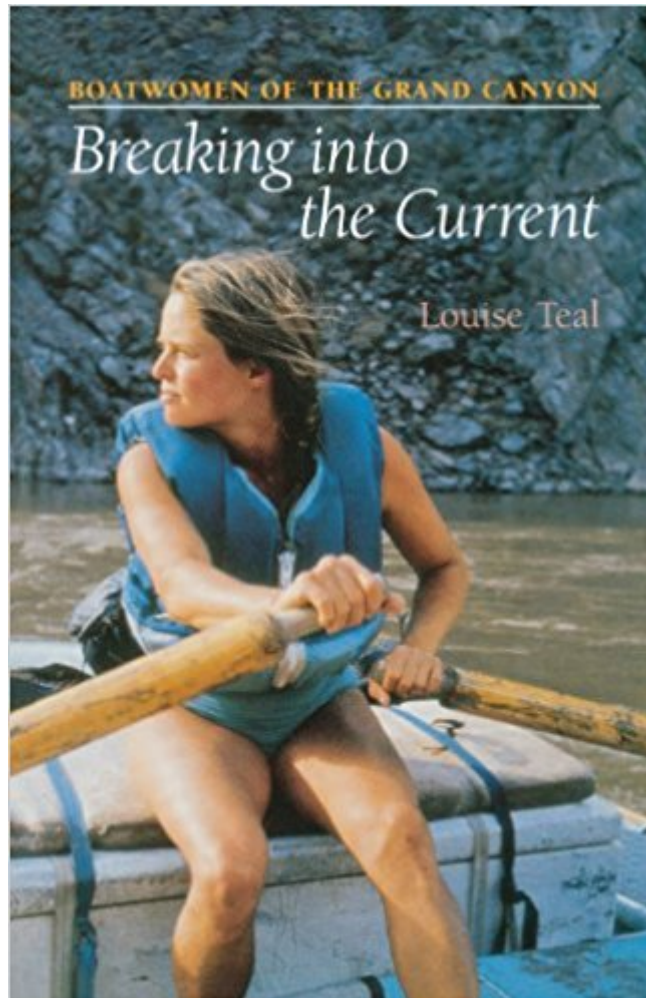




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# Breaking Into The Current: Boatwomen Of The Grand Canyon



## Synopsis

In 1973, Marilyn Sayre gave up her job as a computer programmer and became the first woman in twenty years to run a commercial boat through the Grand Canyon. Georgie White had been the first, back in the 1950s, but it took time before other women broke into guiding passengers down the Colorado River. This book profiles eleven of the first full-season Grand Canyon boatwomen, weaving together their various experiences in their own words. *Breaking Into the Current* is a story of romance between women and a place. Each woman tells a part of every Canyon boatwoman's story: when Marilyn Sayre talks about leaving the Canyon, when Ellen Tibbets speaks of crew camaraderie, or when Martha Clark recalls the thrill of white water, each tells how all were involved in the same romance. All the boatwomen have stories to tell of how they first came to the Canyon and why they stayed. Some speak of how they balanced their passion for being in the Canyon against the frustration of working in a traditionally male-oriented occupation, where today women account for about fifteen percent of the Canyon's commercial river guides. As river guides in love with the Canyon and their work, these women have followed their hearts. "I've done a lot," says Becca Lawton, "but there's been nothing like holding those oars in my hands and putting my boat exactly where I wanted it. Nothing."

## Book Information

Paperback: 178 pages

Publisher: University of Arizona Press; Second Edition edition (1996)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0816514291

ISBN-13: 978-0816514298

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 15 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #910,967 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #90 in [Books > Sports & Outdoors > Miscellaneous > Women in Sports](#) #770 in [Books > Sports & Outdoors > Outdoor Recreation > Boating](#) #837 in [Books > Sports & Outdoors > Outdoor Recreation > Sailing](#)

## Customer Reviews

The companies that run chartered boat trips along the majestic but treacherous 226-mile stretch of the Colorado River from Lee's Ferry to Diamond Creek were bastions of sexism from the early part of the 20th century to the 1970s. They assumed that women were neither strong nor capable

enough to pilot a boat full of people through the Grand Canyon. In this volume, Teal, a journalist and boatwoman herself, disproves that theory by cataloging the stories of 11 women who became commercial boat pilots in the 1970s. Many of their stories overlap in the details of how the women learned to row or motor the boats; their perseverance in trying to get hired; and in the passion they voice for the river. "The water has so much power over the boat and me . . . I feel like the river takes me in its hands," says Martha Clark. Yet each boatwoman shares a unique part of her experience. Marilyn Sayre tells how a boyfriend helped her to become a boatwoman; Suzanne Jordan recalls flipping a boat and nearly drowning; and Lorna Corson explains why she returns to the river every year. This is an engaging chronicle of a little-known group of pioneers. Copyright 1994 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

"An engaging chronicle of a little-known group of pioneers." — Publishers Weekly "An inspiring and necessary reminder that women are thriving in the world of outdoor adventure."

— Sojourner "A thoroughly enjoyable read." — Books of the Southwest "The greatest virtue of the book is Teal's literary gift. . . . A fully rounded view of the adrenaline-fueled life on the big water." — Utah Historical Quarterly "The book transcends gender even as it addresses it and thereby joins the dozen or so books about the Grand Canyon that belong in every river runner's library. . . . Without it, history is incomplete." — Paddler

I read this book for an independent study about women in whitewater kayaking in college, about 2 years ago. Each chapter is a different story from a different woman and their experiences on the Grand Canyon; the first women to guide in big water. As a female boater, I found this book funny and eye-opening. Hearing the struggles that these women were faced with was sometimes angering, but their sense of humor always prevailed--a good lesson for anyone, but especially young women and any woman getting into whitewater boating. This book tells stories of sexism, but more than that, the positive impacts that the Grand Canyon had on everyone who spent any amount of time there. I haven't personally been there yet, but I can surely relate those feelings to any river that I have paddled on. The authors share the fun that they have, and the friends that they made. This book shares all of those thoughts and feelings with the reader, transporting them to the boat the women were riding down the river. I would recommend this book to anyone!

Very interesting to read about women's experiences breaking into this field. I am the same age as most of these women and have just experienced my first raft trip. I completely understand their

obsession.

Louise Teal was seduced by the grandeur of the canyon when she was a teen in the 60's. "The canyon was beautiful and intense--a completely fulfilling place to be." Years later after she married and moved to Seattle, she yearned to return to life on the river. In *Breaking Into the Current* she profiles eleven other women from varied backgrounds who cast aside civilization to raft rapids and learn the secrets of the Grand Canyon. Georgie White opened the way for female river guides in the 50's, but there was still plenty of resistance from a male dominated society to the having women guides at the helm well into the 80's. This book is a must read for teens looking for empowered women role models. All of the women profiled are brave, self-reliant and intent on self-actualization. I was happy to learn about each and every one of these inspiring ladies.

I have turned into a river rat years ago, and when I was told one of the stories of the first lady guides on the Colorado River when I floated the Green River last year, I knew that I have to take on this adventure someday. The stories are so inspirational and exciting, and I feel like going down the river every time I am reading them. These women are amazing and their stories have encouraged me to go one step further and not to be scared but motivated and ready. They are my heroes!

Detailed story of a woman raft guide . She gives her heart out describing thoughts . Very fun reading makes me want to go rafting again .

bought this as a gift and it was read in one day!!

I recently travelled a rafting trip of the canyon and was totally enthralled by the experience. In many ways it changed my life. Reading this book brings back so many memories of what the trip there is really about. I felt a true connection with the women that travelled it before me. The descriptions are so beautiful. This book crosses genders and is simply about a wonderful place and some extraordinary women that have travelled there.

Fun book, but the stories start to be the same after awhile. It is good to read about women challenging the stereotypes that existed, but the stories start to sound the same. A little variety would have been nice.

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