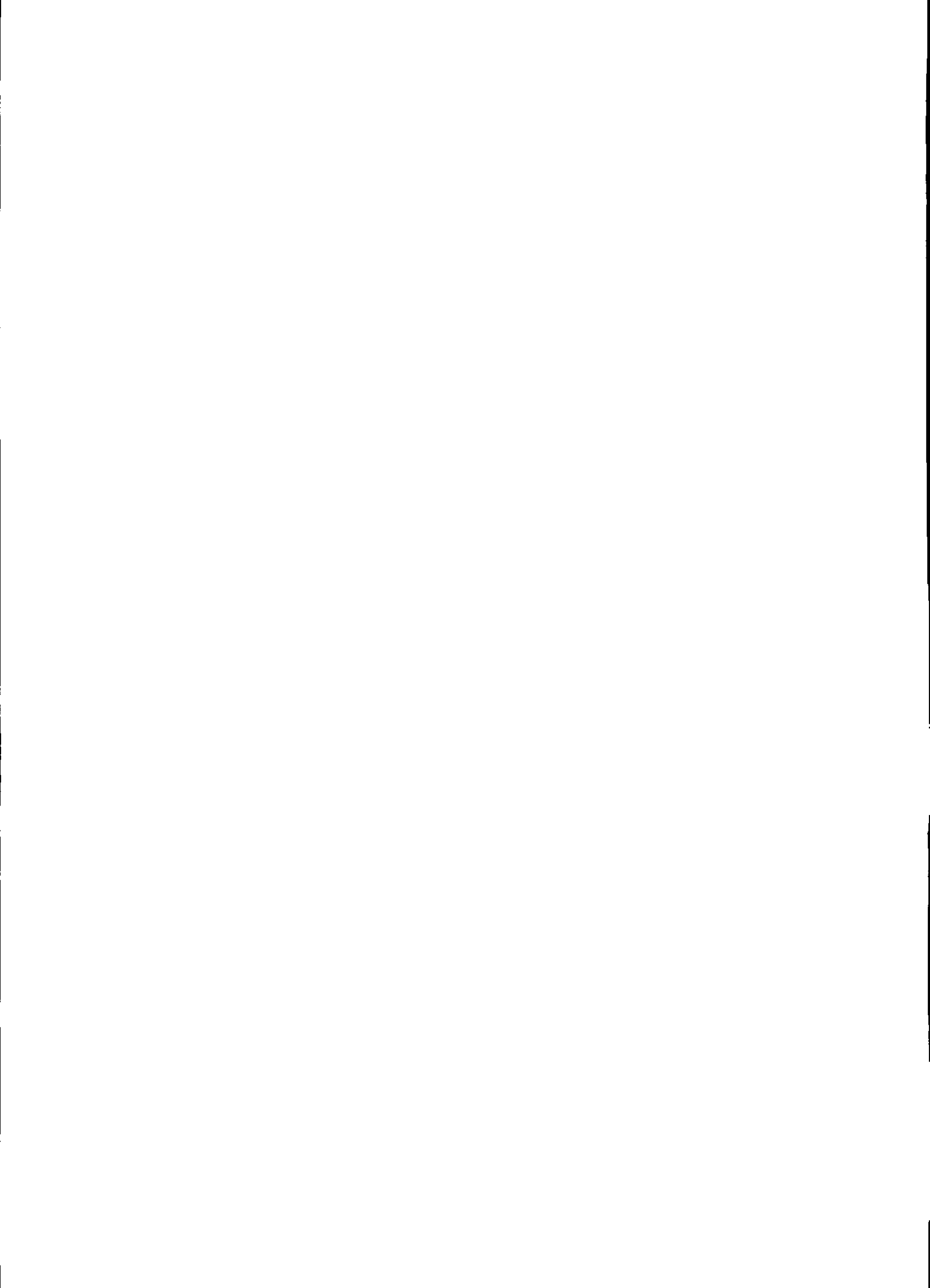


### The Green River 1776--1869

Throughout most of the latter part of the 18th century, the Spanish Government in Mexico was attempting to open a land route to California. The missionary priests were building a long string of churches throughout the southwest, up into California. The hostile tribes of northern Mexico blocked the direct route. For this reason, attention centered on the longer and indirect route that ran through the shadowy unknown north.

On July 29, 1776, a party of ten men left Santa Fe. Their leader was Father Francisco Dominguez, inspector of the province of Santa Evangelino. The real organizing force behind the expedition was Father Silvestre Velez de Escalante who kept the journal. He burned with the desire to see the desert lands that his friend Father Garces had traveled, and to establish contact with the missions in California. This party, was the first recorded expedition to stand on the banks of the Green River.

There is a tradition that the Spanish were in Brown's Park as early as 1650. No support for this has been found, yet it is hard to determine the exact amount of Spanish knowledge of the American Southwest. Trading parties as well as missionary priests wandered through the area.



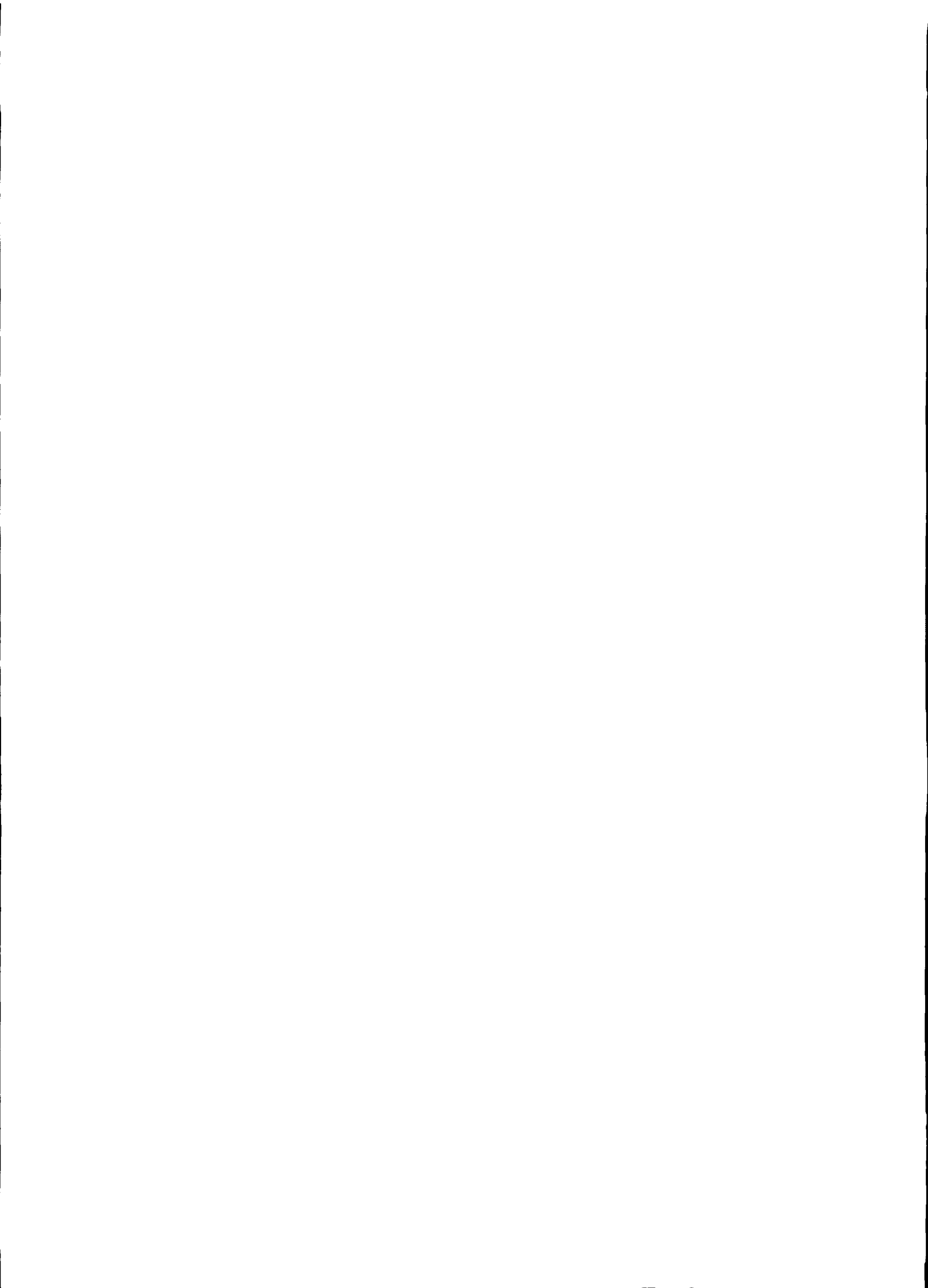
Unlike his dedicated assistant, Dominguez had a different view of the purpose of the expedition. Before leaving, he wrote to the Governor "... For even though we may not achieve our purpose which is to explore a road from this kingdom to Monterey much advance will be made by the knowledge we can acquire of lands through which we shall travel. ..."For him, this was to be a trip of pure exploration.<sup>1</sup>

On the night of Sept. 8, the party camped in the southern end of Douglas Canyon. They were heading in a generally northwestern direction. The next day they were on the White River east of Rangely where they found a vein of benustate, an indication of gold. Escalante reports this, then adds, "...On this matter we assert nothing nor will we assert anything because we are not experienced in mines and because a more detailed examination than the one we were able to carry out on this occasion is always necessary. ..."

They continued north for the next three days. On Sept. 13th, "... About eleven o'clock in the morning we set out from the Arroyo de Cibolo through the plain which lies at the foot of a small sierra... " They traveled about 5 leagues, or approximately five miles and reached a large river which they called the Rio de San Buenaventura

"...This Rio de San Buenaventura is the largest river we have crossed [they did not cross it until the 16th] and is the same one which Fray Alonso de Posada, who in the [past] century was custodian

<sup>1</sup>. Bolton, Herbert E., Pageant in the Wilderness: The Story of the Escalante Expedition...1776, Utah Historical Quarterly, vol XVIII, 1,2,3,4, 1950. p. 10. Hereafter cited as Bolton, Escalante Diary. All quotes from the Escalante diary are taken from this book.





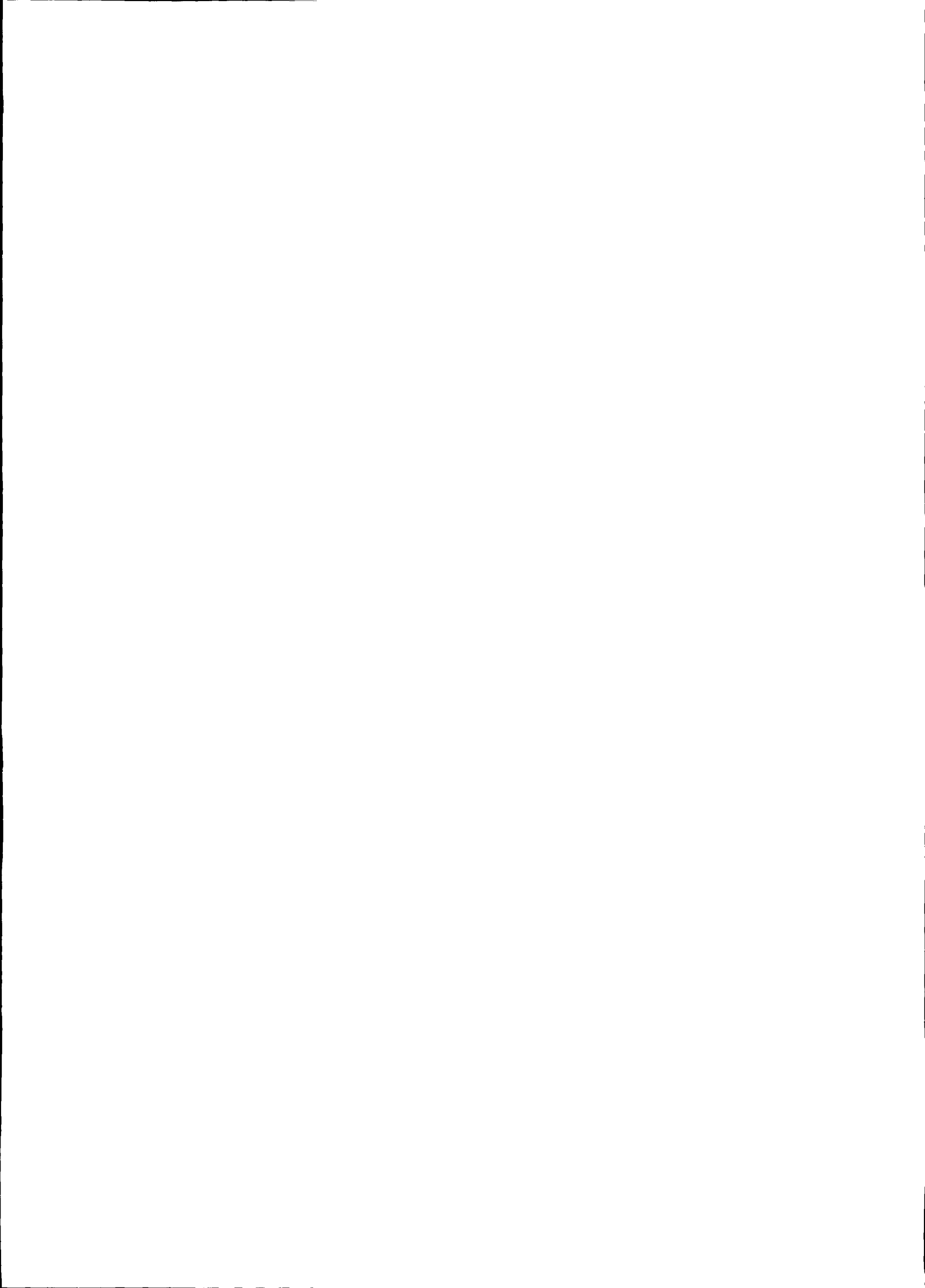
of this custodia of New Mexico, says in a report divided the Yuta nation from the Comanche, according to the date which he gives... The river enters this meadow between two high cliffs which after forming a sort of corral, come so close together that one can scarcely see the opening through which the river comes, ..."<sup>2</sup>.

Escalante believed that they were in an entirely different watershed from the Colorado. This is shown in the maps that Don Bernardo Miera y Pacheco -- the foremost cartographer in New Spain in his time -- drew of the land the expedition had discovered.<sup>3</sup>

The party crossed the river on the 16th just outside the boundary of Dinosaur National Monument, about a mile upstream from Brush Creek.<sup>4</sup> They turned southwest leaving the area, because they feared an Indian ambush, which they suspected their guide had arranged.

The name Green River apparently was applied by the Spaniards. Pacheco affixed the name Plateau Sierra Verde to the Yampa Plateau region on his maps. Most of the American fur trappers called the river Seets Kadu. Daniel Potts, an early trapper in the area, in a letter dated July 7, 1826 wrote, "...After crossing the above mentioned stream

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2. Fray Posada, in 1686 wrote the Informe, at the request of the king of Spain. This book is a fair summary of what was known of the geography of the Southwest. Escalante does not say which part he refers to. If an earlier discovery of the Green had been made, it probably have been nearer the Colorado River.
  3. See C. Gregory Crampton, "The Discovery of the Green River," Utah Historical Quarterly, Vol XX, October 1952, p 308-310. For a reproduction of the Pacheco map see Bolton's Escalante Diary. Escalante never reached the shores of the Great Salt Lake, but he knew of its existence; and Pacheco include it on his maps, believing the Green flowed into it, and that the Lake was in turn an arm of the Pacific Ocean.
  4. Crampton, op. cit., 307. Bolton places the campground too near the quarry.



[Big Horn river] we took a more westerly direction over high rolling prairies [Soth Pass] to a small branch of a considerable river known to us by the name Seets Kadu, and to the Spanards by Green River and is supposed to discharge itself into the Bay of California...<sup>5</sup>.

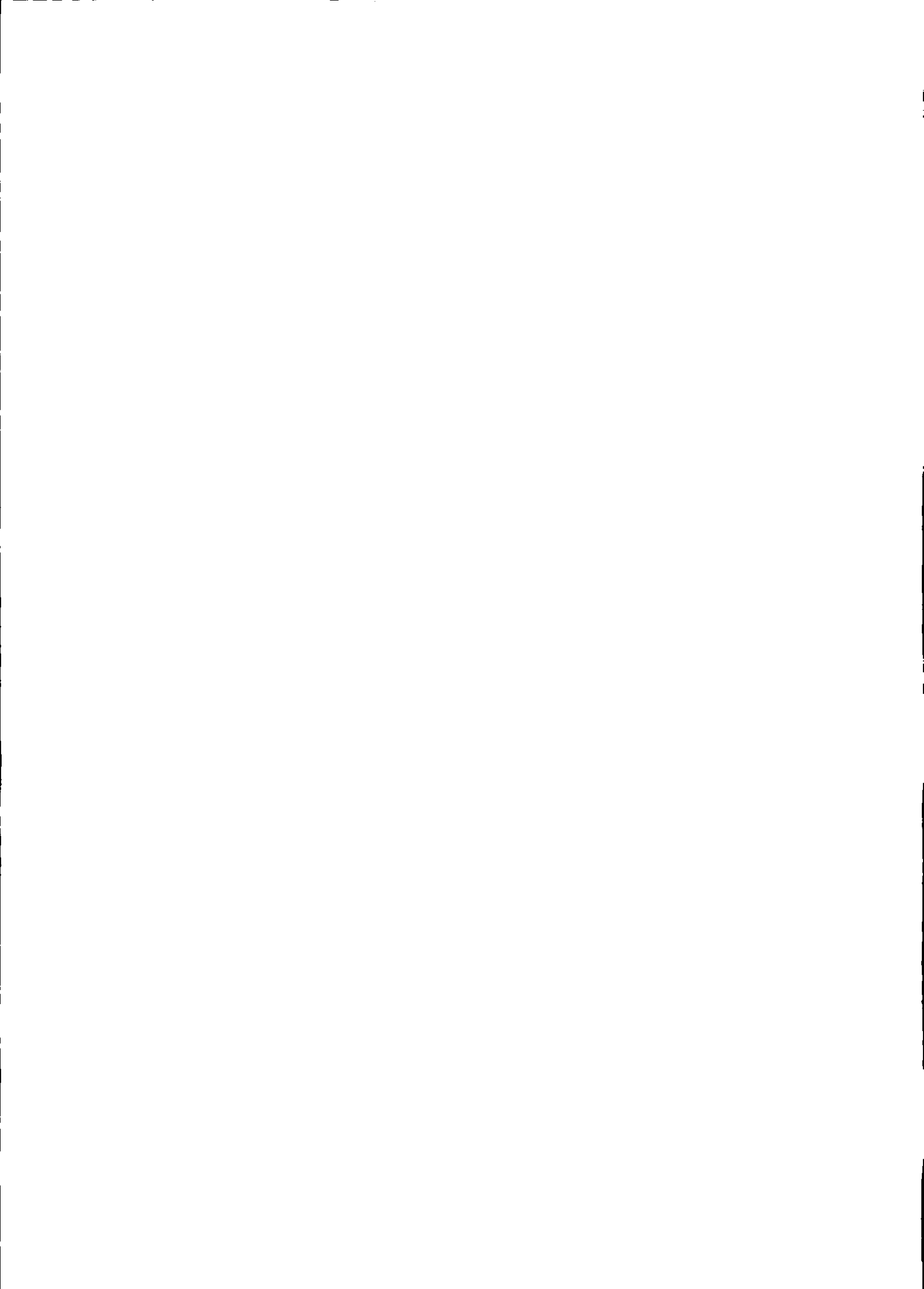
During the next 50 years, except for an occasional trading party, the Spanish made little use of the knowledge the expedition had brought back. In 1811, Baron Alexander von Humboldt published his Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain. This authoritative book, by a renowned German scholar, was based on research the author did in the archives of New Spain. He had access to Escalante's Journal and incorporated the material into his book and accompanying maps. This put the final authoritative seal on the myth of the separate course of the Green River. The resulting confusion, as parties tried to reach the Pacific via the Green, lingered until Powell's expedition of 1869.<sup>6</sup>.

In the early 1820s, the Colorado Basin area became the scene of an intense rivalry for the fur trade. Mexico, after gaining it independence from Spain in 1821, reversed the long standing policy barring American fur trappers and welcomed men like William Wolfskill, William Huddart, and Etienne Provost, the first great trapper of the Southwest. Little is known in detail about their activities, but it is certain that these men were on the Green River prior to 1825.<sup>7</sup>.

5. Morgan's Ashley, 148.

6. C. Gregory Crampton, "Humboldt's Utah, 1811," Utah Historical Quarterly Vol XXVI #3, July 1958, 269-281.

7. For a good summary of the early Spanish American traders in this area, see the chapter on fur traders in Leroy and Ann Hafen's Old Spanish Trail.

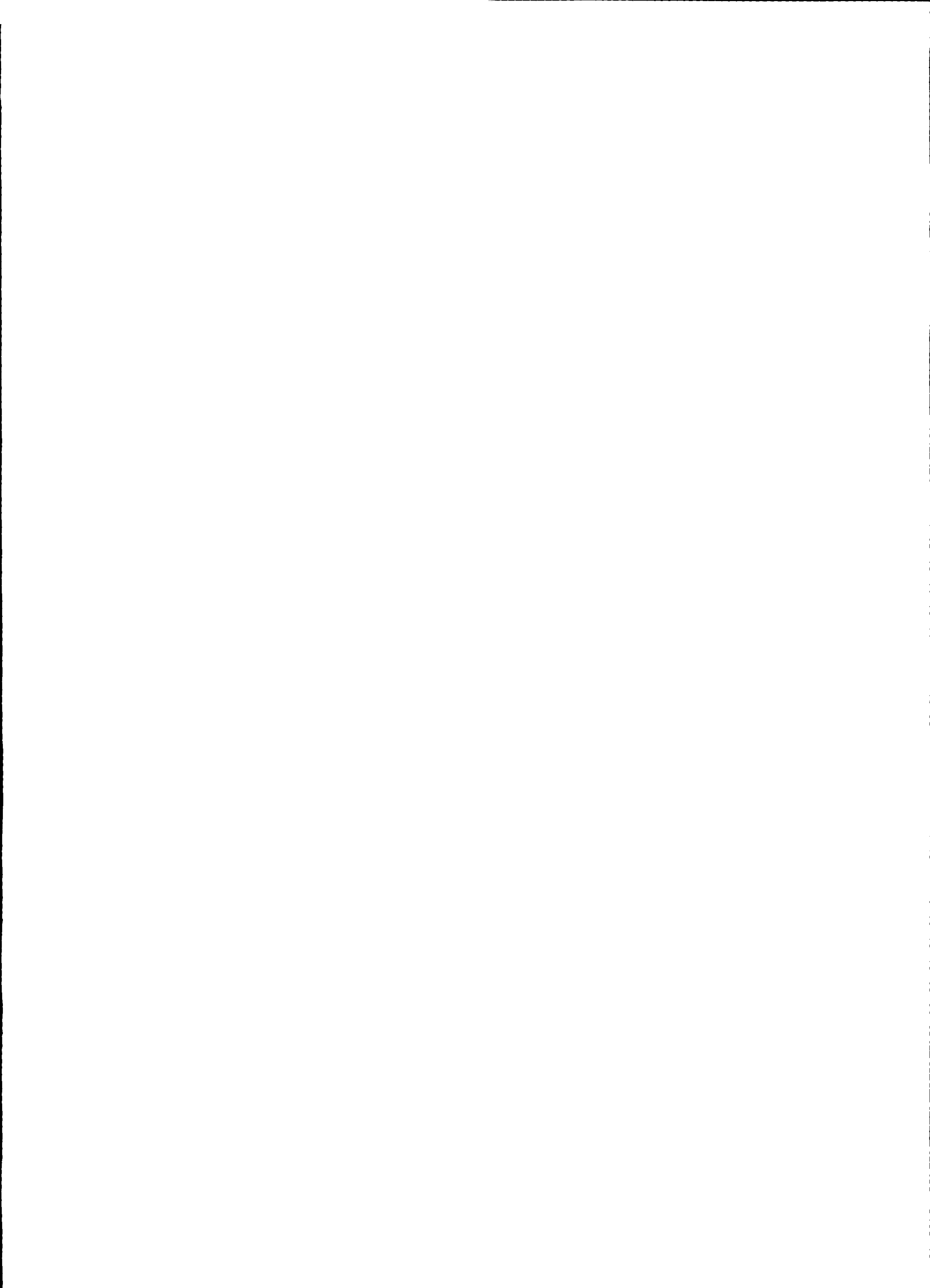


Provost, the best known of these shadowy figures, was born in Canada in either 1782 or '86. He was a member of the first large party of American fur trappers to reach the Front Range of the Rockies in 1815.<sup>8</sup> It is known that he was trapping with his partner Leclerc on the Green as early as 1821, and may have been there a year or two earlier.<sup>9</sup>

There is no indication that either Provost or Leclerc was an employee of General Ashley. Provost maintained a large company. Another early trapper, Pegleg Smith, mentions that Charles Hopper was in Taos, New Mexico, in February of 1825 with 25 men of the Provost Company, and that they had been trapping along the Green river and throughout the Great Basin.<sup>10</sup>

As yet there had been no real attempt to descend the Green River. Provost wandered all over the region -- he may have anticipated Jim Bridger's discovery of the Great Salt Lake by a short period, and either he or some of his trappers probably had gotten into Brown's Park. Here again, there is simply no record. The fur trappers, like the Indians, were content to leave the green River alone, not attempting to run the canyons. It would take a rare sort of man to do that.

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8. Leroy Hafen, "Mountain Men before the Mormons", Utah Historical Quarterly, Vol XXVI, p 309.
  9. Dale Morgan, ed., The West of William Ashley..., 1964, Ptnt #151, p 277, Hereafter cited as Morgan's Ashley. This magnificent volume dealing with the early fur trading activities of the Missouri Fur Company is a must for anyone working in this area.
  10. See "Recollections of Pegleg Smith" printed in Hutchings's California Magazine, January 1861, Vol V, 319, quote from Morgan's Ashley, p 279.



William Ashley was a rare sort of man. In all his many careers he seems to have been noted for his honesty, his fairness, as a leader of men, and he possessed more than his share of courage. Yet one cannot help wondering if Ashley had known the conditions he would face in the canyons, he would have bothered to make the attempt at all. That he attempted and succeeded the trip in a frail buffalo skin boat, neither losing a man or a boat -- but as we shall see coming very close to getting himself drowned -- only makes his feat all the more remarkable.

No known portrait of the man exists, but Fredric Billion describes him as "...A man of medium height, say about five feet nine inches of light frame, his weight might have been from one hundred and thirty five to one hundred and forty pounds, thin face prominent nose.... Had General Ashley been an indolent man he doubtless would have been a dyspeptic, but from his restless and active disposition, constantly on the move and from his various [pursuits] he was engaged in...he found no time to be sick...."11.

Ashley got into the fur trade via the back door. He had been a general in the militia, Lieutenant Governor in Missouri, a farmer, before he went into partnership with Andrew Henry, who was convinced that the area above the upper Yellowstone was good fur country.

At first there was little success, and by 1824 Ashley was terribly in debt, having borrowed all he could to sustain the company. That

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11. Quoted from xxvi, Morgan's Ashley, who quoted from Fredric Billion, "A few brief notes of my personal knowledge of Genl Wm H Ashley (Billion Collection, Missouri Historical Society); printed in J Thomas Scharf, History of St Louis City and County (Philadelphia 1883, 2 vols. vol I, 196-97).





year the news of a discovery of a new "South" Pass through the Rockies -- south of the pass that Lewis and Clark had used.-- heralded the possibility that this might be the route to untapped beaver areas. So Ashley determined to stake everything on one last expedition to recoup his fortunes.

These were the circumstances that brought Ashley to the Green River area. His voyage down the river was primarily a voyage of discovery, looking for beaver sign. He reached the river on April 19th<sup>12.</sup> and saw "...a range of mountains at a great distance say 40-50 miles scutherly..."<sup>13.</sup> which was the first recorded sighting of the Uintas.<sup>14.</sup>

Ashley divided his party into four groups and, keeping most of the merchandise himself, set about preparing to descend the river in buffalo skin boats. On the 22nd, all four parties set out, but they were instructed to meet on July 10th at a spot about 100 miles downriver. This was to be the first rendezvous of the fur trade, a notable event for the next 15 years.<sup>15.</sup>

Slowly Ashley worked his way down the river, trapping as he went. Three times he stopped to cache goods. On May 5th he reached the mouth

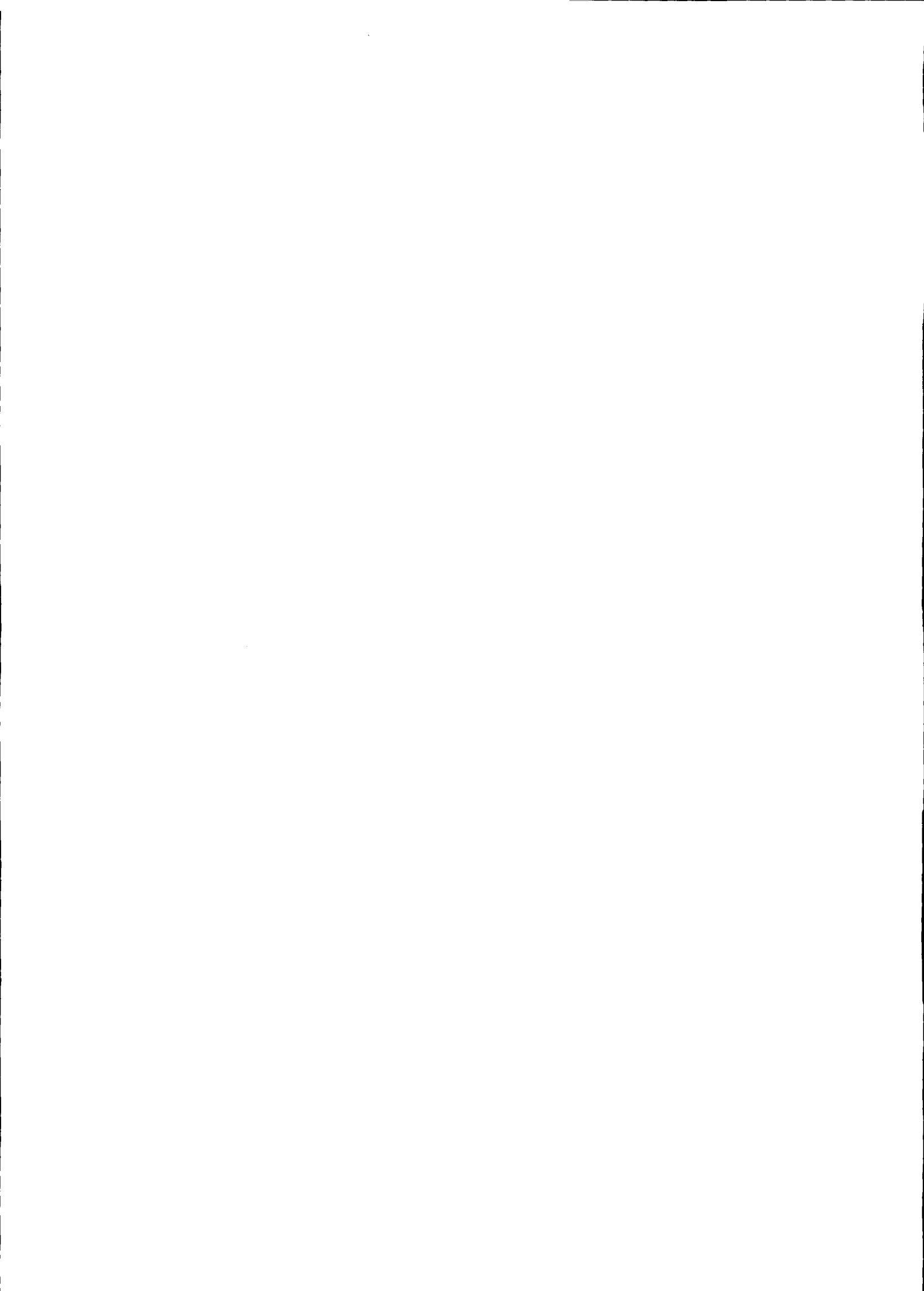
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12. The chronology in the Ashley Diary is badly confused. To quote but one example: in 1825 May 8th was a Sunday; Ashley has two entries for Friday, May 8. Rather than attempt the almost impossible task of straightening out the chronology, I've left it as it is in the diary.

13. Morgan's Ashley, 106.

14. It is probable that the Uintas had been sighted sometime before by either Provest or some of his company.

15. The first rendezvous was held at Henry's Fork of the Green. There is no evidence that Brown's Park was ever a site of the general rendezvous of the fur traders. It lay off the beaten path between the centers of the trade.



of Flaming Gorge. While he decided that Kingfisher Creek had good beaver sign, all in all he wasn't very impressed with the general area. "...These mountains present a most gloomy scene. They are entire rock, generally of a reddish appearance, they rise to the height of 2 to 4,000 feet out of their crevices grows a species of dwarf pine and elder...they are on the one side or other of the river perpendicular or projecting over -- on the other side so steep and rugged as to prevent the passage of man over them -- the rocks that fall in the river from the walls of the mountain make the passing in some places dangerous -- windy unpleasant weather..."<sup>16</sup>.

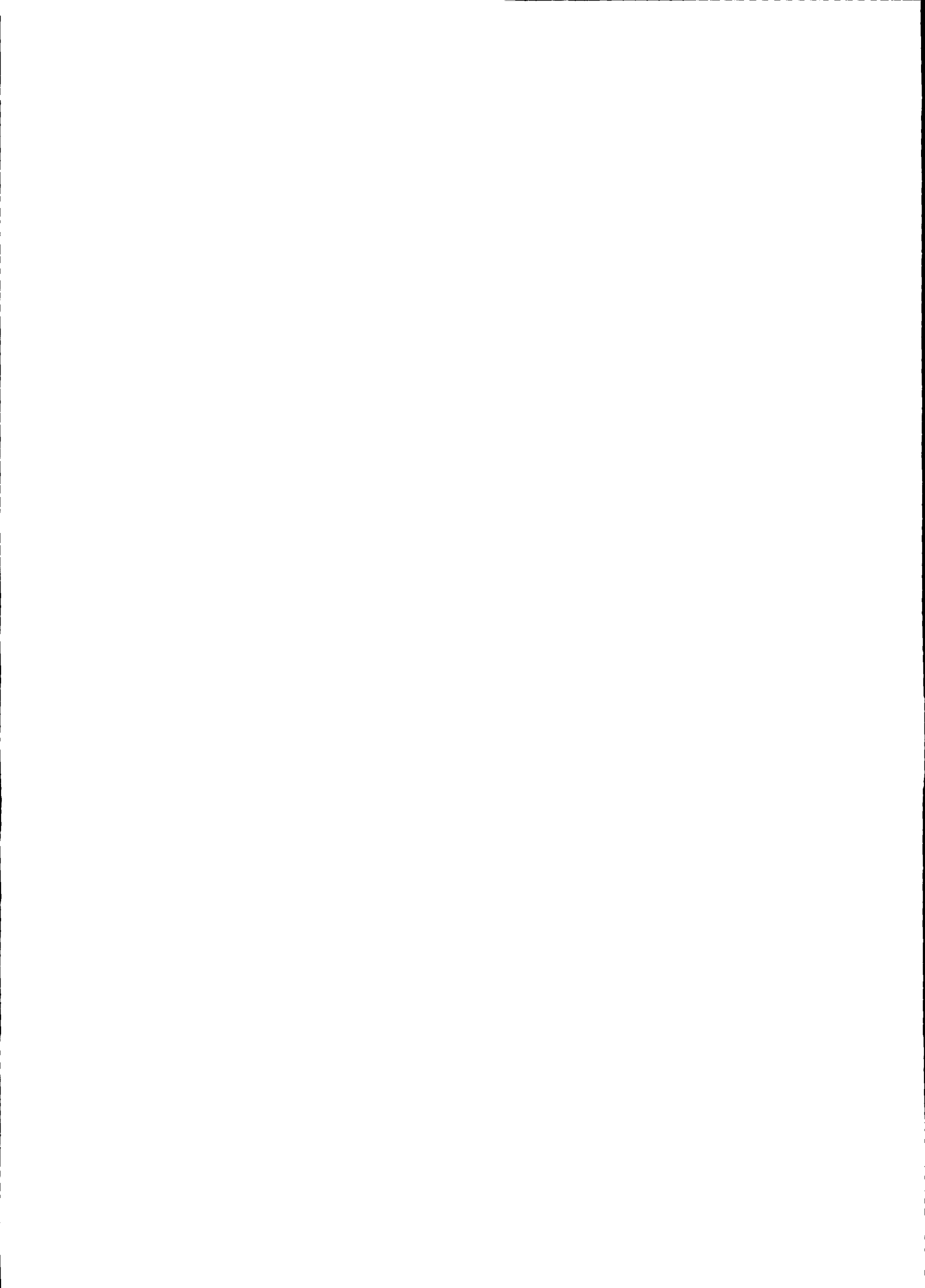
On May 7th Ashley entered Brown's Hole. He doesn't mention Brown's Hole at all except to comment on the thousands of Indians who recently had wintered there.<sup>17</sup> Two days later he entered Lodge Canyon.

The next day (May 10th) Ashley writes "...proceeded down the river-- at the distance of 2 miles the river became so verry bad that we performed a portage of a half mile which in consequence of the roughness of the side of the mountain along which we were obliged to pass made it extremely difficult and tedious -- these may well be called the Rocky Mountains for there is nothing but Mountains of rocks to be seen

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16. Morgan's Ashley, 108-09.

17. Just who had wintered there is still something of a mystery. Morgan suspects they may have been the Shoshoni and not the Utes. (It is worth noting that according to Ashley the country around the Green all the way down to the Yampa was claimed by the Shoshoni.) If so, the Shoshoni ranged further than has been previously supposed. To support his theory Morgan notes that the Shoshoni first made contact with the New Mexican frontier where they were known as the Comanches Sozoni in 1825. (See ftnt 111 p 274, Morgan's Ashley.)



partially covered with a dwarf of cedar & pines - violent wind with snow & rain..." That snow storm would plague them for the next two days.<sup>18</sup>

On the evening of the 11th, they camped just above Triplett Falls. But conditions were very bad."...at many of these places the river is not more than forty or 50 yards wide boiling over rocks with [~~deleted: tremendous~~] [interlined: great] violence some of my men are the most skillful of watermen or I could not have proceeded at all. Even with the empty canoes we are now destitute of provisions and know not when we shall be able to get where we can supply ourselves..."<sup>19</sup>.

What must they have thought as they tackled H 11's Half Mile and Triplett Falls on the 12th. That day they made only three miles. However the worst was over. On Wednesday, May 13th, after eight miles of relatively quiet river they passed Steamboat Rock and the junction of the Green and Yampa Rivers. Ashley named the Yampa, Mary's River. This was probably in memory of his first wife who had been named Mary.<sup>20</sup>

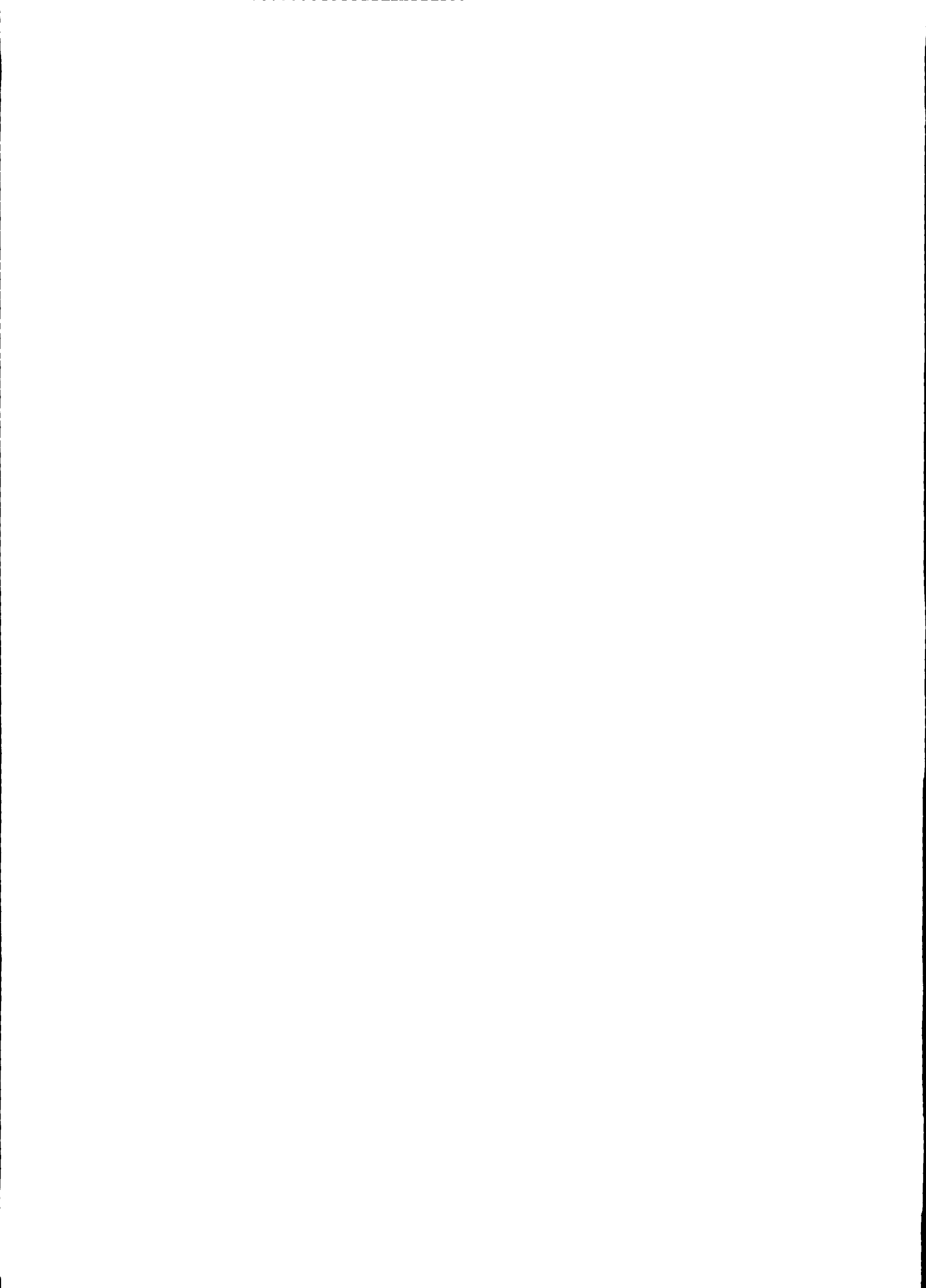
By now there was little interest in beaver sign, which was good but not spectacularly good. The party was desperately short of food. They pushed on down the river, shooting many rough passages that, before, they would have portaged. In Island Park things began looking up. For where they camped they saw their first fresh buffalo sign since they had entered the canyon. The next day Ashley killed a buffalo, and it can be imagined everyone ate greedily.

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18. Morgan's Ashley, 110. This was Disaster Falls. The wreckage that Powell saw in 1869 was that of William Manley (see below).

19. Morgan's Ashley, 110.

20. The early trappers called the Yampa Bear River. Today this name is preserved only in Bear Canyon, one of the side canyons.



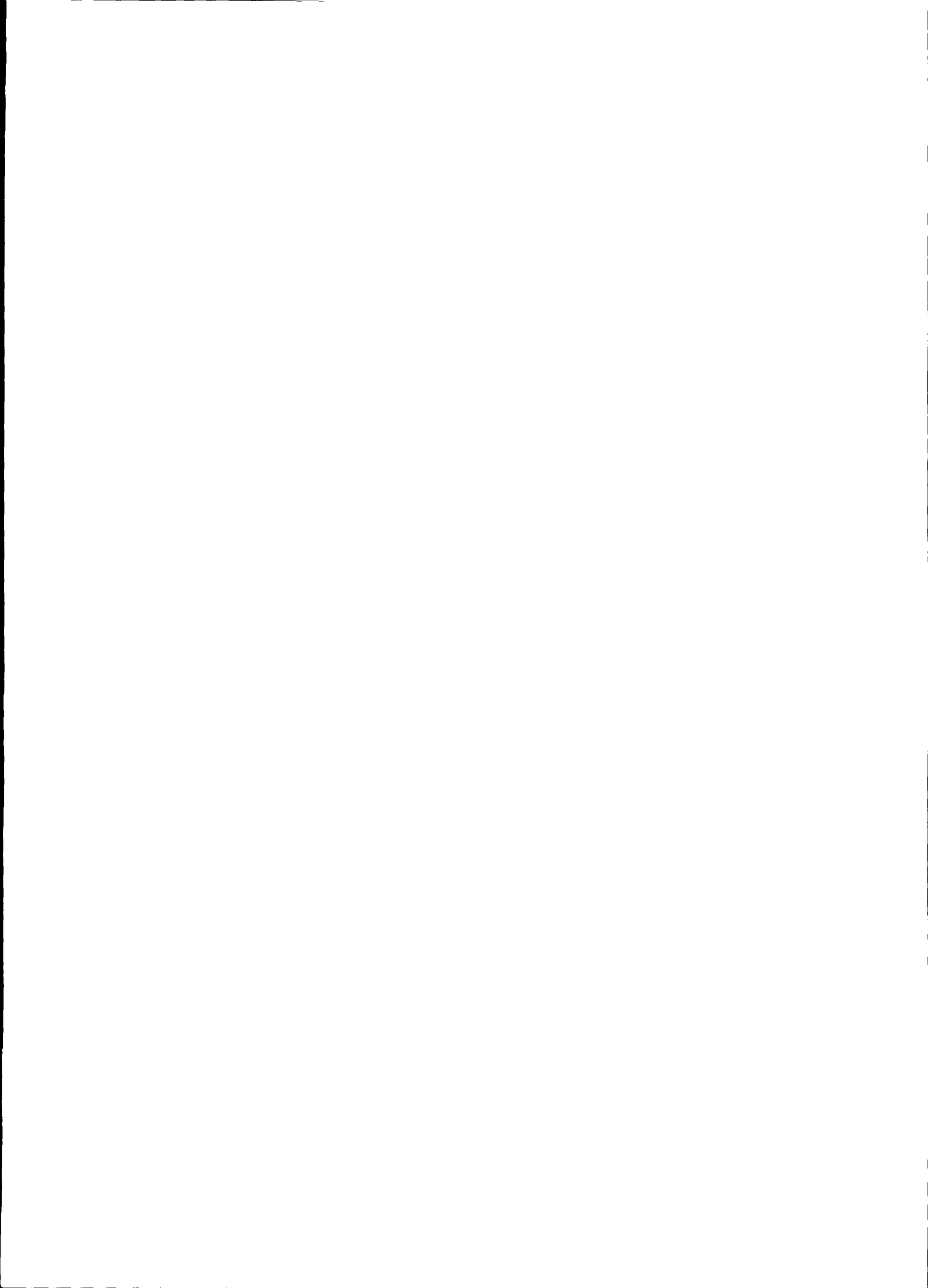
On the 15th they resumed the journey, entering Split Mountain Canyon. Here disaster, which had followed them so closely for days, nearly struck. While shooting a falls that they could not portage, Ashley's boat filled with water. If it hadn't been for the fortunate combination of a provident river eddy and two of the most active men in the boat leaping into the river and towing the boat to shore "... just as from all appearance she was making her exit and me with her for I can not swim & my only hope was that the boat would not sink..." the expedition would probably have been without a leader. By evening after shooting past several different dangerous places where the boats shipped a considerable amount of water, they camped for the night, about one-fourth mile above the great bend in the Canyon. But the end was in sight. The next morning they had only a portage of 100 yards and then they were out of the canyon.<sup>21</sup>

In triumph General Ashley returned to Missouri, where his major interest had always been. He had enough to pay all his debts as well as to make him a rich man. (Some popular accounts placed his fortune at \$100,000.) He sold his interest in the Missouri Fur Company shortly

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21. How much became known generally about Ashley's expedition is uncertain. At least one party -- according to the San Francisco Daily Alta California, June 28, 1858 -- attempted to descend the Green in 1831. Luis Ambrose and Jose Jessum were trying to repeat Ashley's trip, in a canoe. The canoe was wrecked and they had to climb out of the canyon to save themselves. Morgan's Ashley, fnnt 152, p 279.

Denis Julein, in 1836, attempted to explore the lower parts of the Green Canyons. Little is known about his trip and it is surmised he may have lost his life. See the article by Charles Kelly, in Utah Historical Quarterly, Vol VI, 1933.





afterwards and re-entered politics, serving Missouri as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Ashley's name is secure in the annals of western exploration, but not for his descent of the Green River. He, more than any other, pioneered many of the routes that first the mountain man, and later the settler would follow.

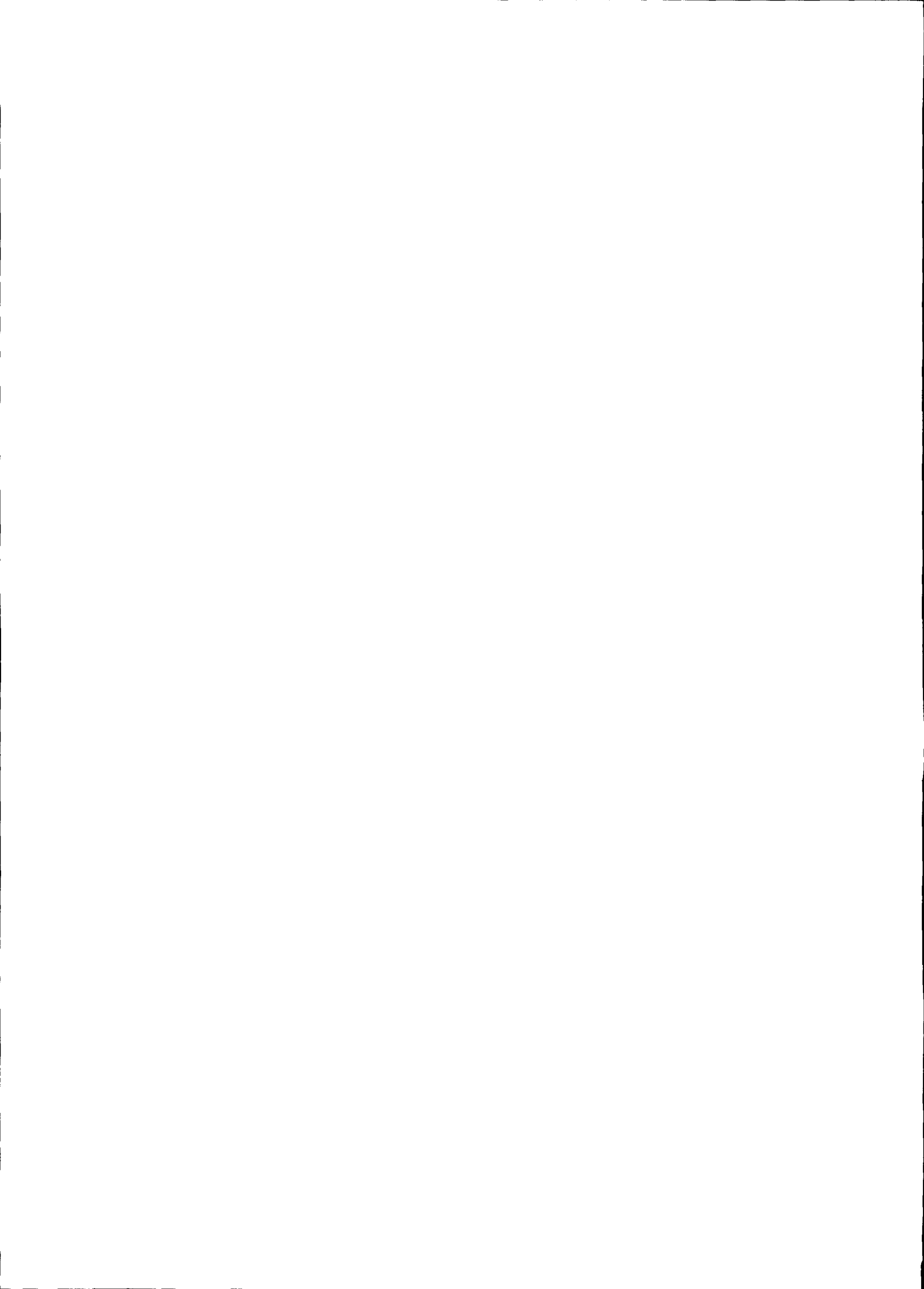
Sometime around 1835-36 a trapper was caught in a large valley in northwestern Colorado by the winter's snow and didn't get out until spring. He liked the area, and lived there off and on, for several years with his Arapahoe squaw. His name was Baptiste Brown, and the area has since been called Brown's Hole. This was apparently the same man who under the name Baptiste Charleyfoe (Charlifou, Charlifoux, and other spellings) was one of the leaders of the band of horse thieves that plagued California during the 1830's.<sup>22</sup>

The first permanent settlement in Brown's Hole was Fort Davy Crockett. This trading post was established -- probably in 1835 -- by three partners, William Craig, Phillip Thompson, and Fruett Sinclair (St Clair). The post was located on the left bank of the Green River above Vermillion Creek<sup>23</sup>.

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22. See Hafen and Hafen, Old Spanish Trail, Chapter 8. But compare Dunham, Our Strip of Land, p 13. There is some confusion as to when Brown first entered the valley. Dunham places him as early as 1824. To compound the problem, there appears to have been two Browns. Baptiste brought Bible Back Brown back from Ft Bridger in 1842. Unfortunately Dunham does not cite any authority for this thesis.

23. Hafen, Leroy, "Fort Davy Crockett," Colorado Magazine, Vol XXIX #2, Jan 1952, p17, (hereafter cited as Hafen, Fort Davy Crockett) quoting from J.C. Fremont's Report of the Expedition to the Rocky Mountains etc. Washington 1845, 279-80.



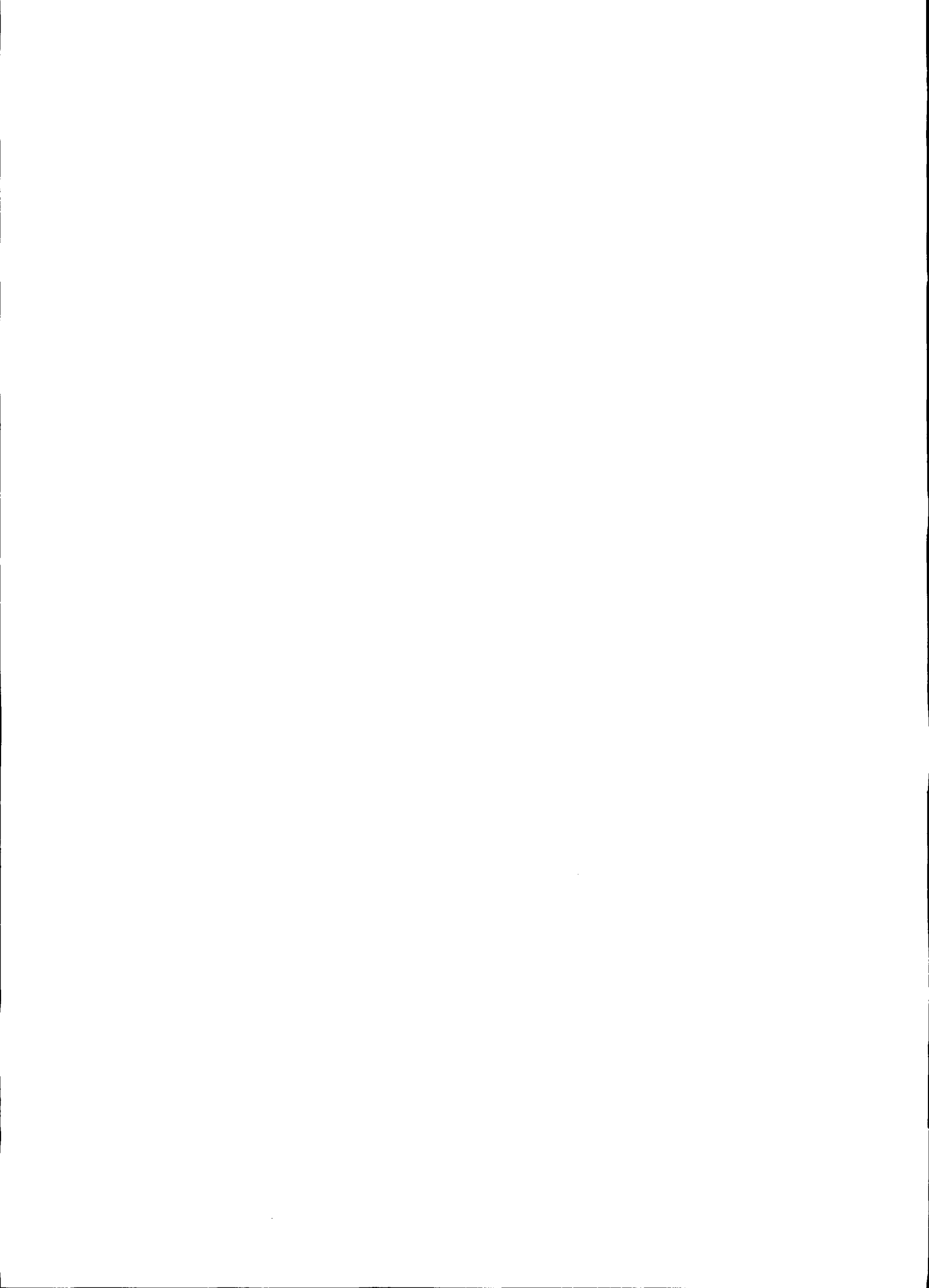
It is assumed that Craig et al built the fort but there is no definite proof of this. The first license issued for a post to trade with the Indians at this spot dates from 1832 [abstract of Licenses 22 Cong 2 sess. House document 104 (Serial 234)]. This license was issued to William Sublette, one of the people who bought out Ashley. It is probable that trade was taking place, whether or not from permanent buildings is not clear, between Jack Robinson, a trader for Sublette, and the Indians. Sinclair can definitely be placed in Brown's Hole in 1832. Thompson in 1837, but we have no record of his early life before that date. Craig sometime before 1839.

The post was the winter rendezvous for many of the independent trappers of northwest Colorado throughout the later 1830's. The trader Jack Robinson remained there trading guns and whiskey for furs. Brown's Hole is sheltered from the winter's snow, so the trappers and the thousands of Indians -- predominantly Snake -- must have had one long orgy to pass the time.

But even a four-month-long "drunk" tends to get boring. The trappers thought conditions were boring in the winter and were continually hunting for ways to pass the time. Perhaps the most unusual event happened in the winter of 1839. Joe Meek, is supposed to have led a party of trappers 100 miles down the frozen Green River, not getting out of the canyons until they reached the mouth of the Uinta River.<sup>24.</sup>

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24. Hafen, "Fort Davy Crockett", p 30 quoted from F. F. Victor, Early Indian Wars of Oregon.



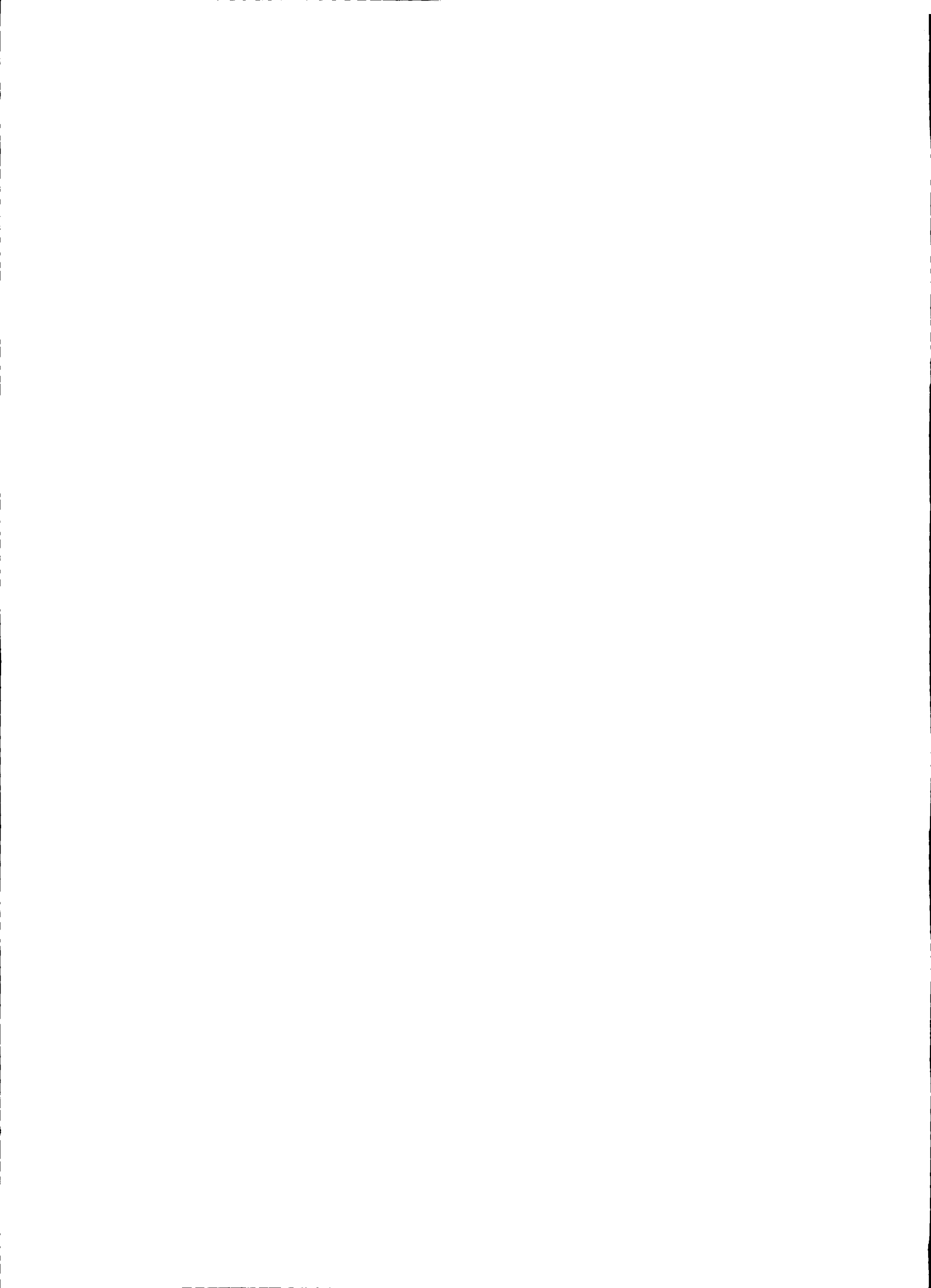
Most of the records of the existence of the fort come from the mention of it by parties who passed through on their way west to Oregon or California. Thomas Farnham, who reached the post on August 12, 1839, described it thus, "...The Fort is a hollow square of one story log cabins with roofs and floors made of mud...Around these we found the conical skin lodges of the squaws of the white trappers, who were away on their fall hunt, and also the lodges of a few Snake Indians, who had proceeded their tribe to this their winter haunt...."<sup>25</sup>. One of Farnham's companions, Obidiah Oakley, tells us that the conditions were grim when the party got there. The inhabitants of the fort were down to eating dogmeat, which the Indians offered for sale at 15¢ each.

The fort was mostly outside the main axis of the fur trade, but as the trade began to decline (ca 1838), parties on their way west began to stop frequently in Brown's Hole. In 1842, we find a trapping party under "old" Bill Williams in Brown's Hole. The famous trapper Andrew Sublette, late of the well-known firm of Velasquez and Sublette, was through the valley in 1844 leading a party traveling to Oregon to recover their health. Fremont was in the area in the spring of 1844. In 1849, a party of Cherokee Indians wintered in Brown's Hole on their way to California. These were but a few of the many parties that were through.

Craig's partnership broke up in 1840. The decline and disappearance of the fur trade had something to do with it, of course. But the

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25. Hafen, "Fort Davy Crockett" p 18 quoting from Travels in the Great Western Prairies, in K. G. Thwaites ed., Early western Travels, XXVIII, 252-53.



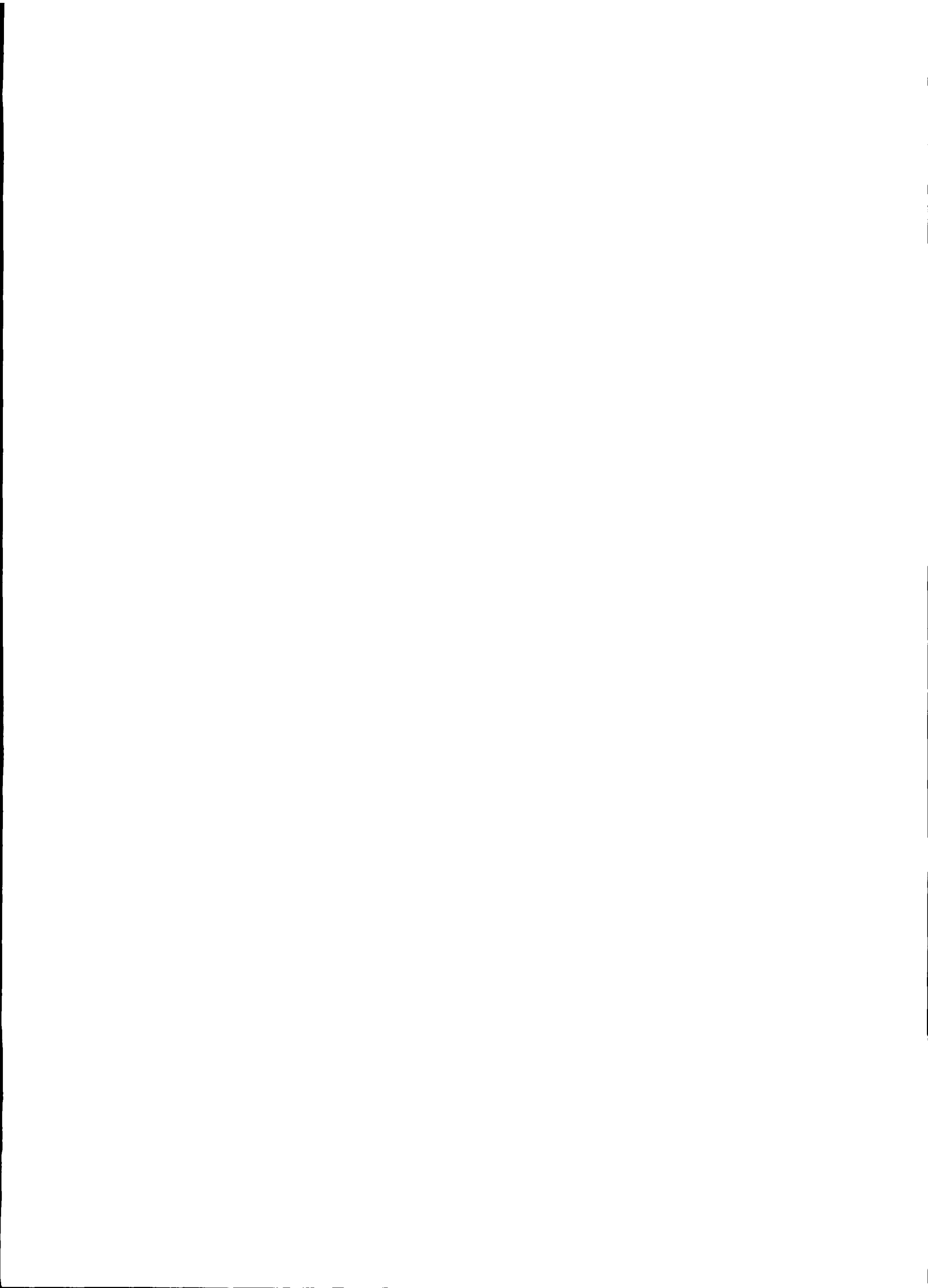
major reason was the matter of some stolen horses. In October 1839, Sioux Indians raided the valley, stealing about 50 head of horses. This was in retaliation for the murder of one of their chiefs. Some of the trappers, led by Phil Thompson, decided to replace their horses by stealing some from the Snake Indians.

The rest of the trappers, when the Snakes complained of their loss, managed to recover the horses. But this strained the partnership. That winter, hearing that the Sioux were planning a raid into the valley in force, the white trappers became uneasy and began to clear out. A party of 20, led by E. W. Smith and two traders, left the fort on January 20th for the forts on the South Platte. Two weeks later another party headed for Fort Hall. That spring a Mr. Walker planned to take a group down the Green River to California. He never made the trip, but instead went overland, reaching California in 1841. Craig went to Oregon in the summer of 1840. Thompson followed two years later. Sinclair is reported in California in 1843.

Fort Davy Crockett was abandoned. It disappeared so completely that today no trace remains. Most of the early settlers in Brown's Hole believe it never existed.

With the collapse of the fur trade, once again an era ended. The way was open for the influx of settlers into the west. And they came, drawn by the thousands, to a magic place called California. Most of them knew little about California, except there was gold there, so much that if a man but got to the promised land, all he would have to do was to pocket it and become rich. William Manley was one of these.

Manley and a company of seven were on their way west. At Fort





Bridger they heard that the Green River flowed into the Gulf of California. Despite knowing little of the conditions of the Green, to save themselves a long overland journey, they decided to descend the river.

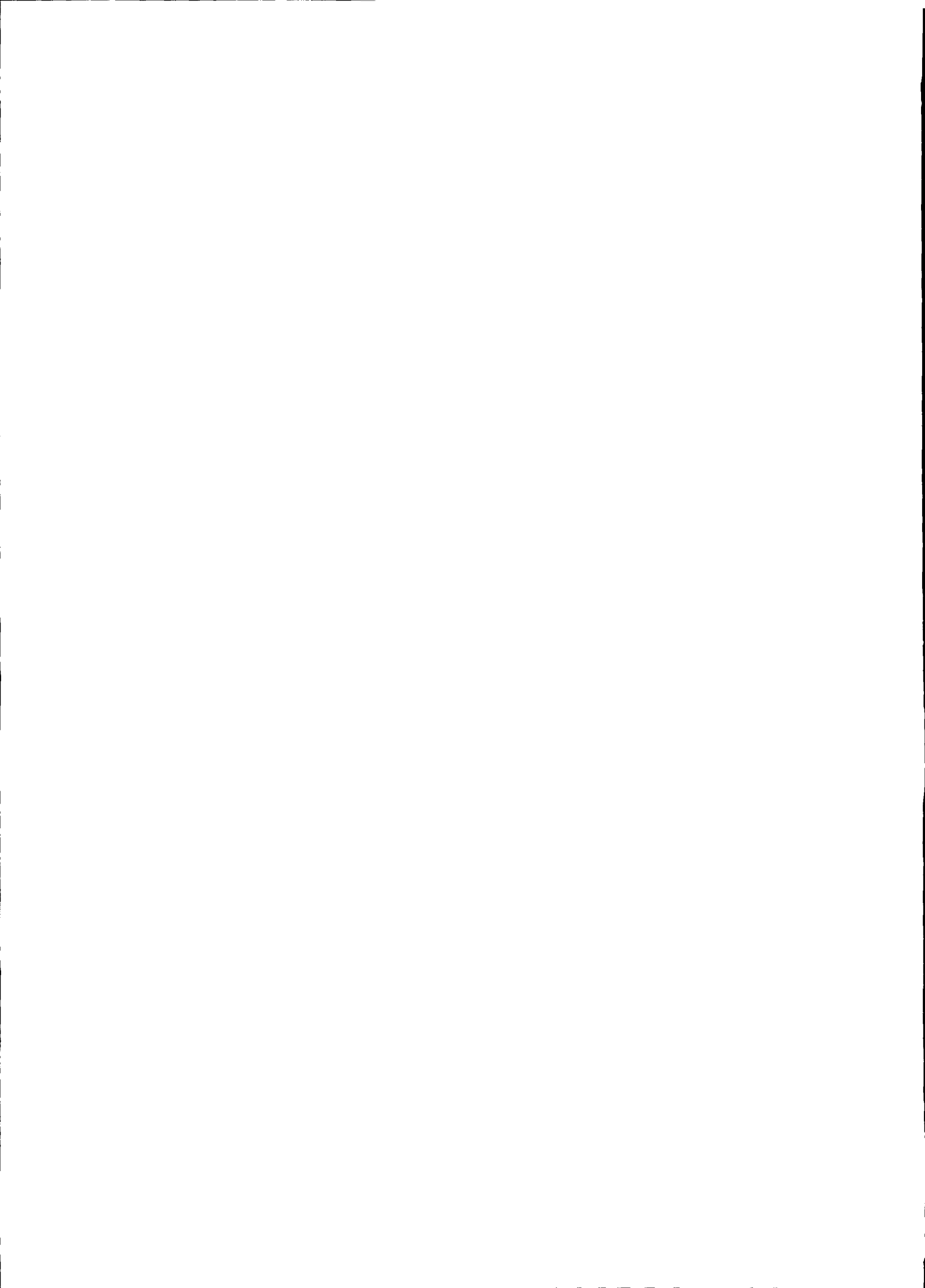
They left from Green River, Wyoming, on a converted ferry boat. The ferry was lost in Red Canyon. Somehow, with crude handmade canoes, they struggled through the canyons of Ledore and Split Mountain. In the Uinta Basin they were met by a Ute Indian chief who persuaded them to give up the trip. From there they journeyed overland to Salt Lake City, where the Mormons put them to work on the foundations of their Temple. The next year they joined the party that gave Death Valley its name.<sup>26.</sup>

Brown's Hole lay empty and waiting. Settlers drifted into the valley one by one, most of the influx after the period this paper spans. "Uncle" Sam Bassett was working as a scout along the Overland Trail and was through. Squaw Man Jimmie Reed was beginning to build up a cattle herd and pasture it in the winter in Brown's Hole. In 1868, Jesse Ewing, H. M. Hook and three to four others left Green River, Wyoming, by boat. They were not settlers in the strict sense of the word. Hook was lost in the river between Fleming Gorge and Brown's Hole. He was buried in a grassy valley which for years was referred to by the local settlers as Hook's Hole.<sup>27.</sup>

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26. Morgan's Ashley has a slightly different version. Menley never made it through Ledore Canyon, but had to climb out at Upper Disaster Falls after losing their boats. It is obvious that the wreckage Powell saw on his first voyage was Menley's and not Ashley's. <sup>possibly</sup> ~~incorrect~~ <sub>see insert</sub>  
It seems strange that Powell who tried so hard to be correct on his facts, missed so badly here.

27. Hey, James, A History of Brown's Park, unpublished manuscript, 102. A good history of the early origins of the settlers of Brown's Hole needs badly to be written. Right here seems to be the place



Bridger they heard that the Green River flowed into the Gulf of California. Despite knowing little of the conditions of the Green, to save themselves a long overland journey, they decided to descend the river.

They left from Green River, Wyoming, on a converted ferry boat. The ferry was lost in Red Canyon. Somehow, with crude handmade canoes, they struggled through the canyons of Lodore and Split Mountain. In the Uinta Basin they were met by a Ute Indian chief who persuaded them to give up the trip. From there they journeyed overland to Salt Lake City, where the Mormons put them to work on the foundations of their Temple. The next year they joined the party that gave Death Valley its name.<sup>26.</sup>

Brown's Hole lay empty and waiting. Settlers drifted into the valley one by one, most of the influx after the period this paper spans. "Uncle" Sam Bassett was working as a scout along the Overland Trail and was through. Squaw Men Jimmie Reed was beginning to build up a cattle herd and pasture it in the winter in Brown's Hole. In 1868, Jesse Ewing, H. M. Hook and three to four others left Green River, Wyoming, by boat. They were not settlers in the strict sense of the word. Hook was lost in the river between Flaming Gorge and Brown's Hole. He was buried in a grassy valley which for years was referred to by the local settlers as Hook's Hole.<sup>27.</sup>

ref. footnote 26, pg 15

1/15/70

"The First 90 years of Adventure" by Floyd Patterson

26. Morgan's Ashley has a it through Lodore Can Falls after losing th Powell saw on his fir It seems strange that facts, missed so badl

27. Hoy, James, A History A good history of the Hole needs badly to b

See pg 12 "Historical Aspects of Dinosaur National Mon. by Harry B. Robinson Jan., 1954 Manuscript in which: is stated that Manley reported finding a camp and wreckage of boats at Disaster Falls (named later) and a note. Burned diary's of Manley resulted in the loss of names connected with this abandoned equipment. Thus, it would appear that the wreckage is not Manley's This information is footnoted and referenced as follows: William Lewis Manley, Death Valley in '49 p. 79



In 1868, a stubborn, opinionated, one-armed Welshman drifted into the area, and began asking inhabitants about it. Major John Wesley Powell, one of the West's great explorers, was making preparations for a descent of not only the Green River, but all the way down the Colorado. The river had finally met its master.

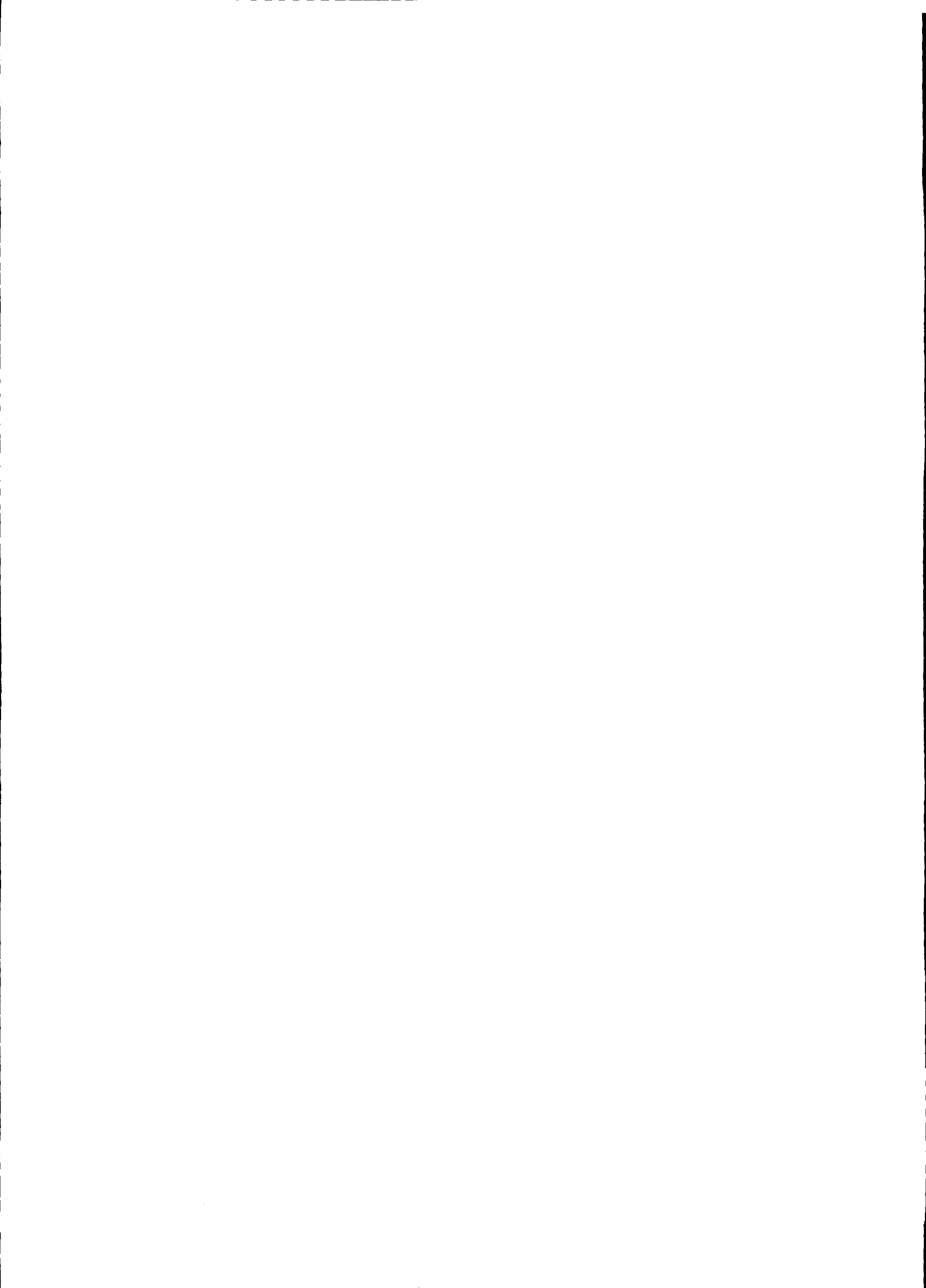
Powell's accomplishments are many: the first ascent of Long's Peak, the discovery of the last unmapped river in the United States -- the Escalante, the mapping of the last unknown mountain chain in the United States -- the Henrys, the exploration of the Colorado Plateau area, the establishment of the Bureau of Ethnology, and on and on. But none of his accomplishments rival for sheer daring his descent of the Colorado River and its tributaries.

The expedition of 1869 was done on a shoestring. The government supplied no assistance except granting Powell the right to draw rations for 12 men from any army post in the west. Much of what financial support there was came from the Illinois Natural History Society, the Illinois Industrial University, and very small grants from the University of Chicago and the Smithsonian Institute. According to Powell, "This summer's work [1869] will be devoted chiefly to the study of the geography and geology of the valley of the Colorado, the great cañon district, the chief of which is the Grand Canyon yet unexplored...."<sup>28</sup>.

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to mention that the "Reminiscences of Queen Ann" published in the Colorado Magazine beginning Vol XXIX #2, should be read as fiction instead of as history. Area residents have told me of arguments they have witnessed between members of the Bassett family and Ann Bassett, trying to get her to tell the truth.

28. Letter of Major Powell, May 24, 1869, to the Chicago Tribune. Reprinted in Utah Historical Quarterly, Vol XV, 1947, 73-74. All Powell's letters are quotes from this volume.

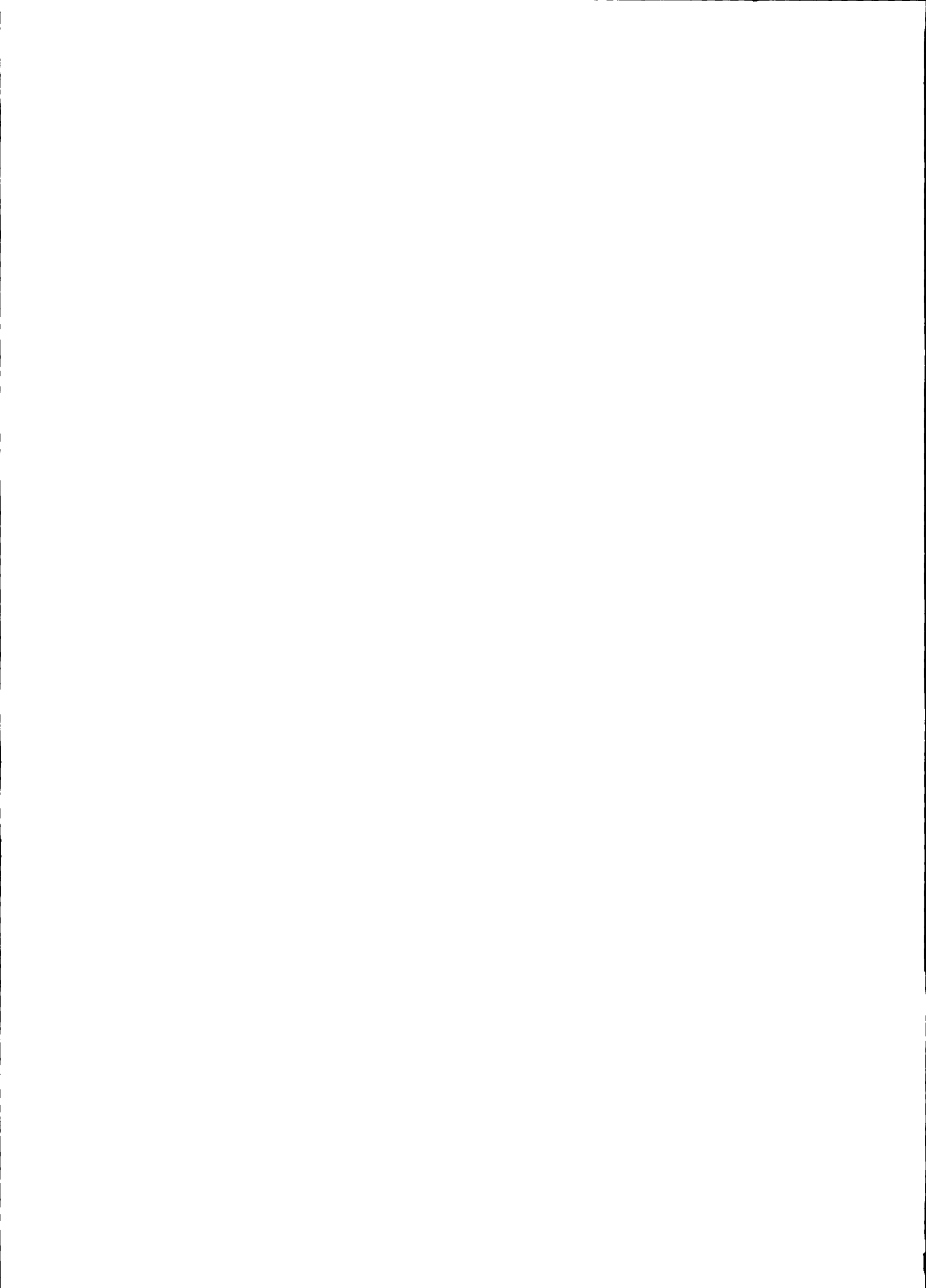


On May 21, 1869, the party left Green River, Wyoming. Powell had four specially designed boats, all double ribbed, and strengthened by bulkheads, so they would continue to float if turned over. Three of the boats were oak, the fourth was pine. They carried food for ten months, an abundant supply of clothing, ammunition, traps, tools, and of course scientific instruments.

The party reached Little Brown's Hole on June 2nd, and two days later reached Brown's Hole. Powell reportedly renamed the valley Brown's Park, but did not change the name of Little Brown's Hole, which is now on the maps simply as Little Hole. On June 4th the expedition arrived in Brown's Park where they "...came under a giant cottonwood, standing on the right bank, a little way back from the stream. The party had succeeded in killing a fine lot of wild ducks, and during the afternoon, a mess of fish is taken..."<sup>29</sup>.

On June 5th Powell and William Dunn climbed a spur of the mountain to the right of the Green River -- possibly part of Diamond Mountain -- to get a glimpse of the country. "These mountains are all verdure clad; pine and cedar forest are set on green terraces; snow clad mountains are seen in the distance to the west [Uintas] the plains of the upper Green stretch out to the north until they are lost in the blue heavens..."<sup>30</sup>.

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29. Powell generally gets credit for renaming Brown's Hole, Brown's Park. It is just possible that while Powell renamed it, Ann Bassett's mother made the name stick in local usage.
30. Powell, letter of June 7, 1869. It seems worth noting, that Powell's enthusiasm appears to run away with him. G. Y. Bradley in his diary describes the day as cloudy and rainy. Also, compare Ashley's description of the same general territory. (above)





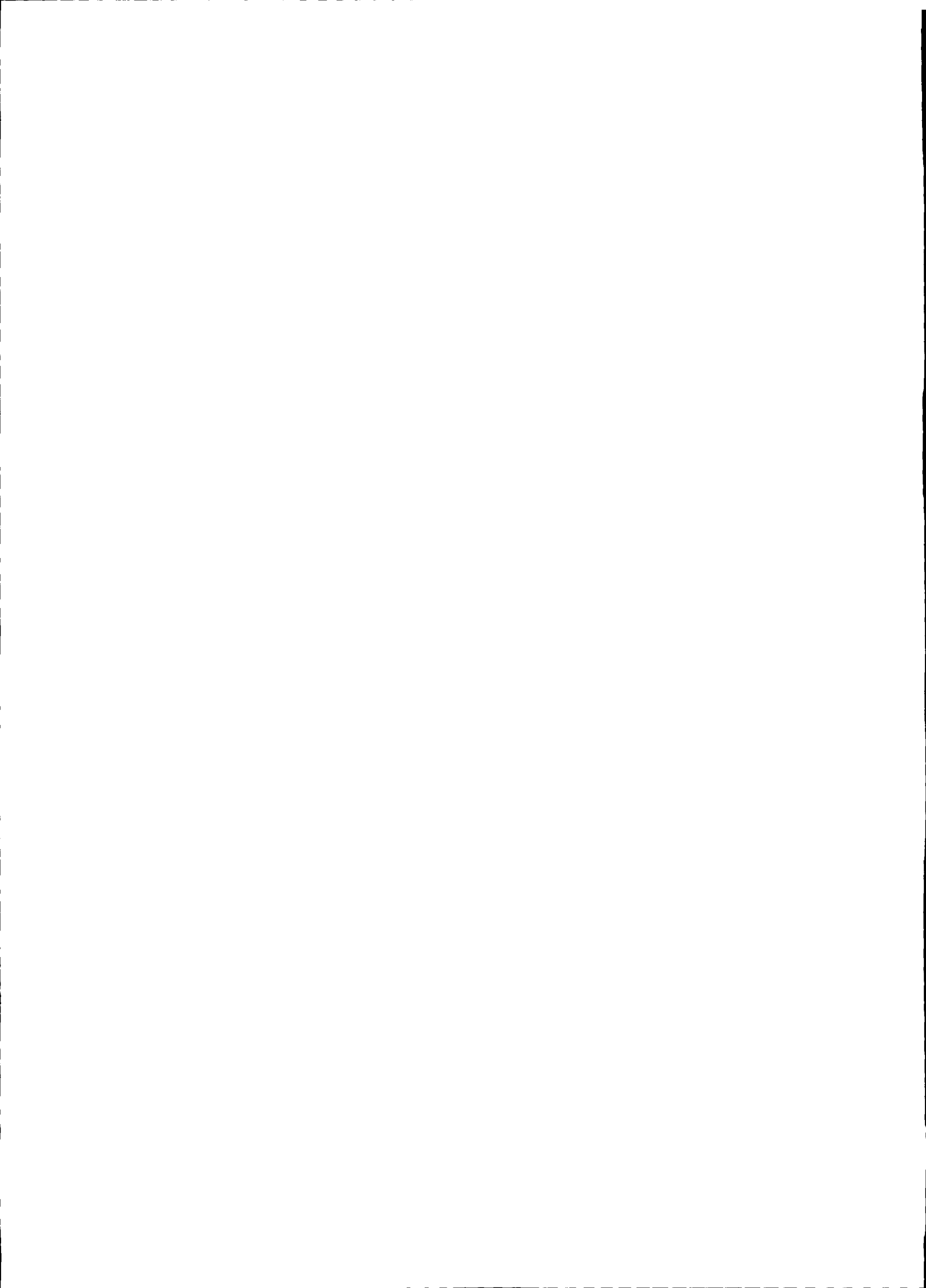
The next day Bradley wrote "Started early this morning... The river is so broad and still and the wind contrary that we have had to row all the way and I feel quite weary tonight. Would rather have rapids than still water but I think I shall be accomodated, for we have now reached the canon at the lower end of Brown's Hole and have camped tonight at the mouth of the Canon. It looks like a rough one for the walls are very high and straight and the sides are of sand-stone much broken with seams but at the mouth nearly perpendicular;..."<sup>31</sup>. The next day Powell and Bradley climbed the cliff on the left side of the river.

On the eighth the expedition entered the canyon and lost their first boat. The "No Name" was caught in the current and swept over the falls and cracked open on a boulder. Three men, the Howard brothers and Frank Goodman, nearly lost their lives. The only things lost were half of the mess kit and 1/3 of their provisions, and all of their barometers. On June 9th Jack Sumner and Andy Hall succeeded in getting a goat to the wreckage and rescued "...a package of thermometers, the barometers, and a three gallon jug of whiskey...". Powell decided since "...Ashley and his party were wrecked here [sic] and we have lost one of our boats at the same place, we adopt the name Disaster Falls for the scene of so much peril and loss...."<sup>32</sup>.

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31. Bradley's diary, June 6, Utah Historical Quarterly, Vol. ~~XV~~ p 25.

32. Powell, John Wesley, The Exploration of The Colorado River and its Canyons, Dover pub 1961, reprinting the 1895 edition. pub by Flood and Vincent and the title Canyons of the Colorado, p 158. This is under the heading of June 12. See Bibliography for discussion of the Powell materials. Hereafter cited as Powell, Canyons of the Colorado.



Slowly they struggled on down the river. They portaged Triplett Fall on the fifteenth and made a trail around Hell's Half Mile. The next day while lowering the boats, they nearly lost the "Maid of the Canon", which got caught in the current. But by then they were past the worst.

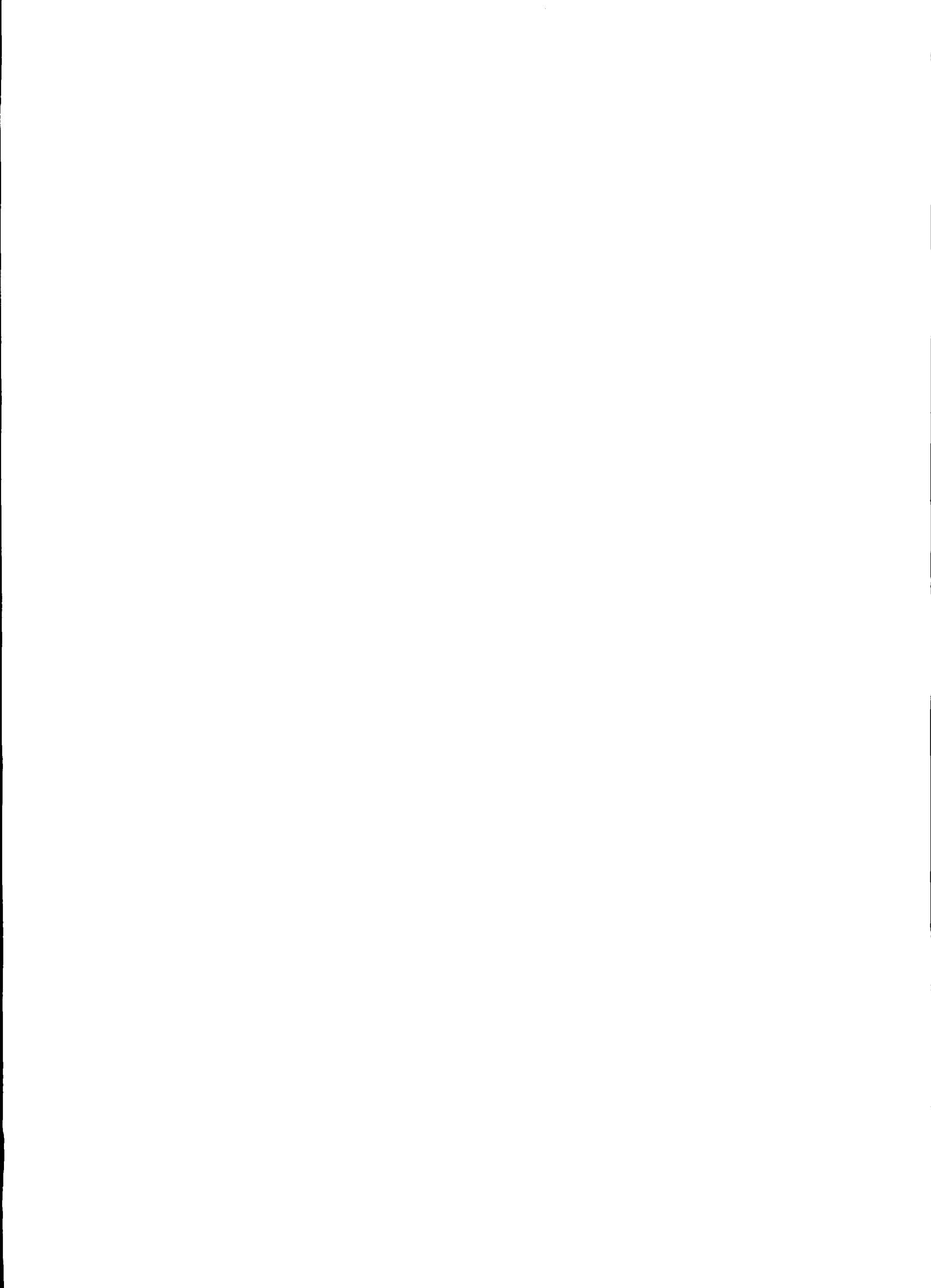
The party camped the night of June 17th at Kipling Brook. While Powell was off exploring the alcove where the stream flowed from "... a whirlwind comes scattering the fire among the dead willows and cedar spray and soon there is a conflagration. The men rush for the boats, leaving all they can not readily ~~size~~, and even then they have their clothing burned and hair singed, and Bradley has his ears scorched. The cook fills his arms with the mess kit, and jumping into a boat stumbles and falls, and away go our cooking utensils into the river.... Loose on the stream they [the men] must go down for the water is too swift to make headway against it. Just below is a rapid filled with rocks. On they shoot, no channel explored... I chance to see them, but have not discovered the dire,... Down the rocks I clamber and run to the bank. When I arrive they have landed. Then we all go back to the late camp to see if anything left behind can be saved. Some of the clothing and bedding... is found, also a few tin cups, basins, and a camp kettle...."33.

None the worse for their experience, the men the next day ran down to the junction of the Green and Bear rivers (Yampa). That day Andy Hall suggested that the canyon they had come through be called Lodore Canyon, a suggestion that Powell and the rest accepted.<sup>34</sup>

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33. Powell, Canyons of the Colorado, 163.

34. Utah Historical Quarterly, 107. <sup>VOL XV</sup> Andrew Hall was 18 when he made the first voyage with Powell. He had already spent five years on



On the 19th Powell and Bradley climbed "Echo Clift" (Steamboat rock) nearly losing Powell. Bradley had to help him over a difficult spot by hauling him up with his underwear. The expedition remained encamped at Echo Park on the 20th while Powell went off climbing mountains and generally looking at the scenery. While on his hike on a ridge near the edge of Lodere Canyon, Powell found a monument that he decided was built by human hands, and he wondered if Escalante could have built it.<sup>35</sup>

The party reached Island Park on June 22nd, after struggling through Whirlpool Canyon. They spent the next day in camp -- Powell sick -- the rest spending their time repairing the boats. On the 24th Powell, much recovered, went climbing again. He climbed the mountains to the east of their camp and from there looked down into Split Mountain Canyon where they must go.

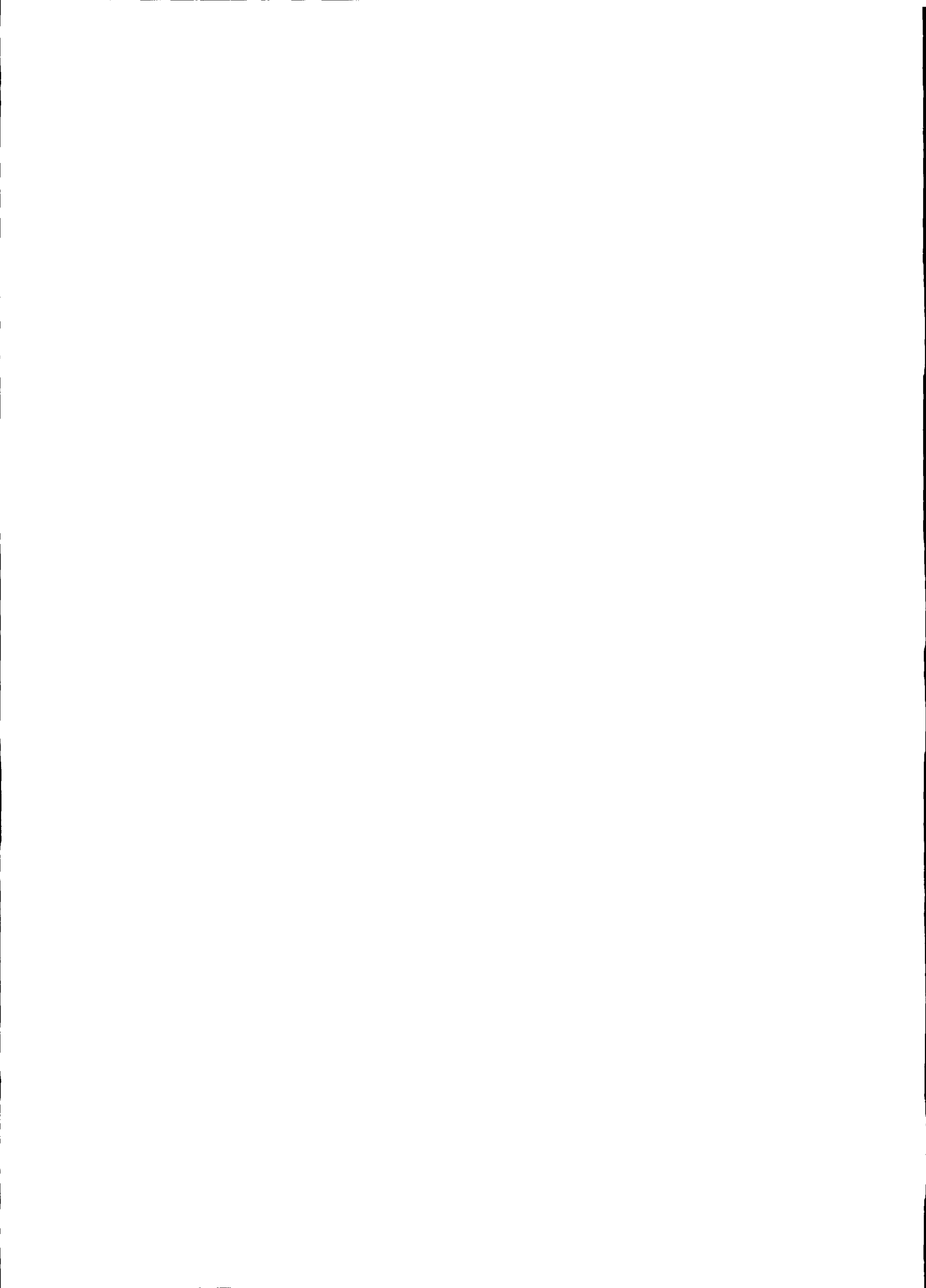
The 25th and 26th were spent in running the canyon. They perhaps could have made it in one day, but according to Bradley, Jack Sumner was sick so they took two. The journey through the canyon was smooth going, as if the river had tired of them. By the evening of the 26th they were out of the canyon.

Two years later Powell was back, leading another expedition down

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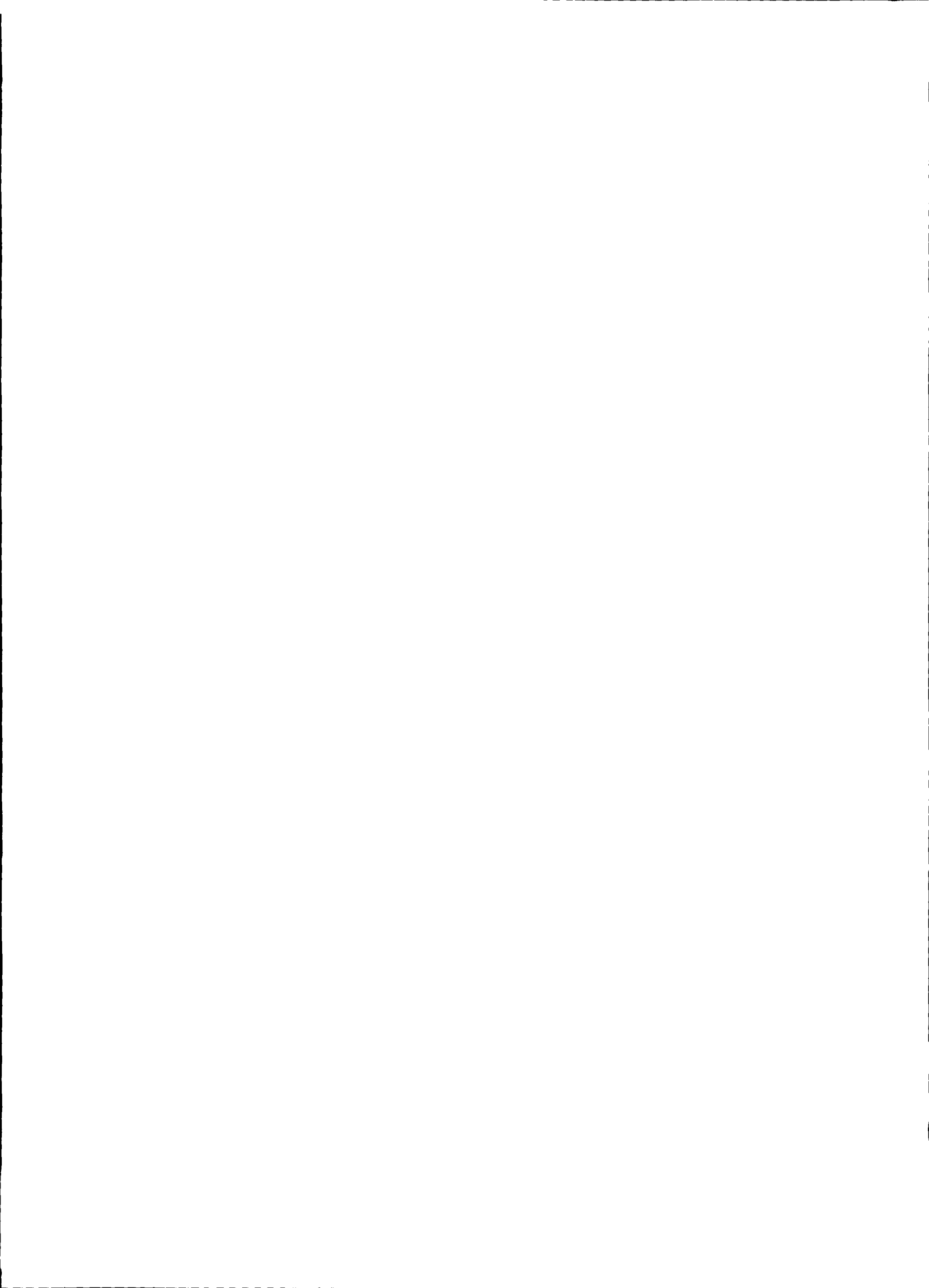
his own in the west, engaging in everything from Indian skirmishes to raising hell anytime he found it. He seems to have had some knowledge of English literature and was familiar with the poem by Robert Southey.

35. Powell, Canyons of Colorado, 172. This appears to be the basis of the belief that Escalante penetrated as far north as the Lodere Canyon area.



the Green and Colorado rivers. On this trip he applied many of the names which are in use today, Kipling Brook, Cliff of the Horn, Disaster Falls, etc.. With his first voyage, an era ended. The mystery that had hung over the Green River was no more. Recorded, measured, examined, named, it took its place on the map of the expanding west.

Today a dam has been built in Flaming Gorge, and the river is only part of what it was when Ashley and Powell ran it. But, even so, when visitors here at Dinosaur National Monument shoot the rapids, they too can find adventure on the Green River.





## "Bibliography"

A paper of this nature is totally dependent on its sources. So a brief discussion of them is in order. For the Escalante Expedition I used:

Bolton, Herbert, ed. and trans., The Story of the Escalante Expedition to the Interior Basin, 1776: Including the Diary and Itinerary of Faber Escalante, Utah Historical Quarterly Vol XVIII, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1950.

Crampton, C. Gregory, "The Discovery of the Green River," Utah Historical Quarterly Vol XX, Salt Lake City Utah, October 1952.

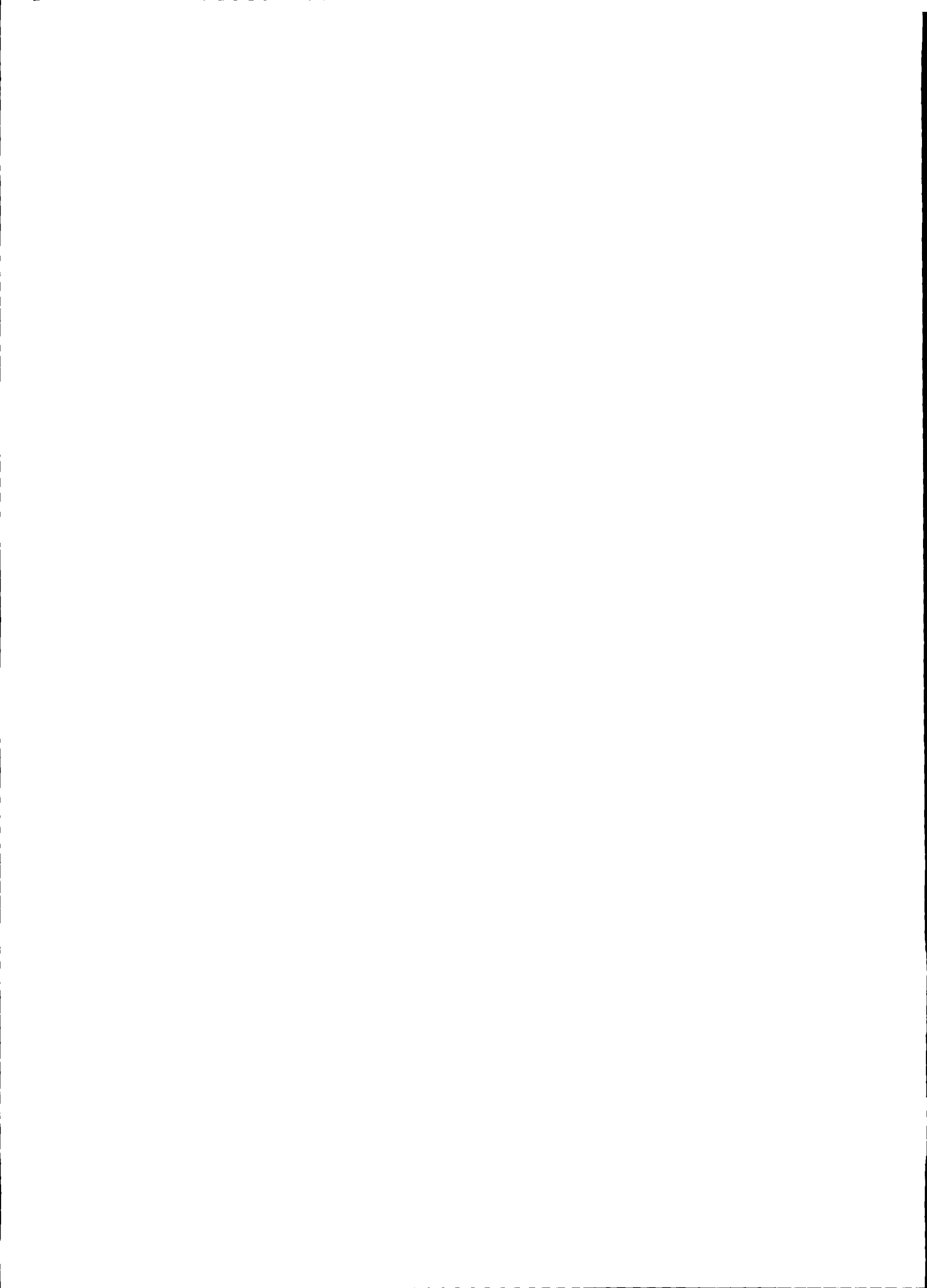
The Bolton is the finest edition of the Escalante Diary. It is a culmination of a lifetime of work by the editor. Crampton's article has value in that it corrects some of Bolton's errors.

For General Ashley I have used:

Morgan, Dale, ed., The West of William H Ashley: the international struggle for the Fur Trade of the Missouri, the Rocky Mountains, and the Columbia, with exploration beyond the Continental Divide, recorded in the diaries and letters of William Ashley and his contemporaries, 1822-38, The Old West Publishing Co., Denver, 1964.

This magnificent volume approaches the definitive. Any student of the early fur trade should be familiar with this work.

The source material for Powell's first expedition are confused. Powell's journal does not exist prior to July 2, 1869. In his book Canyon's of the Colorado (1875), Powell has made the problem more complex by compressing his two voyages into one, and in general events over, sacrificing historical accuracy for the sake of reader interest.



Darrah, William Culp, ed., The Exploration of the Colorado River, Utah Historical Quarterly Vol XV, Salt Lake City Utah, 1947.

Powell, Major John Wesley, The Exploration of the Colorado River and its Canyons, Dover, New York, 1961, reprint of Canyons of the Colorado, Flood & Vincent, New York, 1895.

The Darrah volume contains much of the existing source material for the 1846 expedition. This include, E.Y. Bradley's diary -- the only complete diary of the entire voyage -- Powell's Letters and incomplete diary of the trip, Letters by other members of the party to newspapers etc. and short biographical sketches of each of the members of the party. The Powell volume is the author's final word on the subject.

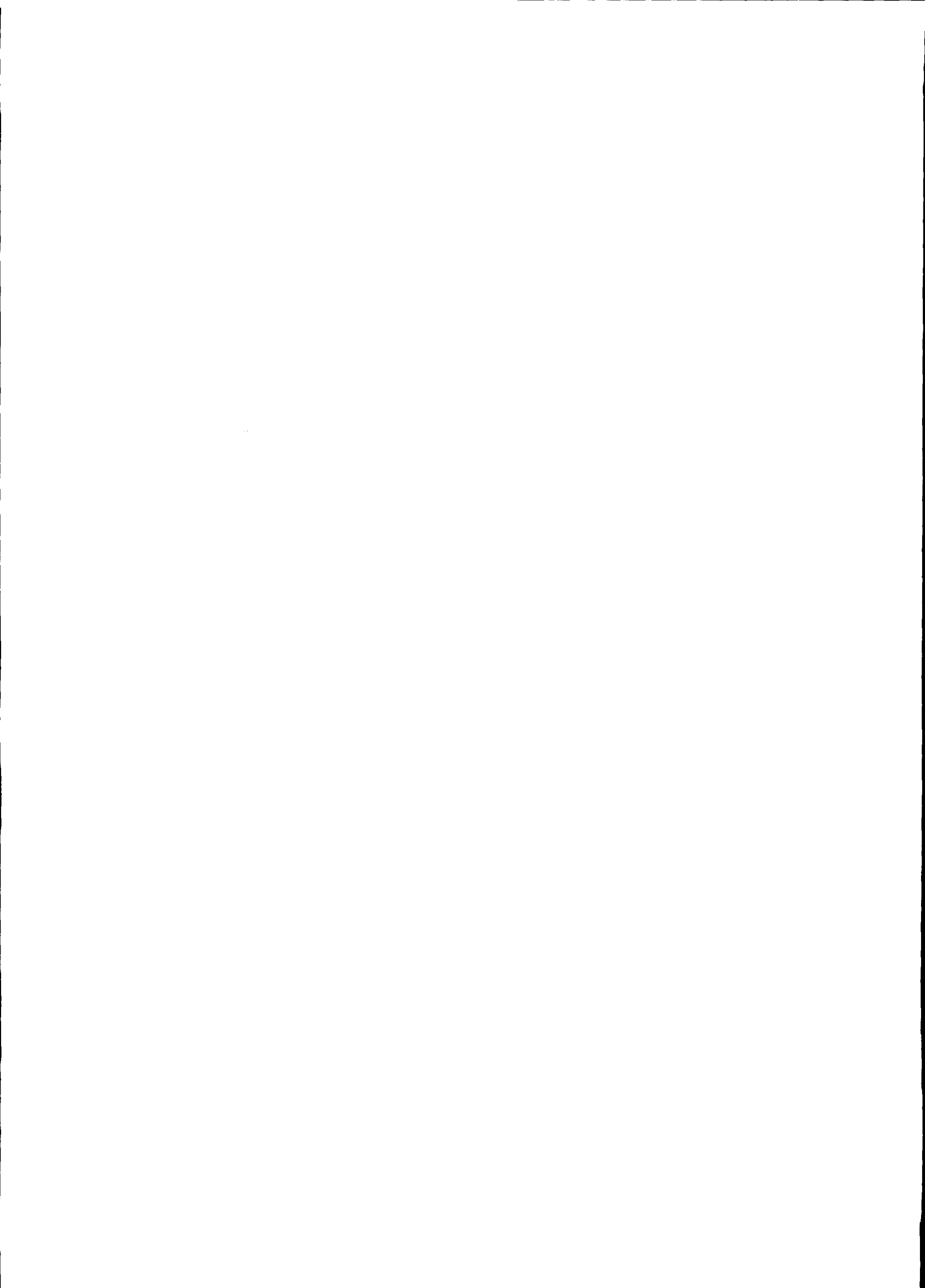
The history of the Brown's Park region is an area in which even angels should fear to tread. A good history is badly needed. What exists today is mainly fragments. I have used:

Hoy, James, A History of Brown's Park, unpublished ms , Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado.

The Hoy is the best available document. This is by one of the early settlers of Brown's Park. It is well to remember that the Hoy's hated the Bassetts like the McCoy's hated the Hatfields. So the Hoy document can not be accepted as totally trustworthy.

I have also had occasion to consult the following:

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\_\_\_\_\_, To the Rockies and Oregon 1839-42, Arthur Clark and Co., Glendale California, 1956.

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\_\_\_\_\_, "Mountain Men before the Mormons," Utah Historical Quarterly Vol XXVI #4, Salt Lake City Utah, October 1958, 307-28.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Mountain Men: William Craig," Colorado Magazine Vol XI #5, September 1934, Denver Colorado, 171-76.

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Tyler, S. Lyman, "The Myth of the Lake of Copula and Land of Teguayo," Utah Historical Quarterly Vol XX #4 October 1952, Salt Lake City Utah, 313-30.

