ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

Even the Riffle Can Be Exciting
Thomas F. Elliot
Trafford Publishing
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Four Stars (out of Five)

What, you may ask, is a riffle? Author Thomas F. Eliott won't keep you in suspense for long. In the first paragraph of the Introduction, he explains that it's "rough water, but not enough to be classified as a white-water rapid." This is Colorado River language, and specifically for this book, the more than 100 rapids that punctuate the stretch from Lees Ferry to Lake Mead, straight through the Grand Canyon.

Eliott made his 200 mile trip in 1969, but he gives his history a little perspective by weaving in the adventure of John Wesley Powell, retired Union Army Civil War major. Wesley and his team of nine were the first white men to "travel down a river through uncharted canyons, rapids, waterfalls, lava beds, and unknown life-threatening obstacles." That was in 1869, and Wesley was minus his right arm, having lost it in the Battle of Shilo. Eliott, himself a veteran of Choisin Reservoir in North Korea, dedicates his book to handicapped war veterans, and includes a chapter, "Impaired Mobility" on how to travel the river with disabilities.

For the most part, however, *Even the Ripple* is a tribute to the Grand Canyon and a guide to the river that runs through it. Liberally illustrated with photographs, graphs, and even the covers of brochures available from different expedition services, the book also has the charm of being small enough to tuck away in a pack or a pocket.

And that's what travelers will want to do, as the guide covers everything from the building of the Glen Canyon Dam—which can seriously effect the flow through the Grand Canyon—to a list of the major rapids, their histories and classification. Other chapters describe an infamous airline crash into the Canyon in 1956—the wreckage remained in plain sight until the late-1970s—and the pleasures of the only cold beer to be found (with hope) at the bottom of the Canyon, at Phantom Ranch.

Even the Riffle Can be Exciting is a well-organized, informative and completely readable guide for both the adventurer and dreamer. While more than 16,000 adventurers make their way down the river every year, Eliot closes his book with some great ideas for how the Federal Government could spend some useful dreamer dollars: build an air-conditioned cable car!

Heather Shaw