

Transcription: Grand Canyon Historical Society

Interviewee: Neal Newby

Transcriber: Nikolas Pullen

Date of Transcription: 6/21/2016

Neal D. Newby, Jr (1926-2016) was a physicist and river runner. Newby received his Ph.D. in nuclear physics from Indiana University. In the summer of 1951, Newby volunteered for six months at St. Christopher's Mission, outside of Bluff, Utah. In 1952 he hiked out to Hole-In-The-Rock and looked down on the Colorado River in Glen Canyon. Newby floated through Glen Canyon with his father in 1955, his father and mother in 1957, and solo in 1958. In 1956 and without a permit to float the Colorado River in Grand Canyon National Park, Newby and his grade-school buddy Frank Moltzen floated from Lee's Ferry to Phantom Ranch in one man life-rafts, very similar to today's packrafts. The two floated past the wreckage of the TWA and United planes that had collided two months earlier. Park Service Rangers interviewed the two and decided to let them go without a citation. They were then interviewed by the FBI. When he was 70, Newby floated solo on the San Juan River from Bluff to Mexican Hat, also without a river permit. At the take-out, Newby was cited for not having the necessary permit. A softspoken man, Newby is survived by his wife Donna and two daughters.

The following is a transcription of a tape recording Newby made in 1957, recounting his 1956 packraft river trip with friend Frank Moltzen. This tape only covers the miles from the Paria beach to Mile 26. Newby and Moltzen eventually made it to Phantom Ranch where they hiked out.

My name is Neal Newby and I'm a graduate student in physics at Indiana University. Last summer an old friend of mine, Frank Molson of Leonia, New Jersey and myself made a boat trip down a portion of the Colorado River in Arizona. We started at Lee's Ferry, Arizona and rode the Colorado River down into the Grand Canyon and finished up at the foot of Bright Angel Trail.

This is kinda a rough section of the river, fast water and rapids; not too many people make the trip. Those who do go down usually go down with a professional guide. Frank and I have been planning the trip for about a year and we went down completely on our own hook. Turned out our trip was illegal, we didn't get the necessary written permission from the National Park Service that we should have... and we got into a little bit of trouble about it, but I'll tell more about that later on.

We pulled in to Flagstaff, Arizona on August 13th [1956] on Santa Fe Chief. I remember the train was about an hour late, we got into Flagstaff about 1:30 in the afternoon and unloaded our bags. We had about 5 big duffel bags and must've had about 200 pounds worth of equipment. All our dehydrated food, we had dehydrated food for 18 or 20 days, sleeping bags, personal items, and rubber boats we were gonna use; the rubber life rafts we were gonna use: deflated of course, and a million and one other things. And Frank waited down on the station platform and I went to go look for a hotel room. Well I found some space in a little hotel right across the street from the train station. Hotel Continental I think it was. And then I went back and helped Frank carry the bags over to the hotel.

I remember as we got the last bags in the front door of the hotel, big raindrops started to come down, it really started to rain hard. We'd been watching the clouds for about the last hour, dark clouds forming over the San Francisco Peaks. We got into the hotel room just before it started to rain, made ourselves comfortable. Frank had sort of a bad cold so he went to bed, took it easy that afternoon, and I went out and did a little last minute shopping. Picked up some coffee and tea and smoking tobacco, and things like that.

The next day, Frank still didn't feel too well so I told him, "We'll stay here in Flagstaff until you're sure you're ready to go", because no sense getting out there in the middle of nowhere then needing a doctor; doctor'd be kinda a long ways off. So I told him we'd stay around as long as you want to until you feel better. So, next day he took it easy and I wandered around town looked the town over. That evening I went out for supper and Frank thought if he'd have some hot tea with some lemon juice in it, it would do his cold some good. He was already feeling a little bit better, but I went out and had supper at the Black Cat, a little cafe up the street there. I had the proprietor up there make me up... I told him I said "My buddy's down (at) the hotel room down the street here and he's sick. I said "He wants a hot tea and a whole lemon, a whole lemon squeezed into this tea". And this fella says "Ohh" he had quite a foreign accent "Ohh, we'll fix him up, we'll fix him up".

He made me up a container of hot tea and lemon and I took it back to the hotel to Frank, and Frank drank that and we talked a while. He was starting to feel better. We talk a while. That evening I wrote a letter to the National Park Service up at Grand Canyon and it was my understanding that they like to know when people want to come down the river, so that if the people didn't show up within a reasonable length of time they could keep a lookout for them. So I wrote a letter to the people up at Grand Canyon, told them we were gonna start down from Lee's Ferry in a day or two. Well it turned out, we found out later that as soon as they got a letter up there, they'd try to get a hold of me in Flagstaff, try and send a letter general delivery to try and stop us, since we weren't authorized to make the trip. And they also radioed the government man up at Lee's Ferry to try to stop us up there, which he wasn't able to do, but these were things we didn't hear about until later.

At any rate, the third day Frank was feeling pretty well, and so we decided to take off. The only bus that goes from Flagstaff up to Marble Canyon, which is 125 miles north of Flagstaff, which was where we had to go to get on to the river. Only bus that goes up

there leaves at night, and we didn't want to leave at night, we wanted to go up in the daytime; see a little of the scenery. So I told Frank, maybe if we could get outside of town, we could maybe hitch a ride up. So I went up and got a taxi, and the taxi came over to the hotel and we loaded all the bags in there. And the taxi took us out 4 miles East of Flagstaff where that road turns off 66 and goes North, I've forgotten the number of that road, but it splits off. We got off there, lined our bags up along the side of the road, and tried to thumb a ride. Well, I guess it was it expecting a little bit too much of people, a couple of fellas with all this equipment, lying up alongside the road. As expected quite a bit, it really would've taken a pickup truck to handle all our stuff, and most of the people going up that way are tourists and I certainly don't blame them for not wanting to stop and pick us up with all that equipment we had.

Well we stood around there, we got out there around 9:00 in the morning and stood around until 1:00 in the afternoon trying to thumb a ride. And then it began to cloud up and look like it was gonna rain, so we decided to call it quits. Frank hitched a ride back into town, and got a taxi, the taxi came out and we loaded our stuff up again, went back into Flagstaff, we left our stuff off at the railroad station, which was also the bus station for this bus we were gonna take. We spent the rest of the afternoon walking around Flagstaff, spent a few hours in the public library there and so on.

That evening, at 10:30 we were on the bus that went up to Marble Canyon, and the bus drives up there through the desert. There's only... well... there's really no towns to speak of up that way. Every once in a while a bus would stop in the middle of the desert and pick up a Navajo Indian or two, maybe a Navajo and his wife and a couple of kids. (There) weren't too many, only six or eight people on the bus, and my guess is about half of them Navajo Indians. They'd get on right in the middle of nowhere and they'd get on the bus, coughing, coughing to beat the band, typical Navajos: coughing they're lungs out.

And we got up to Marble Canyon about 1:30 in the morning. By the time we got up there, it started to drizzle, so we got off the bus, there's really nothing out there; it's in the middle of the desert. There's a motel on one side of the road and a gas station, and an all night cafe on the other side of the road. We got off there, and i checked at the motel to see if they had any space, but they were all filled up so, we got permission to leave our bags and equipment at the all night cafe and we took our air mattresses and sleeping bags and we walked out about 100 yards into the desert, out in the sage brush and pumped up our air mattresses, put down our sleeping bags, and took off our shoes, and just went to bed. Then I had a big plastic tarp, and we pulled that clear up over us; over our heads and we let it rain.

Well it turned out I hadn't used this air mattress of mine before and mine had a leak in it, but fortunately I fell asleep before mine hit the ground, so I had a pretty good night's sleep. We woke up the next morning and it was pretty clear, a few broken clouds, we got up and there you could see there you could see the Vermillion cliffs standing up 1500 feet, 2000 feet, stretching all from the distance almost as far as you could see. A few clouds lying on top of the Vermillion cliffs, and the desert stretching away in all directions.

We had some breakfast at the cafe, and then I tried to get somebody to drive us five or six miles down to Lee's Ferry down on the river where we could start our trip. In the meantime, Frank got talking to a young fella at the gas pumps. Turned out he was originally from Virginia, ever after that we called him the Virginian. Well he had quite a line. He spotted Frank and I as a couple Easterners who really didn't know anything about the West and he had some tall stories to tell us. I didn't pay much attention to him, I kind of walked of, but Frank was listening to him and he found out we were gonna take this trip down the river and he told Frank "Man, it's really rough down there" and he says "When you get down there, whatever you do, don't sleep under any cliffs". How the devil we could do anything else I don't know, but he says "Don't sleep under any cliffs, those big rocks are rolling off all the time".

Well Frank was listening to him kinda bug eyed, I thought Frank was sorta humoring him along, but I found out later that Frank was believing every word the guy told him. Oh and this guy says, "Oh that canyon down here just crawling with scorpions, scorpions all over the place, and rattlers [rattle snakes] too." he says "Man you wanna keep your eyes open down there". Frank is taking all of this in, and last thing he told him before he left he says "Here, I want you to take my address, so when you get down to Bright Angel Trail, drop me a card right away. If I don't hear from you I'm going to have to come down there and rescue you (chuckles).

Well... frankly we had many a laugh later on, how he would've gotten down there I don't know. I just don't think he would've done too much rescuing, had he gone there he would've had to have someone rescue him. But we got quite a few laughs out of it.

Anyway, in the meantime some Navajos around there had been doing some drinking the night before and were still a little bit high. Some Navajos were around there with a pickup truck and I went over and talked to one of them and asked him if he'd like to make a couple of bucks and take us down to Lee's Ferry in his truck. He rolled a cigarette and thought about it for five or ten minutes and finally he decided he thought he could take us down. While we weren't quite ready to go at that time; we weren't quite ready to take off. We still had to partially unpack our stuff and fish out our plastic water bags and fill them up with water and do a few odds and ends like that.

We had some sandwiches made up in the cafe so, we weren't quite ready to go. By the time we were ready to go 15-20 minutes later, he had disappeared, which didn't surprise me. In fact I never expected to see him again, but sure enough about 45 minutes later he comes back with the truck. I went over and spoke to him again and asked him about taking us down to Lee's Ferry. He rolled another cigarette and thought about it five or ten minutes. He allowed as how he could take us down, so we got our bags and threw them in the back of the pickup truck, and we climbed in the back of the truck. He started down that bumpy old road five, six miles to Lee's Ferry.

Well Frank was really bug eyed on the way down there, these tremendous cliffs of red rock and desert. The road winds between these boulders bigger than a house, tremendous

rocks. Frank told me "Neal, this is just like being on another planet" he says "It's just like being in another world.". It certainly is, no doubt about it.

Well we got down there to the river and we unloaded our equipment. I paid the guy two dollars and he was real happy, and turned the truck around and started it off, and just before he left, why I took a quarter and slipped it in the palm of his hand, and he was real happy about that. So they took off, and disappeared down the road, and those were the last people we saw until we got down to Bright Angel Trail, 16 days later.

Well we carried our bags out on the sand dune above the river. Turned out we were starting our trip about 200 yards above the point where dad and I finished our trip in 1945 [1955]. Dad and I started up in Hite, Utah, floated down the Colorado to Lee's Ferry and we landed about 200 yards down the river from where Frank and I started. Well I told Frank it was going to take us about three hours to get loaded up here, so we unloaded all our stuff and spread our stuff all over the place and started trying to get it organized and getting things separated into piles and so on.

We had three, one man life rafts, two of them which we blew up. Frank rode in one of them and I rode in the other, and we had an extra life raft which we didn't blow up, which we carried along as a spare. We each had a double-ended paddle and we also had a half of a paddle as a spare, in case we should lose one. And then we had dehydrated food, I guess 18, 20 days worth of dehydrated food. And we had personal items like clothing, we each had a first aid kit and I had a snake bite kit. Frank had a .22 revolver and I had a Mauser automatic.

We had a hand axe, a folding shovel, binoculars; had a couple 35mm cameras and a light meter. We had all the maps available on the river. We just had a thousand and one different items. We tried to split the food up about 50/50. I took about half the food and Frank took the other half as a safety measure, in case we lost one of the boats, we'd still have quite a bit of food.

In New York I got a lot of these big rubberized bags, they turned out they weren't completely waterproof, but they were pretty waterproof, and the idea was to store everything in these large, waterproof, bags. Frank and I were each gonna have two of these rubberized bags, 2 in each boat. The one rubberized bag would have food and cooking utensils and things like that. The other rubberized bag would be personal items, clothing, first aid kit, gun, sleeping bag, and things like that. Well we got things scattered around there, and got things organized, and split up inside of the boats. We put the paddles together, the paddles were in sections, we put those together. We finally got things organized and packed up and packed in the boats.

There's a canopy that comes over the front of the boats that snaps down on one side, and we wanted to get everything in so the canopy would snap down. It was quite a job but we finally did that. We had everything inside and just a little bit of room to wedge ourselves in. Everything was under the canopy. Frank took the binoculars and I had the cameras and light meter, out where I could reach them. And the maps of the first few sections of

the river, I had those maps out where I could reach them. And everything else was under the cover except for the water bags, we laid the water bags out on top of the canopy so we could take a drink when we got thirsty.

These little boats, the little one man rubber life raft, when you blow them up they're about 50 inches long, in fact we found out later no one's gone down this section of river in smaller boats as far as is known that is. In fact, I don't know, I think you'd have to be a midget in order to go down in smaller boats than we went down in. Now we were really wedged in tight, we just barely got under the canopy and then these two great big rubberized bags filled with equipment are between our legs. We were really wedged in tight.

In fact after the first day or two, when we got a good look at some of the rapids why, we decided we didn't want to be wedged in quite that tight. So for most of the trip we rode with our legs outside of the canopy, right on top and I think maybe it's a lucky thing we did, in view of what happened later on. I think it's a good thing we didn't have ourselves wedged in quite so tight.

Well we got ready to shove off [August 16, 1956], the people at Grand Canyon, we found out later, had radioed the government fella that measures the water flow in the Paria River up there and radioed him to stop us if he saw us. But we started in, these Navajos took us in down about a mile down from the mouth of the Paria, so this fella never really saw us and didn't have a chance to stop us.

Mr. Coffin, the head man over at Grand Canyon, he told us later, "When I heard you fellas were going down, I heard the kind of boats you had, and I wouldn't have given you two bits for your chances of getting out. Well, I don't know, maybe he was right, there were a few times there that I wondered myself if we were gonna get out, at least under our own power.

We got all packed up and ate the sandwiches we had prepared up at Marble Canyon, drank some water, took our boats down to the river and jumped in, and took off. We drift down, the first little rapid we hit was Three Mile Rapid [Cathedral Wash], we ran through that. Frank got a kind of kick out of it, he still getting used to handling the boat and handling the double ended paddles. He got a little bit... I remember... He was coming down behind me and I turn around one time and he was facing upstream instead of downstream, well he got through that alright and we drifted down a few miles and got down to Navajo Bridge.

Navajo Bridge is about 500 feet above the river so the cars up there and the people up there look pretty tiny, but we could see cars stopping, people get out, and walk out on the bridge to watch us drift underneath. We saw a lot of people taking pictures of us, drifting under the bridge. One man called down to me and asked our destination, and I called back up to him and told him we were headed for Bright Angel Trail in the Grand Canyon, but I guess with the echo's and so on and the canyon, the canyon is more than 500 feet deep there, he couldn't understand what I was saying. He repeated his question and I

called back to him again, and I don't know if he understood me that time or not. It's just an awful long way up to that bridge when you're down in the water.

Well we rode on down a few miles, we got down to Badger Creek and it was pretty late in the afternoon. I told Frank beforehand I was sure that rapids like Badger Creek and Soap Creek we'd probably want to portage around. When we got a look at Badger Creek we were sure we wanted to portage around. I told Frank, "Let's make camp down here and we'll do the carrying around in the morning". So we landed on the right side went back up about 200 feet from the water, carried all our equipment and boats up there. Kinda looked around for a sheltered spot because it was clouding over and looked like it was going to rain or blow. We couldn't find too good a spot, we couldn't find as much shelter as I wanted, but we did the best we could and found a little depression there and put our equipment down and got a fire going.

I started cooking up some supper and Frank layed out the sleeping bags and so on. Well, long by the time we got ready to eat, a few drops did come down and some thunder, but we were lucky, it didn't really rain hard. We had supper and after supper it kinda cleared up a little bit. The Moon came out over the cliffs and we sat around the campfire and talked. The bats flew back and forth around the campfire, and there was a nice Moon over the cliffs. We talked a while and we turned in.

Next morning we got up and after breakfast we packed everything up and started carrying it around the rapid. Well this carry around Badger Creek was kind of a long on and (the creek) makes a kind of angle there and it was a fairly long carry. I don't know how far we carried, we carried 300 yards maybe something like that. It usually took us to make a carry two or three trips a piece, to carry all of the equipment: the oars and the boats and everything around.

Then we started up there, we started something we continued for the rest of the trip. We carried around the worst part of the rapid when we did carry around, and would find the most convenient spot to launch the boats. We usually wouldn't bother to carry the boats around the whole rapid, we'd usually ride down the last portion of it. So we did that up at Badger Creek, we launched into the last portion. Sometimes it was kind of exciting to put the boats in the water and where you were trying to launch you tied a boat onto the shore, there'd be waves. Waves lifting the boat up a foot or two, it'd be bouncing around and you'd be trying to put equipment in. Sometimes it was kind of fun trying to get the boats loaded up, and then you finally got the boats loaded up you'd paddle like mad to get out from shore to get out in the water and ride her down, ride her the rest of the way down.

Well, I remember we... we had a little surprise down below Badger Creek. We rode down the last part of Badger Creek and about a quarter mile down there was a little rapid that wasn't even on the map. Frank wanted to call it 'Surprise Rapid', because we really had quite a little ride down through there. Probably would be nothing for a larger boat, probably there would be nothing there at high water, but it was down at a very low stage, probably something like 4,000 second/feet of water on the river. So it was pretty low and

we got kind of a kick out of that drop, but actually it wasn't anything compared to some of the ones we saw later.

After we got down through that rapid we rode a little ways. Then Frank discovered he had a leak in his boat, he was leaking a little bit of air out of a seam in the back of his boat, so we rode on an hour or so and we stopped for lunch. While we were stopped for lunch, we put a patch on the back of Frank's boat. After lunch, we continued on down to Soap Creek Rapid, and that was a real eye opener.

Tremendous masses of water pounding down through there, gigantic waves. Really made us stop and think a little bit. We carried around the first half of Soap Creek Rapid, and we launched down and rode down the second half of it and had a good ride. Down through the second half, Frank almost tipped over, but not quite. We get down through there and below Soap Creek we ran into a lot of small rapids, rapids that probably wouldn't have been anything in a big boat but, they were really something for us. I almost tipped over twice. Boats were filled with water. Swamped with water. The boats could be brimmed full of water, but they still wouldn't sink because of the air chamber.

Late in the day we got down to a small rapid. We landed on the right side, the boats were brimmed full of water, so we landed on the right side and bailed them out. I bailed my boat out and as soon as I had it bailed out, it was half filled up with water again. So I started checking up and I found out I'd done a real stupid thing. I'd packed the big frying pan we had, I had packed it in such a way that the handle of the big frying pan had poked a hole through the bottom of my boat and the whole handle of the frying pan was sticking down through the bottom of my boat. Frank suggested we camp right there and we could patch the boat in the morning, but we were right at the beginning of this rapid and I said, "Frank, I'd rather have that thing behind me rather than try to sleep listening to that thing knowing I'd have to go through it in the morning".

So Frank was a little bit worried, but I said "Let's ride down through this one and camp down below. So I bailed my boat out as best as I could and I jumped in, paddled out, and rode down through. I waited down below the rapid for Frank and looking upstream on the left side of the river he was behind a little promontory of land there and I couldn't see him at all. So I waited two or three minutes and after he got his boat bailed out, sure enough he comes paddling out from behind that little point of land just going like a bat out of hell. I've never seen anybody paddle so fast.

He paddled clear over the other side of the river and shot way down the left side, which was a good place to do it. There was a big chute down there on the left side and most of the water was going down through there. From down below he really looked good riding down through that chute. So we went on down another mile or so, and we camped on a sandbar on the left side of the river about a mile above the Sheer Wall Rapid. We had a nice camp place and Frank... Frank kept asking me about the Sockdolager and I don't blame him, I know what was on his mind. It was on my mind too, namely that after we got a look at Badger Creek and Soap Creek, we knew we were gonna run into rapids which were worse than those because we knew from the vertical profile that some of the

rapids down below like Sockdolager and Hance and some of the others had bigger vertical drops than Soap Creek or Badger Creek.

Also, there was a question of whether you were going to be able to carry around some of them like the Sockdolager. We figured we were gonna have to ride through it no matter what it looked like. It was enough to make you think a little bit bit.

The next morning we hit the Sheer Wall Rapid. I went down first and got into trouble right at the beginning. I got hit with a wave kinda sideways and it spun me around, and I tipped over just about immediately. As soon as a boat gets turned a little bit sideways by the waves, you've got a pretty good chance of going over. I got spun around sideways and I got turned over right away. The boat was turned completely upside down. Waves busted over me and I was carried downstream.

After a few yards I managed to grab the boat and held on for dear life. Frank came along behind me and grabbed the loose paddle, and he tried to grab me, but I got carried away by the water. My legs brushed against a few rocks way down underwater, but I didn't hurt myself. After we got down a ways, Frank managed to get over near me and I grabbed the back of his boat. He paddled for shore. We finally got down to shore about a half mile down from the rapids. We laid out most of my stuff to dry; most of my stuff was soaked. The first 35mm camera was soaked with water and it was ruined. We laid our stuff out to dry there and we had a little lunch: malted milk and some dried fruits.

Our usual thing was we didn't make a fire for lunch. We usually had a fire at breakfast time and at supper time, and at lunch time we'd just have a malted milk and some dried fruits and leftover things like biscuits and leftover stew or something like that from the night before. It just took too much time to try to do any cooking at noon time.

Well after we'd gotten things dried out there stayed there a couple hours. Then we ran down through a number of rapids down below Sheer Wall. Then we reached House Rock Rapid. We landed on the right side of the river right above the rapid, and I got out and took a look at it and it looked pretty wild, but I thought we could make it. I went back and told Frank we could do it but I asked Frank if he wanted to get out and take a look at it. He said he'd rather not, "Let's just run down through it", he said "I don't want to take a look at it".

So we paddle out and I went first. I stayed a little too close to the right hand side and I shot down with some shallow rocks, almost swamped the boat, shot down over an about a four foot drop over a rock on the right side. Frank did a better job. He swept out further and came down right through the middle of the thing. Frank said later the waves were easily 12 feet high, the waves broke completely over us. They easily covered the boats. The waves hit me in the chest so hard they knocked the wind right out of me, almost thought they were going to knock me out of the boat.

I got down in the rapid and I was going like the wind down through there. Out of the corner of my eye on my left I saw Frank. Frank had been behind me. He shot by me

almost like I was standing still. He come riding down through there through some tremendous waves. Just up one wave and down another. It was really a tremendous ride. We got down through there we were soaked through the skin; the boats were completely brim full of water. We got down through there.

We made a nice camp on the right side a couple of miles above the North Canyon Rapid and made up a spaghetti and tomato dinner and we had some banana pudding and tea for dessert. Beautiful evening, it was a full Moon. That was the best ride we had up until that point: the North Canyon [House Rock] Rapid. That was really a tremendous ride. When we got down into it, I never thought we'd get out without turning over.

The next morning we were packing up, Frank noticed the bottom of my boat had kinda a bad slash in it. So we stopped and repaired that. And then we drifted down to the North Canyon Rapid and we carried around it. That was really backbreaking work. We carried around it and then we continued drifting on down. We floated down to 21 Mile Rapid, and we landed on the left hand side of the river, right above the 21 Mile Rapid.

Frank stayed in his boat and I got outta mine and I walked up a ways to take a look at the rapid. It looked pretty bad to me. The water was crashing over rocks near the surface: both on the near side of the river and the far side. But it looked to me like if we hit the center, we'd have a good ride and be able to get through. Well, I went back to the boat. I was a little bit worried and I asked Frank if he wanted to take a look at it and he said, "No.". I told him, "I think we can make it.", so he says, "Well let's go! Let's get it over with." (chuckles).

So we paddled upstream a little ways along the shore before we swept out into the center of the river so as to give us time to jockey for position. I went in first because I was the one who looked at the rapid and I was supposed to know just where we were gonna play it. We got right out in the center of the river and I went first; Frank followed me down. The 'Suicide Boys' headed for the brink.

Well, the trouble was when you're coming into one of these rapids in these tiny little boats, you're sitting way down in the water so that you can't see very well ahead of you. The river drops downhill from the top of the rapids so that you can't see over the brim of the rapid, you can't see exactly where you're going. Then the instance you reach the top of the rapid, the whole panorama is stretched out below you: all the waves and crashing white waters stretched out below you. But before you get to the brink, you just have to go by memory as to where you plan to hit it.

While we approached the rapids, the one thing that I could see was a tremendous spray coming up in the air on the right side. I couldn't see the rapid itself, but this tremendous quantity of water being thrown high into the air on the right side. I knew it would be suicidal for us to get sucked over into that side, so I kinda shied a little bit. I shied a little bit too much to the left, so instead of hitting it where I wanted to, I hit it just... maybe 10 or 12 feet too far to the left. I got to the top of the rapid and I knew I had made a mistake, but of course it was too late then. I shot down over a rock 20, 30 feet long right below the

surface. I shot down over that down a steep slope about 4 feet right into a big curling backwave. The nose of the boat went under that and was completely swamped immediately. I went into the drink. I really thought for a minute that this... might be it... I was completely covered up by the water and lost hold of the boat and the paddle and got swept down.

I managed to come to the top once in a while and get a breath of air. I got down through a ways and out of the worst part of it. I twisted around and took a look behind me and saw Frank had tipped over too. Frank was in the drink. His boat was drifting away from him. Then I drifted further on down, I lost sight of him, and unfortunately I can't swim. Of course the life preserver held me up pretty well, but I kept trying to get over to shore.

I took about 6 swimming lessons in one there. I think I kept trying to get over to shore and the current kept sweeping me out in the center of the river. I drifted and drifted and I could hear the roar of the next rapid coming up down below. I knew I darn sure wanted to get out of the river before I got swept down the next rapid. Well I didn't think I was gonna make it and finally by sheer desperation my hand closed on a piece of driftwood about the size of a shingle and I kinda used that for a paddle and managed to work my way over to shore.

I dragged myself out on shore pretty wet and tired. My hat was gone, I had lost my hat that had been swept away and the only thing I had on was my soaking wet clothes and life preserver. I climbed up on shore and looked around for Frank. My boat was gone, I couldn't see Frank. I shouted for him and didn't get any answer. The only thing I could see was the river and the soaring cliffs going up 2,500 feet all around me. I couldn't see Frank and for a minute there I thought he had been swept down the river and was gone. I climbed up higher on some rocks and shouted some more, and then I got an answering shout from the other side of the river. About a quarter of a mile up I saw Frank on top of a big boulder over there. I worked my way upstream and he worked his way down until we were opposite of each other.

He yelled over to me. He says his boat was gone, what do we do now?. He motioned to me, calling to my attention that his boat was caught in a backwater on the other side of the river. I called over to him and asked if he could get his boat and he said he thought he could. He ran back upstream on his side and I saw him jump into the water and he swam out through a tremendous bunch of floating logs and refuse in this backwater and got back to his boat and turned it over. He got in his boat, he made up the spare paddle, put that together. He started paddling away, then he found one of the paddles he had dropped, and grabbed that. He paddled over to my side of the river. We landed his boat. In the meantime, I waited for him. My boat was nowhere to be seen, apparently it had drifted on downstream.

It was getting late in the day, it was getting on towards sunset. I told Frank we could make camp here but it's better chance we might be able to recover my boat downstream. I said, "I think we ought to do it, so you stay here and let me walk down on this side of the river and see if I can see the boat". I started walking down the left side of the river,

walking and keeping my eyes open for my boat. I got down there about 3 miles down and I was just about ready to call it quits and turn back. I don't think I would've gone much further, and just about that time I saw my boat over on the far side of the river hung up on the other side of the shore on some submerged sticks or something over there and it was just hung up there. There was no way I could get over to it, so I hustled back 3 miles to where Frank was. I told him, "My boat's hung up down there." I said, "We could leave it and go down and get it in the morning." but I said "It might drift off in the night. I don't think we should take a chance. I'll take your boat and I'll go down and see if I can get it."

So I left Frank with food, a pot, dry matches, and a gun: the essential things he'd need in case I lost the second boat in a rapid or something like that. I left him with the essentials he would need. a bag full of stuff. I took his boat with the rest of the stuff and I started down to get my boat pulled up on shore down there. In the meantime, he had a heavy bag of stuff and he was to begin walking slowly down on his side of the river there. I told him I'd build a bonfire for him in case he got down after dark, because I'd be on the far side of the river. Then he could come down and call over to me, and I'd paddle over and get him. So I left him with the essential stuff and I hopped in the boat and rowed down; rode through some rough water. Two or three little rapids. I got down to my boat 3 or so miles down. It was still there.

I dragged it out of the water; I dragged both the boats up onto a high sand dune. I unpacked everything. A lot of the stuff in my boat was soaked because it was turned completely upside down, so I unpacked the stuff from my boat and laid it out on the sand to dry. The Sun was down by that time, it was getting on toward twilight, but I gathered a big piled of firewood. As soon as it got fairly dusk I started a fire and sorta waited around for Frank to show up.

I waited and waited. I had a little snack. Frank didn't show up. I began to get a little worried. There was no trail. He was just walking over boulders and stuff. On that side of the river it would be awful easy to just slip and break an ankle. I got a little bit worried about him there. It got plenty dark and the Moon came out and Frank didn't show up. I began thinking he had fallen and hurt himself and he was in serious trouble. I figured I had better go over and go back and look for him.

I got a rubberized bag and took a first aid kit and his sleeping bag, and I took some tea and raisins and a can of sardines and things. Then before I left I thought I'd fire three shots. I got out my Mauser pistol, it's about 11 o' clock at night and he still hadn't shown up, so I fired three shots. Just a little while later I heard his answering shots, but I still wasn't sure he might not be hurt. He could've had the gun with him and still be laying over there with a broken leg or a broken ankle, I wasn't too sure what the situation was. I got one of the empty boats and I got in and I paddled across the river in the moonlight. It was a full Moon that night.

I'll never forget that: the brilliant Moon. The current wasn't too bad, it swept me a little down stream. I paddled across and got over to the other side and dragged the boat up. I then took the bag of supplies and started working my way upstream on his side of the

river. After I had walked about what I judge was a mile upstream, I could tell by his shots he was at least a mile up from the way his shots came back at me. So I walked and treaded my way up there through these rocks and boulders. When I got up about a mile I figured I better let out a yell, so I let out a tremendous yell. "Hey Frank!" and I almost jumped out of my skin when it turned out he was standing about 30 feet from me, behind a big rock there. He says, "What are you yelling for? I'm right over here."

So I went over and he'd come down about two miles of real rough walking there and it had gotten dark. He decided that he'd make a little camp there and spend the rest of the night there and come down the next morning. It was real dangerous walking in the dark over those rocks. So he had a little camp there, so we built a little fire. We boiled up some water and we had a strange little midnight supper there in the moonlight. We split a can of sardines between us, and each had a double handful of raisins. Had some hot tea, and I left him his sleeping bag. We talked for a while. Then, I went back downstream to my boat and paddled across the river to the other side and went back there. I finally got to bed about 2 o' clock in the morning.

The next morning, Frank's shouts from the other side of the river woke me up. I went down and took the two boats and tied one of the rubber boats behind the other one and paddled over to the far side of the river. I picked up Frank and we paddled back. We unloaded the stuff and dragged the boats up on shore, so finally we were back together again. We had both of our boats, we had only one paddle, the other paddle was still missing. We lost both of our hats when we got thrown out in the rapid. I had managed to ruin the second 35mm camera, so we didn't have any camera from then on, and had also lost the two maps of that section of the river. They had slipped out from under the canopy when I turned over. I still had the rest of the maps, but we didn't have any maps until we got down to Mile 32.

Well, we fixed up some breakfast, and after breakfast Frank took the paddle and the two sleeping bags and made a big canopy alongside a couple of boulders there so we could have some shade. And after breakfast we crawled in there and sorta took it easy the whole day. We slept and talked the situation over. We both realized we had had a rather narrow escape. We could've easily have lost both the boats, in which case we would have been in serious trouble. Or even if we lost one of the boats, one of us would've had to stay behind, because the boats are so small, they only carry one person. One of us would have to stay behind and the other would have to go ahead and get help. And actually, it was just luck that we managed to recover both of them, it was just plain luck my boat happened to get hung up three miles down the river, just plain luck we managed to recover it.

So we both were a little bit thoughtful, we realized we had a bit of a narrow escape. Frank had an old hernia operation which was bothering him a little bit. He thought he might've strained himself a little bit when he got thrown out of the boat back in the rapid. As soon as he told me about that, that worried me a little bit because if anything of that nature should happen, we were an awful long way from a doctor. So we talked things over and looked at some of the maps and decided that we'd get out off the river, and we'd try to get

off of the river as soon as we conveniently could. It looked to me like perhaps down around Nankoweap Creek we had good maps that were inside the park and we had the East half of the Grand Canyon National Park map. It looked to me like we could get away from the river there if we had to, but that was still some miles ahead.

So we pretty well decided that we would leave the river just as soon as we conveniently could, and we took it easy that day. Turned out in the afternoon we were sitting around the sand there, talking. Frank had his back to the river and I was talking to him and I just happened to glance out into the river and there was one of the paddles floating by. It must've gotten caught up in one of the backwaters and hung up there during the night and the morning. Just by absolutely wonderful good luck it happened to be drifting by just the time I happened to be looking out there, so I jumped in the boat and went after it and got it. That was in the afternoon.

In the morning we realized that we were short of a paddle. We had one whole paddle, but we only had a half of another one. We had the shaft of a paddle and a blade on one end, but no blade on the other. So we took the big frying pan and with a little hand drill and some of the nuts and bolts and things dad had put in there in case of an emergency, by arduous work we managed to drill holes in the shaft of the other paddle and we bolted the big frying pan on to the end of the shaft so we had another paddle. It looked kinda crazy, but it was a double bladed paddle. It had a real blade on one end and the blade on the other end was a great big 10 or 12" frying pan, and that's what we planned to use. But it turned out we didn't have to use it because it turned out that afternoon just by good luck I happened to see the other one floating by and went out and grabbed it.

Well, we spent the whole day in that spot. Rested up and took it easy. We slept there the next night. We got up the next morning and Frank was getting out of his sack and a great big scorpion ran out from under his sleeping bag, so he jumped up and grabbed one of the paddles and went over and killed it. It was really a big scorpion, it was the first one we had seen since we had been in the canyon.

We packed our stuff up. We made ourselves up some hats. We took the tinfoil containers the dehydrated food was packed in; we used those and a bandana and an undershirt hanged down the back of our necks to keep the sun off the back of our neck. We had pretty good hats that way.

We started off and carried around three or four bad little rapids. Some of them weren't too big, but they were just small, murderous rapids. Pretty tremendous amount of work carrying the boats and equipment and some of these rapids over tremendous rocks. Really backbreaking work in that desert sun. And so, we got onto the scheme that some places we'd line the boats down to the beginning of the rapid or right into the rapid. We'd go just as far as we could without unloading the boats. Even if we couldn't paddle them down, why we'd line them down along the shore until we couldn't go any further, and then we'd unpack the stuff and carry around. That often saved us quite a bit of trouble.

We weren't quite sure about where we were because we had lost the maps. We camped on a high sandbank on the left side of the river. There was a beautiful natural fireplace there in the rocks. It was down around Mile 26 or 28 was the best we could guess. We had a nice camp there. There was a tremendous pile of driftwood about a 100 yards away. We were going to go over and light it after it got dark, but we just didn't get around to it. After we finished supper, about the time I started writing in my diary, an electrical storm began to break. There was lightning and thunder and it looked like it was gonna storm pretty hard. So we battened the hatches down and put everything under cover and moved into what looked like a shallow mine tunnel, an exploratory tunnel about a 100 yards away. We moved up in there. We sat down up in there.

We built a little fire at the entrance of the tunnel. We were sitting there talking in the firelight, when Frank happened to spot a scorpion crawling over the top of my sneaker, which I am very grateful for. It was one of these tiny scorpions. We found out later it's the tiny ones that are poisonous, not the big ones. So just in this dim firelight, he saw this scorpion crawling over my sneaker, and we kicked him off, and he went down under a rock. We figured the heat of our fire had driven him out of the rocks.

Well we stayed up there for a while. Finally the storm blew over. It didn't rain to speak of. A few drops came down. A lot of thunder and lightening. We stayed up there a while. Then we went back and turned in. It turned out it got pretty windy during the night, blew a lot of sand in our faces, but we had a good night's sleep.

The next morning we got up and it was a beautiful day. Frank didn't feel too well. He felt his hernia was still bothering him, and that concerned me a little bit too. I felt kinda concerned about that. After breakfast Frank made a canopy again, using the paddles and his sleeping bag. He made a canopy and I got under there and had a look at the cameras, both of which had been soaked when we turned over the rapid. I had a look at them to see what I could do with them, but I didn't succeed in doing anything. They just completely jammed up, they had become completely soaked. The shutter mechanism was just filled with water and soaked in sand and everything else, so there didn't seem to be anything we could do with them. We were both pretty disappointed about it because we knew we wouldn't get any pictures for the rest of the trip. END