



Canyons of the Colorado

Joseph Holmes

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John Wesley Powell (1834-1902) was a U. S. soldier, geologist, and explorer of the American West. He is famous for the 1869 Powell Geographic Expedition, a three-month river trip down the Green and Colorado rivers that included the first passage through the Grand Canyon. He studied at Illinois College, Wheaton College, and Oberlin College, acquiring a knowledge of Ancient Greek and Latin but never graduating. He was elected to the Illinois Natural History Society in 1859. Due to his deep Protestant beliefs, and his social commitments, his loyalties remained with the Union, and the cause of abolishing slavery. He enlisted in the Union army as a topographer and military engineer. In 1881 he became the second director of the U. S. Geological Survey, a post he held until 1894. He was also the director of the Bureau of Ethnology at the Smithsonian Institution until his death. In 1895 he published a book based on his explorations of the Colorado titled *Canyons of the Colorado*. Amongst his other works are *Wyandot Government* (1881), *Indian Linguistic Families of America, North of Mexico* (1891) and *Truth and Error; or, The Science of Intellection* (1898).

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