

EDNA FRIDLEY'S SPIRAL JOURNAL 1962

Down Glen Canyon to Harry Aleson's Wedding...#2

Photos by Edna

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

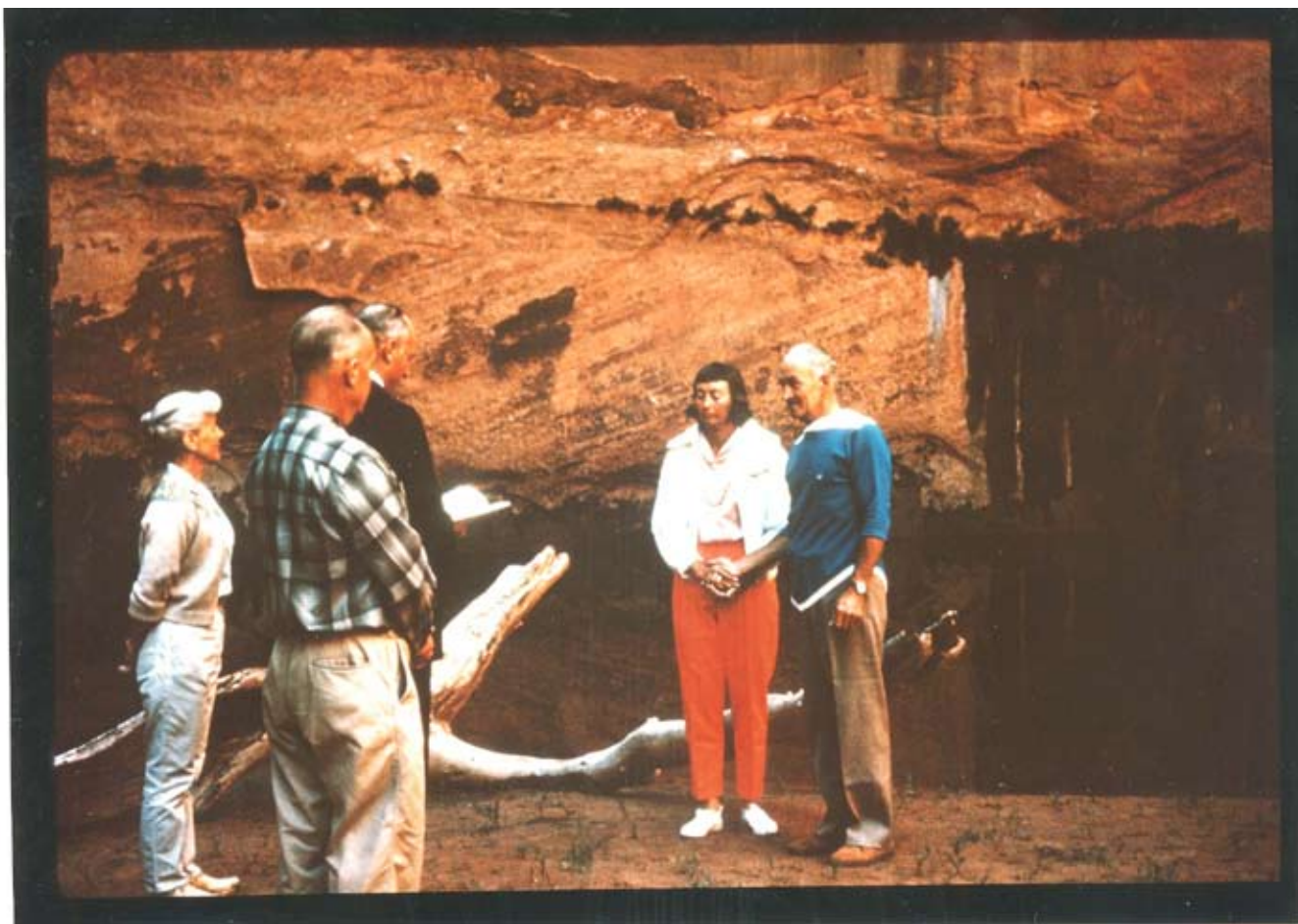
Sunday October 7

Slept finally until 11:00 and then 2:00—also 4:00! While snuffling and snorting plus watching 7 shooting stars. Then saw what seemed at first to be a shooting star, but Harry had mentioned sighting one of the satellites earlier and that's what this proved to be. Harry called to me to attract my attention. Up finally—couldn't stay down any more. Breakfast, perked up. Dottie bathed and washed hair (Bullfrog rapid coming up)



Shortly after, heard Ken Sleight's motor. He arrived in a rubber raft and 10HP motor with not only Bill Wells but a newspaper and gal named Nina Robison (lives on ranch near Hanksville) and his police dog, Misty.

Stopped upriver from Hall's Crossing so Harry could climb up to mark landing field for Bishop Wells and mark landing for Ken Sleight. He, Dottie, Dock climbed up on old road leading from Hall's Crossing. I followed at slow pace. Took pic of Hoskinini Mesa to which we'd climbed the day before. Harry found the airstrip before he expected to, so we went back to boat, ate lunch, went down closer to crossing, didn't see others, walked along wall to see petroglyphs, etc, finally screaming attracted Dock's attention—he was back at rock where ring is imbedded. Barbara and Bering under willows where boat was tied. They had discovered some water pockets in hillside and bathed while we were traipsing up old road. All together again and across to West Bank so men could go back and see names inscribed on rock at crossing. Then downriver short way to camping and wedding spot, (Lost Eden). Dick Strong named it "Harry's Wedding Chapel." We set camp and Harry and Dottie and I took off thru the brush—he chopping furiously, we gals picking dry branches, over slick rock, thru sand—down a small slick rock cliff (?) Thru knee deep narrow pools of water. Muck bottom but at last we reached pool and alcove in which wedding is to take place—pew—am worn out. Harry and I took bath in pool—egads, ice water—but most refreshing. Harry says he'll chop more trail in AM so we won't have to wade. Would be impossible to dress decently and wade. Back to camp, dinner, but first a toast to Harry and Dottie with bourbon which has its own story. Was an unused bottle Bert Loper had in boat when he was drowned in Marble Canyon in '49. I drank mine down at once and let out a few mild whoops and bayed at the moon. This on an empty stomach. Good thing Harry had dinner ready to serve. We had shrimp cocktail—Bering and I stole Dock's—he wasn't interested anyway. He had enough bourbon to choke a cow, became more loquacious than usual, if this is possible. We had a small ball—ate and all went to bed —8:30 P.M.



*Then the ceremony,
simple and to
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the tinkling of the bell
which Dottie had given
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Edna
Fridley

Monday October 8 Wedding Day

Well, we've got Dottie and Harry married and lost Dock, at present chugging along below Hall's Crossing. Was up and dressed when at 7:25 A.M. Bishop Wells flew over camp.

Shortly after, heard Ken Sleight's motor. He arrived in a rubber raft and 10HP motor with not only Bill Wells but a newspaper and gal named Nina Robison (lives on ranch near Hanksville) and his police dog, Misty. Shortly, after clearing table, placing purple glass bottle, fruitcake and card among tamarisk upon it, Nina, Barbara and I started for the wedding alcove. This alcove is much reminiscent of Music Temple, but naturally more secluded since parties do not go in there. It is a truly lovely place in which to be married—or even to see. Harry had cut trail over sand bar so we didn't have to wade. Consequently, were able to dress in Wedding clothes—good thing—Bishop Wells had on a business suit! Much picture taking by everyone but Dottie and Harry.

Then the ceremony, simple and to the point, the tinkling of the bell which Dottie had given me to shake right after the ceremony. Dragged out my rice and everyone threw some on the bride and groom. Harry had taken some too, so he threw it at us! Guess he's really a screwball in addition to being a romantic old fool—and yet I feel somewhat guilty calling him that.

That alcove was such a lovely place with the pool and the ferns (and red poison ivy?) growing along a crack in the wall above it. These were my sentiments last night when we were hacking thru those ungodly willow thickets and wading in the icy water and much—but I dare say if it had been chosen for me as a place in which to marry I'd have approved, willow thickets and icy water notwithstanding.



Later

Am now writing this while sitting on a rock in Lake Canyon—with my feet in some more ice water, the difference being in the fact that I'm sitting in the sun at 3:00 in the afternoon. That sun makes a powerful lot of difference in one's reaction to cold water. After Ken took Bishop Wells and Nina back upriver to the plane, he returned for Dock. We had broken camp in the meantime.

Dock had offered to see to it that Woody's present to Dottie and Harry reached Kane Creek safely but was a vain hope on his part. Barbara's suggestion that it be kept until the publication of Dock's book about the river was taken up (eagerly) by Dottie and Harry, so off Dock went without any bourbon to wet his whistle. Ken's taking him to Page since he (Dock) has to be in Denver in 2 days. We came a few miles down river to Lake Canyon. All voted to spend an afternoon loafing, so here I am back at the rock with my feet in the water. Dottie's trying to find a place to swim—but now I see her sitting near the top of the waterfall with Harry. Barbara and Bering are above me sunning on a rock. Tomorrow we're supposed to go to a moki ruin above the waterfall. Have only 1 roll of film left.