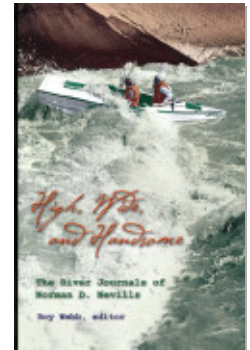




PROJECT MUSE®

Green River, June 19 to July 3, 1949; Grand Canyon, July 12
to July 31, 1949



Published by

Webb, Roy.

High Wide And Handsome: The River Journals of Norman D. Nevills.

1 ed. Utah State University Press, 2005.

Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/9298.

➔ For additional information about this book
<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/9298>

Green River,
June 19 to July 3, 1949
Grand Canyon,
July 12 to July 31, 1949

No diary, original or transcribed, exists in the Nevills papers for the 1949 Green River and Grand Canyon trips. There is little doubt that Nevills kept one, for he was a persistent journal keeper; but he obviously had no time to transcribe it before his tragic death, just weeks after he returned from the Grand Canyon. Despite searches, no trace of the original has been found. It could have disappeared in the turbulent period immediately after he was killed or it could have ended up in the vast collection of documents compiled by Otis Marston. But in the interest of continuity and to bring closure to his river career, the editor drew upon other diaries that were kept during those trips to give a synopsis of the trips. The sources are: the diary of P.T. Reilly, and to supplement the Grand Canyon trip that year, a diary kept by Frank Masland. Both Reilly and Masland were observant and perceptive diary keepers. Reilly, an engineer by vocation, viewed the personalities and events of the trip with a precise, detailed, and at times acerbic, eye. Masland, who had been on the 1948 Grand Canyon trip—and was by his own admission already completely under the spell of Nevills and made no apologies to anyone for the fact—likewise kept a detailed account. The P.T. Reilly diary is courtesy of the Cline Library, Special Collections and Archives at Northern Arizona University, while the Masland diary is from the Marriott Library's Special Collections Department at the University of Utah. Additional information was gleaned from newspaper clippings that are also found in the Nevills Papers, as well as from P.T. Reilly's 1986 article in Utah Historical Quarterly, "Norman Nevills: Whitewater Man of the West."

GREEN RIVER,
JUNE 19 TO JULY 3, 1949

The water was high in 1949, perfect for a successful river season. Nevills ran five San Juan trips from May 1 through the first week of June, meaning he barely had time to go home, repack the boats and supplies, and turn



Norman Nevills at Expedition Island, near Green River, Wyoming, receiving commemorative license plates for his boats from the Utah and Wyoming Highway Patrol

around for another trip. The reason for the haste was the 80th anniversary of the launching of the expedition led by John Wesley Powell; ceremonies were planned for Green River, Wyoming, and Nevills's old friend, Adrian Reynolds, made sure that Nevills was included in the plans. In fact, Nevills was already planning a Green River run, but had decided to start at Flaming Gorge, thus cutting off about seventy miles of flat water from the town to the first canyon. The prospect of free publicity, however, was always an attraction to Nevills, and the agenda for the trip was changed accordingly.

The last San Juan trip ended at Lees Ferry on June 12, 1949, and after two days to clean equipment, repack supplies, and do maintenance on the trailers, the crew left from Mexican Hat on June 15. In those days of unpaved roads and less powerful trucks, it took longer to cross the distances in the West, and it wasn't until June 17 that they arrived in Green River, Wyoming. They spent the next day repairing one of the trailers, causing Reilly to lament, "Sure wish our trailers were made from new parts instead of being assembled from junk yards." A new monument to John Wesley Powell had been erected at Expedition Island, a cove on the Green River within the little town, and a program was scheduled for the afternoon of June 19. Representatives of the Utah Highway Patrol and Wyoming Highway Department presented Nevills with special commemorative license plates

for his boats, and after speeches by local leaders, the Nevills party repaired to the house of Adrian Reynolds for a buffet dinner.

The next day the party got an early start. The boatmen were all veterans save for one: Nevills in the *Wen*, Jim Rigg in the *Mexican Hat II*, Frank Wright in the *Sandra*, and P.T. Reilly¹—the only new boatman—in the *Joan*. With a couple of exceptions again, all of the passengers had been on previous trips with Nevills. They were: Nancy Streator, Joe Desloge Sr., Zoe Desloge, Marie Saalfrank, and Ros Johnson. The newcomers were: Barney Desloge,² and Arthur, Betty, and John (their son) Compton.³ Watched by townspeople from the banks, they went downriver just a few miles, watching a herd of wild horses swim the river in front of them, and camped in the Firehole Towers area early in the afternoon. That night, as they were all wondering about the height of the hills that shaded their camp, Arthur Compton, a physicist from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, told everyone he could easily determine the height of the hill within three percent. Reilly, who had been a surveyor, knew what Compton was going to do, but the others were doubtful. Using a thorn, a cereal box lid, and a piece of string, Compton made a crude protractor, took two measurements, amazed even Reilly by doing the complicated math in his head, and announced that the hill was 328 feet high.

After a “pleasant night,” they were on the river shortly before 8:00 AM. Just after pushing off, they came across some geese swimming the river. “Immediately I had visions of roast goose for supper,” wrote Reilly, and after trapping the geese—that couldn’t fly because they were moulting—he dove in and finally succeeded in grabbing the largest one. Wringing its neck, they went on and soon made the customary landing to pay their compliments to Mrs. Holmes at the Holmes ranch. After leaving her that afternoon, they saw a great deal of wildlife before they camped; besides more geese, there were deer, beaver, ducks, and muskrats. That night they had no dutch oven so there was no way to roast the goose that Reilly had caught earlier. Wright boiled it, but the results weren’t worth the effort; the goose was tough, “but the soup was OK.” That night Adrian Reynolds and Barbara Rigg came into their camp, bringing business papers for Jim Rigg to sign. They had searched all along the river until midnight before finding the river party.

After another early start, they floated along through the open reaches of the Green, surrounded by more wildlife. At lunch, Arthur Compton once again displayed his various talents by making a complete set of panpipes out of willow twigs. Camp that night was not so pleasant, as they were pestered by a plague of mosquitoes, which was to be an all-too-frequent occurrence for much of the rest of the trip. The next day they woke up groggy and covered with welts, and were off as soon as the sun was up. Finally, they entered first Flaming Gorge, then swept around the bend into Horseshoe Canyon and Kingfisher Canyon—Reilly lamented about his own and Nevills’s lack of knowledge about the geology of the Green River canyons—and camped early at Hideout Flat campground. Nevills, Jim Rigg,



Norman Nevills running Ashley Falls, 1949, with Joe Desloge, passenger

Barney and Zoe Desloge, and John Compton set out for the four-mile hike to the Green Lakes Lodge, where they planned to spend the night. The rest stayed by the river and had a pleasant evening, save for another visitation by mosquitoes.

The hikers were back early, and they entered Red Canyon soon after launching. Here they encountered the first real rapid of the trip: Ashley Falls. After searching in vain for the Ashley inscription, Nevills ran the left side of the rapid successfully. He then walked back up and took the *Sandra* through. Jim Rigg also had a good run, but was chewed out by Nevills for neglecting to wear his life jacket. Nevills was even more upset when Barney Desloge and John Compton swam through the rapid, but Reilly noted that it was “no big deal.” They ran on down a few miles and camped at the mouth of Cart Creek, which in just a few years would be the site of the Flaming Gorge Dam. The next day they ran down to Red Creek Rapid at the end of Red Canyon, and learned after running it that Ros Johnson was feeling very sick. She had found ticks on her skin a few days before, and as it turned out, had contracted a case of tick fever. Deciding that she needed to see a doctor, they floated down to the Taylor Ranch in Browns Park, where the rancher agreed to take her to Rock Springs, Wyoming, to get treatment. The mosquitoes in Browns Park were even worse than they had been above the canyons, and all suffered greatly. Reilly commented, “I don’t know why anybody ever decided to live in Brown’s Park as the mosquitoes



Arthur Compton, Betty Compton, John Compton

are unbelievable. Sometimes they hit us in mid-river tho we usually lose them there. As soon as we shove our bows into the grass they come out in great clouds. I think all the outhouses here have smudge pots and anybody going Indian fashion risks losing a pint of blood.” Later that day a strong wind—usually the bane of river runners—was welcomed because it brought relief from the mosquitoes. That night, they camped in a drizzle just above the Gates of Lodore and were surprised to see Adrian Reynolds and his wife come up, bringing Ros Johnson back to the trip. It was a measure of her passion for river running that she returned to the trip after being diagnosed with tick fever, a painful and dangerous ailment. A newspaper article written about the trip was headlined “Green River Expedition Seems To Be Plagued by Old ‘13 jinx,” and it commented on Johnson’s illness and Jim Rigg’s “business emergency.” That night they went to sleep with the Gates of Lodore looming over their camp, promising fast water in the morning.

The next day brought them into the Canyon of Lodore, and rapids were soon encountered. Reilly let Barney Desloge row through upper Disaster Falls, expecting the bigger water to be in the lower part, but he was disappointed and commented that it must have been “sheer stupidity” for Powell to lose a boat in such a minor rapid. The level of the water—about 5,000cfs—was perfect for such easy runs of the big rapids in Lodore, and they passed Triplet Falls with no problems. Camped just below it that night,

Portaging Hell's
Half Mile, Green
River, 1949



Nevills announced that they would portage Hell's Half Mile the next day. During the arduous portage, Reilly was "cussing with every grunt because it was unnecessary." Camp that night was at the foot of the rapid, and they relaxed that evening with a game of charades. With a short day ahead of them, they lounged in camp for the morning and then made the easy miles down to Echo Park, where to Reilly's dismay, they camped on an island at the mouth of the Yampa River. By this time Reilly was getting disgusted with Nevills because he planned no hikes, so they ended up sitting in camp after short days.

After a late breakfast the next day, they ran down to the mouth of Pool Creek, at the lower end of Echo Park, where the party met the caretaker of the Chew Ranch. Nevills had arranged the night before for a ride to the ranch—about four miles from the river—where they all enjoyed fresh homemade bread and buttermilk. Back on the river, they entered Whirlpool Canyon on double the water they had been on, and within a short time stopped at the mouth of Jones Hole Creek, a popular camping and fishing spot. Despite that stream's reputation, Reilly didn't catch any fish, and they soon were on their way to camp at Sage Creek. There, Reilly asked Nevills why he didn't plan any hikes. Nevills replied that he had to make the trips

last to keep his prices up, and felt that most passengers didn't like to hike. After a few miles, they left Whirlpool Canyon the next day and rowed out into the flat water between there and the head of Split Mountain Canyon. Reilly noted that the nine-mile stretch "could be a death march at low water." They stopped at the Ruple Ranch, where Nevills had stopped since his first trip in 1940, and Reilly noted that the cottonwood tree in the yard must be at least 25–30 feet in circumference. Alice Bates, a former passenger on the *San Juan*, arrived with Joel Evans from Vernal, followed shortly by Doris, Barbara Rigg, and Bob Rigg, Jim's younger brother. The party spent the rest of the break riding horses and enjoying lunch at a table with Evans's family. They were back on the water soon after lunch, with Bates⁴ along for the last stretch through Split Mountain Canyon.

Split Mountain, with the greatest fall of any of the canyons of the Green, was wonderful with fun, splashy rapids. Reilly wrote that in Moonshine Rapid—the first one—Arthur Compton "served as a splashboard" on his boat and "took a giant wave which came over the stern when I crashed it. We came out whooping exuberantly." Running through the rest of the canyon, Reilly declared—as generations of boaters were to learn after him—that Split Mountain represents rapid running at its finest. Landing at the foot of the canyon, they met Doris and the Riggs once again, and all save for Ros Johnson went with Jess Lombard, the superintendent of Dinosaur National Monument, for a tour of the world-famous dinosaur quarry. Camp that night was at the foot of Split Mountain Canyon, which is today the location of the boat ramp where Green and Yampa River trips take out.

The next day, Reilly noted that the last dozen miles down to Jensen, Utah, were "flat, quiet, boring," and wished that the trip had ended at their last camp on a "high note instead of this anticlimactic leg." Norman and Doris had gone on ahead in the truck and after a few hours came zooming over the river in a rented airplane. After a muddy landing below the Jensen bridge, the boats were loaded and all went into nearby Vernal. They stayed in the best hotel in town, and that night spoke on the local radio station. Reilly met famed riverman Bus Hatch, "who is more stooped and wrinkled than I expected." Reilly then watched in amazement as Joe Desloge, Sr., wrote Nevills a check for almost \$5,000, besides giving each boatman a \$20 tip. "A true gentleman and well heeled," he commented.

The next day, July 3, they headed back to Mexican Hat, but heavy rains caused slow going and they didn't reach Blanding, Utah, until late that night. They spent the night on Frank Wright's front lawn "under a broken sky." Nevills's final Green River trip was over.

GRAND CANYON, JULY 12 TO JULY 31, 1949

The 1949 Nevills Expedition Grand Canyon trip left Lees Ferry on July 12 on more than 43,000 cfs, the highest water Nevills had ever seen in his

career. The boatmen and boats were the same as the Green River run, but unlike most Grand Canyon trips, this one was composed of a number of newcomers to the river. First timers that were only going as far as Bright Angel were John and Evie Mull;⁵ Josiah Eisaman and his daughter, Anne;⁶ Eddie McKee⁷ of the National Park Service; Molly Maley;⁸ and Nancy Streater, who though only a teenager, was by now a veteran of several Nevills Expedition voyages. The only passengers who signed up for the whole trip were Frank Masland⁹ and Bill Hargleroad¹⁰ of Omaha. Because the Paria River was flooding, they couldn't reach Lees Ferry and were forced to bushwhack through the willows to launch their boats. A large crowd of well-wishers from Steator's family, as well as friends of Nevills, were there to see them off.

They were accompanied for the first few days by two powerboats with crews from the Bureau of Reclamation, who were on their way down to the Marble Canyon dam site.¹¹ The high water caught them all by surprise, and it took all their whitewater skills to safely navigate a river that was full of boils, strong eddies, and whirlpools. Badger Creek was a surprise, and—fulfilling a promise made by Nevills the year before—it was Masland's introduction to rowing a boat in big rapids. Masland wrote, "Was lucky, waves broke right, so a dry ride. Managed to pull out in fair shape. But, oh that feel, that marvelous unexplainable feel when the power of the water takes over as the slide down the tongue starts; the water that seems to say 'I kept quiet so you could row out if you wanted to. You passed up your chance, it's now too late.'" In Soap Creek both Reclamation boats were caught by lateral waves and tossed into the air; one almost came down upside down. When the motor was drowned out, the boatman grabbed a set of oars and rowed the boat the rest of the way through. Camp that night was just below Soap Creek. The next day Masland, who was again at the oars, was stopped by a wave in Sheer Wall Rapid and surfed back down the wave face. "Norm and Frank both said they had never seen a boat slide down a wave upstream," he wrote. Masland was learning to row the hard way: in difficult conditions of high water in a narrow canyon. Even with the master Nevills at the oars, it was tough going. The stretch of canyon is today called the "Roaring Twenties" for the many rapids between Miles 19 and 32, and it took all of Nevills's skill to keep the boat off the walls and out of whirlpools.

After a tight camp at Vasey's Paradise, they made the by-now customary visit to the skeleton near South Canyon, and got on the river. The Bureau of Reclamation camp was just downstream, and Reilly recorded that they stopped to look over the camp and the dam site. "Their pack train met them on the dot and Norm and I climbed out to a point [,] took telescopes [photographs] of the burros by the boats." This was far as the powerboats went, so it was time to say goodbye and continue.

They stopped for lunch at what Masland called "Unknown Canyon." Today it's known as Bert's Canyon. Just a few days before, veteran riverman Bert Loper, had been running 24½ Mile Rapid with young Wayne Nichol; Don Harris and his friend, Jack Brennan, were in another boat. As they

approached the rapid, Nichol felt they were on the wrong line, so he turned around and said, "Look to your oars, Bert!" But the 80-year-old Loper was unresponsive and glassy-eyed. Just then the boat overturned. Loper was last seen floating in his life jacket, facing downstream. The boat got away and was found near Mile 41. There were other parties on the river then—an indication that Nevills, had he lived, would have had some competition after all—and Harris, Brennan, and Nichol, along with Howard "Cowboy" Welty, and Harry Aleson and his friends, Louise Fetzner and Ralph Badger pulled the boat above the high water and tied it to a tree. On the rear deck they painted Loper's epitaph.¹² Nevills's party hiked to the boat to pay their respects and take photographs, and they erected a cairn with one of the oars for a monument. All noted that the boat was poorly made with shingle nails and quarter-inch plywood; it was, basically, a disposable boat.

No one wanted to camp near that grim reminder, so they moved down to President Harding Rapid, to the big beach on the left below it. There, Reilly, who had earlier on the Green been wishing for a "snort of something stronger than river water" one cold night, found an "old, battered can of beer. No brand visible. We open it, find it palatable and cool and have a round robin." Camp was enlivened by a "roaring fire," as Masland noted.¹³ They made the traditional camp at Nankoweap the next day, and Nevills lit two giant driftwood piles, a first for him. As they were running Kwagunt Rapid the next day, the run was so smooth that Nevills dipped a bail bucket of river water and doused Masland. "Probably the only way he would have gotten wet," Reilly said, but that was not Anne Eisaman's experience. In the *Sandra* with Frank Wright, she was sitting on the stern when a big wave washed her overboard. "Miss Eisaman, a Wellesley College student, was flung from the special cataract boat as it bounced and sped in the rock-strewn waters of the river which has claimed many a veteran boatman," a breathless newspaper article noted. "In an instant, willing hands of the boatmen pulled her back."¹⁴ Wright noted, laconically, that "We hit a hole and Ann floated off but hung onto the ropes." No doubt, all were holding on a little more tightly after that, but since there are no significant rapids after Kwagunt for quite a few miles, they drifted along, stopping for lunch at the Little Colorado River, exploring the old mines near Lava Canyon, and finally camping at the foot of the Tanner Trail. Since it was both the first big rapid day and their last day as a group, ceremonies and rituals were held that night. The ceremony inducted Eddie McKee and Nancy Streator, both of whom had already done the lower part of the canyon, into the order of Colorado River Rats. The ritual consisted of "Norm in his usual nerve shattering style and commensurate effect" describing the horrors of Hance, Sockdologer, and Grapevine, the big rapids they had to run the next day. Afterwards, John Mull read a passage from Masland's book, *By the Rim of Time* that described the same stretch; Masland noted that, "The combination was such that several later admitted a fitful night and difficulty swallowing breakfast."

Even Nevills had reason to be nervous and not only because for the first time, their fire had elicited no response from the Desert View Watchtower. Nevills knew the big rapids ahead—had run them more than any man—but he had never seen them with this much water, and two of his boatmen had never seen the canyon at all. “We started the day with tautness obviously present,” Masland wrote, a feeling that any big-water boatmen knows well. Tanner, Unkar, and Seventy-Five Mile Rapids were just warm-ups for the big ones to come, and making a tense situation worse was the heat; it was their first really hot day and all were wilting. Hance just looked too difficult, and after studying it for more than an hour, Nevills reluctantly decided to line it. They let their boats down about four hundred feet, past the worst of the boulders at the top, and then ran on. Everyone was anticipating Sockdologer and they weren’t disappointed. “What a sight! Monstrous waves.” Reilly said. But Masland, who had seen it the year before when the water was at a more difficult level, was relieved: “Only a short look was required to assure us that Soc was in a kindly mood. The great waves were there. The force and power were present but the tongue was clear cut straight through the center . . . it was a marvelous ride, never could it be finer.” Wright noted that when Nevills saw it, he was “jubilant.” Although Grapevine did not appear so benevolent, all made it through the last of the big three for the day with no problems. They floated down to Bright Angel with “much singing, calling back and forth, and kidding.”

At Bright Angel, they found a large crowd, including Doris and Joan Nevills, Ruth Rigg (Jim’s mother), and Susie Reilly. There would have been more people, as a great number of tourists had wanted to see them come in, but the decision to line Hance put the river party behind schedule and the tourists had left. Here the party was to change, with virtually all of the passengers from the upper end hiking out. Saying goodbyes were John and Evie Mull, Edwin McKee, Nancy Streater, and Anne and Josiah Eisaman. Even Bill Hargleroad, who had paid for a full passage, decided that the rapids the day before had been quite enough excitement and joined the departing hikers. As usual, Nevills took a two-day layover at Bright Angel to restock food, rest sore muscles, and regain cohesion as a group. Masland’s eye had been bothering him ever since some sand blew into it at Lees Ferry; it was so painful at times that he wondered if he should go on. Hearing this, Joe Eisaman immediately called the hospital on the rim and arranged for medicine recommended earlier by Dr. James Rigg, Jim Rigg’s father, to be sent down the next day. The medicine worked, and Masland was able to continue, although the eye hurt for the rest of the trip.

On July 20, it was back on the river. Joining them were twelve-year-old Joan Nevills, Mary Ogden Abbott,¹⁵ R.J. “Bud” and Tro Anspach,¹⁶ and Helen Kendall.¹⁷ Susie Reilly, Doris, and several others rode the boats down to where they could catch the trail back up to the rim, and then it was on to Horn Creek. Passing Horn Creek Rapid with nothing more than a “hard, wet, rough ride,” they then ran down to Granite Falls, which they ran after

a brief scout from the left bank. Hermit was next, and at the water level they were on, there are enormous roller-coaster waves in the center. Nevills decided that the risk of capsizing was too great, so he decided to line. They accomplished this task with “considerable difficulty but great efficiency,” as well they should, for a sour Reilly noted that Nevills had run Hermit only three times out of seven trips. The lining meant another short day, and Nevills knew that people on their first night don’t want a long day on the river. Camp was at Boucher Rapid. Masland walked a mile back up the winding canyon to find water, which he decided “had unique flavor; most admirable. Noted burro signs everywhere.” When he returned, he and Mary Abbott made a pot of tea, and they found it so tasty that, “Then and there formed the Boucher Tea Company, Limited; limited to one product, Boucher Tea Aroma de la Burro.”

The next day they stopped at Tuna Creek to revisit the camp where they had found the gear from the marooned airmen the year before. Norman, Joan, Jim Rigg, and Reilly climbed up and soon found the site. They brought back flares, canteens, army blankets (including one made by a mill that Masland’s firm had contracts with), and other souvenirs. Reilly even found the original instructions that had been air-dropped to the stranded airmen.¹⁸ Then it was on to the Gems, a series of rapids that are big and fun at high water levels.¹⁹ All had a great time, Mary Abbott especially: “Mary is thoroughly enjoying them,” Masland wrote. “[She] states she has absolutely no sense of fear, probably due to complete confidence in Norm.” They camped at Shinumo Creek that night and early the next day, they went only a few miles, stopping at Elves Chasm. They climbed to the pools where Masland, like so many after him, was struck by the beauty of the glistening waterfalls: “Joan swam pool then climbed up in back coming out and standing in a window. A nymph of the falls framed with moss and ferns and with a sun splashed pool at her feet. Not a sight I’ll forget.” Reilly, too, was impressed with the place, and when the gathering clouds cleared “got some good shots—cheesecake by Tro and Joan.” Rain came down and all that could fit repaired into Masland’s tent; but it soon passed and they spent a quiet night. At camp that night, Nevills told Masland that he was giving him the *Mexican Hat II* as a gift; Masland was touched and thrilled, and planned to put it on display at his mill in Pennsylvania.²⁰

The next day Mary Abbott seemed to be missing. Wright noted “Mary caused some concern by not showing up for breakfast. She was finally found in a nice place, well hidden, and had overslept.” They moved on through the rapids of the Middle Granite Gorge—“always bailing and never dry”—and made successful runs of Forester, Specter, the dreaded Bedrock, and Dubendorff, which Reilly called a “dilly with many holes and lateral and explosion waves.” Masland agreed: “It was worse than last year with tremendous holes that could not be avoided if run full or heavy. Just a succession of holes, all foam, leading through them. Largest hole in center was an explosion hole. The worst of this type I have seen.” They were

grateful to camp that night by the beautiful Tapeats Creek. Although Reilly and Masland tried their luck at fishing that night and the next morning, the famous Tapeats trout were not biting.

Another short day brought them to Deer Creek, where all rested, hiked to the canyon above the falls, and enjoyed the beauty of the surroundings; but it was too cool to go under the falls for the usual malted milk bet. Joan Nevills came down with a case of swimmer's ear, but treatment in Masland's tent and a night away from blowing sand put her in good condition the next day. Upset Rapid—a "vicious twister"—let them through in good shape, and they ran on down to Havasu for camp.

The water was high enough that they could row up the twisting mouth of Havasu Canyon, and they camped on the ledges above. They "swam and swam and swam and took pictures," and then lounged in the shade as the day passed. Masland was struck by his fellow passenger, Helen Kendall: "She is utterly indefatigable; as soon as we land noon or nite she is off, up a canyon or over a cliff, exploring. Skin scratched, hair awry, clothes in wild disarray; she doesn't give a hoot but keeps on going, getting a great deal from trip." Unlike the previous year, when he had woken bathed in a pool of sweat, Masland and the others had a good night's sleep. They woke to find the river a deep brown, which Nevills declared indicated a flood from the San Juan River. The river had been falling since they left Bright Angel, but recent storms now brought it back up a little. It made no difference when they camped at Lava Falls the next day. New boatman Reilly was impressed, describing the biggest rapid in the Grand Canyon as "a falling, seething mass with no channel." Lining began at dawn, with Nevills "banging the skillets" to get them all up and going. Wright recorded that the process took "45 mins on first boat, 30 on next 2, and 25 mins on last one." By 9:00 AM, the boats were below the rapid and loaded—ready to go. Fortunately, there were few supplies to carry around the rapid, as they were meeting a resupply party at Whitmore Wash, about ten miles downstream.

When they arrived there, they found several members of the Bundy family, a clan of Mormon ranchers who lived some miles away from the river on the North Rim. Also joining them at the bottom of the Whitmore Trail were Doris Nevills; Barbara Rigg, Jim's wife; his father, Dr. James Rigg; and John Riffey, the park ranger in charge of the area. Celebrating that night, they lit a giant cactus on a lava cliff above their camp, which burned for hours: "a never to be forgotten sight that light that blazed above the stygian wall against the starlit sky." The next day, resupplied and with two new passengers—Doris and Barbara Rigg—they ran various Bundy family members through the little rapid below their camp, and bid them adieu. The high water brought them to their next camp, Spring Canyon—just above 205 Mile Rapid—at noon, but by now they could feel the pull of the end of the trip, only a few days away. The next day, Masland rowed Mile 217 Rapid, with Doris as his passenger, and they had no problems getting down to Diamond Creek, their last camp, where they would stop for the usual layover day.

There was little left to burn at Diamond Creek. The next morning, a huge boulder came loose and crashed right into their camp. Just moments before, the boats had been tied to the boulder, and had they not been moved, it could have been a disaster. The day was spent lounging in the creek, taking photographs, and eating. All but the boatmen started on a hike to some old mines that Nevills claimed was only a mile away, with no climbing or bushwhacking. "Somebody ought to write a song about a Nevills mile," Masland wrote. "At about two miles we hit the underbrush just as trail started to climb; after three miles found good shade and gave up." That night they performed the rites of passage into the Colorado River Rats on Jim Rigg and Reilly, and it was the ladies' turn to make dinner.

July 31 was their last day on the river; they started early and within a few hours had reached Lake Mead. The high water helped them, with current all the way to Pierce Ferry, where they met the tour boat *Hae Dae*, which towed the boats all the way to Boulder Landing. The 1949 Nevills Expedition trip through the Grand Canyon was now history.

It had been a great trip for Norman and Doris Nevills: they got to run part of the canyon together with their daughter, Joan, the water had been high, and there had been no accidents or personal problems. Nevills wasn't planning to run the Grand Canyon in 1950 because he had other plans: The Sierra Club had already signed a contract for a trip on the San Juan, and Disney was interested in making a movie about John Wesley Powell. And then there were other rivers; he might try the Fraser River in Canada or even the Brahamaputra in far-off India. Norman Nevills and Nevills Expedition were at the top of the world, and things couldn't seem better.