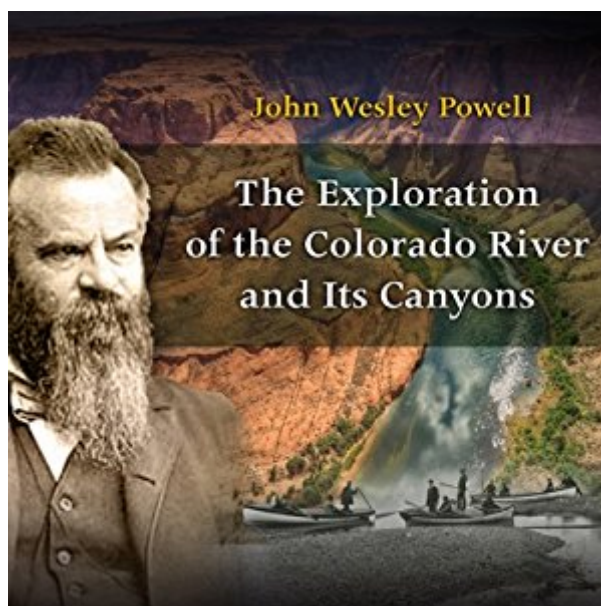


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# The Exploration Of The Colorado River And Its Canyons



## Synopsis

The great unknown of the Southwest is conquered by a one-armed man and his crew of adventurers, placing the Colorado River and the Grand Canyon on the map of the American continent. It is a journey no human being had ever made before. Dangerous rapids, narrow canyon walls offering no escape, terrifying river waterfalls, capsized boats, near drowning, lost equipment and disillusioned men are dramatically described by John Wesley Powell, leader of this adventurous party. In this first recording as an audiobook, Powell powerfully describes the spectacular beauty of the landscape, the fascinating lives of the indigenous people and the courageous efforts of the expedition party.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Anyone who is enthralled by the beauty of the Southwest, or as Powell defines it - the Colorado River watershed, should read this book. It's not the same now as it was in his day. For one thing, Glen Canyon, which he named, is now submerged under Lake Powell (could any name be more ironic?). No one today can feel the same kind of wonder and awe as Powell and his companions did as they pushed their boats into the raging rapids of the muddy Colorado without having any idea of what was ahead. Even the part of the Colorado watershed that has not been developed, and there is a considerable extent of land under protective status, today has nothing like the remoteness that Powell experienced. Everything has been mapped and carefully scrutinized. Yet, anyone who has spent some time sizing up the immense water-carved rock canyons, can still feel something of the

sublimity that Powell felt. It requires more imagination; it is true, but anyone who is determined to make more of a commitment than just standing at the rim of the Grand Canyon can still experience the really sublime features of this landscape. How much more difficult will it be in the future? Will these wilderness wonders become more degraded? The book describes by daily journal entries the historic river run of 1868 starting at the Flaming Gorge in Wyoming and ending at the Virgin River as well as a follow-up expedition the next year. Powell does not overdo the apprehensions and hardships of himself and companions, nor does he make mention that he accomplished the physical exertion of climbing the canyon walls and navigating the boats with one arm: but largely confines himself to descriptions of the events and the incredible landforms.

On May 24, 1869, Major John W. Powell, a one-armed veteran of the Civil War, along with nine others (geologists, geographers, scouts and adventurers), set out from Green River, Wyoming to explore the last great unmapped and unknown portion of the continental U.S. No man had ever descended the Colorado river as it cut its way through 1,000 miles of incredibly rugged badlands. However, Powell and his band of men completed a remarkable journey of exploration through this country. A passage from Powell's narrative of the expedition, after they had been on the river nearly two months, conveys very well a perspective of the challenge Powell and his men faced, the courage they demonstrated and Powell's matter of fact, but powerful writing style. "We are now ready to start on our way down the Great Unknown. Our boats, tied to a common stake, chafe each other as they are tossed by the fretful river. They ride high and buoyant, for their loads are lighter than we could desire. We have but a month's rations remaining. The flour has been resifted through the mosquito-net sieve; the spoiled bacon has been dried and the worst of it boiled; the few pounds of dried apples have been spread in the sun and reshrunken to their normal bulk. The sugar has all melted and gone on its way down the river. But we have a large sack of coffee. The lightening of the boats has this advantage--they will ride the waves better; and we shall have but little to carry when we make a portage. We are three quarters of a mile in the depths of the earth and the great river shrinks into insignificance as it dashes its angry waves against the walls and cliffs that rise to the world above. The waves are but puny ripples. We are but pigmies, running up and down among the sands or lost among the boulders.

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