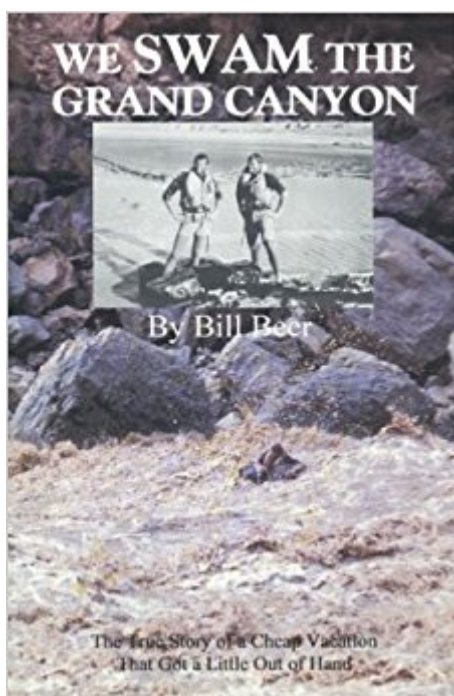


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# We Swam The Grand Canyon: The True Story Of A Cheap Vacation That Got A Little Out Of Hand



## Synopsis

The true story of a cheap vacation that got a little out of hand. In 1955 Bill Beer and John Daggett, at the time both recently out of the military, and in their mid 20s, footloose, and more or less unemployed conceived the idea of swimming the Colorado River through the 279 miles of the Grand Canyon-principally because they couldn't afford a boat. This simple idea escalated into a national news story and has been one of the legends of the Grand Canyon ever since. Never equalled nor duplicated, their illegal venture and many of its dangers, comic episodes, innovations, side effects and long term ramifications are the story of this book.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Beer..msterfully delivers the excitement, comedy and sense of awe of the trip" --USA TODAY, October 26, 1989"Every complete history of the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River gives at least a generous paragraph to the water soaked saga of Beer and Daggett. What once was considered a foolish risk is now legend" --Arizona Highways"It is high time for this astounding saga to see the light of day. To grip us with its inspirations, agony, despair, hope, determination and fun. Without it, the Grand Canyon story would be missing an indispensable chapter; one that will gladden and enrich us all." --Martin Litton 1988"Every complete history of the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River gives at least a generous paragraph to the water soaked saga of Beer and Daggett. What once was considered a foolish risk is now legend" --Arizona Highways"It is high time for this astounding saga to see the light of day. To grip us with its inspirations, agony, despair, hope, determination and fun. Without it, the Grand Canyon story would be missing an indispensable chapter; one that will gladden and enrich us all." --Martin Litton 1988

Following the swim Bill went on the lecture circuit with the film. A Stanford graduate he was a reporter, TV newsmen, script writer, worked in public relations & was a professional sailor. In his seventies he flew his Ultralight up the Mississippi to Canada. Bill died at Sunrise, June 9th 2000 of heart failure; having completed another life long dream to fly Monument Valley

I had no idea swimmers completed the entire length of the Grand Canyon (in 1955), which was before Glen Canyon was built and the Colorado River was forever tamed. Good grief - I had to read about it. What an amazing and good read story this is. I have a hard time imagining two fellows wearing simple clothing and gear (much from military surplus stores), stepping into the cold river (low 50's) day after day, and surviving all of the rapids along the 277 miles from Lees Ferry to Pierce Ferry. They loved most of the rapids, even though they got beat up along the way. Notorious Lava Falls Rapids? Success! I love reading real life adventures and how those involved pulled it off and what hardships they endured. Like this one and like Shackleton's famous trip in Antarctica. Another unbelievable book is "Across the Olympic Mountains, The Press Expedition, 1889-90", though it has been out of print for sometime, it can be found. I recommend reading about this swim legend to anyone interested in Grand Canyon history, adventure stories, or just want to be amazed on what someone has pulled off.

This was an EXCELLENT book and I am already thinking of half-a-dozen friends to whom I would like to "gift" copies. It wasted no time on "character development" but went right into the meat of the story. (One might think that they had picked up a Reader's Digest "abridged" version!) But I mean that as a "positive" statement about the book. I don't read "deep". I'm the kind of guy who wants his story to "get right to it". And this book does- the adventurers are in the river before the end of Chapter One! But as the chapters unfolded, the characters became very real and you could feel the emotion, the challenges, the fears, and the frustrations. I also found the footnotes and historical anecdotes to add considerably to the adventure as it unfolded. You could feel the place in the history of the Grand Canyon that the two adventurers were securing. (And yet, that was NOT what they set out to do!) It is a short book that is FULL of meat and potatoes and I will get additional copies to pass on to others who are sure to pick it up from my desk and in a few short minutes become absorbed and intrigued and ask to borrow it. No, I won't lend it out. I want this book to be always on my desk. But I WILL give them a copy of their own and feel good about sharing this kind of adventure. If I "loan" it to them, they would have to give it back. I'm certain that they will enjoy it

so much that they too will buy an extra copy or two to "share" in the way that I did. This is NOT a book about "growing up". This book is about adventure, determination, facing challenges and accomplishment. It is uplifting and fulfilling. It is an easy read. It is a "can't miss" gift for all ages. (It is NOT a "kid's story" but will be enjoyed, I think, by anyone age 10 and up.)

This is one of those books you can't put down. Easy going, you feel like you're along for the trip. I'm a Grand Canyon addict and love books on the canyon. Not a whole lot about the scenery or geography - just coping with the river and its rapids and the human challenges of it all. You'll like it.

There's a back story to this that I heard from an old river rat. John Haggett's wife and kids were killed in a terrible car accident. His good friend and fellow swimmer, Bill Beer, tried to console him. He suggested they both go out drinking and stay drunk for a month, but after one night they were sick and gave up drinking. Then he proposed they go climb a big mountain. They weren't mountaineers, and had almost no money, so they couldn't create an expedition. Finally Beer, suggested, "Let's swim the Grand Canyon!" Haggett was enthusiastic about it, and that's how this insane idea got started. There are movies of their great swim out there somewhere. Maybe they've even been digitized.

From the three books on explorations of the unknown I've read in the past few months I enjoyed this the most. (The others were Ryback, The High Adventure from Canada to Mexico, and Cousteau, The Silent World). I admit that I enjoy backpacking, so far mostly in the Sierra Nevada and in the Grand Canyon. I also skin dive and hopefully will get a SCUBA licence this spring. So each of these three books displayed a piece of history about one of my hobbies. Nevertheless Bill's book left me in awe: it is such a fantastic, modern adventure, nearly unbelievable without the detailed descriptions and photographs. I've hiked along the Colorado in the GCNP and (maybe because of the warnings of the rangers or maybe because the river 'diagonals' down rapidly the thight canyons) would have never considered swimming in it. The book is really well written and the pictures give you a feeling of being close to what happened 50 years ago. (My only wish would be to get rid of some of the scratches using digital retouching. But then again the scratches give them an authentic feeling.) Bill, I really have to thank you for republishing this book!

Was glad this book was still available. I had loaned my original one out and it was lost.

i bought this for really cheap from the marketplace because it said there was "some writing." that some writing turned out to be the author's signature. sweet! other than that, this is a great read that i would recommend to anyone who enjoys outdoors-y stuff or grand canyon history.

A gripping read about an amazing adventure. This is truly a tribute to the power of testosterone in young males. If you've ever gone down the Grand Canyon, you will love this book.

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