High Wide And Handsome

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Grand Canyon,
July 11 to August 5, 1948

By 1948, Nevills was perched atop the river running world, and he knew it. He was about to embark on his sixth trip through the Grand Canyon, a number that was unprecedented at the time. He was well aware that he had taken over one-third of the magical “First Hundred” to go through the Canyon, and he was thus assured of a place in river-running history. The 1948 journal—for which the original, penciled notebook has been lost—is indicative of this awareness. Even more than the typed transcriptions of his 1946 and 1947 journals, it is more polished—obviously written for posterity, not just a day-to-day account.

And Nevills had good reason to feel proud: his San Juan trips were consistently booked, and he was turning away requests to go on his Grand Canyon trips. For the first time, he was actually making good money at his chosen career, and he had no competitors to speak of.

The 1948 trip—on a medium water stage of 18,600 cfs—would amply demonstrate that he was at the top of his game. For this run he had a new boatman, Frank Wright, who was loyal, competent, and best of all, not likely to be a contender for the spotlight that Nevills so loved, for Wright was another of those rare individuals in Colorado River history who had no axes to grind, and about whom it is impossible to hear a cross word.

With the 1948 trip, Nevills also gained a new friend: Frank Masland, a wealthy and influential carpet manufacturer from Pennsylvania, who would support him with passengers for his trips, and even help him with funding as needed. Masland’s friendship would persevere even in the face of tragedy.

Yet all was not well on all fronts. Some entries in the journal indicate a testiness, a lack of patience with certain members and crew that had not surfaced before. At home, his children, Sandra and Joan, were doing well, but Joan had reached the limits of homeschooling, and they were forced to send her to a boarding school in Utah. It was heart-rending for the close-knit family.

On his rise to the top of the river-running community, Nevills had made not only friends but some enemies. While people like Rosalind Johnson, Frank Masland, Randall Henderson, and Joe Desloge loved Nevills’s style and trips, others felt that he was autocratic, imperious, and rigid in his methods, and that his trips had grown stale and lacked variety. Some of those who had worked for him for a while were tired of constantly repairing trailers and equipment made from the junkyards of the
Southwest and claimed that Nevills often made them carry more than their share of supplies and passengers. He completely rejected any suggestion that he make changes to his boats. Worst of all was his lost friendship with Otis Marston, which by this time had changed to an active enmity. 1948 was the last trip that either Otis or Garth Marston would make with Nevills. Marston’s hostility, like Masland’s friendship, would outlast the life of Norman Nevills.

During 1948 Nevills continued to concentrate on his new love: his airplane. Gaylord Staveley wrote: “The airplane, like the cataract boat, had become an extension of Norm. He loved what a plane could do, where it could put him.”

Like many pilots, he always wanted a bigger and better and more powerful airplane. Not content with the Piper J3—even with the upgrades he had put into it the year before—Nevills had traded in the J3 for a Piper Super Cruiser, which was delivered at the end of the 1947 river season. The Super Cruiser was a much more powerful airplane, with more horsepower, a two-way radio, and a two-passenger back seat. He named it Cherry II, after his pet name for Doris. Not only was it sheer fun, it was good for business. No longer did passengers or guests at the Lodge have to make their way on busses and in the back of mail trucks to Mexican Hat; now Nevills could “boom over” and pick them up in Grand Junction or Kayenta, Arizona, and he could visit family and friends as far away as California.

And it was not all “flitting,” as Nevills called flying; he flew Christmas presents to isolated communities on the Navajo Reservation, and volunteered to take the sick to hospitals to spare them the agonizing rides on the horrible dirt roads of the area. But at the same time, his devil-may-care attitude toward take-offs and landings, his love of stunts like flying under the Navajo Bridge, and even simple things like being careless about straining his fuel through an old chamois, caused great concern among his friends and family. An old saying about flying goes: “There are old pilots and bold pilots, but there are no old, bold pilots.” Norman Nevills was a bold pilot.

**Grand Canyon,**

**July 11 to August 4, 1948**

1948 marked the 79th year since the first party made the trip thru the Grand Canyon, from Lees Ferry to Hoover Dam. During these years a very few, a very fortunate few of us have had the thrill of seeing the Grand Canyon by boat. Since my first trip ten years ago, in 1938, I have made, with this present trip, six trips thru the Grand Canyon. During these trips we have been responsible for conducting thru the Canyon 34 of the total 100 people who have completed the traverse. So it seems that another milestone in the history of the Canyon has been passed. The canyon has lost none of its glamour, the rapids have lost none of their thrill, their danger—the food still has sand—but it’s only inevitable that with so many trips by boat that one gets a knowledge of the Canyon that changes the trip from an uncertain exploratory trip to a trip planned to function on an easily met schedule.
I have already at one time or another expressed my many views relative to the psychology of fast water boating. So I just want to acknowledge again here my very real appreciation to all persons who have run any river anywhere with me, their trust and reliance in my leadership—their support made this all possible.

The “rating” for a trip by boat thru Grand Canyon is based on the traverse of the Grand Canyon from Lees Ferry to Hoover Dam. As a matter of record and interest I am listing below here, year by year those whom I have taken thru.

1938 Elzada Clover, Lois Jotter, Bill Gibson, Loren Bell, Del Reid, Norm Nevills
1940 Doris Nevills, Mildred Baker, Hugh Cutler, Barry Goldwater, C[harles] Larabee, John Southworth
1941 Agnes Albert, Weldon Heald, Bill Schukraft, Zee Grant
1947 Al Milotte, Randall Henderson, Kent Frost, Margaret Marston
1948 Rosalind Johnson, Frank Masland, Lucille Hiser, Wayne Hiser, Moulty Fulmer, Frank Wright

Who’s who—and where:

BOATMEN: WEN—Norman D. Nevills; MH2—Frank Wright;§ JOAN—(of course) Otis “Doc” Marston;§ SANDRA—Garthwaite Marston
THRU PASSENGERS: Frank Masland;§ Moulty Fulmer;§ Lucille and Wayne Hiser§
LEES FERRY TO BRIGHT ANGEL: Florence and Bestor Robinson§
BRIGHT ANGEL TO HOOVER DAM: Nancy Streator; Rosalind Johnson;
Howard Welty; John Doerr

JULY 11
This morning we get up secure in the thot that the big cataract boats are already down at Lees Ferry awaiting us. During the last two of the seven San Juan trips this year we hauled down the cataract boats to Lees Ferry, thus precluding any possibility of a last minute delay. Doris, Garth Marston and I are about to leave when my friend Jimmie Rigg of Pioneer Aviation shows up in the Stinson owned and piloted by Andy Watts, Andy’s wife, and Frank Hall, all of Grand Junction. They came down to bring Jimmie, who will take my Cruiser out for a working over. We decide on the spot that Doris and I will fly to Lees Ferry in the Cruiser, followed by the Stinson (only the Stinson passed us up!). Garth and Lamar Wright will come overland in the Chevrolet Suburban with additional food supplies. We arrive on schedule and find many of the party already arrived. In the afternoon we launch
the boats with the able assistance of two Bureau of Reclamation men, Jim Jordan and Rod Sanderson.\textsuperscript{10} Jim used to hold the outboard world’s speed record. Took us all for a ride in a Navy storm boat. Some ride and a beautiful display of skillful handling. The river party crew was composed of Frank Masland, Moulty Fulmer, Cowboy Welty and myself. In the evening the whole party assembles for a sort of farewell dinner. Spirits are high and nothing but keen anticipation flavors the outlook of everyone. Takeoffs are so hard, yet everyone is full of zip and rarin’ to go.

\textbf{JULY 12}

Shortly after breakfast the last member of our crew arrives in a Piper Cub. Frank Wright. Doc and I borrow the Cub and fly once under Navajo Bridge. We then all repair to the cars and drive down to Lees Ferry. Stowing of luggage commences, the boats are bailed out, and the new nylon hawsers attached. I make a hasty selection of passenger distribution,\textsuperscript{11} and we’re soon loaded.

\begin{align*}
\text{WEN:} & \quad \text{Norman D. Nevills, Florence Robinson, Wayne Hiser} \\
\text{SANDRA:} & \quad \text{Garth Marston, Lucille Hiser, Moulty Fulmer} \\
\text{MH2:} & \quad \text{Frank Wright, Frank Masland, Howard Welty} \\
\text{JOAN:} & \quad \text{Doc Marston, Bestor Robinson} \\
\end{align*}

Cowboy Welty will ride as far as Badger Creek rapid. There we expect the Bureau of Reclamation boat to come down and see us run Badger, and then take Cowboy back upstream with them.

It’s a beautiful day, the water is a bit low, only 18,000 second feet, but it has a fairish current. We are glad to be all assembled and on our way.
NAVAJO BRIDGE. Quite a few spectators up on top. We call back and forth. It’s a very real thrill to look way up at the almost spiderlike span of the beautifully arched bridge. Too, it means we are really on our way down into Marble Canyon and the rapids ahead.

BADGER CREEK RAPID and Lunch. Mile 8. Coming around a bend we hear the familiar roar of Badger Creek Rapid. After all of the relative quiet water above, plus it’s being our first major rapid, there’s a tense thrill that fills us all, and we’re impatient to get a good look at our first real barrier to the lower canyon. Landing, I find that this lowish stage of water doesn’t hurt us here at all—it’s a clean cut straight shot channel. I decide the first runs should be solo to test the boat balance and the actual punch of the water. 11:20 AM, shove off in the WEN. Right on course, uneventful but a lot of fun. Garth next in the SANDRA. OK. Frank next in the MH2. The signals fail to get the results, and Frank clips the big right hand center hole. A real thrill ride. I glance up to see the Reclamation boat pulling in with Mrs. Jordan aboard too. I have Doc take Rod Sanderson aboard for the final ride. I do the signalling but again there’s a mixup, and Doc and Rod take on the right hand hole—another below, and have one wild and wooly ride. But other than a good soaking and a lot of fun no damage is done. The river always is looking for an opportunity to drive home the point that caution and care is needed at all times!

After lunch we elect to cut any siesta time short and take off for our old friend the Soap Creek Rapid. Final farewells are said, the Jordans, Cowboy and Rod Sanderson take off from the head of Badger, and we repair to our boats and shove off again.

Mile 11. SOAP CREEK RAPID. A fine roar greets our ears—and it’s pretty rough. Not a bad channel, tho and easy to pick. I take Bestor as a passenger. Swell ride. Garth comes thru with Frank Masland. OK. Frank [Wright] solo. OK. Doc solo. OK. With the running of Soap Creek we are finally in the groove and somehow adjusted to rapid running. We now are eager and keen to try out the big fellows below. The enthusiasm has been absorbed by the passengers and they too are ready for more. We intend to break the precedent of many years and camp tonight further down than usual. The WEN and the JOAN are leaking quite a bit and require constant bailing. For next season am going to see that they both have a real working over.

Mile 14. SHEER WALL RAPID. A swell ride and easy to run.

Mile 17. HOUSE ROCK RAPID. Clear skies make it safe to camp right in the mouth of House Rock Canyon. Not a bad camp tho a bit short on wood. We’re all pleasantly tired and ready for bed. Been a fine day and everyone happy.

JULY 13

Good night’s sleep. Everyone eager to be on the way. Not a bad channel here, so we’re going thru passengers and all.
Mile 18. BOULDER NARROWS. Top of rock appears to be at the 100,000 second foot stage. This would be a dangerous place with that much water.

Mile 20. NORTH CANYON RAPID. We’re rolling! Looked this one over from boat and we all piled thru in fine shape. Fine ride.

Mile 25. TWENTY-FIVE MILE RAPID. We take all passengers thru here, but one boat at a time. Drop off tongue to left.

Mile 26. TWENTY-SEVEN MILE RAPID. Run right thru, but the WEN gets water within 6” of the gunnel. Swell ride.

Between Miles 28 and 29 a hummingbird showed up and proceeded to land on everyone’s hats, shoulders, etc., boat by boat. Utterly unafraid. The bird landed on Florence’s hat and proceeded to peck on the straw.

Mile 29. TWENTY-NINE MILE RAPID. Loads of fun. Run along right wall.

Mile 32. VASEY’S PARADISE. CAMP. At this stage of water you can reach spring easily along the ledge from the big cavern above the spring. Island in center of river is about 3’ out of water. Spring temperature is 61°. After lunch all but Garth and I go over to see the dead man, and to explore the old limestone cave. Garth and I try a bit of climbing but finally relax on the sand and talk. A most pleasant lazy afternoon. This is a beautiful spot to loaf in. Fairly early to bed. Grand night for sleeping, and we all do a good job of it.

July 14
The party is in its stride. Both in camping efficiency and for adjusting to one another and have a good time.

Mile 33. REDWALL CAVERN. No sign of the rattlesnake we saw and left unharmed here last year. Get group picture.

Mile 35. BRIDGE OF SIGHS. Right. Land just below and Moulty and Garth and I climb up in cavern below and work up inside. With climbing ropes could go up and thru into the Bridge of Sighs. Roll a lot of big rocks down into the river. Difficult landing here.

Mile 40¼. Left. DWB. Initiation of the Driftwood Burners. Initiatory degree given all members. A really unusual and spectacular fire results from considerable resinous wood. Florence and Bestor Robinson, Lucille and Wayne Hiser, Moulty Fulmer, Frank Masland, and Frank Wright receive their degrees.¹³

Mile 40¾.¹⁴ Right. Fair sized canyon here. LUNCH. It is not on the map we finally determine. It should be added in another printing. We go up a short ways to get shade, then Bestor, Doc and I go on up the canyon to explore. We clamber over numerous huge rocks, shortly coming to a series of beautiful springs with an abundant growth of maidenhair fern. Good water. Other members have a siesta. On way back to the boats another drift pile is taken care of by the DWBs.

Mile 41. Center arch of ROYAL ARCHES. I see buck deer.
Mile 43. PRESIDENT HARDING RAPID. Wide open. We slip around the big rock to the right. Be careful, as higher stages make left more desirable. All OK.

Mile 47. SADDLE CANYON. We’re drifting about 3½ miles per hour thru here.

CAMP. Mile 52. NANCOWEEP CREEK. As per usual, tired or no, we hurry over and start a diversion project in NancowEEP which results in the water flowing over close to our usual camp site by the big catclaw tree. We have a nice collection of planks to rig up the kitchen. Fearing we will get flooded out, I divert a bit of the water above camp. Next morning there’s a regular canyon through the sand!

JULY 15
Camp at NANCOWEEP. This morning all but Frank, Garth, and I go up to see and photograph the ruins. After lunch Bestor, Doc, Moulty, Frank W. and I go over to Little NancowEEP and start up the canyon. We take the main fork to the left and finally get up into an area of vegetation, ferns, and pools of water—all in the shade. Even can swim. The climb on out to the top from here would be very difficult and require climbing equipment. Bestor and I scale around the head of the canyon a bit, but without ropes it’s not safe to get too far up. All relaxing by a pool when Bestor rolls a big rock into the pool, causing immediate waking up reactions—but fast! After dinner we have a game of charades, accompanied by a great fire of driftwood. The fire lights up the whole area and is really beautiful. River seems to have been dropping all the way down, but does show changes in color that suggest local showers are occurring at different points on the watershed.

JULY 16
Mile 56. KWAGUNT RAPID. At this stage rough, rocky and tricky. We run wide open and have a lot of fun—but watch this one! Good drinking water here. Good stream.

Mile 59. SIXTY MILE RAPID. Easy and fun. Were here at 10:10 [A.M.] last year!

Mile 61. LITTLE COLORADO RIVER. At first checking it appears that the Little Colorado is a muddy turgid red, but Doc finds the clear blue water about ¼ mile above. It’s a brighter blue than Havasu. We all go in swimming and have a grand time. Some of us swim down towards boats a part of the way back.

Lunch and dinner. Mile 65. LAVA CANYON. We eat lunch in the North mine tunnel. Doc takes off for an exploratory trip up Lava Canyon. The rest of us row across the river and go up and into the old Tanner Mine. We find the rate of cave-ins progressing fast even from last year. It is becoming dangerous. Return to mouth of tunnel and thence back across the river. Am awakened from nap by Frank who is worried about Doc. Frank, Garth and I set out to look for him. Reach some foul salt water. Further on Garth elects
to return. Shortly beyond we find good water. Garth joins us for drink, then goes back. Frank and I walk fast on up canyon. After 1 hour 45 min. from boats we stop for “war talk.” Just then Doc hoves into sight. He has seen a lot of deer, also the probable means of access to the North Rim. We return to find dinner prepared. Eat hurriedly, climb into the boats. and in the failing evening light run LAVA CANYON RAPID, and proceed thru the soft early evening shadows down to our designated camp at TANNER TRAIL. A most beautiful evening.

TANNER TRAIL. We land, start a large drift pile afire, and begin to receive flashlight blinks. They are unintelligible, as are ours to those on the Rim signalling. The blinking keeps up for a long time but we finally give up. Talk for some time—joke about the big run tomorrow—and it’s a dilly! After others have long gone to sleep Bestor and I sit and talk. Really enjoy our talk, and the setting is out of this world.

July 17
River has continued its drop. Going to be choppy in lower canyons.

Mile 72. UNKAR CREEK RAPID. We land here and look over, then first boat, the WEN, takes off in exactly same time to the minute as last year! I take Florence and Wayne with me, other boats watch, then they in turn come on thru passengers and all. A bit tricky and some sharp water at the bottom. We restrain manfully from having a DWB meeting in the area of the great drift pile here, but—1949?! A good ride and all arrive bottom OK.

Mile 75. SEVENTY-FIVE MILE RAPID. Good idea to check the channel each time here. We do so, then right on thru, all in a row. Bit rough but OK.

Mile 76. HANCE RAPID. Well, the lower stage of water doesn’t improve this baby. We need to take the same left, meandering channel as we do in the higher water, yet the rocks and holes are quite a bit more complicated. Others thru OK tho the trusty WEN acting a bit as tho knowing the channel made it thru a bit smoother. Water below here plenty rough itself and after loading up again and going on we get quite some ride. All thru solo on Hance.

Mile 78. SOCKDOLOGER RAPID. Hance had me prepared for a bit of a rough channel ahead, and Sock certainly presents the toughest looking takeoff at this stage that I’ve ever seen yet. Requires some tricky maneuvering right at the start. Bestor works his way quite a long ways down along the left side and reports that even in this stage of water it would be possible to go down alongside—but difficult. WEN off with Florence and Frank Masland. A marvelous ride, a thrill.

It is my firm conviction that no one has ever really lived until he or she has had a first view of Sockdologer—looked down into that fury of water, knowing he has to go thru it in the boat—taking off, poising on the brink, then with what seems like express train speed literally hurled down into
the lashing wave. It’s fearful—quickly changing into a perfectly thrilling exhilaration. ‘Nuf said.

Mile 81. GRAPEVINE RAPID. Wowsy dowse! All that can be said about Sockdologer can be said about this one—and plenty more! This one has a really confused takeoff. Looking at this one I wonder why I ever elected to lead parties into this sort of thing—but know the answer at the same time! It’s a frightfully tough looking proposition, and even when we have the channel selected I feel a bit squeamish. But—1:50 PM. Everything snugged down on the WEN. Florence Robinson and Frank Masland are aboard—we’re off! It’s a thriller, but we slide thru in wonderful style. The rest of the boats, one by one show up. All make it OK! We’re ready for lunch.

LUNCH. Mile 82. Left. BOULDER CREEK. Good shade. Have stopped here before.

Mile 84. CLEAR CREEK. A very rough number. Watch it. Land above rapid on right and it’s possible to get into Clear Creek. Do it in ’49.

Mile 84 2/3. ZOROASTER RAPID. Rough as the dickens. In fact all these numbers through here are a fine, equipment-, man-testing thrilling ride!

Mile 87. BRIGHT ANGEL CREEK. On the bank is Doris, Nancy Streator, Rosalind Johnson. Together with some Park men, a few others. Our usual almost formation-like approach is somewhat marred by Garth trailing in quite a ways behind in the SANDRA. But it’s grand to touch shore and know we’ve successfully run the upper part of the canyon. A big job lies ahead restocking supplies. Two weeks and some of the roughest water in the Canyon lies ahead—but we’ve run some pretty heavy water already and feel confident. We wish the river would stop dropping. It’s down today already to about 12,500 second feet. We all head for the swimming pool at Phantom Ranch. We meet our very fine hosts at Phantom, the Malones. Dinner is a fine and gala occasion—followed my much fun and more swimming after dinner. I have been told that our new member of the party, John Doerr, Chief Naturalist of the NPS, is a very big man in size as well as position. How heavy? My boatmen are turning in a very fine job, the boats are behaving beautifully, so I guess everything will work out fine.

JULY 18
Day spent in loafing and relaxing. John Doerr gets in. After much ribbing etc. I finally learn he only hits scales at 194. I put him on a diet anyhow, and we all have a lot of fun—at both John’s and my expense. Poor Nancy got a fine set of blisters coming down the trail so she gets in for a bit of joshing too.

JULY 19
Doris is off up Bright Angel trail. I see her over to River House. Back to the boats where Frank and Garth have sorted food. Partially stow cans, but it’s time for lunch. After lunch Frank and I get some of the supplies we had at
the USGS cabin and add to our stock. Everything appears in order and we are set for the morning. A good time at dinner. Nancy takes all of John’s food, but at last minute John appropriates her plate.—and so it goes! We all were sorry to see the Robinsons leave. They took off up the trail sometime during the night. The farewells are the hardest part of these trips. Cowboy Welty gets in with his customary enthusiasm, so our final party grouping is all set and we are ready to go in the morning.

July 20

If any failing spirits are present they are well concealed. We are given breakfast a bit early in order to give us a better start. We find the river has dropped down to 11,200 second feet, but stormy areas suggest a possible rise. After all I have been thru on 3,000 so we aren’t hurt too bad!

Sailing order:

WEN  Norm, Nance, John
MH2  Frank, Ros, Frank (Fisheyes)
SANDRA  Garth, Lucille, Moulty
JOAN  Doc, Cowboy, Wayne

Shove off. We’ve heavily loaded but everything is running well. The waves are sharp and vicious, and do throw lots of water at us. We bail.

Mile 90. HORN CREEK RAPID. And here we hit another toughy. Our customary left hand channel isn’t practicable, and the right hand is a bit of a thriller. We have lots of water ahead, I give orders for solo runs, but decide to take Nancy with me in the WEN. We shove off—and it’s a thrill ride! Make it fine. Others thru solo in good form.

Mile 93. GRANITE FALLS RAPID. One place to run, and that’s on the right down thru the big waves. They’re a bit mean and have some hard punching curls. This will have to be solo, all the way thru. It’s some ride. Land below in my usual cove, with plenty of water in the boat. Others thru in good shape, tho all get a good drubbing in the waves and a good workout getting to shore below. It’s a difficult walk around this one and is accomplished tho by everyone in good style. It’s a very real thrill to get this rapid “under the belt” as it has a lot of potential dynamite.

Mile 95. HERMIT FALLS RAPID. LUNCH. My first cursory glance as we land affirms it can be run tho how am not sure. We go have with lunch, then study the situation a bit. Not too easy, but finally work out a deal to slide thru. All make it fine, tho Frank gets clipped by one wave and is momentarily out of control. This was solo run.

Mile 96. CAMP. BOUCHER RAPID. Camp at head on left. Very little wood, quite a ways up creek to water. Good camp tho, and anchorage is good, which is important as Hermit at foot is very rough. Ros breaks out some South American MATE, similar to tea, and we all enjoy it a lot. A perfectly beautiful night.
July 21

Running Boucher Rapid. Normally we just boom thru this one, but this stage of water renders it a bit more than tricky. Presages rough going in some of our old friends below. Nance and I go off in WEN. OK. Then Garth and Ros in MH₂. Rest thru solo. All OK, but wet!

Mile 99. TUNA CREEK. These thru here have been wonderful sport. We bail plenty. We had a shot to stop at Tuna Creek, but the famous DOG LEG section ahead is too much to resist so we boom on down. What a ride!

MILE 100. On right. Thru various sources, news accounts, etc., we had all learned of the famous descent by parachute of three army men from a C-54 some four years previously. It was on the Tonto Rim above us. After four days they were spotted, lots of supplies dropped, including a radio, eventually rescued by an overland party from the North Rim. We feel it will be fun to try to locate the camp and also get a great view from the Tonto if we climb out here. We also want to try to find the radio and surprise Harold Bryant with it. Our “search party” resolves itself into: Nancy Streator, Rosalind Johnson, Doc Marston, and myself. We set out about 10:15 AM, go up a ways in the canyon at Mile 99 2/3 just upstream a ways, but find it pretty precipitous. Returning to the river we go on upstream a ways to where a long steep slope of talus appears to give access to the rim. It’s getting a bit hot, but away we go. Ros and Doc take one route, Nance and I another. Nancy’s feet have five blisters to start with so it appears that haste will be most undesirable! We expect to pick up water in Tuna Creek after reaching the rim. About 2/3 of way up, tired, thirsty—Ros and Doc ahead a ways find one of the supply chutes. Mattress, shoes, etc. etc. Broken quart of OLD OVERHOLT, and a quart canteen of water. Might be four years old, but the water tasted like nectar. Reaching the rim we park the girls in the shade and Doc and I scour the ¾ mile square mesa top, soon finding the fliers camp and the cache they left. Radio in good shape. Other stuff, canteens, blankets, etc. many first aid kits, much the worse for weathering, and rats. We get a couple of Very pistols. I go down to get the girls and awake them by shooting off a parachute flare! We gather up our loads and start down. I find I have greatly overestimated my carrying capacity, and end up caching everything but the radio itself, minus the speaker, aerial, etc. Will get it in 49. Ros and Doc go ahead. I instruct Doc to take the party on down to camp at first feasible spot downstream, as where the boats now are there’s little or no place to camp. Nance and I finally struggle on down—and flop in the river! The water tasted rather good! Making our way to camp we find Fisheyes and John Doerr [a]waiting us. By now it’s getting darkish, and I don’t care to risk running any rough water with so much load. We consume gallons of tea, find perches for the night—and sleep!
July 22

Nance, Frank, John, and I hurriedly stow our gear and take off down the river.

Mile 101. On right. We find the main party on a fine beach. We get in in time to participate in some breakfast. It’s good to get all assembled again. This rapid here, SAPPHIRE CANYON RAPID has a tricky channel. Several holes complicate the picture. But boats are soon packed and we shove off.

WEN shoves off. Rest of boats down, bialed [sic] out—and we’re off.

Mile 106. SERPENTINE RAPID. Look over briefly, then WEN off. All passengers [ride]. Marvelous ride. We’re going to town this morning.

Mile 108. SHINUMO CREEK. LUNCH. Good shade in the cove. Everyone in swimming. I sleep the soundest I have almost in years.

Mile 112. WALTHERNBERG RAPID. Well! I expected this to be a bit rough—and it really is. Very tricky takeoff and course to follow. I don’t like the looks of this one. My judgement says OK, so I end up with Nance in the WEN, and we shove off. Make it tho quite a thrill ride. Garth smacks the ledge on the left. Frank can’t drop into the secondary channel and whizzes thru the hole just off center. Makes it fine. I send John Doerr (Little John) thru with Doc. They boom thru the hole too and have a fine rousing ride. What a day!

Mile 116. ELVES CHASM. CAMP. Like old times. Make out a pretty good camp. All are tired and go to bed early. This has been a day to be long remembered.

July 23

Had a good night here at Elves Chasm, tho sand drifted a bit. This morning we go up and sign the register, go up to the falls a few hundred yards up the canyon, then climb into our water ponies and take off.

Mile 118. Right. Bit cloudy and wind blowing. Land here to perform the sacred and ancient rites of inducting Nance and John into the order of the DWBs. Both pass the requisite test and are accepted. The sign of the match is flourishing! John shows an especial ability and most acceptable enthusiasms in his displays of pyromania! We have enjoyed the change from the Granite Gorge, tho are sort of anxious to try out our next session with it below.

Mile 123. FORSTER RAPID. Passengers have been having a whirl at the oars. Ros takes on Forester Rapid—stepping into some really big waves. Does fine. 25

Mile 129. SPECTER CHASM. Good spot for lunch. It takes a Brunton Compass operated by John to definitely establish our position. We dropped down thru such a collection of fast—lots of fun—drops that I lost position. Thus we are quite close to Bedrock.
Mile 130. BEDROCK RAPID. Stormy and windy. At this stage it proves to be easy to walk around, and the current is a very tricky proposition in its drive to the big rock. Takes some fast dropping off the tongue. Nance and I shove off in the WEN, make it fine, then land and clamber up on the big rock in center of river. Find a wonderful natural pool filled with warm water. Moulty and Garth get in uncomfortable close to the big rock. Frank clips the big rock. Doc clips big rock and springs hole in JOAN. This rapid is a deceptive fellow. Seems like it's always good for a thrill. Starts a hard rain, so Nance and I take off and go across to the other boats, and join all but Ros in huddling under granite ledges. Ros wanders around and soaks up the rain. We are disappointed in not having any waterfalls following up the rain.

Mile 131. DUEBENDORFF RAPID. A technique job. Main channel drives into big holes, so we elect to run just right of center, in and about several rocks. WEN off, solo. Flirting with dynamite with this one, yet I get disgusted beating the rapid out of its fun so much. I go back to run the MHZ thru, and beckon Lucille Hiser over to join me. We come thru right on the money again, and do our best in lower end to have a ride. Not bad. I ride standing on deck. Garth thru solo in SANDRA OK. I go back up and ride thru with Doc in the JOAN standing on the deck with a stirrup rope. Lots of fun. My first real ride with Doc. OK.

Mile 133. TAPEATS CREEK. CAMP. Watch this one dropping thru wide open. I took this one on running into the sun and was just barely able to get the correct channel selected at the last moment. A slipup here could make it a bit rough.

In evening and morning Doc catches about 11 rainbows, John 2. They are really delicious. Most bathe, but it's too rugged for me in Tapeats Creek so I bathe in the river. Nance elicits a lot of whistles when she shows up in a spotless shorts ensemble! The rain at Bedrock gave way to a beautifully clear evening. Once during the night a bank of clouds goes over but it clears again. We set off a couple of the Very flares—they are quite a sight.

JULY 24
A very wonderful rainbow trout breakfast.

MILE 136. CAMP. DEER CREEK FALLS. Enchanted Canyon. This is where the contest comes off for standing under the falls—the first out buying malts for rest of contestants at Boulder. Nance, Doc and I seem to be the only exploratory minded, so we make the climb to way above the falls and then follow the chasm rim back some several hundred yards to where the valley opens up. It is spectacular beyond description. In deference to blisters, Doc goes on solo to check the water source, while Nance and I loaf in the shade of a big cottonwood tree. Close by the creek comes rushing by, in and thru little pools and grottoes covered with maidenhair fern, and another fern with a strange and wondrous rust color. We merely have to twist and lean over to get a drink of this fine water. Directly below us the
water cascades down thru a series of pools, until it reaches the bottom of the gorge proper. There, it rushes on to the mouth of the chasm, shooting out into space to form Deer Creek falls. This is such a restful and beautiful place. Birds seem to be the only things to assure us that this is not some ShangRiLa in another World. It’s easy to talk—then drift off into sleep. We are awakened by Docs return with a report of the canyon. He’s carrying some board he found a ways above us, thus indicating that in the past some prospector—who knows who—came this way. The left fork above has water gushing right up from the stream bed, whereas the right fork ends in a wall from which, like Vasey’s Paradise the water is discharged from the wall. We feel this has been a migration route of the ancient cliffdwellers. The fact is supported by a ruin just below that is at a point that would be fordable in real low water.

Evening is spent in song, stories, and the Yogi appears to tell us all of the origin of the canyon. Another Very flare is set off. A beauty. Goodnight.

**July 25**

Almost forgot. John seems to have lost the main contest on the malts. Garth and I put on a secondary contest which of course I promptly lost. I still owe him a malt. Will repay him in Berkeley, where the malts are 5¢ cheaper!

Mile 138. **DORIS RAPID.** Just a bit choppy, tho here in 1940 Doris and John Southworth both fell out of the boat.

On this stretch going down to **KANAB CREEK** we stop once to settle argument of river width. Rock throwing establishes an average channel of about 100 yards in width.

Too, along here are much amused in the **WEN** when a dragon fly alights on the gunnel and whenever I would put my finger up towards his right foot, he’d raise the right foot and apparently shake hands. He’d never fail!

Mile 143. **KANAB CREEK RAPID.** This is a long one. For a change we try running without looking over first. Works fine and we have a wonderful ride. Have to be just a bit sharp at first as there’s quite a few holes. It’s lots of sport to run as it goes on and on and on.

**UPSET RAPID. LUNCH (at foot).** This is a solo job. I run both the WEN and the MH. Thru OK. Garth and Doc OK. Bad eddy at foot and I have plenty of trouble getting off after lunch.

Mile 152. Nance has taken over the oars and she puts us thru this rapid in good style.

Just above Havasu Canyon we all stop, with exception of Doc, to pick up some wood for our camp at Havasu. We plan to camp on the ledge, and past experience has shown it to be free of driftwood!

**CAMP. HAVASU CANYON.** Mile 156. We hurry up to take advantage of the last sun on the falls back up a ways from the river. Get a few pictures but the light soon fades. The water has a trifle murky cast occasioned by
recent showers, yet it is still a beautiful place. To avoid the overland tour, Nance, Moulty and I swim down the canyon to the river to get back to the boats. The rock ledges are hot and next morning we hear of several sleepless nights. In future it is well to be remembered that the lower ledges closer to the boats are most desirable. But it’s a wonderful setting—and the moon fills the canyon during the night to make it seem even more unreal.²⁸

**JULY 26**

This makes seven days on the river since Bright Angel. Time really has wings. It seems like yesterday since we took off.

Between miles 162 to 164¼ was staged the great running battle of 1948. The WEN was first attacked, the fight in full swing (full swing of a water bucket) raged on. Nance handled the oars of the WEN, executing skillful flanking maneuvers, and all were well soaked. The greatest tragedy occurred when Wayne Hiser had his glasses knocked off, and had to complete the trip without a correction for distant viewing. We dropped down over our old friend 164½ MILE RAPID and sailed on.

Mile 171. STAIRWAY CANYON. LUNCH. John and Doc go up canyon and finally find a sort of pool. Rest of us relax. The war of the morning continues—this time Lucille directs a deadly fire of pebbles at Nance while she—sleeps.²⁹ It is hot. Feels good to get out on the water and travel.

In the rapid we run directly below here, Loper and Harris upset in ‘39. How, we wonder for it’s anything but a rapid of severity.³⁰

CAMP. Mile 179. LAVA FALLS. We land and find it not too hot. Lining is indicated as the two possible places to run are too much a matter of chance. By dinner time we have carried all the equipment, more or less, down to the foot of the falls where the boats can pick it up. We look and look for John Riffey, but he doesn’t show up. After dinner, Garth, Frank and I go across the river to look over the main channel. What a hole! Running here would be impractical. Been a good day, and everyone retires early.

**JULY 27**

Garth, Doc and I get up extra early and have a light bite, then start lining the Mexican Hat 2nd. This is done from 5:55 AM to 6:30 AM. Really fast! Then the WEN in 30 minutes. JOAN a bit less—and the SANDRA in 15 MINUTES! This has been the fastest most efficient lining operation I have ever participated in. Boats are soon reloaded and we are ready to go.

LUNCH. Mile 188. WHITMORE WASH. We take to the tamarisks here for shade.

Wind against us. Bit overcast. Have to dabble oars a bit to make time.

Mile 193. Left. The aluminum landing barge that got away at Lees Ferry in 1947, first landed that same year at BEDROCK RAPID, this year in the real high water has been carried down and wedged in here on the left. I doubt if anything will move the barge from now on. Seven steel drums
are still attached, but not well, and even with this buoyancy the barge is certainly too well anchored to move.\textsuperscript{31} We shall see.

**PARASHONT WASH. CAMP.** Turns out to be a very nice camp. Beautiful night again. Nance and Garth put the hex on Frank W. and his shaving, but Frank still doesn’t nick his throat. I believe this would be a good place to bring in food supplies, and may do so in ’49.

**JULY 28**

*Mile 205.* 205 MILE RAPID. Run this wide open, but what a ride! Rather than dodge, we boom right thru a largish hole $\frac{2}{3}$ of way down. WET! Water hits us hard and I have trouble clearing my head. Nance comes out of it gasping and throwing dirty looks in my direction. All thru fine shape. Must watch this one—it’s real sport but can be dangerous.

*Mile 209.* GRANITE PARK. A good ride. Steal a bit on the left.

Nance takes the oars again to Fall Canyon. Runs a couple of good ones.

*Mile 211.* FALL CANYON. Sharp drop and rough and tough. Watch it.

*Mile 213.* Left. Cove with willow tree. Spotted it last year. Beaver have almost ruined the willow tree, but we get some good ledge shade for lunch.

*Mile 217.* 217 MILE RAPID. This is a surprise. I expected this to be a first class son of a gun, but instead it’s a nice riding set-up. We first go over and check evidence that unquestionably shows that Doc Marston, Ed Hudson—Sr. and Jr.—with Willie Taylor, made an upriver run to this point.\textsuperscript{32} We see their note, also a cache of gas. They did this without any lining, which pales into insignificance any other so called upriver “runs.” This party did it with power—not ropes. We declare this “dubs” day—so Nance and I lead thru in the WEN, followed by Moulty Fulmer. He does fine. Then John Doerr does a swell job of running the MH\textsubscript{2} thru. Rosalind comes thru in the JOAN, does fine, tho is knocked off the seat. makes a good recovery and lands as we planned. We are going to have another “dubs day” on the run from Diamond Creek to head of Lake Mead.

*Mile 219$\frac{1}{2}$.* Right. Garth in lead spots a two man life raft at the 100,000 second foot level. It appears to be the famous Roemer raft.\textsuperscript{33} Initials RUO on front in water-proof tape. All conditions being considered I feel that this raft has probably been lost by some sportsman in the Spring of this year.

*Mile 220.* Right. Here is where Aleson hauled and dragged his boat up the river to. Too, this is where Doc and Ed Hudson effected repairs to their boat this spring when they were here on 70,000 [cfs]. John Doerr finds a shirt which we think must have been one of the upriver party—gives it to me, and I in turn find it fits Nance so give it to her. Been having a good zippy ride to here. Plenty of rocks showing up. Current is fast and vicious at times. We have been getting by well, tho. so far. Only wide open rock impact was made by Garth when he rammed the SANDRA into a rock head.
on just above Deer Creek Falls, breaking the portage bar and springing the transom.

Mile 223. 224 MILE RAPID. Rough fast and fun. Tricky tho. So watch it.

Mile 226. DIAMOND CREEK. CAMP. 27¾ miles today. They were a bit hard earned. Current slow and the wind blew. Nance and John did more than their share of relieving me at the oars. We find the spring water here cool and good. The creek is fine bathing. Establish a good camp and are settled down to a 24 hour layover. To bed to bed says sleepy head.

JULY 29
We all get up early. After breakfast we loaf around and relax in the shade. An impulse to climb starts me up the north face of the south point of Diamond Creek cliff. It is a bit difficult, and am rather glad to finally reach the top. The descent is easy. I then sort of rinse or wash out shirts, sheets, etc. Lunch. Initiation into the Royal and Honorable Society of River Rats is then conducted. This initiation marks the 100th different person to have made the traverse of Grand Canyon from Lees Ferry to and beyond Diamond Creek. Our inductees number: Rosalind Johnson, Lucille and Wayne Hiser, Frank Masland, Moulty Fulmer, Frank Wright. Nance and I take the WEN and row across and up the river to shade side of the canyon and relax under a great willow tree. No flies bugs or ants. Back for dinner. Games stunts etc. are in order. Charades. Baths. And night finds us all pleasantly relaxed from a most interesting day.
July 30
This is the day we somehow look forward to, yet really dread too. It’s our last day on the river. By noon or before we will be on Lake Mead. One of the greatest adventures any one can have any time is about to be in the past. We want to see it accomplished, but we hate to give up our fun, our comradeship—living in a setting that has been reserved for a very chosen few.

SHOVE OFF. Diamond Creek Rapid is fun, and the water below begins to really get interesting. Fast sharp, plunging drops keeps us constantly alert and very wet. We glory in it, for not far below the river trip is ended.

Be sure to stop at TRAVERTINE CANYON at mile 229 in 1949. Good water and waterfalls.

TRAVERTINE FALLS. Mile 230. River is colored a sort of tawny grey this morning. We later find that it’s about 8,000 feet here this morning, thus we have been on a falling stage clear from Lees Ferry. It if hadn’t been for local storms we would [have] probably been on even way lower water. Falls here are nice, but the urge to run rapids is uppermost in our minds. The dubs day running seems to go by the board, tho I had Fisheyes warming up ready for a solo run. When the fever to run rapids gets you its hard to stop for other things!

Mile 232. 232 MILE RAPIDS. A zippy fast tricky fine to run number!
Mile 235. BRIDGE CANYON. We’re getting close.
GNEISS CANYON. LAKE MEAD. Arrived to the minute at the same
time as a year ago today. The river part is now over. Now, on to Hoover
Dam.

Left. Mile 238. Bureau [of] Reclamation Camp. LUNCH. We prowl
around, rig up a table and chairs to have our lunch on. Then a siesta. Frank
W. and I repair to the former supt.’s cabin, sleep on springs and mattress.
Smoke and a rumbling hiss awakes us. We dash out to apparently find the
cabin afire. I shout “We can save it!” Then for some reason hustle back to
get my red hat, come out and with the aid of a long iron rod punch pull and
beat at the fire—putting it out—and effecting the laugh it causes—because
Doc set the fire! Time’s a-wasting.35

Mile 239. SEPARATION CANYON. Pictures of the group in the usual
tradition obtained with us around the plaque. Very very hot here. A relief
to get into the water, and on down the lake. Directly after taking off Nance
takes off from the WEN and goes back to the MH2, leaving John and I to
our own resources. We row.

Mile 246. SPENCER CANYON. CAMP. Little or no current to here.
Quite a trip up the canyon in and thru brush and trees to where the water
is clear. Lower end of stream down to mouth is very murky owing to mud
deposits. After dinner most everyone takes off to sleep. It’s hot. The wind
blows. Bugs. Nance and Ros talk with the Cowboy. I am terribly restless
and sleep seems impossible. It’s a let down in more ways than one that’s bothering me. Finally I rouse up Frank W. and we row across the Lake to a damp dust-free bar. Quite a time getting over in the dark as an angling current hits us. But finally to sleep.

**July 31**

7:30 am we take off. I soon conceive the idea of tie the boats end for end and then one man doing the rowing. I start at 8:00, row ‘til nine. Garth rows 9:00-10:00. Frank W., 10:00-11:00. Doc takes over at 11:00 and ends about noon on a place on the left that develops some fine shade. A long siesta, then we start out again, this time each boat apart. Nance is on the oars when Doc pulls ahead. I take this as a suggestion to make better time. We do! Nance, John and I keep the oars flailing until sundown, at which time we reach Emery Falls. Get water then row around into a cove and with the aid of a rope establish camp up on a ledge. Nice place, really, wood and everything. Everyone but Ros, Garth, Nance and I are bushed. Garth finally gives up, not followed too long by rest of us. Frank W. and I have a cozy nest on a bunch of rocks in the bed of the wash—but it turns out to be swell place to sleep—and tonight I could sleep on the tines of a pitchfork and like it!
AUGUST 1


And on our way. We stop at noon for lunch and swimming at Temple Bar, I believe it was. Then on. Ice water. Cokes. Talk. Relax. Boulder City dock. More friends and relatives. Dinner—to bed.

AUGUST 2
Boats loaded on the trailers in the morning. Able assistance of the Boulder dock crew made it a short and easy job. Then a hurried lunch and a great thrill awaited us all. Supt. Christensen took us down to the powerhouse via the big overhead tramway. And that was an experience never to be forgotten.
At night we had a banquet and the “little flies” had their final meal together. I feel this trip was one of the most successful to ever thru the Canyon. To those on the trip, those that stayed home “pitching,” to those making our arrival so pleasant—thank you.

**AUGUST 3**
Doris and I clear to Tuba City. Frank to South Rim. We left radio with Lon Garrison. Cowboy rode to South Rim with us.

**AUGUST 4**
To Mexican Hat by 3:00 PM. Joan and I unloaded and stowed the two boats. Midnight, Frank, his brother and wife arrive with news that trailer axle breaking, complicated by terrific washout made them leave WEN, JOAN at or near Kayenta.

**AUGUST 5**
Frank, Joan and I go with another trailer out across the mud, lake beds, washouts, rains, etc. etc. etc. to rescue the boats. In by dark, to Mexican Hat.

And now, goodbye to Grand Canyon until 1949.