

EDNA FRIDLEY'S SPIRAL JOURNAL 1962

Down Glen Canyon to Harry Aleson's Wedding...#1

Photos by Charles Kreisler

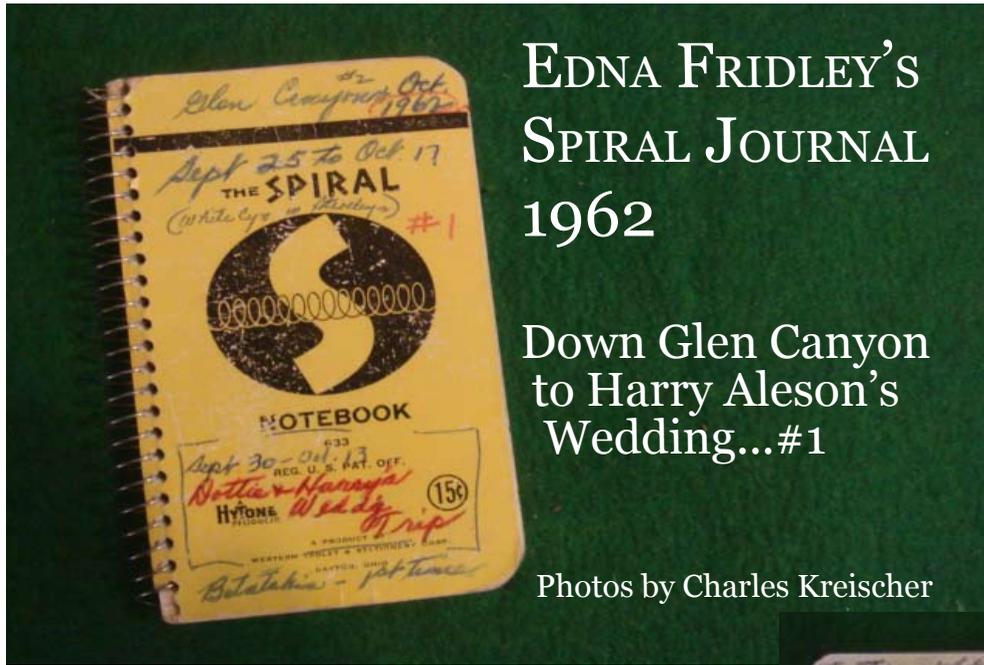
INTRODUCTION

Edna Fridley was a good friend of the canyon country of southeast Utah for more than 30 years. Every year she returned to the slickrock from her home, back east, to wander and explore what was then one of the most remote and isolated parts of the United States.

In the fall of 1962, Edna set off on her last trip down Glen Canyon. The dam, 150 miles downstream, was almost complete. Within months the Bureau of Reclamation would close its diversion tunnels and stop the free flow of the Colorado River.

Edna had been invited to join a party of friends to celebrate Harry Aleson's wedding, which was to happen during the trip. She flew to Salt Lake City, then rented a car to Page, Arizona via Zion National Park. At Page, after checking in at the Page Boy Motel, she arranged a flight to the dirt airstrip at White Canyon.

She took thousands of photographs of her pack and river trips with legendary guides Ken Sleight and Harry Aleson. But she also kept journals, often scribbled in small spiral notebooks. Here are excerpts from that trip--- Part 1 of Edna's last journey down Glen...JS



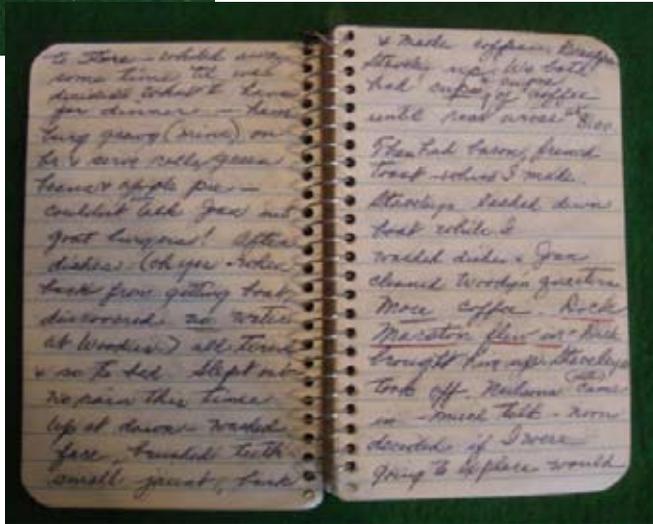
29 Sept 1962

Have had quite an eventful times since leaving home...Gorgeous day. Long way from Kanab to Page; arrived about 2:30. Went to airport, then to Page Boy. Had shower, rested, went out to the dam, then back to airport. Had to wait 1 1/2 hours for weather which cleared. Also Royce got another run to Navajo Mtn. so he reduced my fare to \$25---goody---then took off. What a stupendous thrill! ARR White Canyon about 12:30 or so. Woody (Woody Edgell, the operator of the Hite Ferry in 1962) surprised to see me. Took me back, cooked rabbit---good---he went to Monticello after introducing me to Fran and Ethel Barrett.

Slept out in the front yard! til 4:30 AM when rain started. Rain lasted pretty much til day lite.

Was isolated by creek in Farley Canyon--or so I thought. Was taking pictures when station wagon & pickup truck drove to opp. side and some mad woman sleaped out and started to wade the creek. After cars drove thru found out it was the Staveleys from Mex. Hat! They had camped the nite on the other side of White Cyn. Then started the adventure that lasted all day...Drove to where road was washed out. Then the fun started. the car got stuck. Some 2 1/2 hrs later some one-handed guy (hook) got it started.

Went over to Hite side on ferry--seemed simple job to get boat out BUT after the boat was partially on trailer it all settled into the mud--egads!



**30 Sept--Sunday
Launched finally
about 10:20 AM. Had
the usual adventure.
Woody's station wagon
wouldn't start---
NATCH.**



The store at White Canyon...



Into Glen Canyon on U95

NEXT DAY...

Slept out--no rain this time. Up at dawn--washed face, brushed teeth, small jaunt, back and made coffee. Grandpa Staveley up. We both had cups and cups of coffee until the rest arose at 8:00.

Then had bacon, french toast--which I made. Staveleys lashed down boat while I washed dishes and Joan cleaned Woody's quarters. MORE COFFEE. Dock Marston flew in--Dick brought him up...

At noon I decided if I were going to explore would have to get with it. Dock said he'd go with me. Finally took off, walked down to lookout tower, then along cliff edge to other ruins. Spent considerable time looking at names scratched in tower. Jacobs, Elmer Kane--Dock supplying info on each. Both these men with EAST Exp 1891. E. Kane on 2--TALL man 6'4". BIG man physically too. FUN. When along cliff saw Harry arr. Dock called to him. he answered--we went down the road & met him...

I say, what a character. Tries to see how quickly he can get your goat---GOT mine.



A sign on the old road...U95

FINALLY ON THE RIVER...

...Pushed off. Harry on the oars but stiff up river wind necessitated using motor--made lunch stop. Sandwiches on boat. Not too long after Ticaboo.

...water higher than last trip I was on. Went back to Hite's grave (no cabin) didn't stop at Roper's diggings. Hot walk. Took no pics of glyphs---just V-shaped notch overlooking Hite's valley. Had bath in creek again. Back to boats and on down river to camping spot, East bank, upper Rincon. Got settled. Harry had dinner soon--sat around the fire and listened to Dock tell about running the river with jets---more fun---so glad I could come. Slept well.

The Hite Ferry operator, Woody Edgell



THUR OCT 4

On top of Old Tapestry Wall PHEW! More later--no energy. This is an authentic 'sight.' 4 Henrys visible, also Black Mesa (west of road to Canyon de Chelly) Navajo Mtn rising in the haze; Waterpocket Fold & beyond Kaiparowitz Plateau.

Boy, what a view.

Took me 2 hr 13 min going, 2 hrs 12 min returning. Had lunch there, recorded names. Stayed awhile...

Pooped when arrived back in camp. We plopped--Harry made us tea. Finally think I'll recover. Thunder and black clouds overhead. Better get dressed. So ends my climb to Tap Wall. Magnificent. Worth the two blisters acquired (on bottom of my big toes).

FRI OCT 5

Well, here I sit awaiting dawn. Measuring and folding toilet paper. Shrotly after finished writing yesterday aft. storm blew over cliff on opp. side of river and everyone was occupied with holding things down

Man, what a blow.



Edna Fridley

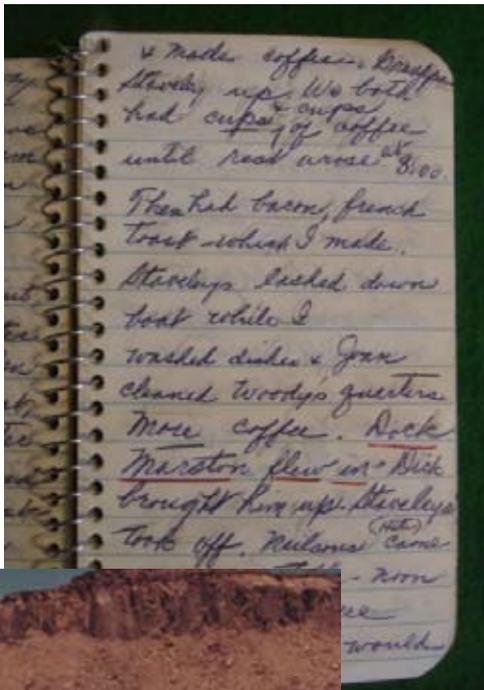
INDIAN CAMP... GOOD HOPE BAR

Went down river a bit--searched for chips on old Indian Campground---none---only 2 small thin ones...

My Indian sat on a bluff overlooking one of the most beautiful scenes--toward Ticaboo--so he didn't get many arrows chipped. Harry decided not to camp there. Too much carrying.

Good Hope Bar, formerly scene of intensive mining operations...In afternoon had wandered back in with Bud & Jerry to see where ops had been conducted--reservoir, old stone house, old printing press, junk. After dnnr sat around fire again listening to Dock tell about married couple lost in Grand, Buzz Halstrom.

To bed at 8:00--cold



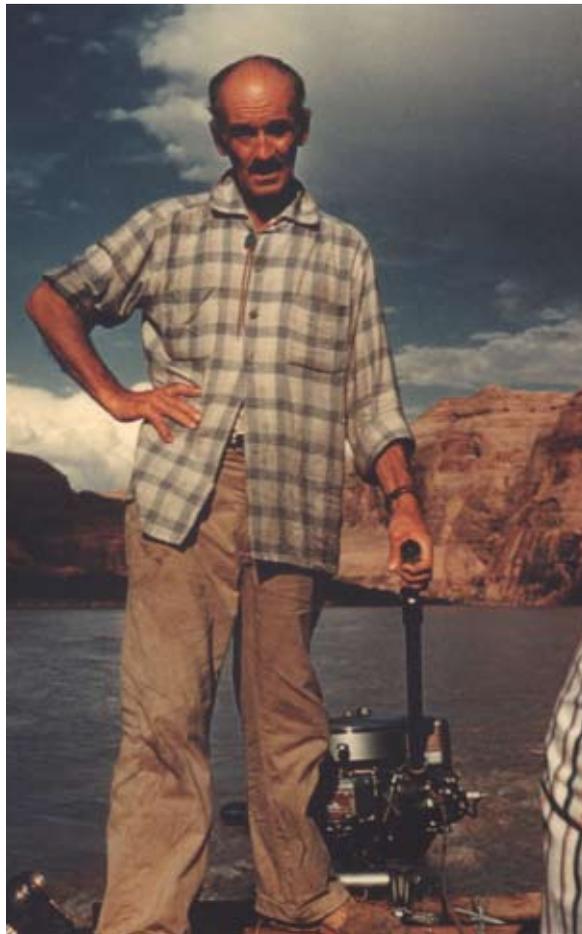
Hite from the air.



Hite Ferry

Oct 2...I took off overland--down river to the mouth of a canyon two miles distant where Harry said they'd stop to look for Hite's name. Was FUN. Reached Chinle formation at edge of canyon. Reached wash that comes out of canyon. Found a shady spot. Cleaned out sock & boots and heard Harry whistling, walk'g around rocks. said he'd found Hite's name. This I must photograph. Heard Dock so will quit writing...

Only thought it was Dock. Had to wait some more 'til others come up....Harry found an arrow head--gave it to me---it's a beautiful pink and is perfect. We had lunch on bank but I think I ate too much because later after dinner, was MOST uncomfortable. Floated down river a few miles. Put in at Mummy Sprgs. Made bed up on bench. Had bath. After eating took shovel and surprised a porcupine in oaks. He took off and so did I. To bed at 8. Slept well.



Harry Aleson at the controls.

SUN OCT 7...

Stopped upriver from hall's crossing so Harry could climb up to mark landing field for Bishop Wells & mark landing for Ken Sleight. He, Dottie, Dock climbed up an old road leading from Hall's Cross'g. I followed at a slow pace...

NEXT ISSUE:
More from Edna's journals, including the Big Day: Harry and Dottie get married and Dock drinks all the whiskey.