Yogie Yokey, Green River Captain
by John Weisheit

The following are excerpts from the Warston
Collection at the Huntington Library about Captain H. T. Yokey. I would like to thank Rosalyn Jirge for the
discovery of this ancestral boat yogie. [Brackets indicate
editorial comment.]

[From an obituary in the DAILY SENTINEL of Grand
Junction, CO., dated Tuesday, October 15, 1957:]

Captain Harry T. Yokey, age 86, who had become something of a
legend in the Green River area, died about 12:30 p.m. Monday [which
would have been October 14th] at the V. A. Hospital in Grand
Junction. Captain Yokey was the man who built the "Cliff Dweller", a deluxe twodecker pleasure boat in 1905, to run on the Green and Colorado Rivers
between Green River and Moab. It was through this and his interest in
boats and early-day river running that he acquired the title of Captain.
The "Cliff Dweller" was run by steam, but the coal gave out on its
 maiden voyage and it had to be towed back to Green River. It was
 later rebuilt and named the "City of Moab", but proved impractical and
  was taken by rail to the Great Salt Lake. It was used there for many
   years ferrying passengers from shore to island.

Captain Yokey was born in Atum, Iowa, October 4, 1869. He
was involved in the border raids along the Mexican border in 1892 and
then reenlisted in the Spanish-American War. He was discharged from the
Army while still in the Philippines.

Captain Yokey came to Green River in 1904 to operate the Rio
Grande Pumping Station. He was a bachelor and had no known relatives.

The colorful retired railroader lived in a small home about
three miles from Green River. He was noted for his frequent trips into the
town atop to pick up copies of the Congressional Record at the post
office and also to secure groceries and supplies.

Captain Yokey was admitted to the V. A. Hospital in Grand
Junction September 18. The Callahan-Edfast Mortuary of Grand Junction
has arrangements and the body will be sent to Denver for burial in the National
Cemetery.

A man named William Davis frequently corresponded
with Otis Warston; helping to locate historic inscriptions.
Davis made several inscriptions himself in Cataract Canyon
from river trips completed by a ten-man raft back in the
early 1950s. In 1952, Davis and his daughter Mildred ran
Westwater Canyon; Mildred was probably the first female to
ride through Westwater Canyon and at the age of fifteen.
Davis wrote a letter to Cap Yokey concerning a trip in a
boat referred to as the Black Eagle. The following letter is
from Yokey, postmarked from Elgin, Utah, and dated October 4,
1952:

Friend Davis,

I have finally got around to replying to your two epistles of
late date; so pull down yer vest; wipe off yer chin; & on following
begin.

Yes; we had a steamboat blow-up or blow-out some years back on
lower River Green; I was builder, owner, commander, and pilot of craft
(Black Eagle - of Elgin), J. A. Ross, fireman; E. J. Cook, engineer;
when I did not have time to monkey with the engine & a cap, us four & no
more.

Fortunately or unfortunately; we had a water tube boiler &
  flood of mud for water; A couple of tubes got plugged with mud; natur-
ally blew themselves killing the fire. Thus we had no power other than
arm-strong rowboat. Plenty of wild wheat and scenery for desert.
Naturally no rush about getting out.

However, if it had been a flue-type boiler, we would be
overdue to this day; just another mysterious disappearance on high seas
of time or destiny in vast port of missing men.

However, later we were picked up by a boat bound for San
Rafel. There I secured a team and wagon, thus landing my surviving men
in their home ports of Elgin and Green River.

Some years back, in canyon of the Lower Green, while searching
shelter from the elements under a ledge, I noted the following:
(D. JULIEN MAB 1838)

Did you meet this guy during your trip? Also did you note
evidences of river cutting down through solid rock to its present
location. [Questions probably asked by Davis in a previous letter.]

This is the biggest hunk of geological bolonga on Earth. Some
years back I was employed by U.S.R.S. to transport MWH, GHUB & TOOLS
down into the canyon of Lower Green to search for Bedrock for proposed
power dam site in many cases. The workers discovered the bed of river
was on a vast mass of slide rock (like you see on both sides of river
in Cataract Canyon & many other places along the waterway across the
desert). [see front cover photo]

I have infused the Earth for over 80 years. Been awake most
of the time, too. Noting what has been done & its affect on will be
done. I am the man on the ground, seas and Rivers. Thus know what I am
talking about.

I have seen enough to know, old Mother Earth has had other
fixed axis of rotation; other than she now has & two great unbalancing
factors now accumulating & have been for some millions of years. It's
absolutely necessary for Earth to Delouse & ReNew itself. New
continents, new Islands, Seas, Rivers, & Sea.

After a period of erratic unbalanced rotation, during which no
part of Earth's surface has enough regular exposure to Sun to prevent
freezing, yea Bo; be tougher than old Billy Bedanned, damn few
survivors.

Signed: Yours as she looks - Captain H. T. Yokey* [sic]
This photo was taken in 1914 by Eugene LeRue of the United States Reclamation Service 1/2 mile below The Confluence. This floating, steam-powered drilling rig is searching for bedrock to determine the feasibility of a dam. The crew drilled 124 feet without reaching bedrock when rising flood waters forced abandonment of the project. If built, this dam would have flooded the communities of Green River and Moab. Pictured third from left is Bert Loper. Photo courtesy of USGS Library, Denver.