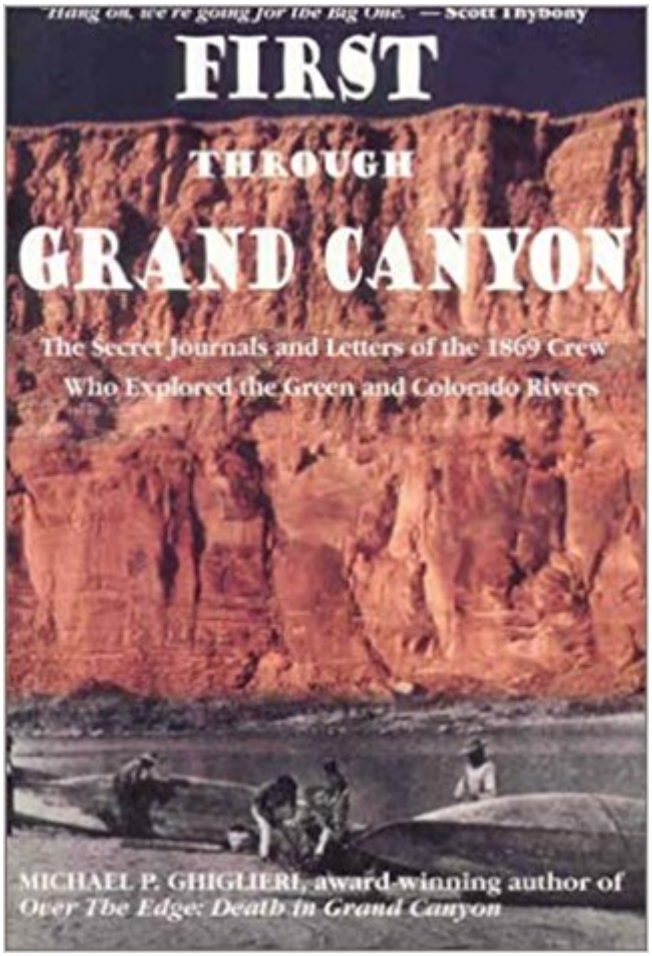
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First Through Grand Canyon: The Secret Journals & Letters Of The 1869 Crew Who Explored The Green & Colorado Rivers



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Synopsis

In May of 1869, eleven men embarked on a journey of exploration and discovery. 98 days later six of them arrived 1000 miles away after navigating the Green and Colorado Rivers to the end of Grand Canyon. The journals and writings of the expedition leader, John Wesley Powell have been extensively published but here, for the first time, are the newly transcribed, unabridged journals and letters of some of the other members of the group. Author Ghiglieri has used his extensive river running experience to introduce the whole group and their exploits of courage and endurance.

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Customer Reviews

Michael Ghiglieri has painstakingly gone through all the documents produced by the individuals who were part of Powell’s famed 1869 expedition, as well as other primary and secondary sources, to give us the fullest picture yet of what actually happened in First through Grand Canyon: The Secret Journals and Letters of the 1869 Crew Who Explored the Green and Colorado Rivers. Ten expedition members began at Green River in current-day Wyoming on an odyssey lasting over three months...After lengthy introductions Ghiglieri presents the chronology of the trip with each participant’s material given in order of the events recorded. He then tells what later happened to each of the nine. Ghiglieri’s meticulous research hardly portrays Powell as the heroic leader many consider him. Lewis OR Clark, he wasn’t: brave (he had but one arm), but often inept, sleazy, and a poor leader of men. And lucky to live when hierarchal loyalty counted for more than today. Those who actually carried the expedition (Bradley, Sumner and Hawkins) missed the age of the whistle blower. While most expedition members were experienced mountaineers, few knew much about

riverboats....Bradley's clandestine journal is the most fun. Day 19, June 11, 69...The Major as usual has chosen the worst camping-ground possible,is typical of the private irreverence shown his boss, Hawkins, who outlived them all, said even more. Readjusting Powell isn't Ghiglieri's only piece of revisionism. On day 97, Aug. 28, three members---O.G. and Seneca Howland and William Dunn---decided they'd had enough and broke off from the main party to hike out. The memorial near the spot says: kled by the Indians,the accpted villians for over a century. Ghiglieri doesn't think so. He nominates the Mormon outpost he believes they came upon and gives some interesting reasons. He presents; you decide. The most tragic part of that decision to separate was two days later---the others were through the Canyon and ran into three locals fishing. Powell and his brother peeled off to head for civilization. The remaining four kept going---Hawkins and Hall all the way to the Sea of Cortez! First through Grand Canyon is a great read and a fine addition to Arizona History. --Tucson Weekly, July 24-July 30, 2003, page 21If you live in the Southwest, you may think you know all about Maj. John Wesley Powell's historic voyage that began 134 years ago this Saturday down the Green and Colorado rivers into unexplored Grand Canyon. Myths abound about the one-armed Civil War veteran's courage and grit as he led the first expedition into the terra incognita of the canyons and wildlands of the West. But Flagstaff author, veteran river-runner and ecologist Michael P. Ghiglieri has sifted through the tedious and frequently innacurate historic record, much based on Powell's sometimes exaggerated accounts, and breathed new life into this western odyssey. Ghiglieri spent two years researching and writing First through Grand Canyon: The Secret Journals & Letters of the 1869 Crew Who Explored the Green and Colorado Rivers. The result is an armchair time trip into 19th century adventure, most of it told in the own words of Powell; his brother, Walter Henry Powell; George Young Bradley; Andrew Hall; Oramel G. Howland; and John Colton Sumner. Ghiglieri's goal was to provide a vicarious account of the expedition devoid of the scholarly white-wash, dillution and distortion. My idea was to put you there in the minds of the men who are struggling along, sharing their disappointments or agony, their rotting boots. But also sharing their optimism about getting through. You know, that fire in people that burns and pushes them through something that looks impossible, he said. Ghiglieri did some prodigious digging to find the private journals, letters and published accounts of the expeditionaries, whose accounts were forgotten or ignored by historians who considered Powell's record of the thousand-mile journey as the most reliable. First through Grand Canyon is the first book on the expedition to rely on multiple eye-witness accounts to log each day of the trip, from May 24 to Sept. 10, 1869, beginning on the banks of the Green Ruver in Wyoming and ending near Yuma on the Colorado. The result is an armchair trip into the 19th century as each day of the 110-day mission of exploration is recounted by

those who starved, sweated, risked death, and worked for Powell like galley-slaves all day. Forget all the hype about roaring rapids, towering canyon walls and death-defying exploits that have dominated Powell's official report of the expedition. The story told in the words of the crew goes deeper and reveals much about the men and their daily fight for survival. Ghiglieri puts flesh and blood into the story by extensive profiles of the 11 crew members. They were so self-reliant. And along with that independence and self-reliance, they could sort of justify doing things any way they wanted because they were responsible for their own consequences. They were very can-do, very will-do. It didn't matter how bad it got, they would joke about it later, Ghiglieri said. The book contains new information, a brutally honest portrait of Powell and pulls a few historical prizes out of its bag of research that will likely spark some controversy among Colorado Plateau historians. --Arizona Daily Sun, May 22, 2003, pages C1-C2. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Michael P. Ghiglieri earned a PhD in Ecology from U.C. Davis for his research on wild chimps. He has worked as an international wilderness river guide since 1974 and has rowed Grand Canyon over 100 times. His previous books Canyon and Over the Edge: Death in Grand Canyon (co-authored with Tom Myers) have earned him a deserved reputation as an interpreter of wilderness adventure, exploration and values.

A generous enterprise, this book hasMade available diaries and other texts that would only otherwise be available through a visit to a distant library special collection. The author has done a great service to all those who have a passion for the Colorado and its fascinating history,A similar work bringing together the diaries if the second trip (including Dellenbaughs) would make for a great two volume set.

first thru the grand canyon is a truely outstanding book..having been to the 'canyon' many times and living in Az most of my life i was most interested in the history of the 'canyon'..this book is a 'must-read'...gdm

IntroductionWhile visiting the Grand Canyon South Rim in August of 2015, I noticed Michael GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s book First Through Grand Canyon. As I had enjoyed his prior book Over the Edge: Death in Grand Canyon, and being a fan of early Colorado River exploration, I read the book. It has a noble goalÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â ¢to let Major John WesleyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s PowellÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s pioneering first trip (1869) down the Colorado be told through accounts

written by that tripÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s participants as the trip unfolded. Unfortunately, Ghiglieri surrounds this ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“liveÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• history with his own speculation about the expedition, which comes across with a distinct anti-Powell bias and mars the whole effort.I am not a professional river runner, as is Ghiglieri, but simply a fan of the Canyon. I have no axe to grind in the historical drama of PowellÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s expedition. I fear that is not the case with the author, whose sympathies for his professional river runner colleagues seeps into his analysis of PowellÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s crew and his alleged mistreatment of them. No doubt both PowellÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s crew and Powell were not perfect, and had many hard edges, but GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s approach, where the crew walk on water and Powell is the devil, is not only overly simplistic, it is not supported by the record. So that this is not perceived simply as one readerÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s opinion, I have taken some effort in this review to lay out the evidence on which my opinion rests. It remains for the reader to reach his or her own conclusions.HubrisGhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s self-praise of his book is off-putting. He would have been well advised to adopt some of that ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦charming modesty rarely displayed today...ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• that he so admires in John Colton Sumner (p. 3). Ghiglieri tells us that of all the works preceding his: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦none of them attempting to describe the 1869 expedition has managed to get it right or even complete.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (p. 2); he unabashedly describes his book as being ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦the definitive history of this amazing journey.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (p. 2); he reminds us of ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦just one more added value of this book.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (p. 77) Such analysis and praise is traditionally left to third party reviewers.While spending considerable time lamenting transcription errors (for example, repeatedly noting the lustyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œlucky error ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ pp. 4 and 10) and the general sloppiness of preceding works, it is notable that even in GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s third, revised edition of 2015 (the one I read), there remain errors of his own, despite his efforts ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦to insure that no errors of my transcription would find their way into this book.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (p xvi) (e.g. the Bradley quote at the top of p. 12 is attributed to a June 14, 1869 journal entry when the actual entry (p. 120) is from June 11, 1869; similarly the Bradley quote on p. 239 is said to be from August 14 when the actual entry (p. 204) is from August 11; William Hawkins is quoted at p. 243 that when informed of William DunnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s near loss due to drowning: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“The Major said as to Dunn that there would have been but little loss.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• and yet at p. 241, Ghiglieri attributes this very same quote to PowellÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s brother, Walter: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“At dinner Sumner remarked that DunnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦had come close to drowning. Then (Sumner and Hawkins

agree on this) Walter Powell ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœmade the remark that it would have been but little loss.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“ This remark features prominently in GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s negative assessment of Powell and yet it appears to have come from PowellÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s troubled brother (had mental issues), not Powell himself. This review of errors is not intended to be overly picky, as any work of this type is prone to such errors; it is just to say that Ghiglieri is not immune to them.Ghiglieri also, almost gleefully, tells us that when author Ed Dolnick, who wrote his own book on the 1869 expedition (Down the Great Unknown: John Wesley PowellÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s 1869 Journey of Discovery and Tragedy Through the Grand Canyon), shared his chapter installments with Ghiglieri for GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s critique and feedback, this ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦was the kindling in me of the desire to write this bookÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•. Ghiglieri notes that this was likely an ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“undesiredÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• byproduct of Dolnick having revealed his work in progress with him. After having rubbed some salt into the woundÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â ¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“So, thank you, Ed, for inspiring me to do something that you may well wish I had never thought of.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (p. xv)ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â ¢Ghiglieri goes on to trash DolnickÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s book (pp. 9-10), the one he had been asked to critique: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“The many problems his book leaves for river runners, armchair adventurers, and certainly historians emerge from Dolnick being, metaphorically speaking, a virgin writing at length and authoritatively on sexÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â ¢and often getting it wrong.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• In other words, according to Ghiglieri, only professional river runners are capable of writing a decent history of the early Colorado river expeditions. Interestingly, at the time of this writing, DolnickÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s book has received 87 customer reviews on for an average 4.3 star rating (out of 5 stars) while GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s book has received 6 customer reviews (not including this review) for an average 3.7 star rating.Ghiglieri emphasizes the prime reason for publishing his book was to allow the 1869 expedition story to be told through the words of the participants from their journals and writings made during the expedition itself. In GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s words: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“These accounts do not deserve to be deleted or abridged or ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœimproved.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (p. 10) It is unfortunate, then, that Ghiglieri feels the need to bookcase these accounts with his own interpretations ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦of what this expedition was really like, both physically and socially.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (p. xv) Think about that for a minute. Ghiglieri tells us on the one hand that the virgin accounts, written at the time events unfolded, should not be tampered with or ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœimproved ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ and then in the next breath tells us of his need to add

his own interpretations to ensure we know what really happened. One reviewer refers to this as Ghiglieri attempting to ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦lead the reader by the nose to follow his own spin.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (review by A. Pulsipher, October 15, 2008)GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s InterpretationsGhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s main beef with Powell is how he allegedly mistreated his crew and failed to adequately recognize their contributions. At the heart of his issues with Powell, is GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s belief that Powell banished William Dunn from the expedition at Separation Canyon, which ultimately lead to Dunn, and the two Howland brothers who left with him, being murdered by Indians, or Mormons, depending on which theory you believe. Ghiglieri clearly blames Powell for the fate of these three men. Ghiglieri also suggests Powell was an incompetent expedition leader despite the expeditionÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s ultimate success in navigating the Colorado (likely for the first time) over its most difficult stretches. There are many problems with GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s interpretations.It is telling that the prime journal entries exhibit a general, if not complete, lack of badmouthing of Powell. It is these accounts that Ghiglieri says are the ones we should rely on for our history and not subsequent writings that suffer from deteriorating memories and intervening motives, Nowhere in these prime journal entries do we get any hint that Powell was the overbearing tyrant Ghiglieri would have us believe he was. And this lack of corroboration for GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s theory in the prime journals cannot be ascribed to any control or sway Powell may have had over these men as these were ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦free thinking mountain menÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (p. 10), ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦independently minded and self-sufficient Westerners with combat experienceÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (p. 283). In other words, these were not shrinking violets. It is unrealistic to believe their private journal entries would have been censored out of any fear of Powell. If Powell had truly been the sob Ghiglieri seems to believe he was, the journals would have told that taleÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â ¢they do not.Ghiglieri accuses Powell of glaring literary excesses in exaggerating the difficulties of the river they navigated, in particular the drop on Sockdolager Rapid. Powell had described this drop in his prime journal entry as being in the order of 30 feed then, in one of his later, popular writings (i.e. less scientificÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â ¢Powell sought to spark the publicÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s interest in his beloved Canyonlands, so a little ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœliterary licenseÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ is understandable), Powell suggests the drop is in the order of 75 to 80 feet. (p. 6) But contrast this with the following prime journal entry of George Bradley, whom Ghiglieri greatly respects: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Major estimates that we shall fall fifty feet in the next mile, and he always underestimates.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (P. 177) So, it appears the good Major was not always one to blow things out of proportion.While there is some criticism of Powell for

the many portages versus running more of the rapids, this caution is likely a reason the expedition was ultimately successful and certainly cannot be construed as a callous disregard for the safety of the menÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â ¢quite the contrary. With the early loss of one of their four boats in Disaster Falls and the resulting scarcity of their supplies, the MajorÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s bent for caution was understandable. Indeed, the men appeared in large part to accept this:
ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦MajorÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s way is safe but I as a lazy man look more to the ease of the thing.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (p. 160); ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦Twice we let down with ropes but we could have run them all if it became a necessity to do so. We are quite careful now of our provisions as the hot blasts that sweep through these rocky gorges admonish us that a walk out to civilization is almost certain death, so better go a little slow and safe.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (p. 161)The major incident underpinning GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s character attack on Powell occurred at the aptly named Separation Canyon, where William Dunn and the two Howland brothers left the expedition to hike out of the canyon and were ultimately murdered by Indians or Mormons, depending on whose account you believe. GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s interpretation that Dunn was forced out by Powell is almost entirely derived from oral and written accounts by John Sumner, many years following the expedition. However, PowellÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s actions at Separation Canyon are not those of a tyrant seeking to banish DunnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â ¢quite the opposite. In SumnerÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s own words:
ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“As O.G. Howland appeared to be the leader of the three, and had fully made up his mind to quit as the rapids had become a holy terror to him, I saw that further talk was useless and [I] so informed Major Powell, and suggested we make duplicate copies of field notes, and give the men latitude and longitude and a draft of the location of the Mormon settlements as far as we knew. Major Powell and I were up most of the night to get an observation, and he worked out the calculations while I kept a light burning for him with mesquite brush. At daylight we crossed back to the north side of the river and commenced to make the portageÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (pp. 249-250) So here, according to GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s favourite source (Sumner), not only had the Howlands and Dunn decided on their own to abandon the expedition ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“as the rapids had become a holy terrorÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• but we are also told that Powell stayed up almost the whole night to make sure the trio had the best information he could give them for their hike out. How does that square with GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s portrayal of the tyrant Powell chasing the men off? It very clearly does not.One of the secondary accounts which Ghiglieri relies on heavily, is a letter written by Sumner in 1906, some 37 years after the expedition (after PowellÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s death and shortly before SumnerÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s death). In it, Sumner

states: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“So J.W. Powell Says I Saved his Bacon a time or two did he? Well from Reading his Report one would think there was no one in the Party but Capt Powell and himself. he Evidently didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t tell you of the row in Cataract Canyon when I got so damned mad at his abuse of howland and Dunn that I had to ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Speak out in meeting,ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• which culminated in my taking full command of the Expedition and Keep it to the endÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â|ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (p. 293) (emphasis added) It is astounding that Ghiglieri says nothing of this ground-breaking assertion. The reason is apparent. If Sumner is telling the truth, it is fatal to GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s case against Powell. GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s case is grounded on the assertion Powell hounded Dunn off the expedition at Separation Canyon, but if by that time Sumner was in control of the expedition (Separation Canyon is well downstream of Cataract Canyon and the men arrived there about a month later), that could not have happened. Alternatively, if Ghiglieri doesnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t believe Sumner, it is incumbent on him to say so, to call out this lie. He does not do so as this would be equally damaging to his caseÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â ¢i.e. the conclusion that Sumner lied with respect to a core aspect of the Separation Canyon incidentÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â ¢as it discredits all of SumnerÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s other post expedition accounts. In terms of the credibility of SumnerÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s post expedition accounts, particularly his 1907 account, an understanding of his state of mind is also relevant: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Sumner spent his last years plagued by illnesses, poverty and depression. The latter proved to [sic] severe, notes historian Don Lago, that on May 24, 1902, near Green River, Utah Sumner castrated himself with a knife. In 1903, he began his lengthy correspondences with Stanton. In 1907, Sumner completed his account of the 1869 first descent.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (p. 294) It is largely on the accounts of this severely sick (self-castration?!) and depressed man that GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s case against Powell rests.Sumner may have had a motivation for turning on Powell as apparently Powell had not fully paid Sumner for the purchase of SumnerÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s equipment and supplies used in the 1869 expedition. Ghiglieri discounts any such motivation, stating: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Both Sumner and Hawkins likely felt to their dying days that Powell had welshed on his debts to themÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â|Even so, none of this means that either Sumner or Hawkins would therefore fabricate lies about what happened during the 1869 expedition. Indeed, the only member of the expedition whom we know did fabricate lies about it was Major Powell himself, and he did so copiously in print.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• So, Ghiglieri is quick to conclude that Major Powell lied ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“copiouslyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (primarily a few alleged exaggerations or ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœliterary licenseÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢) yet takes the later writings (not the prime accounts, which remember, Ghiglieri claimsÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â ¢I think

rightfullyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â ¢represent the best record of the expedition) of the other crew members as gospel. Well, as discussed above, we know that either: (i) Sumner lied in his later account to the effect that he took over the expedition in Cataract Canyon; or (ii) Powell had nothing to do with Dunn leaving at Separation Canyon, as at that time the expedition was under the control of Sumner.The back jacket of GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s book displays a review containing the following: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Ghiglieri presents a scathing reappraisal of Powell and the historians who have glossed over his fatal failings of 1869. Powell comes across as an incompetent whose desire for self-aggrandizement drove him to fabricate reports of his expedition and to monopolize credit for it to the exclusion of the extraordinary crew who made it possible. Ghiglieri rights the record in an accurate and engaging way.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• Give me a break. Incompetent!? Powell spearheaded the expedition safely (perhaps because of the very portages now questioned in hindsight). He was a tough customer who held his own despite missing his right arm. In that respect, consider the prime journal entries of July 26, 1869. Bradley writes: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦Major wished to land and climb the mountains, so five of us started on a wildgoose chase after pitch [pitch from pine trees was needed to repair/seal the boats], but it was so hot we all backed out except the Major, who says he climbed the cliff, but I have my doubts.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• Well, with respect to those doubts, consider next the entry from Sumner on the same day:
ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦camped on the south side to repair boats. 5 of the men tried to climb the cliff to get some rosin from the pine trees at the top but all failed but the professor [Powell was sometimes referred to as the professor], he being lucky enough to get about 2 lbs.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• So, our one-armed Major out-toughed all those mountain men to get the valuable pitch required to repair the boats.And as for GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s complaints that Powell never adequately recognized the efforts of his crew, consider the following dedication to PowellÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“swan songÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• 1875 book Canyons of the Colorado, and I reproduce the entire dedication as it contains the words of a man of grace and reflect a kind spirit entirely at odds with the character Ghiglieri attempts to create through his interpretations: "Many years have passed since the exploration, and those who were the boys with me in the enterprise areÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â ¢ah, most of them are dead, and the living are gray with age. Their bronzed, hardy, brave faces come before me as they appeared in the vigor of life; their lithe but powerful forms seem to move around me; and the memory of the men and their heroic deeds, the men and their generous acts, overwhelms me with a joy that seems almost a grief, for it starts a fountain of tears. I was a maimed man; my right arm was gone; and these brave men, these good men, never forgot it. In every danger my safety was their first care, and in every waking hour

some kind of service was rendered me, and they transfigured my misfortune into boon. To youÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â ¢J.C. Sumner, William H. Dunn, W.H. Powell, G.Y. Bradley, O.G. Howland, Seneca Howland, Frank Goodman, W.R. Hawkins, and Andrew HallÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â ¢my noble and generous companions, dead and alive, I dedicate this book."But even this gracious dedication, that certainly has Powell recognizing the contributions of his crew (including Dunn and the Howland brothers), is attributed to ulterior motivations by GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â ¢perhaps because Ghiglieri understands that taking it at face value completely undermines his character assassination. Ghiglieri even stoops to telling us of an affair Powell had. (p. 289) Query what this has to do with running the Colorado? It appears that no petty detail is to be missed if one is intent on character assassinationÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â ¢indeed, one other reviewer characterized GhiglieriÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s mission as a ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“vendettaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• against Powell. (review by J. Schauer, November 19, 2005)ConclusionWhile Ghiglieri has done us all a service by painstakingly reproducing the various original accounts of the 1869 expedition, it is unfortunate that he has then tainted this effort by bookcasing those accounts with interpretations that, on a fair reading, present as biased against Powell. This conclusion is mirrored in a number of the existing reviews on . The result is disappointing and not worthy of more than 2 stars.

I wanted to read more about Powell’s trip after visiting the Grand Canyon and agree the author has done a good job of assembling the diaries and giving a commentary.However, the overwhelming tone of the book is colored by the author’s vendetta against Powell. Every action is interpreted in favor of the "noble boatmen" (like the author). There is much too much jumping to conclusions, for which he criticizes other authors. It became tiresome to read how Powell should have done this, that, or the other. Admittedly, the man had his faults, but the leader will always get the praise or blame. A more measured analysis would have been better.

Ghiglieri fails at the objective job of an historian. I wish he had laid out the river journals and related writings about the first Powell expedition without injecting such an extraordinary stream of personal invective. Ghiglieri doesn’t trust the reader to draw his own conclusions about Powell’s character. The author instead serves up an annoying personal crusade against Powell -- and against every prominent historical writer on the topic. I nearly abandoned the book while wading through the introductory tirade, but I was glad I stuck it out. Ghiglieri deserves credit for his work to research and compile the story of the first Powell expedition from the participants’ river journals. Reading the expedition members’ accounts grouped into daily entries provides an intimate experience of the epic

trip as it unfolded.

This book by Michael Ghiglieri is an outstanading documentary of the first exploration of the Grand Canyon by John Wesley Powell and his crew. While almost every other account of this amazing journey is based on Powell's journal and notes, Michael very carefully pulls together all the accounts of this trip using not only Powell's notes but also the journals of the crew, letters and other doucments not previously published. His book is well researched and very effectively debunks a number of misconceptions about Powell, his leadership skills, how and why the 3 members of his trip were killed (hint: it was NOT the Indians)and the contributions and skills of his crew.Michael not only publishes word for word all the journals that survived, but also did an impressive amount of original research into the events that made up this exploration. He then uses his background as a professional river guide to pull it together into a very compelling and hard-to-put down tale of this fateful journey. This is must read for anyone interested in the real facts of this incredible adventure.

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