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In 1923 there were very few parties that had ever yet made a trip in a boat down through the Grand Canyon. Today there are strong motor boats that make the trip quite frequently but then in all history there have not been more than 5 or 6 parties that ever had made that trip.

That Canyon runs for about 200 miles and for 100 miles there is not even a place for a deer to get down from the top, down to the river. It is a very wild, and then it was a very isolated area. At that time there was a honeymoon couple that decided to make a trip down it in a boat. They came to the place at the foot of where the headquarters of the National Park was located, and they stopped there and spoke to the official there, and then went on in their boat. They were never heard from again.

President Coolidge took an interest in the situation and great efforts were made to find them, but nothing was ever found. I've travelled in that same area quite a bit and it is not hard for me to understand just how this doubtless hapened. Today there is a great dam that has been built a little up river from the Canyon which quite changes the nature of the stream. But at that time the stream was so full of mud that it was almost half-way between mud and water, and the river would come a great rainstorm way up in the mountains long distance away. It might send so much water coming down that the water would rise 10 feet within an hour or two.

I have no doubt that what happened was that one night the party stopped for the night as they were doing each night. They stopped at a place where there was a little sandy beach as they got in a little ways from the river, pulled their boats up a short distance on to the shore, had their supper and then went a little higher up to a more comfortable place to lie and spend the night.

During the night without their knowing anything about it, that water rose. The result was that the water came back up the sides this distance and not enough that they were aware of it at all. But it took their boat and carried it off down the river. It might be another 100 miles to a place where there was any way of getting out. The boat had in it their provisions, their supplies. A few days later the boat come out into Lake Meade at the lower end of the Canyon.

I would imagine that the next morning they awoke, they looked there and could not find their boat. It was obvious that it had been washed away. What could they do? Well, if you go a quarter of a mile down maybe an eighth of a mile up, and you come to steep cliffs 1000 feet high. You can't go any further along the river. But you could go up from that little beach and there would be a sort of a little canyon and you could go up maybe 2 or 3 miles and go inland. Then you would come to a place where it would divide into several branches, and you would follow one for a couple of hours of hard going through brush. Then you would come to a place where there was a steep cliff with no possibility of climbing it.