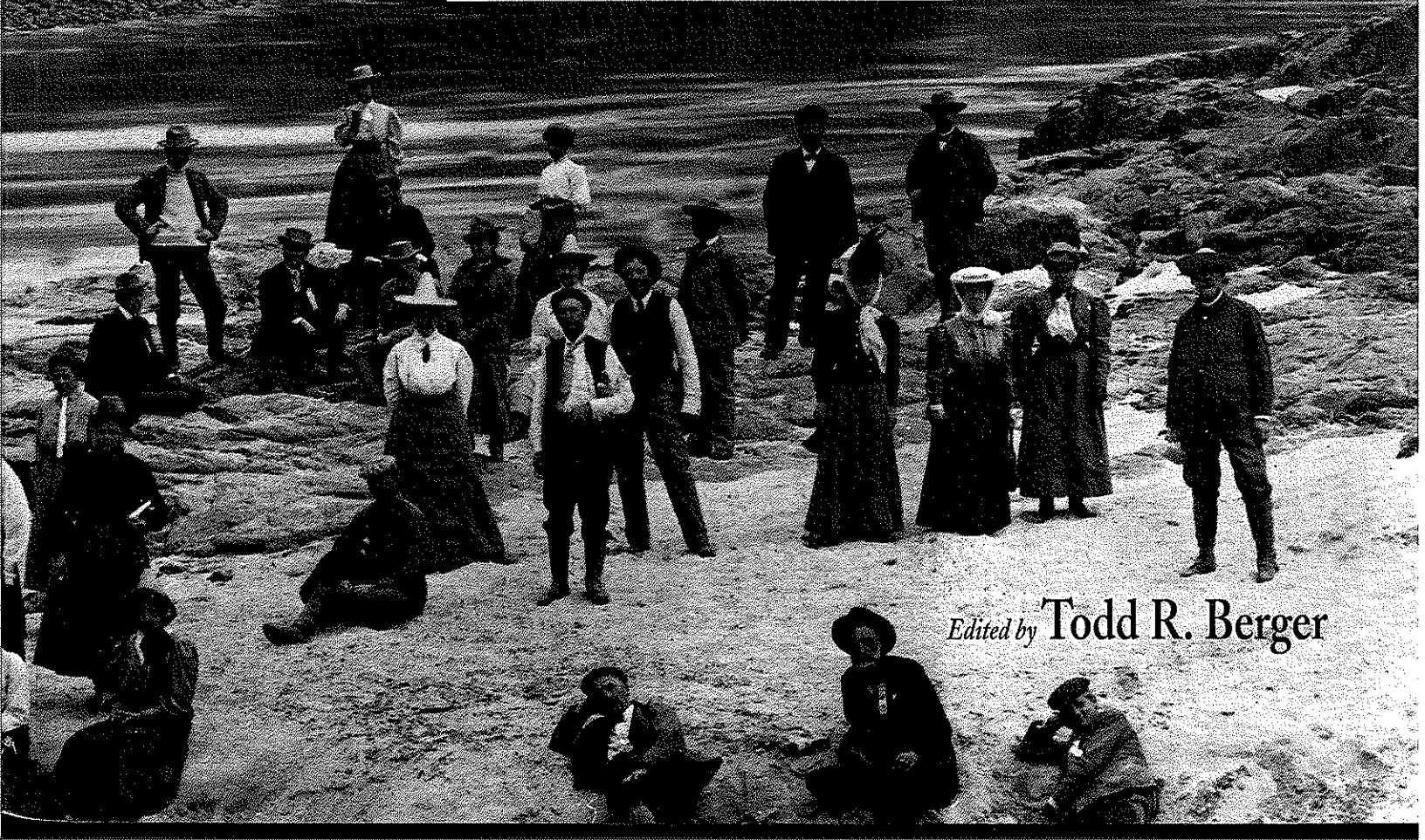
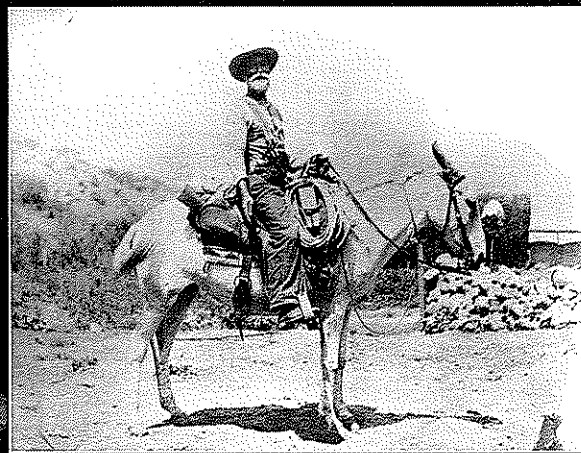


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# Reflections of Grand Canyon Historians

Ideas, Arguments, and First-Person Accounts



*Edited by* **Todd R. Berger**

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Cover background photograph: Grand Canyon visitors along the Colorado River at  
the end of the Bright Angel Trail, November 14, 1906. Photograph courtesy of the  
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Cover inset photograph: Louis Boucher atop his mule, Silver Bell, circa 1910.  
Photograph courtesy of the GCNP Museum Collection (#5972)

*It is the mission of the Grand Canyon Association to cultivate knowledge,  
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and its visitors. Proceeds from the sale of this book will be used to support  
the educational goals of Grand Canyon National Park.*

# 'THAN, THE MAN: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF NATHANIEL GALLOWAY

BY GAYLORD STAVELEY

*One of the factoids in a popular river guidebook is that Nathaniel T. Galloway developed the stern-first technique for running Grand Canyon's rapids in 1897. As a boatman who was shown the Galloway technique in 1956 and then used, studied, and taught it for quite a few years, I was curious about Galloway the man, how he lived, and how we came to inherit his pairing of crafty boat design and boat handling.*

The life journey of Galloway was rough, like the rivers he ran. He made a luck-of-the-hunt living, had a marriage that ended in divorce, and fathered some troubled and troublesome children. Although Galloway lived his life as a trapper and hunter, he began thinking of himself as a special white-water boatman in the last few years of his life. He was.

At the time Maj. John Wesley Powell launched his 1869 expedition from Green River, Galloway was a fifteen-year-old farm boy. At age thirty, Nathaniel—called “Than” by family and friends—was a hunter-trapper beginning to venture down the upper Green River. He built his own boats, often leaving one at the end of a run and building a new one for the next run. In doing so, he developed a pairing of white-water boat design and maneuvering technique that used the power of the river rather than the energy of the boatman.

The Galloway system came to be called drift-boating, or drifting. He passed it on to his friend David Rust, who passed it to Ellsworth Kolb. Thirty-some years later, Norman Nevills picked it up; his more descriptive term for it was “facing your danger.”

Galloway was the third of ten children of Charles Wesley Galloway and Anna Cutler. Charles was born in Pennsylvania and Anna in New York State.<sup>1</sup> They were married in March 1849 and made their way west following the ox-wagon route the Mormon pioneers had established in 1847. They first settled at Lehi, Utah Territory, in the Great Salt Lake Valley, where Nathaniel was born on January 11, 1854.<sup>2</sup>

By 1864 they were farming in Rhodes Valley (later renamed Kamas), a benchland between the Wasatch and Uinta mountains. Nathaniel and his older brother George were often assigned to watch their father's dairy cattle. Nathaniel would sneak away to go fishing in the Provo River, and throw the fish away so as not to be found out.<sup>3</sup>

In about 1869, the parents and younger siblings moved down to a farm near Fillmore, in west central Utah Territory. Nathaniel apparently remained at Kamas, where, in 1875, he married Mary Elizabeth Sabin, the daughter of a blacksmith who had abandoned his family.

Nathaniel and Mary had ten children. The first four were born at Kamas. In about 1884, the family moved to a

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census 1860, 1870.

<sup>2</sup> Intellectual Reserve, *International Genealogical Index*, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org).

<sup>3</sup> E. G. Evans to Otis Marston, 19 November 1958. Otis R. Marston Manuscript Collection, box 60, folder 12 and box 76, folder 3, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.

homestead three miles north of present-day Vernal, Utah, where they established a fruit farm. There the remaining six children were born between 1885 and 1898.<sup>4</sup>

Nathaniel didn't set out to be the dean of river boatmen; he set out to make a living by hunting and trapping the river. But his success and survival as a lone hunter-trapper hinged on his being attuned to everything around him and a master of many trades. His evolution as a fast-water boatman began soon after he moved near the Green River. His blending of rowing technique with effective boat shapes and lines may well have come from studying the body shapes of wild ducks and geese, and the way they face downstream to ride riffles.

From statements made to William Richmond in 1896<sup>5</sup> and a letter to Robert Brewster Stanton,<sup>6</sup> we can conclude that when Galloway moved to Vernal he began running small local streams and, in 1891, tackled the rapids-filled gorges of Red Canyon, the Canyon of Lodore, and Split Mountain Canyon. A wagon track known as the Carter Road led across the shoulder of the Uintas into Wyoming,<sup>7</sup> and on the bank of the Green, at the mouth of Henry's Fork, Galloway could launch a boat, trap his way down through the gorges, and conveniently come off the river just a few miles from home.

After running those challenging canyons once or twice, Galloway began, as boatmen do, looking for a new river. In 1895, he and a companion launched a boat at Green River, Wyoming, seventy miles above Henry's Fork, and trapped down to the confluence with the Colorado. In 1896, probably in April or May, Galloway and a companion launched again, planning to retrace that same route, but the Green began rising markedly,<sup>8</sup> which meant the Colorado probably would too, so they quit above the head of Desolation Canyon.

A few months later, Nathaniel and his son (probably John, age thirteen; not Parley, age eight) hauled a boat from Ashley to Henry's Fork and started down the Green. When they caught up with two prospectors who had lost their mining apparatus and nearly their boat in Ashley Falls, Galloway suggested they go on down the rivers together, maybe even through Grand Canyon. One of the men, Will Richmond, was interested, so, after exiting Split Mountain, they took the boy home and reprovisioned. A

few days later, when Galloway and Richmond began prospecting and trapping their way slowly down the Green, it was fairly late in September 1896.

Richmond described Galloway as a very athletic, careful, and deliberate man about five feet eleven inches tall, weighing 150 pounds, bald, with a heavy black mustache. He had, he told Richmond, twelve years' experience running mountain streams.<sup>9</sup>

At Nine Mile Creek, Richmond was persuaded to abandon his boat and buy the one Galloway had cached there several months earlier. Down through Desolation and Gray canyons, the splashy water, besides being cold, was wetting the accumulated beaver pelts. Galloway partially shrouded the cockpit ends with some canvas ticking he had brought from Vernal. At Green River, Utah, they laid over to ship the pelts their trapping had yielded and to re-supply.<sup>10</sup> They also built wooden storage bulkheads to contain the pelts in the ends of the cockpits.

Their descent of infamous Cataract Canyon got only a few sentences in a letter Galloway mailed from Hite City, Utah, to the editor of the *Grand Valley Times* in Moab.<sup>11</sup> They had run all but six of Cataract's rapids, he reported, and he had hurt his knee falling on a rock, and was lame.

In Glen Canyon, forty-five miles above Lees Ferry, they encountered a prospector named Ed Mesken working his claim on Rothschild Bar and stayed the Christmas-New Year's week with him. Mesken then accompanied them downstream. Six miles above Lees Ferry, Galloway and Richmond staked a claim he named the Glenn Placer.<sup>12</sup>

The three decided that Mesken would go to Kanab and record their joint claim, along with one he had staked, while Galloway and Richmond would continue through Grand Canyon.

On January 12, they pushed off from Lees Ferry. The soakings and dousings in the heavier rapids of Marble and Grand canyons were unbearable; Galloway mounted posts at the cockpit corners and made curtained enclosures with holes for the oars to stick through. At one point they were able to start a warming fire only because Richmond had thought to stow some dry matches in his hair and keep his hat pulled down hard.<sup>13</sup>

4 Intellectual Reserve, *International Genealogical Index*.

5 Richmond, William Chesley, "Trip through Grand Canyon, 1897." Otis R. Marston Manuscript Collection, box 198, folder 6, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.

6 Richmond, "Trip through Grand Canyon, 1897," January 30, 1908, 2.

7 USDA Forest Service, *The Carter Military Road*, historical pamphlet, Ashley National Forest Visitors Center, Manila, Utah.

8 U.S. Geological Survey, Daily Streamflow at Green River, Utah, 1896. [water.usgs.gov/ut/nwis/discharge?site\\_no=09315000](http://water.usgs.gov/ut/nwis/discharge?site_no=09315000).

9 Richmond, "Trip Through Grand Canyon, 1897," 2.

10 "Green River Waves," *Grand Valley Times* (Moab, Utah), 29 November 1896.

11 "Green River Waves," *Grand Valley Times* (Moab, Utah), 18 December 1896.

12 P. T. Reilly, *Lee's Ferry: From Mormon Crossing to National Park* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1999), 152-53.

From Lees Ferry down, Galloway had begun keeping trip notes, but their scantiness, combined with an editor's flowery narrative, makes it difficult to track their progress. Galloway's signing of his name in the Elves Chasm grotto on January 24, 1897, provided a fix on their location twelve days after leaving Lees Ferry. Deer Creek and the mouth of Kanab Creek were identifiable on the 26th. The last day of January they reached Separation Rapid, and, seeing no way to portage their cargo and line the boats, they ran it, getting a wild ride but not capsizing. A day or two later they portaged-lined the head of Lava Cliff Rapid and then ran its lower section. On February 3 they emerged from Grand Canyon and, a couple of days later, reached the settlement of Rioville, Nevada, at the mouth of the Virgin River (today beneath Lake Mead).

From Rioville, Galloway wrote a letter to his oldest daughter and her husband, letting them know he and Richmond had made it through Grand Canyon, that the trip was "of little profit," and that they were trying to sell their boats, after which he would come back via southern Utah.<sup>14</sup> After it was written, their plans changed; they encountered lawmen who had recovered the bodies of two miners killed by a renegade Paiute, and got themselves hired to boat the officers and the bodies on downriver to Needles, California.<sup>15</sup>

After leaving Needles, Galloway traveled to Lees Ferry to work on his placer claim for a few weeks, and there he took more than passing notice of ferryman Jim Emmett's fifteen-year-old daughter, Clara, who arrived on March 25th.<sup>16</sup> About a week after that, he started back to Vernal, arriving in mid-April 1897<sup>17</sup> and staying through most of the summer. In July, when the news of the Klondike gold strike broke, he and three others from Vernal talked about heading north the following spring and running boats down the Yukon River to Dawson.<sup>18</sup> But by September, Galloway had returned to Glen Canyon.

There he met writer George Wharton James, who had come to Lees Ferry looking for stories. Galloway had built a new boat and was about to row upstream to his placer claim. James described how, after some "strong persuasion"

Galloway rowed him upstream to see the claim being worked and then, bringing along a second boatman, down to the head of Badger Creek Rapid, and eight miles back upstream to the ferry landing.<sup>19</sup>

In mid-October 1897, Galloway decided to quit the Glenn claim and start working his way forty miles upriver to where Ed Mesken was prospecting. By then, some eastern investors had formed the Hoskannini Company to power-dredge Glen Canyon's river-bottom sands for gold. Robert Brewster Stanton's engineering credentials and river survey experience (Denver, Colorado Canyon, and Pacific Railway) led to his becoming a Hoskannini Company vice president, project engineer, and superintendent.

Stanton's plan was to stake the entire Glen Canyon and connect a lot of the claims by riverbank roads or trails, and he spent much of 1897 overseeing the work. On January 12, 1898, as he was being boated downriver to go home for the winter, Stanton encountered Mesken and Galloway working the Diamond Placer on Rothschild Bar.<sup>20</sup> Stanton jotted Galloway's river record and mailing address in his field notebook and a few months later, hired Galloway to help build shoreline road in the vicinity of Hite City, Utah, and to shuttle company president Julius Stone up and down Glen Canyon on inspection trips.<sup>21</sup> While waiting to start work for Stanton, Galloway met the Rust brothers, David and Will, who had a placer claim at Wild Horse Bar, seven miles upstream from Mesken's diggings. Mesken wanted to head for the Yukon strike and, in March, sold his Diamond Placer to Galloway and David Rust. (Rust would later construct a tourist camp at Bright Angel and a tramway across the Colorado nearby). Galloway and Rust became good friends as well as hunting and prospecting partners through fifteen ensuing years.<sup>22</sup>

On November 21, Galloway began a 125-mile float, transporting Julius Stone and another Hoskannini investor down Glen Canyon from Ticaboo to Lees Ferry.<sup>23</sup> It gave them many hours to become acquainted, and, several years later, when Stone wanted to make a river trip retracing Powell's route, he hired Galloway as his trip leader. By shuttling Stone downriver, Galloway also met, and was smitten by, the new

13 *Vernal (Utah) Express*, "Through the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River; Adventures of Nathaniel Galloway" (journal entry for January 30, 1897), 29 September 1898.

14 *Vernal (Utah) Express*, 4 March 1897.

15 Otis R. Marston, research notes, Otis R. Marston Manuscript Collection, box 75, folder 1, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.

16 Reilly, *Lee's Ferry*, 154.

17 *Vernal (Utah) Express*, 22 April 1897.

18 *Vernal (Utah) Express*, 16 September 1897.

19 George Wharton James, *In and Around the Grand Canyon* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1903), chapter 21.

20 Robert B. Stanton, *The Hoskannini Papers*, C. Gregory Crampton and Dwight L. Smith, eds. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1961), 47.

21 *Ibid.*, 60.

22 Nathaniel Galloway to David Rust, 2 December 1901, 7 December 1907, 5 July 1912, 5 January 1913, 24 May 1913, 6 June 1913, 25 August 1913, Otis R. Marston Manuscript Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.

23 Stanton, *The Hoskannini Papers*, 60.

schoolteacher, Sadie Staker. Hoping she could be persuaded to marry him, Galloway set up camp a mile and a half upstream from the ferry, got a road built to it, gave her a boat ride through the Paria Riffle, and spent as much time around the ferry site as he could until Sadie left in May 1899.<sup>24</sup>

After that, Galloway homesteaded at Wellington, Utah; prospected for copper along the Price River with Rust; and shot deer to provide meat for the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad crew.<sup>25</sup> In September he went back to work for Stanton, running a twenty-five-man crew that would build riverside roadway between the mouth of the San Juan and Hole in the Rock, the historic Mormon crossing point of the Colorado, six miles upstream.

Galloway finished with the Hoskannini Company by June 1900. In January he and Rust sold the Diamond Placer they had bought from Mesken two years before. During the spring months, Galloway's crew added a few hundred yards to the shoreline road below Hole in the Rock. In June he was boarding with a family at Hanksville, Utah, and, when the census was taken, he gave his marital status as single.<sup>26</sup> By the fall of that year, he was back up north, trapping his way down the White River from Meeker, Colorado, to the Green, and then down the Green to the town of Green River, Utah.

In July 1902 his wife, Mary, was granted a divorce on grounds of desertion and nonsupport.<sup>27</sup> In 1903 Nathaniel and his son Parley went trapping down the Green to the confluence with the Colorado, and then upstream to Moab. In 1904 he ran down the White River, and then down the Green and Colorado to Lees Ferry. Also that year, Galloway went to the World's Fair in St. Louis and married a girl from Iowa.<sup>28</sup>

In 1905 he seems to have tended the farm at Ashley, Utah, except for a September run through the canyons of the Green.<sup>29</sup> In fall 1906 he and son Parley started over the Uintas, apparently for another river run, but "Than was, in the words of a newspaper,<sup>30</sup> "taken ill" and they turned back. In December he boated down the middle Green with J. E. Birch, president of the Indiuta Mining and Power Company,

who had the notion of starting steamboat service between Jensen, Utah, and the railroad line at Green River, Utah.<sup>31</sup>

During 1906 Galloway and Julius Stone began talking about a 1907 trip all the way down the Green and Colorado rivers.<sup>32</sup> Galloway, who had always been more interested in making a profit than making a reputation, was now reading Dellenbaugh's *The Romance of the Colorado River*, lent to him by Rust, and thinking that Rust, whose many vocations included teaching school, could write a book about the Galloway accomplishments, including the expedition being planned with Stone.<sup>33</sup>

The Stone-Galloway expedition was still in the planning stages when Charles Russell and Edwin Monett were making their (September 20, 1907–February 8, 1908) frenetic, determined, and much publicized descent of the river, and Galloway complained to Stanton that "parties traveling through the canyons this winter claim to be the inventors" of the stern-first technique.<sup>34</sup>

Stone suggested using steel boats for his forthcoming expedition, and shipped one to Vernal. In early 1908 Galloway ran it from Green River, Wyoming, to Green River, Utah.<sup>35</sup> He must not have liked his steel boat; when he and his son Parley went down the Yampa in spring 1909, they used a different boat, new but wooden.

In April 1909 Galloway sold the fruit farm<sup>36</sup> and, with one of his sons, he made a trip down the Yampa and the canyons of the Green.<sup>37</sup> A few weeks after that, Stone summoned him to Ohio and Michigan to advise on the construction of four wooden boats. Galloway then returned to Utah, and he and Rust went on a month-long bear hunt near Panguitch.

After the 1909 Stone-Galloway river trip, Galloway went back up north, spending the next two summers trapping wolves. His 1909 boat had been left at Needles, and in early 1911, he tried to interest Rust, without success, in getting El Tovar to display it, as they were then doing with the Russell-Monett boat *Utah*.<sup>38</sup>

Late in 1911 he ran from Jensen to Green River, Utah, in a canvas folding boat,<sup>39</sup> probably one Rust had used on the Colorado at the mouth of Bright Angel Creek. In 1912

24 Reilly, *Lee's Ferry*, 161–165, 169–175.

25 David Rust to Otis Marston, 12 December 1951, Otis R. Marston Manuscript Collection, box 75, folder 9, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.

26 U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census, Utah, 1900.

27 *Vernal (Utah) Express*, 19 July 1902.

28 David Rust to Otis Marston, February 1948, Otis R. Marston Manuscript Collection, box 75, folder 4, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.

29 Nathaniel Galloway to Robert Brewster Stanton, 14 January 1908, Otis R. Marston Manuscript Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.

30 *Vernal (Utah) Express*, 22 September 1906.

31 *Vernal (Utah) Express*, 1 December 1906.

32 *Vernal (Utah) Express*, 15 September 1906.

33 Galloway to Rust, 7 December 1907.

34 Galloway to Stanton, 30 January 1908.

35 Nathaniel Galloway to Robert B. Stanton, 14 January 1908, Robert B. Stanton papers, New York Public Library; 35mm transparency copies in Otis R. Marston Manuscript Collection, box 75, folders 16 and 22, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.

36 *Vernal (Utah) Express*, 16 April 1909.

37 *Vernal (Utah) Express*, 7 May 1909.

38 Nathaniel Galloway to David Rust, 30 January 1911, Otis R. Marston Manuscript Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.



he hunted wolves near Boulder, Utah, to earn a special bounty put up by stockmen and, in November, ran Cataract Canyon with Charles Smith. That was his last river run.

After selling the farm at Ashley, Galloway had bought an orchard at Richfield, Utah, but sold it in 1912<sup>40</sup> and began living out of his wagon on the homestead of Angus Fillmore, the county sheriff. At Richfield 'Than played violin at dances and always had candy for children in his pocket.<sup>41</sup> In September 1913, he took Stone on a bear hunt, hoping to persuade him to join in a lecture company proposition, and Stone noticed that Galloway was not quite right. Stone called it "forgetful." Then, three days before Christmas, 'Than fell across the endgate of his wagon, crushed his throat, and suffocated. The death certificate noted epilepsy of many years' duration as contributory.<sup>42</sup>

'Than Galloway may not have been the first to turn a boat around and run it facing downstream but, as a full-time

river man, he was the only man of his time positioned to imagine the method, perfect it, and pass it on in finished form to the small clutch of river men who existed late in his life. In Glen Canyon in 1898, while they were prospecting together, Galloway taught his technique to Rust. About 1905 Rust began using it in the Grand Canyon, both upstream and down, from his tourist camp at Bright Angel Creek, and in 1907 he showed it to Ellsworth Kolb. Ironically, when 'Than "applied" to lead the Kolbs' 1911 filming expedition, they didn't need him, because Rust had shown them how to row, and Stone had loaned them the drawings for the 1909 Galloway-Stone boats.

Galloway's legacies to today's river runners are that the culmination of his boat design survives as a historic boat tucked away in a warehouse at Grand Canyon National Park, and his rowing technique is de rigueur for anyone who would challenge Grand Canyon's rapids sagaciously.

39 Nathaniel Galloway to Julius Stone, 11 November 1911, Otis R. Marston Manuscript Collection, box 75, folder 24, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.

40 Galloway to Rust, 5 July 1912.

41 Eva Galloway Nielson, interview by Otis Marston, transcript, Otis R. Marston Manuscript Collection, box 76, folders 4, 6, 8, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.

42 State of Utah, *Death Records*. images.archives.utah.gov.