

LAST FLOAT DOWN GLEN CANYON--SEPT/OCT 1962

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 tunnel 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...and, of course, these amazing, never-before-seen photos..JS



Words & Photographs by
EDNA FRIDLEY



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 Na-vajo 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.



White Canyon airstrip. On approach.

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 leaped out and started to wade the creek. After cars drove thru found out it was the Staveleys from Mexican Hat! They had camped the nite on the other side of White Canyon. 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 boat was partially on trailer, it all settled into the mud—egads! Some Time Later after using up the balance of my film—the boat and trailer were out of R and we went back across to the place. Was obvious boat was too long and angle too sharp to go thru behind station wagon.. About this time the mail plane came in. Still very cloudy and on the rainy side. Day's father was already over so he started for air strip for me to tell pilot—no mail—but after Mr Staveley got stuck - another place here came Frank Barrett—he'd gotten thru, picked up mail and was on his way to strip - egads again. So I took mail and started hoofing—almost reached strip when here came Mr Staveley - anyway, did get the mail to plane, (whee,) went back to the place. Dick (US Geological Survey) had pulled boat over by backing up (I guess.) Anyway, it was all over. Came back to store—whiled away some time til we decided what to have for dinner—hamburger, gravy (mine) on bread and serve rolls, green beans and apple pie—couldn't talk Joan into goat burgers! After dishes (oh yes—when back from getting boat, discovered no water at Woody's) all tired and so to bed.





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.



Dock at Indian Ruin. White Canyon side of ferry.

30 Sept—Sunday Launched finally about 10:20 AM. Had the usual adventure.

Woody's station wagon wouldn't start— NATCH

...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.

