



The Brave Ones: The Journals of the 1911-12 Expedition Down the Green and Colorado Rivers (Colorado River Chronicles, 1)

Ellsworth L. Kolb, Emery C. Kolb

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In 1911, The Kolb brothers, Emery and Ellsworth, young photographers living on the South Rim of Grand Canyon, conceived a preposterous expedition: although neither of them knew much about whitewater, they had two wooden rowboats built, and proposed to row them the entire eleven hundred miles of the Green and Colorado Rivers. The trip was not solely for thrills. They planned to make not just still and stereo photographs, but moving pictures as well.

In early September they launched from Green River, Wyoming. For the next four and a half months, the brothers rowed, careened, roped, dragged, and carried their boats through and around the rapids, often finding themselves swimming in the freezing river, patching and repatching their boats, and salvaging what film and equipment they could from their flooded hatches.

Their first assistant left in tears after the first week, but was replaced on the last leg of the journey by stalwart Bert Lauzon, a miner, cowboy, and roustabout. Against all odds, the three men emerged from Grand Canyon in January, 1912, with photographs and movies they would show and sell for the next sixty years.

Here for the first time are their on-the-spot accounts, transcribed from the journals they penciled late at night along the shore. Theirs is a tale of phenomenal courage, terrific luck, and dogged perseverance. And in spite of unending hardship, the brothers had nearly as much fun doing it back then, as you will have following along nearly a century later.

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