

Transcription: Grand Canyon Historical Society

Interviewee: Ann Hopkinson (AH)

Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)

Subject: Ann's experiences kayaking and hiking with friends (**Part 1**)

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TM: Today is Thursday, April 11th, 2019. This is a Grand Canyon oral history with Ann Hopkinson. This is a recording over the telephone. Good morning Ann. How are you?

AH: Just fine. How are you?

TM: Great. I'm fine. May we have your permission to record this interview over the telephone?

AH: Yes.

TM: Thank you. Ann what year were you born?

AH: 1951.

TM: Where were you born?

AH: Pennsylvania.

TM: What were your folks doing out there?

AH: My father was an attorney and my mother was not working at the time.

TM: Did she have other children? Did you have other brothers and sisters?

AH: Yeah, I was the fourth of four.

TM: That's what your mom was doing. She was taking care of the kids. When you were growing up, did you spend a lot of time out of doors, or were you mostly indoors? What was your upbringing like?

AH: A lot outdoors. Yeah, we lived in the country. My grandmother lived across the field and cousins all around. We kind of lived on a compound. It had been a larger farm kind of thing and then it got split up to the younger generations. So we could ramble all around. There was a creek and fruit orchards and gardens, fields of corn and stuff like that. It was great.

TM: Did you learn to swim then?

AH: Yep. Spent hours swimming, yeah. My grandmother had an old swimming pool that we all took care of and the whole neighborhood would go there. It was hot a lot.

TM: [laugh] Nice. Did you get out and do any any canoeing at all, any boating?

AH: Yeah, we did. My father had been... He'd gone on a trip when he was young up in Canada and it was one of the best experiences of his life. So we, yeah, we went canoeing in New Jersey. Then when we went on vacations up in New England, we'd canoe on lakes and stuff. Then I went to day camp and overnight camp even and always liked canoeing, too, because you got to do trips.

TM: Nice. Tell me a little bit more here.

AH: And we were skiers, too. That's actually how my parents met. It was a family thing.

TM: Where did they meet?

AH: Well, they were both from Philadelphia but back then, it was before lifts. Skiers would go and stay in farm houses up in Vermont and skin up. They met, someone just said, "Well, why don't you ride together?" She was actually engaged to someone else. But they hit it off.

TM: Do you remember, roughly what year that was?

AH: That they got married?

TM: No, that they met?

AH: Oh, I don't know when they met, but they got married right when... Let's see early 40s I think.

TM: Okay. So that would put them on the slopes in the late 30s, early 40s. So they would have been in the pioneering ski community.

AH: Yeah, yeah, they skied the Seven Turns of the Nose Dive at Stowe and the Tuckerman's Ravine, stuff like that.

TM: Okay. So very much out of doors. You mentioned a trip that your father took into Canada. Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

AH: Afraid not. Being the youngest kid, you just don't get a lot of the details. [laughs] He died when I was pretty young.

TM: I'm sorry.

AH: I didn't.... Yeah, and he was a very stern guy, so it's not like he sat around telling stories and chatting to the kids.

TM: All right. And then in high school, as a high school senior, I'm assuming you finished high school. What were you thinking about doing? I guess I should back up. Had you been out West yet by the time you graduated from high school?

AH: Yeah, actually I spent my last year of high school in Steamboat Springs. I really wanted to ski race. I had quite a privileged upbringing. For tenth grade I got to go to Switzerland for a year.

TM: To ski?

AH: To be in school and learn French and skiing because I was desperately unhappy. I was like the last kid in the neighborhood and family and everything. There was no one around. I was really unhappy there so they sent me to that school in Switzerland. Then my father died at the end of that year and I took care of my mother for that next year. But I got to go away for my senior year and ski in Steamboat. There I became a racer.

TM: Who were your instructors at Steamboat? And what year was that, roughly?

AH: That was '68 to '69. Loris Werner was my coach. He was at Steamboat Springs. I skied with the Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club. He was Buddy Werner's brother and Buddy was Olympic champ guy and got killed, quite young. He's very famous, though, back in the day. I think he got a bronze or maybe he got a gold, I forgot.

TM: Okay, so that's your senior year there in Steamboat. That was the winter of '68-'69.

AH: Yes.

TM: Okay. What were a couple of the recollections you have of that year in Steamboat?

AH: It was incredibly great. It was a small private school. We got to ski every day. It got kind of oppressive for the rest of the students because they were sort of trapped with this small group of people, but I was out with the town people and I had a much broader circle. I loved skiing and got to travel to all these ski races and so forth. So yeah, I really had a wonderful time. And I was just blown away by all the powder and fun, incredible surroundings. Yeah. And I do remember there, they were building some kayaks. I didn't get involved but a couple of the teachers were building kayaks then at the school.

TM: Do you remember their names at all?

AH: I think, it was Paul Stettner who's still up there, I think. I'm not sure it was him, actually. Might be Wayne Kakela was in there helping them. I'm not sure. He's dead, I know. He was a neighbor. He actually didn't work for the school at the time. And there was another guy, Dennis somebody that I can't remember.

TM: What do you remember about Wayne?

AH: He was like Santa Claus kind of physique. Really interesting guy. He lived in a very cool house, had a very individual homemade original look. It was really fun to go to their place. They took borders, you know, skiers or such. They like had a dorm that they rented beds out. He was very outdoorsy and do-it-yourself and knew a lot about science. Just a great guy. Yeah. And later he did teach at the school after I left.

TM: So then you graduated in the spring then of 1969, would that have been your high school graduation?

AH: Yeah.

TM: Okay, what were your future plans, then what were you thinking?

AH: Then I went to Colorado College in Colorado Springs. I didn't have anything other than that. I was doing a lot of hitchhiking around and exploring the west, you know.

TM: Tell me more. This is one of those sign language times when I'm spreading my arms wide saying tell me more Ann. [laugh]

AH: I guess maybe that wasn't till college, actually. I didn't have much money, just had fun with my friends doing outdoor stuff.

TM: Did you get into kayaking then or what was that later?

AH: No. That was not till late after college. Because I met Fletcher, got together with Fletcher at the end of my college. He had been kayaking all his life. He wanted to share that.

TM: Nice. Let's spend a little more time just in your college years. Did you go ahead and graduate from Colorado College there in Colorado Springs?

AH: Yeah.

TM: What did you graduate in?

AH: Anthropology. And I also, well I ski raced there, I was on the team. That was a big part of my life and social life. We had a great group on the team and we were all really close, had tons of fun. No money but we'd go around crammed in old vehicles and get single hotel rooms. About 15 of us would fit in them.

TM: [laugh] Oh, that's fun. Who did you meet there that became lifelong friends?

AH: Fletcher and Marilyn Crosetto, Jacqui Metzger, J.R. Patee.

TM: Okay. Did you race on the Olympic or in the races? Were these like for nationals or...

AH: It was the USSA A-races, United States Ski Association, and they had A, B, C. And then also there was a college league, sort of a second rate college league. It was the CUB team, DUB team, CSU and UNM and Mines, bunch of others.

TM: Oh, the Colorado School of Mines?

AH: Yeah. So that was part of it. And that's what we got funding for from school. But we also went to a lot of the A races. Not all of us went to the A race because we weren't all A's, but a smaller group of us went to those. So we got to travel all over the west and see all the ski areas. It was really neat. For the downhill's, we'd leave Tuesday night or something...the train.

TM: [laugh] When was the first time you saw the Grand Canyon?

AH: 1972. The school I went to had a block plan for the courses. So you took one course at a time for about a month. My friend Marilyn and I took a independent study in anthropology where we hitchhiked around to sites in the Southwest and kept a journal and wrote a little paper about it.

TM: Where did you go?

AH: One of the places we went was the Grand Canyon. But we went to...let's see, where did we go?

TM: Did you go to Chaco and Mesa Verde? I'm just gonna throw out some of the...

AH: No, we didn't actually go to that many archeological sites. We went to Canyonlands and hiked Salt Creek which was on... I mean hardly anyone did it then. There was no trail even and we kept getting rimmed out. [TM laughs] We really didn't know what we were doing. I had never backpacked before. But that was my first backpacking trip.

TM: How did you hear there were ancestral pueblo and houses and structures in there?

AH: My friend Marilyn is an amazing planner. She pretty much planned the whole thing and I just said, "Okay." I know we went to the Coral Sand Dunes. We were at Bluff. I remember hitchhiking there for five hours [TM laughs]. Kayenta. I could look at my journal. I think I still have part of my journal for that. I'd have to look at that and get back to you.

TM: So the Grand Canyon, did you come at it from the North Rim side or the South Tim side?

AH: South.

TM: Okay. What do you remember about that?

AH: And we walked down Havasu, also, that was really amazing experience.

TM: As someone studying anthropology, what was your take on that?

AH: Well, it was just really cool to see the village still, you know, it was pretty remote. And then we befriended a ranger there. Well, actually he kept spying on us. We also got to be friends with him.

TM: Do you remember his name?

AH: No. But he told us all about the war between the Havasupai and the Hualapai and showed us some ruins and things like that.

TM: Was he a younger guy or an older guy?

AH: Young. He was probably our age and he was just after some girls.

TM: I'm just going to put out a name here. George Billingsley?

AH: I have no idea.

TM: Doesn't ring a bell. Okay.

AH: He was a Havasupai.

TM: He was Havasupai. Okay, alright. That's not George. Could have been Victor Watahomogie. No, that wouldn't be right.

AH: He probably wouldn't remember even if he was.

TM: What were some of the other anthropological things that you saw that really moved you or really made you stand back and go, this is amazing.

AH: I think mainly the ones that we saw in Salt Canyon because I'd never even seen rock art before. That was mind blowing to see that. Yeah.

TM: Okay, nice. Do you remember any of your anthropology professors that you really admired?

AH: I didn't admire any of them actually, but I was pretty good friends with Mike Nowak. Fletcher worked with him in the summer up in Alaska. After Fletcher and I were together, we went up to Nunivak Island where he had continued to do work. Yeah, I got to know him quite well. He was also a skier. So it all was a big family.

TM: How did you meet Fletcher then?

AH: I met him at Colorado college, he was a ski coach.

TM: And his last name was Anderson?

AH: Yeah.

TM: Okay. How old was he at the time?

AH: He's three years older than me. So I guess I met him my freshman year. I'm not sure if it's freshman or sophomore.

TM: Okay. So he was skiing, too. Was he skiing the competition circuit?

AH: Yes.

TM: Had he graduated from college by then?

AH: Yes.

TM: What did he graduate in?

AH: Anthropology, and he was working as a TA in the Anthropology Department.

TM: Okay. So that's how he knew Mike Nowak?

AH: Yeah.

TM: Okay. You mentioned going up to Alaska in the summer to stay with Mike. Was that your first sort of major outing with Fletcher?

AH: Well, I don't know what you mean by major, but...

TM: Well, let's back up again. What sort of things did you and Fletcher do besides ski together, outings-wise?

AH: Well he taught... He wanted me to learn how to kayak. So right after I graduated, he... I mean we took some of trips skiing, but right after we graduated he took me down the San Juan River. It was full flood [laugh] and it was raining like crazy at first and you couldn't even put in at the normal place or he couldn't find it or something. I just remember we put in that little wash that crosses the highway. And all we had were these... I mean the equipment back then was really bad.

TM: What did you have, tell me about it.

AH: I had an old wetsuit vest with the sleeves cut off that used to be his. Homemade spray skirts made out of cloth, not the wetsuit material. You made your own paddle jacket so it was just like 60-40 nylon, kind of stuff.

TM: So sort of splash jackets more than anything else.

AH: Yeah, and then you wore socks and old sneakers on your feet. I forget... Oh, wool, tried to wear wool. Wool sweaters that's what we'd wear underneath, yeah, we'd get from the thrift shop.

TM: So I'm backing up going, wait a minute. The wash across by the highway, was that at Mexican Hat?

AH: Bluff.

TM: Bluff, okay.

AH: Between Bluff and Sand Island.

TM: Okay. All right, so put-in at Bluff. Was it just you and Fletcher in two kayaks?

AH: Yeah.

TM: And had you ever kayaked before?

AH: I'd done a little. He took me up to the Arkansas for a few minutes, but it was snowing, didn't last long. [TM laugh] And maybe we'd been in the pool or something. I didn't know how to roll, I know that. I was terrified. And the boat was one that he'd had around the family. His brother used it and broken it in half and never paddled again. But it was basically was this long cigar. Yeah.

TM: So was it like a four meter boat kind of thing?

AH: Yeah, not four meter...oh, yeah, probably was.

TM: Sixteen foot.

AH: Whatever they were back then. Yeah. Well, don't remember how long they were back then. Twelve feet maybe?

TM: They were heading in that direction, but 1960, they were still four meter. So this is ten years later, but I'm assuming you're in some old beater. [laugh]

AH: Yeah, and it was homemade of course.

TM: Fiberglass? Did it have a seat?

AH: Yeah, they made a seat. But it was very loose for me.

TM: So your job is just sort of balance, keep from going over.

AH: Yeah, and it was really high. He was having a ball surfing on the sand waves and I was just like, oooh, [TM laughs] but it was really fun. We never saw anyone. We did all the cool hikes, of course. It was great. We couldn't go to Clay Hills because the road was washed out because of all the rain.

TM: Wow. So where did you take out?

AH: So we went to Hovenweep instead.

TM: Wow, paddled all the way?

AH: No, no, we just drove. That was another adventure. I don't know if you want to hear about it.

TM: Yes, please.

AH: There are two roads to Hovenweep, the one we took... I guess we were going at night and we didn't notice it was closed. We came to a high point and then kind of slowed down and then we just started sliding. We slid right into a river, a flooding wash, and got stuck. We got out and walked back. There was a trading post not too far away within walking distance. Then we woke them up and they came out, they said, "Well, we haven't seen anyone for thirty days on the road. [laughs] There's another guy that got his jeep stuck in here. Since we had nothing to do, we dug it out and got it out. And well, we can rescue you with that." So they pulled us out and we went back on the right road that was open.

TM: So this wasn't to Piute Farms.

AH: No, Piute Farms wasn't there yet, as far as I know. This was Hovenweep, the ruin. Oh, the name of the trading post, you mean? Well, I'm not sure.

TM: Whether it was Oljeto. I'm just trying to figure out... Once you passed Mexican Hat and headed down the San Juan past...

AH: No, we didn't... We just got in the car after we got out at Mexican Hat. This was a car trip.

TM: I'm sorry. So you went from Bluff to Mexican Hat.

AH: Yeah.

TM: Got it.

AH: We had to take out there because there was no access after that.

TM: Okay, thank you.

AH: Road was closed, that one we heard.

TM: So you liked kayaking enough to then keep working on it.

AH: Yeah.

TM: Nice.

AH: Then we just did more and more river trips. It was really, really fun. And back then, you know, you just went. You didn't have to get a permit.

TM: Tell me, where did you go?

AH: We must have gone... Well, we went a lot to, let's see, Dinosaur, I think. We went several trips there. The Salmon, Main Salmon, Middle and Main, up in Idaho. Snake. We had family up in Jackson so we went up there a lot. And up where I live now, we spent a lot of time around this area. Fletcher worked for Roger teaching at his kayak school.

TM: Okay, so I definitely wanna know about him but let's back up a bit here. Did you finally then learn how to roll in a swimming pool on the practice? How did that work for you?

AH: I learned... Yeah, my roll came and went throughout my kayaking career. I used to practice at the Boulder Reservoir a lot. But yeah, I had pool sessions and stuff all throughout my kayaking career.

TM: Okay, okay. On these river trips, Dinosaur, the Middle and Main Salmon, the Snake, was it just you and Fletcher, or did other people join you?

AH: Other people.

TM: Who of those people do you remember with fondness going, yeah, we met so and so and that was really great?

AH: Mike Crenshaw. Fletcher's brother, Nick Anderson, and his wife, Wendy Morgan went on some. Well, that was in the 70s. We did a lot of racing and there was a community of racers that we'd meet every weekend, set up the gates, race different rivers in Colorado. We became good friends with a lot of those and did trips and stuff.

TM: So this would be slalom racing where gates would be hung out over the water and your job in the kayak was to go through the gates without touching them from gate to gate to gate. Did you guys swing up your own gates out over the river from tree to tree and try to work those out or was somebody else doing that?

AH: We did it. And those people, well, there was Laurie Walters; Tom Ruwitch; the Thorpe's, Peanut and forget her husband's first name; Denny Emory, he's from Jackson. He'd drive all the way down from Jackson every weekend. Lamar Simms; Gary Lacy, he was still...the guy, you've probably heard of him. He does a lot of the whitewater parks now. Scott Randolph. We also did Wildwater. We'd do two of those slalom in Wildwater every weekend.

TM: Okay, so Wildwater, that terminology at the time was simply for long distance paddling, is that right?

AH: No, it was for... The races would be about five miles long usually. They still have it, it's an event that hasn't changed particularly. The boats are very long. The boats are, I guess, fourteen feet long and U-shaped bottom, narrow, and hard to turn, no rocker. They're just for going fast through the rapids.

TM: Okay, let's back up a little bit, you mentioned Tom. What's Tom's last name?

AH: Ruwitch.

TM: And then the Thorpe's?

AH: Yeah. Oh, I can't remember his first name. And then Peter Looram, he's in Aspen. There was a newsletter from the Colorado Whitewater Association. Fletcher wrote it, it was called *The Spray*. It would have a lot of those names and results probably and issues at the time. I don't know if you could track it down.

TM: Yeah, I'm sure it's gonna be available somewhere. So the FIBArk race, the first boating of the Arkansas, started in 1949. It would have been going now in it's almost 30th year by 1979. What other races were happening that you were competing for at the time, do you remember?

AH: Well, we had one in Buena Vista at the Numbers. We had one on the Blue at Silverthorne. We had one on the Poudre. There's one down in New Mexico, I never went to that one, on the Pilar. Where else? There's one here at Shoshone. There's one at Sierra Metz on the Crystal. Up in Aspen at Snowmass, well, that run below Slaughterhouse, Toothache.

TM: Up on the Roaring Fork?

AH: Yeah.

TM: Okay. Then I'm assuming along the way...

AH: Eric did those, too, I think. Eric Leaper did some of those.

TM: You mentioned, Roger Paris. When did you first meet Roger?

AH: In the '70s, I think, when we were living in Boulder. Fletcher would come up here in the summers and teach for him. He had a kayak school out of Colorado Rocky Mountain School that ran in the summers. And I took the class once or twice with Roger.

TM: What do you remember about him?

AH: He was very much attached to being out in nature. That's where he was happiest and that's what his life was all about. I did lots of mountaineering with him. Did the Grand with him several times. We paddled on the Roaring Fork and Crystal and stuff together. Lots of hiking. He is very strong, tough as could be, always loving being out there.

TM: Nice. You had learned French in high school. Did you speak French with him? Did you do...

AH: No, I was too embarrassed.

TM: Okay, okay. What were his thoughts on recreation and just the outdoors in general? Did you have an idea of that?

AH: That was important, but he was all for saving the environment. He was not one to coddle people that weren't keeping up. He just expected people to be as tough as he was. So it wasn't always a good situation for beginners or people that were, you know, not fit.

TM: Okay. You mentioned that you'd gone through the Grand Canyon a couple times with him. Can you recall your first Grand Canyon river trip?

AH: Yep.

TM: What year was that?

AH: That was in 1975. I was still a beginner and didn't know how to roll. Fletcher got invited to be in a movie, or he was hired to be in a movie, called *The Edge* that involved six sports and explored why athletes push it to the edge kind of thing. So the movie paid/brought us on the trip. They wanted me to go, too. I looked enough like... It also had a story with an actor and an actress. I looked enough like the actress that when I was in a kayak that they could inter-cut it. So it worked out that they could, you know, pretend she was learning how to kayak.

TM: Who else was on the trip, do you remember?

AH: Yeah. Roger Brown was the director. Barry Corbett was the editor, he was paraplegic. We brought him and he became a very close friend. The sound man was, I can't remember his name. And then there were some other kayakers, Will Evans, Will Parry. Then the rest of the people were... Oh, Walt Blackadar, he was the other main kayaker. They played Fletcher and Walt off against each other to make it more interesting because they had very different philosophies about how to paddle.

TM: Can you go into that a little bit?

AH: Sure. Fletcher was all about good form, being clean and elegant as you paddled through a rapid. Taking a really good line, reading the water well, you know, just doing it with working to perfection like a

racer does. Do a beautiful run and not tip over, turn into eddies really cleanly, things like that, and surf and have fun. Whereas, Walt, it was more conquering nature. He had a huge blade and he'd just go into rapids and get knocked over and hold his breath and roll up and consider it that he'd conquered the rapid.

And he was all into self-promotion, too, that he'd run this and that because, you know. But in Fletcher's opinion, he hadn't really run it, he hadn't done it well. So it irked Fletcher that he was getting all this notoriety for floating through and tipping over and rolling back up.

TM: Yeah, if you sort of do a submarine run, you know, yeah. I can appreciate that. Interesting. So did they kind of sort things out on that river trip or did they part ways, still each...?

AH: They continued to have some disagreements, certainly, but we later went on a...got invited on a family trip with Walt and his family. Mostly that was because Barry became close to Walt and we were close with Barry. I know Fletcher continued to be pretty irritated by Walt. But I liked him. He was a blowhard and full of himself, but he had a very warm heart and meant well. I could overlook the things that bothered me about it.

TM: Yeah. I'm sorry, remind me of Barry's last name again.

AH: Corbett.

TM: Thank you.

AH: He was on the first American expedition up Everest before he was hurt and became a paraplegic. After that trip, we got him into kayaking. Made a special seat for him and took him on a bunch of easy rivers and stuff so he could get in the outdoors again. It was pretty neat.

TM: Nice. That must have been just really golden. So other people on that trip, do you remember who the crew members were? This was the 1975 Grand Canyon trip.

AH: Stanley Boor, Mark Jenkins. I saw both of those guys recently. We had a little reunion. Whale...

TM: Curt Hansen.

AH: I don't know, he's dead now.

TM: Yes.

AH: Yeah, that must have been him. And Brian, I think Brian Dierker was, too. I'm not sure though, maybe we met him later. I can't remember.

TM: Nice. And who was the commercial company?

AH: Who's the photographer? Bart Henderson. Is it Henderson?

TM: It could be, yep.

AH: Yeah.

TM: Do you remember the name of the commercial company?

AH: Trying to think, no, can't remember which one it was. Oh, Ron Hayes, that's right. Ron Hayes was the company owner. He was there. But I don't remember the name of the company, sorry.

TM: Okay, so that was 1975.

AH: After that we became friends with all those boatmen on that trip and they kept inviting us to be swimmers on other trips. So we got to do a whole bunch of Grand Canyon trips after that because we

could run safety. They were trying to run their numbers up because they were still in the process of allocating user days to commercial raft companies. So they wanted to jack them up. And they were fine with giving these kayakers little jobs. We didn't have to work very hard, we just did the toilet and helped around the kitchen and stuff. And helped with safety if rafts flipped. Got free trips, it was great.

TM: Okay. So by this time, the history of kayaking in Grand Canyon was really sort of new, but kayaking elsewhere was really strong and had a long history. So I'm assuming you guys brought, certainly Fletcher and of course Blackadar, brought some real strong strengths into that trip. I'm thinking specifically of rapids like Lava Falls and my running assumption was Blackadar would have gone right down the middle. Where would Fletcher have run Lava?

AH: Everyone ran it to the right of the ledge hole through the big waves and the left of the great cheese grater rock. It was higher then so that was pretty much the clearest run. Although actually Will Evans ran it on the left and fell into the pourover on the left.

TM: Oh. There is a tight left run over there.

AH: Yeah, well, he was trying to find his center. [laughs] He would he kept trying to close his eyes while he was paddling. [laughs] He basically traveled through the rapid with his bow vertical, his boat vertical and then he went over the pourover.

TM: I see. Okay, so we're not gonna blame the rapid for that. [laughs] Okay. Had you met Walter Kirshbaum by then?

AH: I never met him.

TM: Okay, so he had passed away before.

AH: Yeah.

TM: Okay. Had you heard stories of Walter?

AH: Yeah, Fletcher liked to talk about him.

TM: What would he say?

AH: He meant a lot to Fletcher. He said he was a tortured soul. That he'd been a Nazi and he never could... The only time he felt at peace was on the rivers. He took Fletcher on a lot of his trips. He wanted to run every river in the Colorado drainage. He ran Gore, he was the first guy to run Gore, I think, and a bunch of... Just go off by himself a lot and run these rivers. I don't know if it's true, he said he drowned in a bathtub after all that. But he had a, yeah, he had a drinking problem. He ended up with his boat and he donated it to the museum on the South Rim, apparently, some museum.

TM: Yes, and it's still there today in great shape, carefully cared for, right next to Alexander Grants Escalante folboat and Lesley Jones' aluminum, oar-powered skull, I guess you could call it. And then there's two little kayaks in there. There's a Jackson and I think a Prion in there.

AH: Where is this museum? I've never seen it.

TM: This is at the South Rim. Well, we'll talk later, I'll make note. If you come through Flagstaff we'll see if we can make an appointment and go see those boats. It's a lot of fun.

AH: Okay.

TM: Yeah. I think it's kind of well-known that Roger, I'm sorry that Walter, was an amazing boater, but had his demons.

AH: Yeah. I think Fletcher a wrote a piece to go with the boat but I'm not sure.

TM: He did, there is material there which is really good. And of course, Walter had written up that trip as well so his recollections are there, too. Nice. What more can you tell me about Roger? And again, you recently, yesterday, just alerted me to the fact that Roger has just passed away.

AH: He came over to FIBArk. You know, they bring two Europeans to race that are big names every year, or they used to, and he was one of them. He was one of the top canoeists. He was in a C-2 and did the race and that's how he first came over here. I don't know if he stayed or came back or whatever. But he was on the whitewater canoe team.

TM: Who was his partner? Do you know who he raced with?

AH: No, I don't.

TM: Okay. Did he get into kayaking after he came over? Because I know by the mid-60s, he was racing, well, he was winning the FIBArk, he was winning the downstream run.

AH: Yeah, he may have already known how to kayak when he was canoeing. I'm not sure about that. But yeah, he used to still race when we were doing it over there, he'd come over. Sometimes he'd camp with us. He was very, very competitive. Even when you went for a hike with him, he always had to be first. But it was fun. I mean, we just laughed about it, teased him and stuff. He was clearly out for himself, but you knew it so you just accepted that about him, you know. He was not the type of guy who was gonna sacrifice himself to save you or anything.

TM: Yeah, very much so. In the competition I mean he was all about winning.

AH: Yeah. But even when you were just doing expeditions with him, you kind of knew he wasn't gonna go out his way to help you particularly. He was always competitive. But since you knew it... But that did cause him to lose some friends. And he lived very frugally. He would always go on the trips and, "Oh, I'll bring my own food." And then, you'd offer him leftovers and he'd chow down heavily, stuff like that. But it was always amusing, it's not like I cared, you know. I really loved the guy. It was so inspiring to be out there with him. He just knew where he was going, wanted to see something new and always wanted to go around the next bend and explore just a little bit. It was really fun. [laugh] He was just so strong and even to the end.

He used to go to Baja in the fall, by himself in a boat and take like a spear and two or three gallons of water. That's all he'd take, and he'd go for a couple of weeks. Paddle out in the ocean and go to these little islands. Unbelievable. He kept inviting me and I said, "No, that's a little hardcore for me."

TM: Live off fish. When was the last time he did that, do you know?

AH: No, I don't know.

TM: Okay. Fun.

AH: We kept going... Let's see, somewhere around 2000ish a couple years we did Grand Canyon trips. They were really small, five people and then six people and he was one of them. He kept saying, "Oh, this is probably the last year I get to go." I guess he was in his seventies or eighties then. Seventies, probably. He always lied about his age so he could get jobs. He worked for Club Med for a while and they wouldn't hire you if you were too old.

TM: Oh, yeah. Okay. What else about Roger comes to mind?

AH: I had something I was going to say and it slipped my mind.

TM: You know, we've been happily chatting away here for about an hour. Maybe this is a good time to end Part One and we'll pick this back up again. Does that sound good?

AH: Sure, if you want to tell me what... I could sort of try and look at some things to jog my memory if you're gonna say what you're gonna talk about.

TM: Yeah, we'll talk in a minute. Hold the line for a minute. Today is Thursday, April 11th, 2019. This completes part one of Grand Canyon oral history with Ann Hopkinson. My name is Tom Martin. Ann thank you so very much.

AH: You're welcome.