

Transcription: Grand Canyon Historical Society

Interviewee: Peter Brown (PB)

Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)

Subject: Peter recounts the fourth segment of his tule reed boat trip, travelling from Buck Farm to Little Nankoweap camp

Date of Interview: January 3rd, 2021, Part 4

Method of Interview: In person at Little Nankoweap camp

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Date of Transcription: February 8, 2021

Transcription Reviewers: Sue Priest

Keys: Little Nankoweap, Colorado River, tule reed boat, Buck Farm Canyon, President Harding rapid

TM: Today is January 3, 2021. It's Sunday. We are at the Little Nankoweap camp on the Colorado River in Grand Canyon, at river mile 52. Sitting next to me on this little rubber raft is Peter Brown. My name is Tom Martin. Good evening, Peter. How are you tonight?

PB: Very good, Tom. Thank you.

TM: So Pete, today in the little tule boat we started off at Buck Farm Canyon. The one main rapid today that you paddled in the tule raft was President Harding. How did that go?

PB: It went okay. I did get a little wet and slipped off at one point, but otherwise it was fine.

TM: How do you get back on a tule raft once you slip off?

PB: Well, riding the tule raft, again, the way to do it is you put your legs down on both sides and ride it like a horse and then it just kind of bounces over the waves. Basically, if you start sliding off, then you've got one leg hooked to be able to pull yourself...

TM: Pull yourself back on again.

PB: Yeah.

TM: So you're putting quite a lot of force with your leg on the tule to get back on. It's cool with that?

PB: Oh yeah, very much.

TM: Wow.

PB: And even when you get flipped off completely, it's pretty easy to climb back on top of. It's not that hard at all. And it seems to be taking its shape okay. One thing we're having best luck with right now I think is trying to get it as vertical as we can at night and that's draining a lot of water. It does weigh a lot less in the morning when we do that.

TM: So you mean standing it up on its end.

PB: Standing it up on its end.

TM: Wow. Okay.

PB: Which is just like the fisherman in Ecuador, we've been told by one of the folks on the trip.

TM: Okay. So they stand it up on end and let it dry out. And today starts the first of a... We're going to be at this camp for two nights, so this boat will get a chance to dry out all day tomorrow in the sun. And then the day after we'll be on our way again. Anything else you want to say about the tule tonight?

PB: Just so far, that I think the most impressive thing to me about it is that the integrity is—it's staying in really good shape. There's a couple little dings and scratches on it, but otherwise it's the same shape, same quality of design and build, as when we put in the water.

TM: Okay. This is a short little interview. With that, that will conclude Grand Canyon Oral History here at Little Nankoweap camp on January 3rd, 2021 with Peter Brown. Pete, thank you so very much.

PB: Sure thing, Tom. Thank you.