nastawgan

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FOLLOWING ANCIENT TRAILS

A solo journey to the Coppermine River

Herb Pohl

For plodding types like myself the average gestation period for an extended canoe trip is several years. This was certainly the case for a trip in the summer of '88 which started just north of the village of Rae in the Northwest Territories and ended a month later at the mouth of the Coppermine River.

For nearly ten years now I had listened to accounts of trips on this river and seen pictures which put this watershed in the 'must see' category. Eric Morse once mentioned that he thought it the finest trip he had ever undertaken; high praise indeed. On the negative side were two factors which had held me back: a) the high cost in time and dollars for a solo tripper to get from Southern Ontario to Yellowknife and beyond, and b) the river was just too 'in' with the paddling crowd to please me.

It was left to George Luste to alter my tripping pattern, which for some time had focussed on Northern Labrador. In a wide-ranging conversation, the only kind George ever engages in, he gently hinted at myopia when he declared with just a hint of condescension: "there *are* places other than Labrador to see."

Fortunately for me, George didn't leave it at that. A short while later he made arrangements to have my boat transported to Yellowknife - free. It was an offer I couldn't refuse.

Most wilderness trippers are a bit quirky in one way or another and I am told I'm no exception. One of my dislikes is following other people's routes. The standard overland route to the Coppermine watershed is that taken by Franklin in 1820-1821. It leads up the Yellowknife River, crosses over to the Snare River watershed, up the Winter River to Little Marten Lake, and finally over another height of land to Point Lake. One variant of this route is to start at the village of Rae and travel upstream on the Snare River to Winter Lake, a route taken by David Wheeler in 1912 and much more recently by WCA member Shawn Hodgins. A careful perusal of maps convinced me there was another and possibly easier approach to the Coppermine.

Starting from Slemon Lake, which is two paddling days north of Rae, I planned to follow the Snare River route for a short distance and then cross over to the Emile River which makes its way south from the arctic height of land through a succession of lakes. Along its course the river receives only one substantial tributary which originates as the outflow of Mesa Lake. At the small lake where this stream joins the Emile I determined to strike out overland to reach Mesa Lake by the most direct route and from there portage over the arctic height of land into Grenville Lake. The latter is drained by the Parent River which then flows successively through Rawalpindi Lake and Parent Lake to join the Coppermine at Red Rock Lake. So much for the plan. Now it was time to translate it into action.

An early morning flight from Toronto had me in Yellowknife by mid-afternoon. Within two hours I was re-united with my boat (which had arrived a few days earlier) and heading northwest to Slemon Lake in a Cessna chartered from Bathurst Inlet Air Services. The boys at Bathurst Air had assured me that they knew of no-one who had ever followed my intended route.

After what seemed like a long time a familiar-looking string of little lakes came into view. Two hours later the first of many portages was behind me. With provisions for 38 days my outfit weighed a trifle under 150 kg and it was awfully crowded in the little boat. The campsite that evening was way up on a bluff overlooking ridges of solid rock separated by long and deep grooves which had been carved by the ice sheet of bygone eons in its advance from the north. The flanks and tops of these ridges were sparsely populated with birch and jack pine which clung grimly to every crack in the solid mass while poplar and black spruce predominated in the lower parts.

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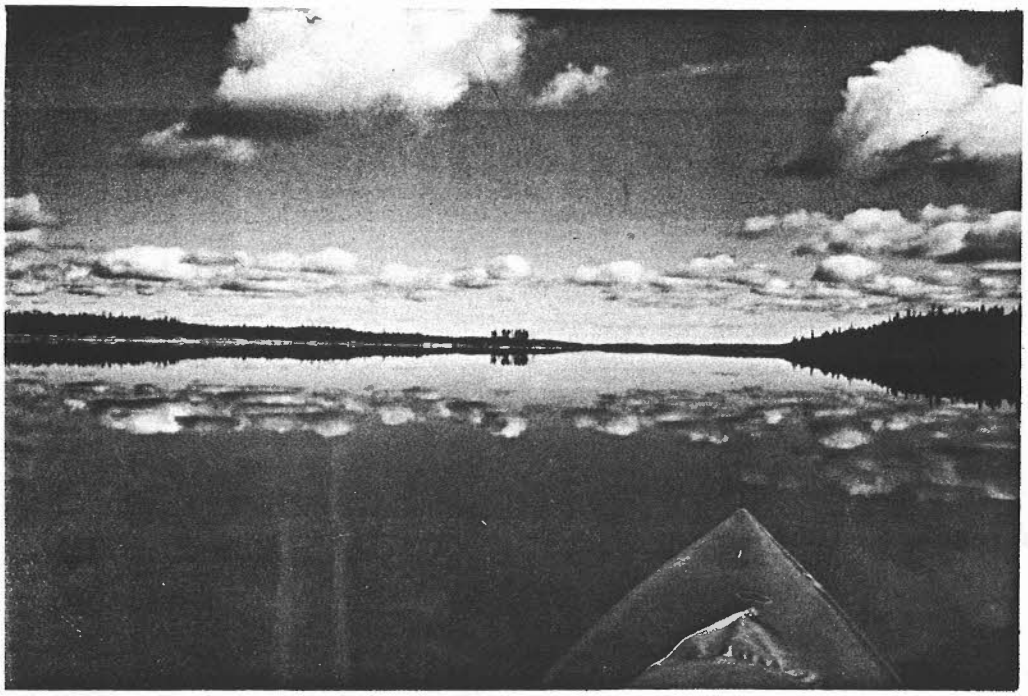
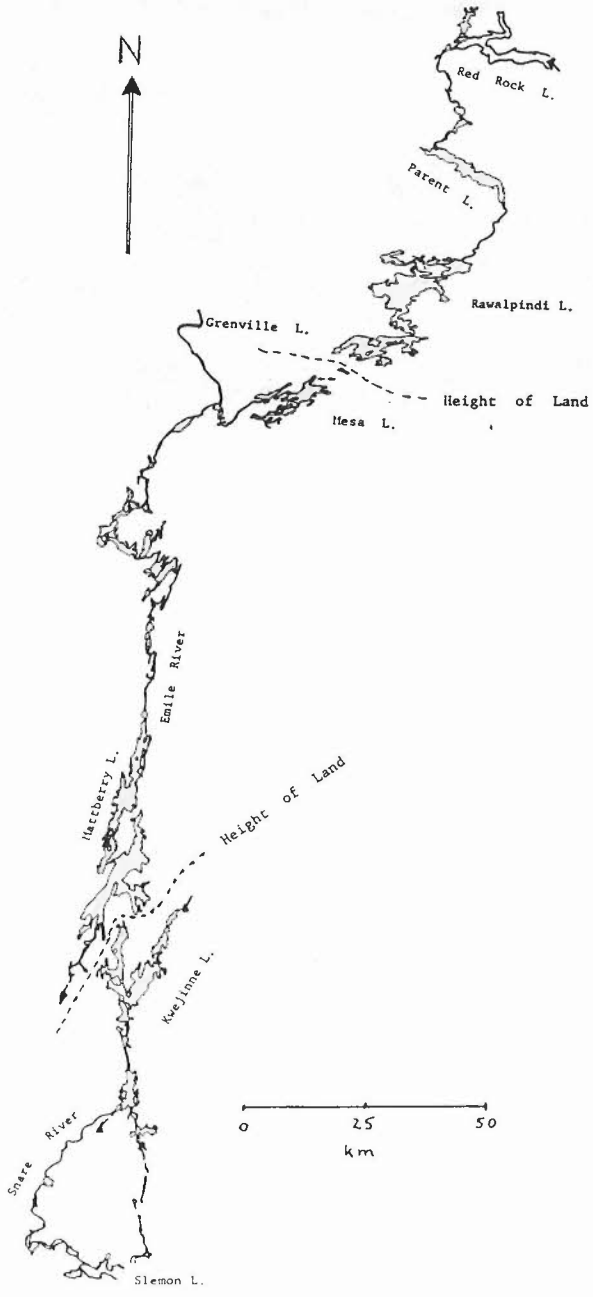
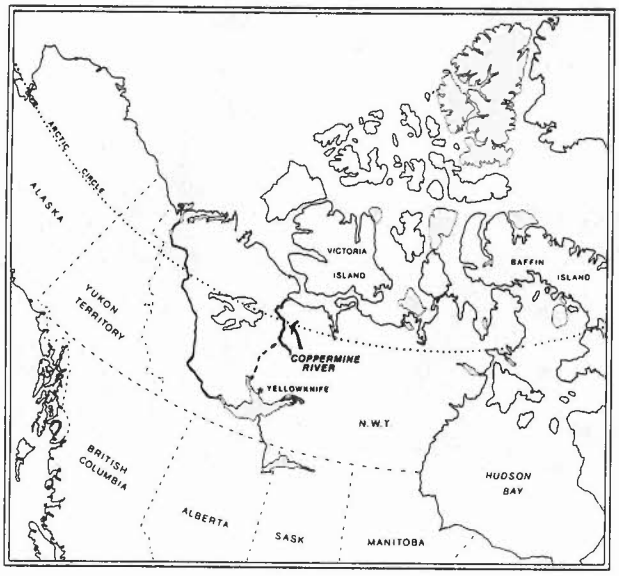


On Big Spruce Lake





The route I was following is an old portage route which by-passes a turbulent section of the Snare River. It leads due north from Slemon Lake and rejoins the river at Bigspruce Lake. Two days later I put ashore at the most westerly bay of Kwejinne Lake in glorious sunshine. A portage of a little over two kilometres should get me to the Emile River watershed. What I could see from the top of a nearby hill was not encouraging: an alder-choked swamp flanked on either side by fractured rock faces. This could be fun.

Within fifteen minutes I stumbled upon an old and long-disused trail. Hallelujah! It was a very soggy portage and the black-flies were dishearteningly thick, but what could have been a long and hard day or more was reduced to a few hours.

That evening I camped on a beautiful sandy point on Basler Lake next to the remains of an old grave. Despite the good example near me I spent a restless

Windbound on Mattberry Lake

night in the overheated tent, too tired to sleep. Worrying about being wind-bound had me on the water by five o'clock the next morning and across the portage into Mattberry Lake before lunch. The latter stretches some sixty kilometres from south to north and I only made it about halfway before I gave up against a stiff northwester and put to shore on a small island. Since there was little hope of a change in conditions I set up the tent and was quickly put to sleep by the sound of wind and waves.

When I woke in the semi-darkness of midnight the wind had died down and the silence seemed absolute. The aftermath of sunset, visible as an orange glow in the north, was reflected on the calm waters and served as a beacon as I quickly packed up and pushed off. Canoe trips to me are sequences of magical moments, and this was as magical as it gets. The silence was palpable and accentuated by sporadic outbursts of bird calls which floated in from the dark-grey shore. The light breeze which drifted frostily out of the north banished curtains of fog to the sheltered bays along the way. Imperceptibly the quality of light changed and grew in intensity until the northern horizon was suffused with an orange glow which filtered through the swirling mists. Surely the Holy Grail was just around the next bend.

Alas, the only thing around the next corner was a portage, and sublime exultation was quickly replaced by muttered imprecations of a more earthy nature.

That evening I camped near the north end of Norris Lake. It must have been a centre of native habitation, for I came across the remains of no fewer than three sites where substantial areas had been cleared of trees. This, together with the total lack of the usual camp litter, suggested that these sites were of relative antiquity and had been occupied for a considerable period of time.

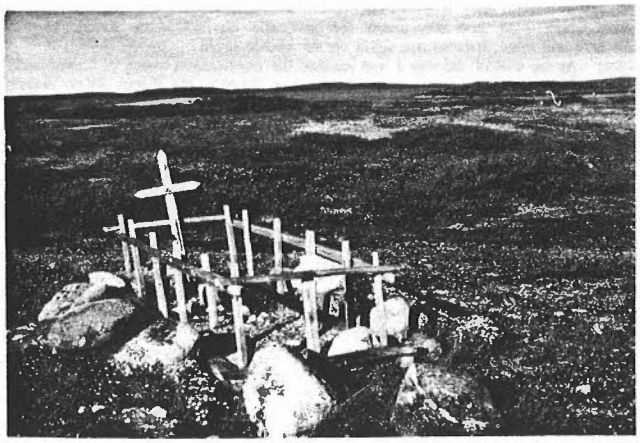
Much as these discoveries stimulated my imagination, my attention was focussed on a narrow gap in the northwestern extremity of the lake - my next portage. The Emile River upstream from Norris Lake flows in a wide arc through several lakes. At a number of places this flow is interrupted by rapids. It seemed better to by-pass this section by cutting across a few small lakes before rejoining the river at Brown Water Lake. Once again my luck held and after a brief search I was panting along beneath my load in the deep groove of a centuries-old trail. The day's travel went through the most forbidding-looking terrain of the whole journey. Rock faces rent with enormous cracks, huge boulders strewn helter-skelter across the land - it looked like the battle field of giants. In spite of the sun-drenched day there was a sinister, evil feel to it all; the spirits were not far away.

Days later at yet another portage I came across the remains of a canoe. Except for the top of the bow it was completely overgrown by moss and lichen. It was a powerful reminder to walk carefully, for whoever belonged with this canoe did not forget it here.

The small lake where the Mesa River joins the Emile is ringed by sandy ridges. Because my route struck out east and away from the river at this point I called it, presumptuously, Nastawgan Lake in my journal. One could conceivably follow the circuitous course of the Mesa River to reach Mesa Lake, but a more direct overland approach to the most westerly arm of the lake seemed the better choice. After a lenghty portage from Nastawgan Lake to by-pass a series of rapids I briefly tracked up the Mesa River looking for the best spot to cross a steep-sided range of hills to reach the next lake. After some deliberation I started out with the first load, convinced that this time I would have to make my own way, but once again there was a trail leading up as steep a hill as I ever portaged a canoe.

A few hours later I was standing atop a great hill and looked out over the wind-streaked expanse of Mesa Lake. In a few kilometres the transition from boreal forest to treeless tundra had been complete. Once again, as so many times in the past, I was overwhelmed by a sense of gratitude to be able to see such an exquisite panorama.

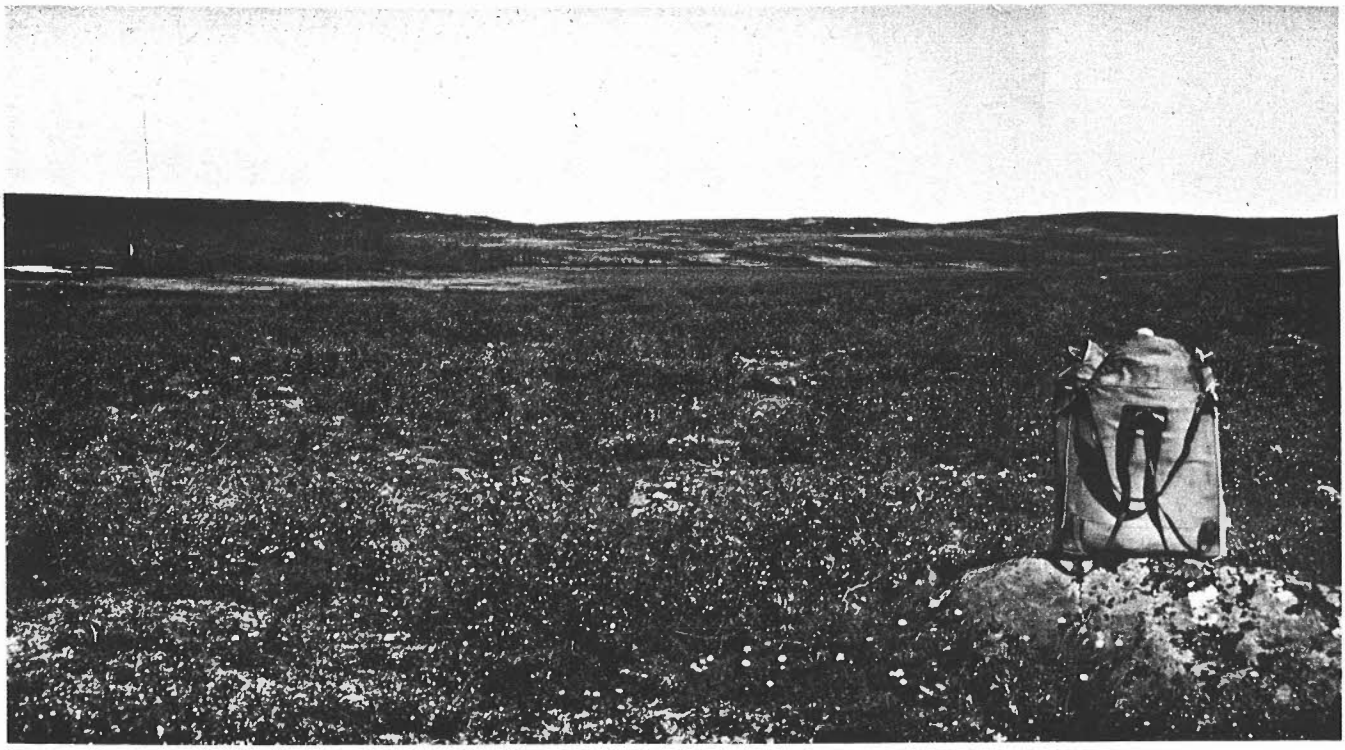
So far everything had gone much smoother than I had hoped. The presence of old portage trails, although often difficult to follow after many years of disuse, had made portaging much easier than anticipated and the winds, which can pin one down for days, had not greatly interfered. So, when a stiff east wind



sprang up, I was not displeased. This would be wash day, I decided, and with good reason. The night before I had made the mistake of sticking my head inside the sleeping bag, trying to overcome the chill of the frosty night air after too much tea had forced me prematurely from the tent.

Only one major hurdle remained now - crossing over the height of land which separates the Mackenzie River drainage from that of the Coppermine. After traversing Mesa Lake to the northeastern extremity, the portage route took me through several small lakes to the gentle rise which constitutes the height of land. For the first time I could not find a sign of previous human travel, which meant this was not the native route over to Grenville Lake where hunting camps were once again evident.

With permafrost not far below the surface, the terrain was soggy even on sloping ground, and walking on the soft, hummocky peat was unusually tiring. The last campsite on the south-side of the divide easily won out as the worst of the whole trip. After a fruitless search for a suitable spot, I pitched the tent on wet uneven ground amid clouds of black-flies which covered every fold of clothing several layers deep. Luckily for me it turned cold during the night which reduced the onslaught to tolerable levels the next day, and after five hours of steady slogging I had my three loads over the four-kilometre portage and had lunch on the shore of a small lake. Strangely, there wasn't a black-fly around (nor did I see another one for the rest of the trip), and since I was thoroughly zonked I settled for a catnap in the willows.



On the portage towards the height of land

By late afternoon I had finished another portage into Grenville Lake, intent only to find a decent campsite on one of the many islands, have a good wash, and lie down and laze the evening away.

Of course it never works out that way. A dip in the ice-cold water revived the vital signs and I started to look around my little two-hectare island kingdom, coming across some interesting things. In a low spot near the shore was a stack of poles, much overgrown, which had been used as drying racks and there were caribou bones scattered over a large area. The poles must have been brought some distance as there were no trees for many kilometres around. Of particular interest was a large cuboidal erratic of basalt, polished to a glossy sheen by the ice-sheet which had abandoned it here. A V-shaped split down the middle was oriented precisely east-west and partly filled with caribou bones. I was trying to convince myself that there was some spiritual significance to all this, but more likely the natives simply used the rock as a lookout since it was the highest point on the island.

The landscape in this region is quite flat and featureless, and navigation required constant attention as both Grenville and Rawalpindi lakes are large and full of deep bays and islands. The latter is crisscrossed by several prominent eskers which wind their way across the landscape, dip below the surface of the lake here and there, only to rise again on the farther shore.

At the end of the day I had reached the northeastern shore of Rawalpindi Lake and set up camp at the base of an esker. Nearby, the Parent River issued forth to start a steep descent towards the Coppermine. The rumble of an unseen rapid periodically drifted across a rise behind the tent whenever a slight breeze blew in from the north. The vast expanse of the lake stretched west to a distant horizon. Pockets of rain clouds loomed darkly in the sky, their image mirrored in the calm waters, brilliant shafts of sunlight penetrated through the clouds in an ever-changing pattern and once again the Holy Grail was near.

The Parent River, despite the large area which it drains, is a small stream - a reflection of the relatively low precipitation and high evaporation in this region. As it emerges from Rawalpindi Lake it races through narrow boulder-lined rapids. Gradually the slope becomes gentler and the river bed wider. In total there are well over thirty rapids below Rawalpindi Lake, all of them runnable, although a number of them are so shallow that the canoe has to be dragged. Piles of detritus, sparsely covered with vegetation, are heaped up everywhere. At intervals the continuum of an esker interrupts the confusion of irregular hummocks, and gradually pockets of stunted trees re-appear.

Throughout the day storm clouds emerged all around leaving only my little corner of the world untouched, but it clearly could not last. After nearly two weeks of perfect, sunny weather the wind increased and torrential downpours kept me pinned down on Parent Lake for two days. On the evening of the sixteenth day of the trip I reached Red Rock Lake and made camp on a spit of sand.

For the first time since the start of the trip the disagreeable sounds of "civilization" (from Max Ward's fly-in fishing camp) intruded into my cherished solitude. At five o'clock the next morning I quietly slipped away down the Coppermine. But that's another story.

Confessions of a Canoeing Symposium Groupie

John Winters

To the native Canadian, born to the axe and paddle, there is nothing more ludicrous than going to the U.S. of A. to learn anything about canoeing or camping. But I, being a latter-day United Empire Loyalist and lacking genetic wilderness skills, always have something to learn as well as lingering sentimental ties to the old country that need occasional recharging. For my pilgrimages south I chose *Conclave* in Urbanna, Illinois, which is put on by Charlie Wilson and his crew at Grade Six (the makers of what are probably the best canoeing packs available), and *The North American Canoe Symposium* (NACS for short) in Bridgeton, Maine, which is put on by Phil Sagiano and the folks at L.L. Bean. (If you don't know who they are you just aren't paying attention.)

The two are as different and yet alike as such activities can be. Over 3000 people attended Conclave to try out the latest in canoes, watch experts like Pat Moore, Steve Scarborough, and Mike Galt do stuff you didn't think was possible in a canoe, and receive instruction on how to do it. Interspersed with the hands-on stuff were lectures by recognized experts on canoe design, tripping, safety, maintenance, and even a bit of philosophy. Everything was smoothly orchestrated and professionally done yet still with the friendly aura of smaller paddler gatherings. To say I had a good time would be an understatement and for those who want to meet and talk with the best and the brightest in the canoe world, Conclave is the place to be. Everyone who is anyone was there and more than wiling to converse at length about anything dealing with canoes and demonstrate it if needed.

An added bonus of this year's Conclave was the first-ever Style Paddling Competition and Slalom Race. OK, there is something uniquely American about making a competition out of every aspect of paddling and I know our Canadian souls are repulsed by the idea, but it was a good show and actually exciting watching the best paddlers pushing themselves to the limits of their ability (and almost wiping out in the process). Conclave makes it obvious that we Canadians have a lot to learn when it comes to promotion of canoesport.

NACS is something different. It is held at Camp Winona on a big lake that is named with a New Englander's sense of humor: Moose Pond. There were fewer than 400 people who acted for all the world like an extended family. You couldn't walk ten metres without getting a big smile and a fifteen-minute conversation on some aspect of canoesport from a participant, one of the "professional" staff, or one of the ubiquitous L.L. Bean employees. Everyone melded together until one could hardly tell who was putting on the show and who was paying to see it. As with Conclave, there were lots of big names (most of whom write for *Canoesport Journal* — can't help getting a plug in here) all of whom would gladly spend the better part of the afternoon chatting and even going for a paddle with you. Best of all, this was a Symposium in the Greek sense, and after-dinner conversations over good things to drink were as valuable as the seminars. Equipment, paddling styles, and canoe routes were hashed and rehashed till the wee hours, only to resurface at the unforgivable hour of 6:30 while one stood in line for the showers.

Canada was well represented by the irrepressible Peake brothers whose show and party left the Americans speechless and put the lie to the common American belief that Canadians are stodgy. A common question after their slide presentation was, "Do all Canadians travel like that?" I would smile and lie, "Yes!" No doubt Cash Belden, who also represented the WCA (and brought along a couple of hundred *Nastawgans* that were hastily gobbled up by wilderness-starved Americans), did the same and we wimps became heroes by association.

The bonus feature of NACS is its proximity to the mecca of all outdoorsmen, The L.L. Bean Store in Freeport (1-1/2 hour's drive away and open 24 hours a day, 365 days per year). This is the ultimate Camper's Boutique. A store the size of Eaton's in Toronto but dedicated to the proposition that an outdoorsman and his money are easily parted. Fortunately I stumbled into the cash register island where I begged the salesgirl to total my purchases before I exceeded the limit on all three of my credit cards. On the way out I gave a dime to a beggar dressed in full L.L. Bean regalia who said that was all he needed to pay for a pair of Maine Guide boots. I won't relate the sad story he told me about how he became a Bean equipment junkie. I know the hell he went through. My wife hides the catalogues from me too.

So, fellow Canadians, until we get something as good here in Canada, NACS and Conclave are darn good places to get your spring canoeing fix.

FORESTS FOR TOMORROW
An environmental assessment (EA) of timber management on Crown land in Ontario is presently taking place in Thunder Bay. About 70% of Ontario is Crown land and will be effected by the results.

The view of the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), that forests are primarily a wood source, is being challenged. If the MNR cannot be made to change this view it could adversely effect the quality and availability of wilderness canoeing in Ontario.

If you have come across any bad timber management practices on your canoe trips, and have not made any submissions to the EA, I would be interested in hearing from you — Stephen Crouch 416-782-7741.

TEMAGAMI
The Temagami Wilderness Society continues to fight for a wildlands reserve. Its attempt to stop the Red Squirrel Road by legal means has failed. The Ministry of Natural Resources announced earlier this year the creation of 26,720 hectares of additional park in Temagami, protecting 225 km of canoe routes. However, the remoteness of these routes and the surrounding wilderness area is not protected.

ALGONQUIN PROVINCIAL PARK
A review of the Algonquin Provincial Park master plan is currently in progress. The MNR has issued a tabloid laying out what it considers are some of the major issues and includes a questionnaire to solicit input from the public. There are a number of contentious issues that could potentially be resolved during this process: use of motorboats in the park interior, lodging services in the park, and sport hunting and trapping in a nature reserve zone in Clyde and Bruton Townships. Logging in the park is not considered an issue for the park master plan.

QUETICO PROVINCIAL PARK
This is one of the few provincial parks in Ontario that is classified as 'wilderness.' The park provides some outstanding wilderness canoeing. There are a few private land holdings within the park that it is felt mar the true wilderness aspect, but the MNR has been committed since the 1977 master plan to buy these on a 'willing to sell' basis. However, one such property has just been bought by Wilderness Canoe Trips Inc. Why did the MNR not buy this property? It appears they did not consider it best value for available funds. The MNR appraised the property to be worth $25,000 (Cdn). It was sold for approximately $43,000 (Cdn).

MISSISSAGI RIVER PROVINCIAL PARK
This Northern Ontario park is located approximately 150 km northwest of Sudbury. It runs for about 160 km south from Ramsey Lake to Rocky Island Lake and offers an excellent wilderness canoe trip. A group of people feel that the development pressures (logging) around Biscotasing Lake just to the north of the park are beginning to threaten the integrity of this wilderness area. They have formed a group called The Friends of Bisco Committee, and are endeavoring to save the area. They have proposed that the Mississagi Provincial Park be extended to take in the south end of Biscotasing Lake, with perhaps a future extension to take in the northern end which runs into the Spanish River.

For more information contact Frances Gualtieri, Friends of Bisco Committee, 68 Kingsway Crescent, Etobicoke, Ont. M8X 2R6, 416-239-1670.

Stephen Crouch

APPEARANCES CAN BE DECEIVING

There can be no doubt that we humans find autumn to be the most tranquil and beautiful season in Algonquin. Everything about the Park in fall supports this impression. The campground are mostly empty, the woods are silent, and morning lakes are calm as glass.

Among wildlife, we often encounter dozing mergansers soaking up the sun on bleached logs at the water's edge, or chipmunks with bulging cheeks scuttling back to their burrows through dry leaves on the forest floor. Or, if we are really lucky, we may glimpse a sleek, antlered buck standing in golden hardwoods before it bounds away with high, graceful leaps.

All these images reinforce the picture we have of nature being at its most peaceful and bountiful at this time of year. But, in the natural world, reality is often very different from the way we perceive it and these examples are good cases in point. Take for instance the beautiful buck in the hardwoods. It may seem to be the epitome of grace and harmony but we would have a different impression if we were able to see how a buck really lives in the fall. This is the time of year leading up to the rut, or mating season, of the deer. In Algonquin the rut peaks in November but even now the lives of our deer have started to be anything but tranquil. Antler growth, begun last May, is now finished and the nourishing layer of skin called velvet which covered the antlers all this time has been shed.

If they haven't already started, bucks will soon be using their newly exposed antlers in sparring contests with other males. Rival bucks lower their heads, casually engage their antlers, and start pushing with all their strength. Usually one animal is busted in less than a minute and withdraws. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the season, very young males often persistently challenge older bucks even if they are invariably forced back immediately. Eventually even such inexperienced youngsters learn from these contests how they stack up against other males and a dominance hierarchy among bucks is established. The value of this is that, when things get really serious later on, rival deer can almost always size each other up quite realistically without having to waste energy or risk injury in an actual fight.

After a month or more of preliminary sparring contests, the mood of the bucks becomes much more intense, not to say downright ugly. They lose all tolerance for other bucks and begin to chase does. At first they merely trot along, their tails raised high and their noses to the ground, following the doe's scent. As they close in they adopt a "courtship posture" with the neck extended and lowered and the chin slightly raised but, at this stage, does almost invariably want nothing to do with the males. Sometimes a trailing buck gets the message when the doe stops to urinate. The bucks sniffs the urine and then raises his head while curling back his upper lip for about five seconds. It is believed this manoeuvre helps concentrate the urine vapor in the buck's nostrils and permits him to evaluate where the doe is in her reproductive cycle and therefore how long it will be before she is ready to mate. If the doe's receptive period is a long way off the buck may leave in search of another doe but sometimes he charges after the doe anyway. The doe will run hard and may leave her fawn far behind in an effort to get away from one of these aggressive bucks — and with good reason. In captivity bucks have been known to kill unreceptive does that couldn't get away.

Normally, however, tension and violence are far more likely to come to the fore between rival bucks than between a male and a female. If two bucks chase the same doe, the dominant buck lays back his ears and stares directly at his adversary. A subordinate male usually signals submission by turning away but, if he doesn't, the dominant animal bristles his hair, lowers his antlers, and stiffly walks toward him. This almost always suffices to make the inferior animal turn and only very rarely are two bucks so evenly matched that their confrontation escalates into a real battle.

In these cases the two rivals may slowly circle each other at a distance of only one or two metres, grunting all the while before suddenly smashing their antlers together in an incredibly violent, instantaneous mutual charge. There follows an intense bout of shoving and neck twisting until one buck is forced to retreat.

The chasing of does and the competition between bucks is relatively easy to understand but the rutting season in deer is accompanied by other, quite bizarre forms of behavior that are much less comprehensible. All through the rut, for example, bucks thrash saplings and shrubbery with their antlers. They then rub their foreheads on the debarked "buck rub," apparently leaving a scent produced by glands in the skin, but no-one really knows what purpose is served.

Bucks also leave other, more complicated signposts in the form of "scrapes." First the buck reaches up into a tree sometimes standing on his hindlegs, mouthes a branch, pulls it down (often breaking it) and then releases it in such a way that it springs across his forehead. Then, below the marked branch, he scrapes a shallow, circular depression with his forefeet, clearing it of leaves and other debris. As a final touch he urinates into the depression. It is suspected that does may visit such scrapes and leave scent messages of their own but, again, no-one knows for sure why deer do these things.

A third peculiar behavior exhibited by bucks during the rut is "rub-urination" in which a buck squeezes and rubs his hindlegs together while urinating on them at the same time. The urine reacts with secretions produced by glands on the inside surface of the buck's legs to produce a powerful, far-reaching odor that even humans can smell quite easily.

Any or all of these behaviors might serve to intimidate other bucks — or perhaps attract does when they finally do become ready for mating. Finding a buck might not seem to be a problem for a doe (given how eager the males are) but maybe it was in the past. Before European man arrived on the scene and greatly improved deer habitat through logging and forest fires, deer were almost certainly rarer than they are now. It may be that deer evolved their present signpost behaviors back in a time when does could not be guaranteed of finding a buck when they needed one unless they had a few smelly clues to guide them.

Does are fertile and will mate only for a period of 24 hours and during that time are jealously guarded by a dominant buck. Mating itself is simple, quick and violent — often the doe is knocked off her feet.

With the end of the rut, aggression subsides, the swollen necks of the bucks recede, and eventually the antlers are dropped. The exhausted bucks turn their attention to eating for they have lost as much as 30% of their weight during the rut and need to replenish their reserves if they are going to make it through the approaching winter.

It is hard for us humans to imagine what the deer have been through because we see so little of their lives. About all we can hope for is to catch a glimpse of a beautiful buck in golden fall hardwoods. When we do, we marvel at the animal's grace and beauty and quite naturally assume that a buck's life is as tranquil as it seems . . . Appearances can be deceiving.

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nastawgan is an Anishinabi word meaning 'the way or route'

EDITORIAL

The well is drying up. The stream of envelopes being stuffed into my mailbox is slowing down to a trickle. The number of contributions to *Nastawgan* is gradually getting smaller. And that's really not the way to go.

Nastawgan is your newsletter and you are responsible for filling its pages with the informative and unique material this very special publication is justly famous for. I, as editor, only juggle your contributions around and pour them into a pleasant form for our several thousand readers to enjoy. But I need your submissions to work with. Presently the WCA has almost 600 members so I should not have to rely on the few true-and-tried regular contributors to supply me with acceptable articles. What we want to see are new faces and names, people we have never heard of but who are willing to tell us about their adventures, large and small, on the waters and lands of canoe country.

So dig into your memories, write down your stories, thoughts, ideas, joys and worries, experiences good and bad, dreams and nightmares, anything related to wilderness canoeing. What is particularly needed are short to medium-length articles (500 to 3000 words) about trips you have done, about conservation issues, equipment, technique, special people, health, food, etc. The payment you will receive dollar-wise is exactly zero, but your efforts will be highly appreciated by a large group of dedicated paddlers.

And don't think that you have nothing to say because you never get out of southern Ontario and just can't compete with all those impressive stories about exotic and far-away Labrador and the Barren Lands. It's not the length and toughness of a trip that are of prime interest to us. It is the human experience, the personal element in your trips that touches us and that makes for the most interesting articles. And that feeling can be found anywhere, in the tiny creek next door as well as in the raging stream rushing down northern Quebec.

So please, submit your articles, photographs, sketches, anything that might be of interest to our diverse group of wilderness paddlers. And if you need advice and encouragement on what to do and how to do it, contact me and we'll discus your ideas. Now, dig in and paddle!

FALL PARTY

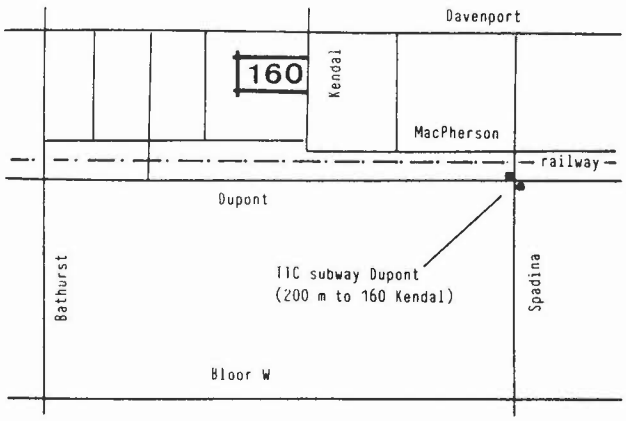
Want to meet old canoeing friends? Want to hear some tall paddling stories and see interesting photographs? Want to find out what the WCA is all about, who its members are, and what inside information they can give you?

Then come to the WCA Fall Party, also called Wine-and-Cheese Party, on Friday evening, 24 November, in the Staff Lounge of the Casa Loma Campus of George Brown College, 160 Kendal Avenue, Toronto. Non-WCA-members are also welcome. Admission, to be paid at the door, is $5.00 per person.

Program

7:00–7:30 Registration and Welcome.
7:30–7:45 Introductory slide show.
7:45–8:30 Meet the people, enjoy the wine and cheese.
8:30–9:30 Slide shows.
9:30– . . Coffee and gab.

For more information, contact Diane Hamilton at 416-279-0789.



There are several parking lots in the area. Do not park on the streets.

BILL MASON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

As a tribute to the late Bill Mason, a Canadian recognized at home and internationally as a canoeist, environmentalist, artist, filmmaker, photographer, and public speaker, the Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association (CRCA) has established the "Bill Mason Memorial Scholarship Fund" with the permission of the Mason family.

To ensure that the memory and spirit that Bill stood for is kept fresh in the minds of Canadians, the Scholarship Fund is intended to incorporate some of the characteristics that made Bill Mason unique. This will be done by awarding an annual scholarship to a worthy outdoor recreation or environmental studies student at a Canadian College or University.

Donations sent to the CRCA, designated to the "Bill Mason Memorial Scholarship Fund," will be placed into an annuity account. It is hoped that the annuity, when fully capitalized, will yield an annual scholarship of $1,000.00. A selection committee will review worthy applications to the Bill Mason Memorial Scholarship Fund. All donations will receive a charitable donations tax receipt. Send your donations to: CRCA, P.O. Box 500, Hyde Park, Ontario N0M 1Z0 (phone: 519-473-2109). Make cheques payable to: CRCA Bill Mason Memorial Scholarship Fund. Donations via credit cards (Visa and Master Card) are also gladly accepted.

THE CANADIAN HERITAGE RIVER SYSTEM

The Canadian Heritage River System is a co-operative program, developed and run by the park administrations of federal, provincial, and territorial governments to give national recognition to the important rivers of Canada. The primary objective of the program is to ensure that rivers which are outstanding examples of Canada's natural heritage, which have played a significant role in Canada's history, or which offer outstanding opportunities for recreation, are managed in such a way that their distinctive value is conserved while public use and enjoyment is enhanced.

On 18 January 1984 the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board was established to administer the CHRS program and to review river nominations for inclusion in that program. As of 1 February 1988, sections of fifteen different rivers, with a total length of 2600 km, had been nominated to the System.

(From the fall 1989 issue of *Kanawa*, the news magazine of the Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association.)

NEWS BRIEFS

NASTAWGAN MATERIAL AND DEADLINE Articles, trip reports, book reviews, photographs, sketches, technical tips, or anything else that you think might be of interest to other readers, are needed for future issues. Submit your contributions preferably in typewritten form or on floppy disk; contact the editor for more information. Contributor's Guidelines are available upon request. The deadline dates for the next two issues are:

issue:	*deadline date:*
winter 1989	12 November 1989
spring 1990	4 February 1990

WCA MEMBERSHIP LISTS are available to any members who wish one for personal, non-commercial use. Send two dollars in bills (no cheques, please!) to: Cash Belden, 77 Huntley Street, Apt. 1116, Toronto, M4Y 2P3.

SPANISH RIVER THREATENED AGAIN?! There are persistent rumors that the famous Spanish River, west of Sudbury, Ontario, might be dammed in the not-too-distant future. A report on this disturbing development will be published in the next issue of *Nastawgan*.

ALGONQUIN PARK MASTER PLAN Algonquin Park is conducting a Master Plan review this year and are asking users of the Park to help their work by completing a questionnaire which can be picked up at any Park office. Please fill one out, this is your chance to be heard.

SYMPOSIUM IN JANUARY Set aside coming 26 and 27 January for the fifth annual Canoeing and Wilderness Symposium. This year we focus on LABRADOR, one of the last and most spectacular true wilderness regions of North America.

Already a number of contributors have agreed to participate, including 84-year-old Elliot Merrick, whose "True North" narrative from the 1930s is one of my all-time favorite wilderness books. Other participants include John Rugge, Herb Pohl, Robert Perkins, Ray Chipeniuk, and many more Labrador enthusiasts.

In October or November, when you receive the WCA mailing for registration, be sure to respond early as we expect another sell-out. If you can volunteer time to assist, please contact George Luste in Toronto at 416-534-9313 (evenings).

1990 CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS Three positions on the Board of Directors will become available coming spring, with elections for a two-year term to be held at the February AGM. The office is open to all paid-up members who have reached to age of majority, or will do so within ten days of election. Candidates should notify John Winters (705-382-2057) of their intention to run. Although nominations may be made up to the time of the elections, candidates are requested to declare themselves prior to the deadline of the winter issue of *Nastawgan*, so that they can publish a brief platform.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1990 Next year's AGM will take place in the third week of February in a still-to-be-determined location.

CREDIT RIVER — NO RIGHTS TO PORTAGE

On 20 and 21 April 1989 Mr. Justice Doherty of the Supreme Court of Ontario heard the case of Canoe Ontario and James Greenacre (plaintiffs) and Julian and Laurie Reed (defendants) regarding the right to portage around the dam on the Credit River where the river runs through the Reed's property at Norval on Highway 7.

The main objective of our case was to have the Credit River declared "navigable" on the assumption that canoeists, and any other river users, had the right to portage around obstacles, providing the river was classed as "navigable." Mr. Reed maintained that he not only owned the property on both sides of the river, but had title to the river bed as well, and could therefore prevent access to the river where it flowed through his property by erecting barbed wire fences above and below his property, ostensibly to keep his cattle from straying.

Justice Doherty ruled that the Reeds do not own the river bed; therefore they have no right to maintain fences on the river which deny public access to that part of the river which runs through his property. This, he goes on to say, does not prevent the Reeds from erecting structures designed to keep their cattle on course when crossing the river, providing the structure is well marked and has a gate or gates for the use of river users. He also ruled that the Credit River, where it passes through the Reed property, is navigable. However, this does not give canoeists, or other river users, the right to land and portage across the Reed property.

This ruling means that whether a river, any river, is navigable or not, canoeists do not automatically have the right to portage around obstructions if the portage passes through private properties. To those many WCA members whose main interest in canoeing is one-day, whitewater river trips on nearby rivers, this ruling could have dire consequences.

Rouge River at low water, Metro Toronto

WCA PHOTO CONTEST

The WCA again offers its members an opportunity to participate in an exciting and rewarding competition. Have a good look at your photo collection, select the shots that you particularly like, and enter them in this unique contest, which is for all of us who try to express photographically something of our wilderness experiences. Each photograph you enter means a chance of getting published in a place of honor in *Nastawgan*.

CATEGORIES

1. *Flora*: wild plants in their natural settings.
2. *Fauna*: wild animals in their natural settings.
3. *Wilderness*: scenery, landscapes, sunrises/sets, mood shots, close ups, etc., that interpret the 'feeling' of the wilderness. There should be no evidence of man in the photographs.
4. *Wilderness and Man*: as in category 3, but with man in harmony with the natural environment.

CONTEST RULES

1. Entries will be accepted from WCA members only.
2. *Not* eligible for entry are: photographs that received prizes or honorable mentions in previous WCA contests, photographs made by the panel of judges, and photographs by professional or semiprofessional photographers.
3. All photographs must have been taken by the photographer her/himself.
4. Any kind of photograph is acceptable: color as well as black and white, slides as well as prints (minimum print size 3 1/2 x 5 in., maximum 11 x 14 in., border or no border, unmounted or mounted, no mats or frames).
5. A maximum of four photographs per category may be submitted; you may enter as many of the four categories as you want.
6. The WCA reserves the right to use any of the photographs entered in this competition for reproduction in *Nastawgan*, and to have duplicates made for the purpose of WCA promotion.

HOW TO ENTER

a. Select a maximum of four photographs per category.

b. Each photograph submitted should be numbered and clearly marked with the photographer's name. Include with your entry a sheet of paper stating your name/address/phone, and indicate by number for each photograph the category entered and the title of the photograph.

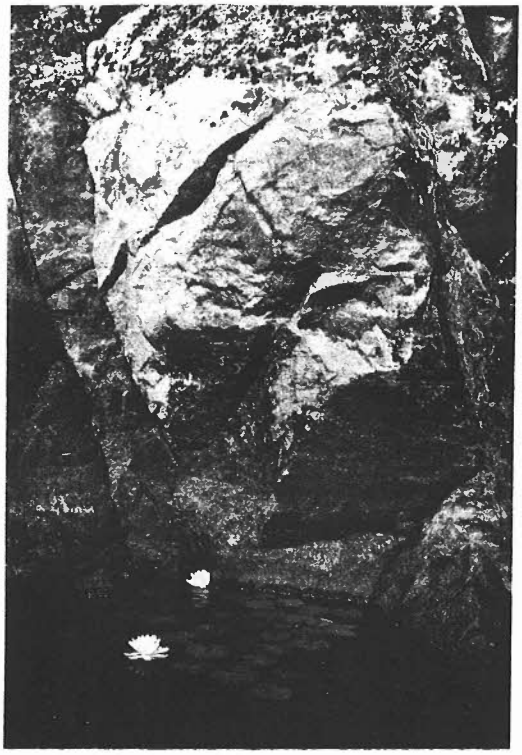
c. Include with your entry the $3.00 fee in bills (preferably) or by cheque made out to the contest organizer Toni Harting, regardless of the number of photographs entered.

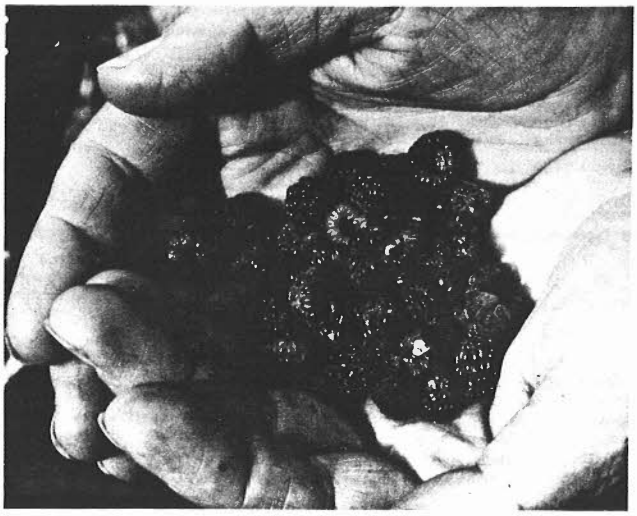
d. Pack everything in a strong box or between two sheets of cardboard in a sturdy envelope marked "photographs," and send or deliver to: Toni Harting, 7 Walmer Road, Apt. 902, Toronto, M5R 2W8, phone 416-964-2495, *to be received no later than Sunday, 21 January 1990.*

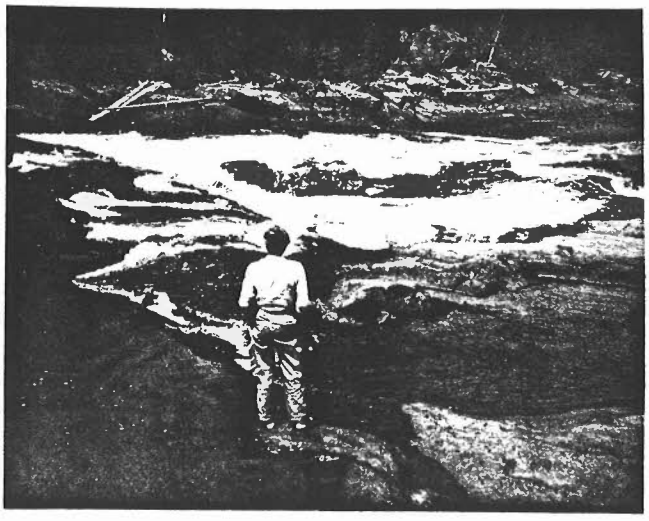
JUDGING will be performed by a panel of experienced photographers who will look for content, spontaneity, originality, feeling of wilderness, and joy of photography.

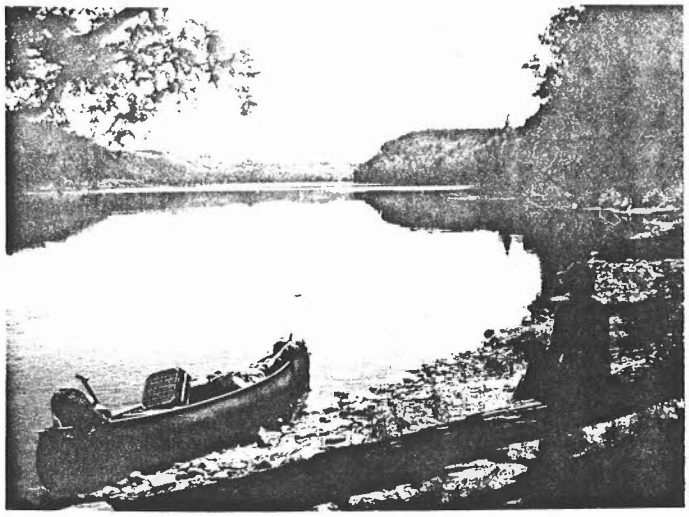
PRIZES: The winner of each category in each class will receive an 8x10 enlargement of the winning photograph, matted and/or framed. All placed photographs will receive a certificate in recognition of their achievement. Honorable mentions will also be given if deemed appropriate. All winning photographs and a selection from the other entries will be published in *Nastawgan*. Winners will be announced at the Annual General Meeting in February 1990, where all entries will be shown and constructive comments will be given on many of the photographs.

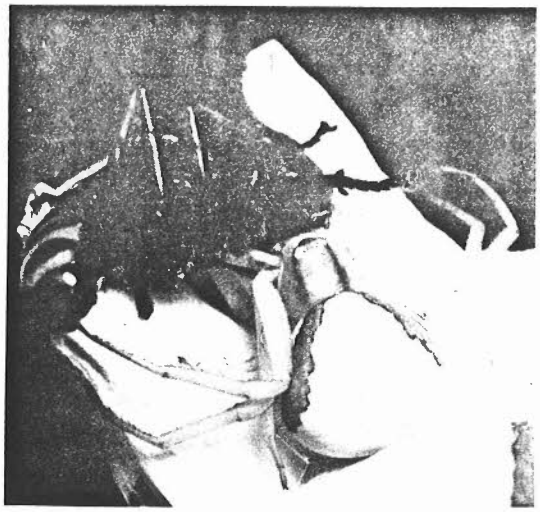
RETURN OF PHOTOS: Entrants may pick up their photographs at the AGM. Those not present there can pick up their photographs at Toni Harting's home, or they will be returned by mail (please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope of appropriate size). Indicate with your entry how you would like to have your photographs returned.







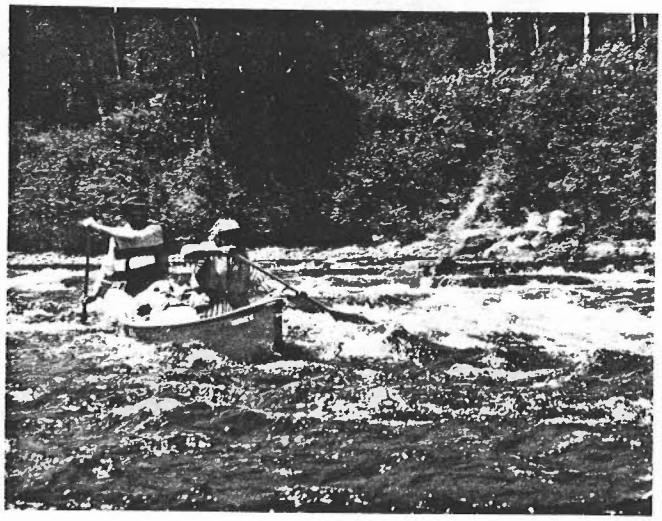


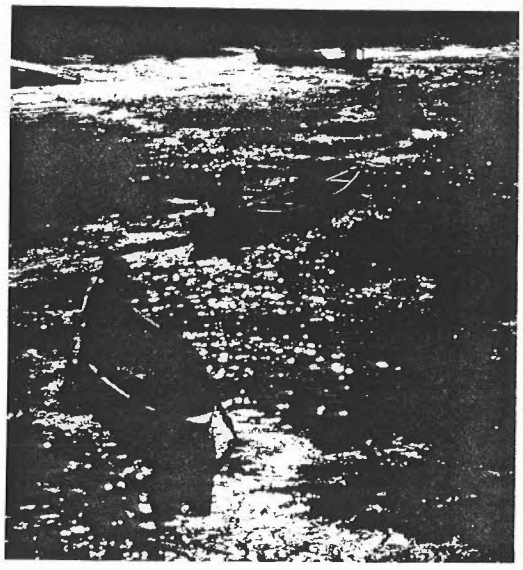


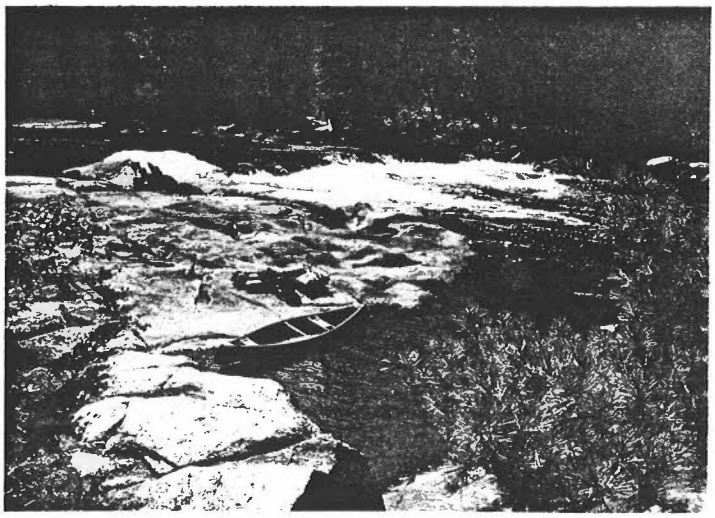
SPANISH RIVER

Toni Harting

20 July – 1 August 1989
Put-in: Duke Lake
Take-out: Agnew Lake Lodge







THE WAY IT WAS

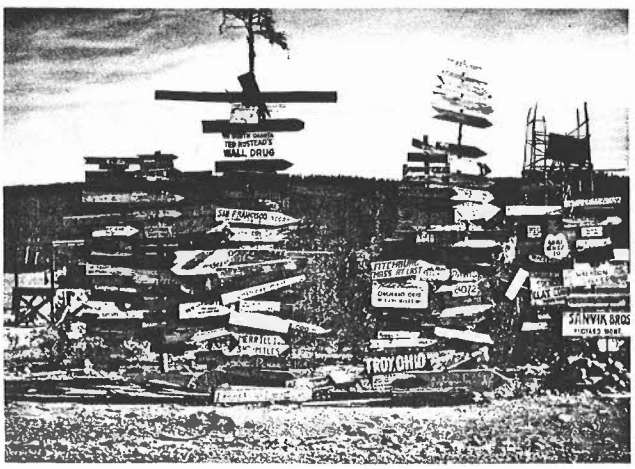
Canoeing in the Yukon Territory in 1955 and 1957

Henning F. Harmuth

On the road to the Yukon north of Edmonton in 1955.

Today we can afford to ship canoes by air and charter bush planes but this was not so a generation ago. Any trip to the north country started with planning how to get there without going broke. The Alaska Highway to Whitehorse on the Yukon and the Mackenzie Highway to Lower Hay River on Great Slave Lake were the preferred access roads, particularly since both featured bus service two or three times a week. Of course, you could not take a canoe on the bus, but a folding boat could be loaded if the bus driver was not too picky. The starting point was Edmonton, from where one could reach Great Slave Lake in two days and Whitehorse in four. The direct highway via Whitecourt to Valleyview did not yet exist. Instead, one travelled on a ribbon of mud past Lesser Slave Lake. Things improved once Dawson Creek was reached since the Alaska Highway had gravel mixed into the mud.

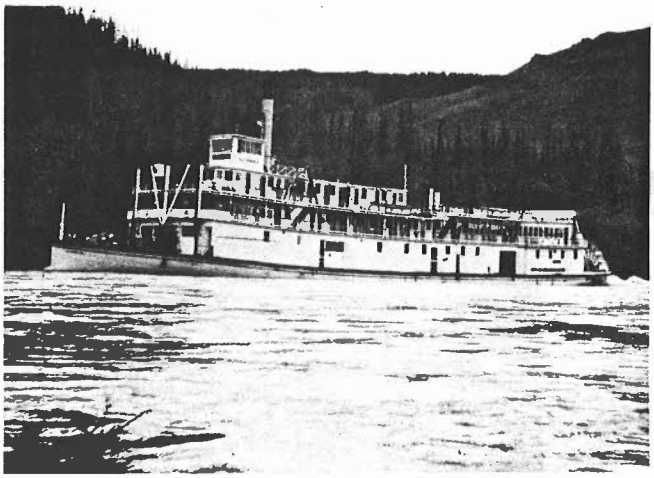
Shortly after, Fort St.John was reached. Everything was up to date in Fort St.John, they had gone about as far as they could go. You could walk the sidewalk in the rain and never muddy your boots, thanks to a sturdy boardwalk. Hitching posts were provided to tie up horses or cars. Segregated drinking facilities permitted the ladies to fill up to their heart's desire without feeling compelled by male customers to show unnecessary modesty. Further north one passed the now famous assembly of road signs still in its original tacky state but sporting the inevitable advertisement of the Wall Drug Store in North Dakota. Four days out of Edmonton the bus pulled into Whitehorse and the passengers pulled themselves out of the bus, having survived the hardest part of any canoe trip on the Yukon.



The famous road signs on the Alaska Highway before improvement by the government.

Whitehorse was the proud home port of the Yukon stern-wheelers. SS "Klondike" was still plying the Yukon between Whitehorse and Dawson. Much ingenuity had gone into maintaining this boat service. Just below Whitehorse traffic was blocked well into June by frozen Lake Laberge. To break open a navigable channel earlier, black soot was spread along a line across the lake to help absorb more sunlight. This added a few weeks to the navigation season. Another major obstacle was Five Finger Rapids. Down river the steamboats could run the rapids, but the current was too fast to battle them upstream with a paddle wheel. The solution was to winch the ships up through the rapids on an iron chain.

Dawson was a ghost town in 1955. A few placer miners were still working in the area which provided some economic base for the town, but the opera house, most saloons, blacksmiths' shops, and other leftovers of a bygone era were in various states of decay. Fort Reliance just below Dawson, on the other hand, was a lively village. It had existed before gold was discovered at the Klondike and Dawson grew up overnight, and it still existed now that most of the gold was gone. The onion-shaped top of its little church reflected the Russian influence of the nineteenth century.



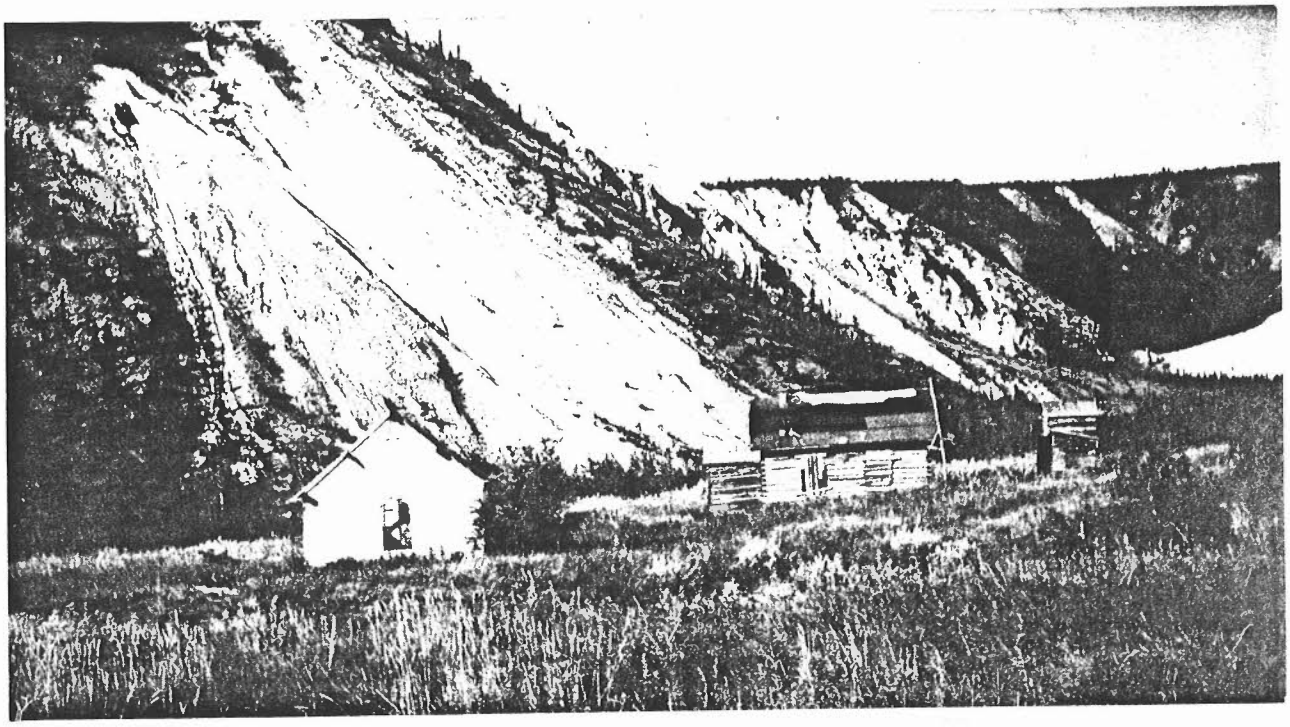
SS "Klondike" on its way from Dawson to Whitehorse.

Let us now jump to a trip on a tributary of the Yukon in 1957. We started in Arctic Red River in the Mackenzie Delta, since this is a take-off place to reach the Porcupine River which flows into the Yukon at Fort Yukon. From here Bell explored the route to the Yukon for the Hudson's Bay Company a century earlier. Franklin established here an "astronomical pier" that served as the reference point for the survey of the 1000-km-long route to the Yukon by dead reckoning. Very few people lived in Arctic Red River in 1957, but it featured an RCMP force of two men who were most happy to have the monotony of their summer broken by two visitors.

Today Arctic Red River is connected with larger Fort McPherson by a road, but in the old days it was a long paddle past Point Separation with its fierce winds from the north. Fort McPherson not only had an RCMP force of its own, it even had a jail with a prisoner in it. The rather fragile structure of this jail - canvas and tent-poles - made me ask: "Does he not run away?" The policeman had a simple answer: "Where would he run to?"

The population of the North was a far cry from what it is today. Most of their livelihood was derived from hunting, fishing, and trapping, with an occasional assist from welfare, which is the reverse of today's means of support. The pride that comes from self-support could readily be seen in such remote villages as Fort McPherson or Old Crow.

Across McDougall Pass from Fort McPherson is one of the most inaccessible areas of Canada and the Yukon drainage. Following the Little Bell, Bell, and Porcupine rivers down from the continental divide one reaches Old Crow some two weeks out of Fort McPherson. It was not anywhere as up-to-date as Fort St.John. The only building materials were tree logs, and here was the last RCMP post still housed in a log cabin. A mail plane from Fort McPherson came once a month during the summer. Whenever the mail arrived, people got sick with various types of cold, showing the lower resistance of such isolated populations to the common sicknesses of civilization.

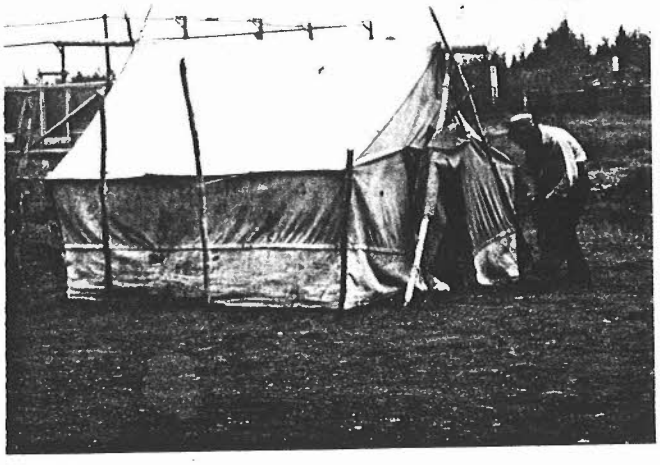


Rampart House on the border of Canada and Alaska at the Porcupine River. The buildings are in Canada, the hills in the background are the Ramparts of the Porcupine already in Alaska.

The Anglican church of Old Crow served a variety of unsuspected uses. The little extension in the rear left of the church once provided housing for the missionary - who hopefully was not a tall man - but progress had brought a married missionary to Old Crow and the couple lived it up in a log cabin. The old quarters now served as guest accommodation, and we lived it up too after weeks in a tent. Besides the Anglican church with missionary cabin and the police cabin, there was also a Catholic church tended by a missionary from Paris, France. He was a lonely man. Except for one RCMP man there was no Catholic in Old Crow or the Porcupine valley and for all practical purposes he was shunned by everybody. We did our good deed by talking with him.

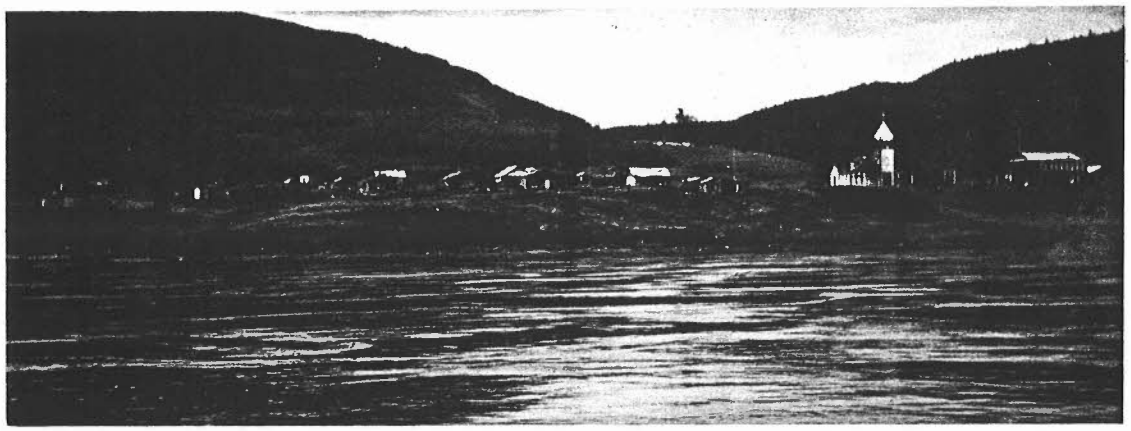
Another landmark of Old Crow was the schoolhouse. It seemed impossibly small, but about 30 pupils of all ages managed to crowd into it during the summer session. Principal, teacher, and caretaker for the buildings and grounds was the Anglican missionary. He was assisted by his wife, who was a registered nurse and represented the medical establishment of Old Crow. She was paid $50 per month by the government for medical care to the village population, which she considered generous remuneration. Money had some value then, although gasoline sold for $ 2.00 per gallon even in 1957. This was twice the price charged in Fort Yukon, but the supply line to Fort Yukon was tenuous and consisted of two trips per year by a small river launch.

The schoolhouse in Old Crow.



RCMP Jail in Fort McPherson in 1957. The prisoner enters the cell for the night.

Indian woman with her children in Fort McPherson. Note thedecoration of glass beads on moccasins and child wrapper.



Fort Reliance just below Dawson on the Yukon.

The economy of Old Crow was still squarely based on the fur trade, primarily on muskrat trapped in the Old Crow Flats that could be reached by going up the Old Crow River. This trapping economy created a low-activity life in summer, permitting the people to attend school and to socialize in the village. During winter they were isolated in their trapping cabins.

The earlier prosperity of the Porcupine valley during the fur trading days was amply demonstrated by the many abandoned trading posts between Old Crow and Fort Yukon, 500 km down river at the end of the Porcupine River. Rampart House on the border with Alaska had discontinued operations about ten years earlier. Stephens, Old Rampart, Curtis, and Shuman House were in various states of decay. Among the debris at Shuman House was a mammoth tusk. It is interesting to note that this area was not covered by ice during the last ice age, but was completely surrounded by ice. As a result, it became a refuge as well as a prison for many animals and eventually a major source for their bones and tusks. The low precipitation which prevented glaciation is still noticeable today when one observes that the mountains above McDougall Pass, that reach altitudes close to 2000 metres, have no permanent snow and ice cover.

At the junction of the Porcupine River with the mighty Yukon we connect with the trip of 1955 that we interrupted in Fort Reliance below Dawson. The fast, muddy waters of the Yukon make this river ideal for the fishing wheel. The current at Fort Yukon is easily 10 km per hour, which is much too fast to paddle against. The town is located on the cut bank of the river and the historic sites of the Hudson's Bay Company have all been washed away by the fast current a long time ago. However, there was still the clinic that served Indians, trappers, and traders for many decades. The airplane makes it now more economical to fly patients to Fairbanks, but a log building with two stories and a usable attic must have been one of the marvels of its time.

Let us close this report of canoeing a generation ago with a memorial marker erected by the Hudson's Bay Company in Fort Yukon at the bank of the river that marked one of the farthest corners of its empire. It says:

In memory of the people
of the Hudson's Bay Company
who died at or near Fort Yukon
between the years 1840 and 1870
many of them being
pioneers and discovers and
explorers of various portions
of the Yukon and Alaska.
Erected by
The Hudson's Bay Company 1923

GIARDIASIS AND WATER SUPPLIES

Giardiasis, or Beaver Fever, is a parasitic disease which can be transmitted through water supplies as well as by contact from humans or animals. Because beavers were suspected as the source of the first outbreaks detected in Colorado, Giardiasis became known as Beaver Fever. However, the organism has also been isolated from dogs, cats, horses, deer, sheep, coyotes, and muskrats.

There have been no known outbreaks of Giardiasis from municipal drinking water supplies in Ontario. However, water-related epidemics have been identified in Alberta and several U.S. states.

Scientists feel it is unlikely that the disease has spread dramatically in the short period it has been identified. It is more probable that modern medicine can now identify Giardiasis infections which previously were misdiagnosed as other gastric ailments.

Beaver Fever can be characterised by nausea, anorexia, cramps, diarrhoea, and flatulence. None of these things are pleasant, but scientists stress that Giardiasis is not regarded as a life-threatening infection. Researchers say it is a "well-adjusted parasite, which does not want to kill the host it feeds on."

Mental institutions, day-care centres, and other similar institutions, because of the possibility of lower levels of personal hygiene, are high-risk situations for Giardia infections.

The disease is caused by the organism *Giardia lamblia*, a protozoan parasite of the Order Protomonadina. At least half the infections of *Giardia lamblia* may produce no symptoms. Chronic, subacute, and acute symptoms do occur with infections which, if persistent, can cause serious fatigue and weight loss. The disease can last for as long as three months, after which the body either eliminates the parasite, or comes to terms with it, often with little negative effect.

Giardia lamblia has two stages in its life cycle: a trophozoite (Fig. A), and a cyst (Fig. B). Trophozoites appear as pear-shaped cells with sucking disks on their ventral surface by which they attach themselves to their host's intestines. They range in size from 9 to 21 microns long, (a micron is a thousandth of a millimetre) by 6 to 12 microns wide. Quite fragile, the trophozoites cannot survive outside their hosts.

The egg-shaped cysts are approximately the same size but have smooth walls and are much tougher than the trophozoites. These cysts can survive in quite hostile environments for long periods, especially in cold water. They have been known to survive as long as 77 days in water at 8 degrees Celsius, but survival time drops to between 5 to 24 days in water at 20 degrees C. They can also resist levels of free chlorine which would kill most bacteria and viruses present in water during normal water treatment.

In humans, the disease begins when the parasite is ingested in its cyst form. It then passes into the stomach where the acid triggers a change, releasing what are now trophozoites. These attach themselves to the intestine walls. There they absorb food, reproduce, and release their offspring into the digestive tract, where they once more encyst. From initial infection to the passage of the first cysts from the hosts, the disease usually has a nine-day cycle.

Cysts enter the environment through infected fecal material on land, in water, or in food. Animals may pick up the infection from human feces, after which they may contaminate water sources, commencing a new cycle of infection through the human consumers. Additionally, humans may pick up the infection from direct contact with animals.

While water taken from lakes can be a source of Giardiasis, the cysts settle rapidly. Natural sedimentation can remove and cover the parasites quickly, keeping them out of the water and away from man until they perish. As contamination from animal feces is more likely to occur at, or near, the water's edge, any risks can be further minimized by locating the water intake pipes at some distance away from the shoreline, as is the case with most municipal water systems.

Normal chlorination will not kill the cysts in drinking water, but they are substantially removed by the conventional water treatment processes of coagulation, sedimentation, and filtration.

Coagulation combines many of the cysts into 'flocs' which are formed into large soft lumps of sediment in the water being drawn from the lakes for treatment. Once a cyst-containing floc is formed, it can be 'settled out' of the water, or trapped by the filters.

While well water in rural areas is usually safe, because the soil acts like a natural filter, some waters taken from surface sources may contain Giardia cysts.

Ironically, streams in isolated areas, because of flow and continual turbulence, are more likely to keep the cysts in suspension in areas where the parasites are present. Even in mountain areas such as Colorado, where the water may be otherwise pure, streams have often become a source of Giardiasis infection, because of animal feces entering the water courses.

A few simple precautions can greatly minimize the risks to cottagers and other rural dwellers. Untreated water taken from streams, even in so-called pristine areas, where campers might feel secure from any pollution, may contain cysts. However, the cysts can be effectively inactivated simply by boiling the drinking water.

In our research for this article, we found that the conventional plants treating municipal water supplies, if well-engineered and ably operated, are effective in preventing the transmission of water-borne Giardiasis.

Indeed, human contact with both wildlife and domestic animals is a much more likely source of the disease. The public can greatly reduce the risk of infection from this parasite simply by observing the safeguards listed above.

(Report courtesy of the Ontario Drinking Water Information Council.)

THE LAST WILDERNESS

Author: Peter Browning
Publisher: Great West Books, PO Box 1028, Lafayette, CA 94549, USA; 1989 ($14.95 US).
Reviewed by: Toni Harting

In the summer of 1964, two men made a 1000-km, 11-week canoe trip from Black Lake in northern Saskatchewan to Snowdrift on the eastern arm of Great Slave Lake in the Northwest Territories (District of Mackenzie). They started out with 210 kg (463 pounds) of gear and food and travelled in a 17-foot aluminum Grumman canoe.

The two adventurers, having practically no experience in northern travel, took a tremendous risk in attempting such a long and difficult journey with just one canoe and no one to fall back on in case of life-threatening accidents. But they pulled it off and successfully finished their trip without serious mishaps, in spite of the mistakes they made in the planning and execution of the adventure. Both were enriched beyond measure by the experiences they had shared on their trip through this empty, harsh, unforgiving but unforgettably beautiful part of northern Canada.

In 1975, one of the men, Peter Browning, published a book recounting in a personal, introspective style and in fascinating detail the story of this trip. Now, in 1989, with the first edition of his book unavailable for several years, Browning has published a second edition that shows some interesting improvements over the first one. The text of the two editions is practically the same but the second edition contains more of the often excellent photographs as well as a large number of black-and-white silhouette images that greatly enhance the look of the book. A limited but good bibliography has been added.

We should be thankful to Browning for again making this illustrated true-life adventure story available. His is indeed a special book that will surely delight many new readers. It not only chronicles the day-to-day events of a long and arduous canoe trip with many gruelling portages, but it also shares with us the deep feelings and thoughts of an intelligent and perceptive man who, for the first time in his life, is confronted with the haunting spectacle of the country on the edge of the Barrens.

[The book can be ordered directly from the publisher mentioned above or, in Canada, from Northern Books, see the announcement in the Products and Services section on the last page of this issue of *Nastawgan*.]

QAYAQ

Newsletter of the Great Lakes Sea Kayaking Association

In November of last year a small group of enthusiasts came together in Toronto and formed a club to promote the special kind of paddling called sea kayaking. Things soon got rolling and in the spring of this year the club (now called the Great Lakes Sea Kayaking Association) produced its first newsletter, *Qayaq*, with Sandy Richardson (of WCA fame) as interim editor.

Sandy's many years of experience running our own newsletters *Wilderness Canoeist* and *Nastawgan* are clearly evident in the quality of *Qayaq*. Lay-out and presentation are excellent and once the GLSKA members will get their creative juices flowing their newsletter will surely offer some interesting articles.

We welcome *Qayaq* in our small world of paddling publications and hope to be able to reprint some of its articles in future issues of *Nastawgan*. Anyone interested in the activities of the GLSKA can get information by contacting: Great Lakes Sea Kayaking Association, P.O. Box 22082, 45 Overlea Blvd., Toronto, M4H 1N9.

BIRCHBARK CANOE

An Apprenticeship with the Indians

Imagine settling down to build a canoe. Now picture the experience without the help of power saws, drills, or even a hammer and nails. This was the type of challenge David Gidmark faced when he decided to build a birchbark canoe. The challenge grew to embrace an entire Indian culture when Gidmark moved to Maniwaki, Quebec, to live among the few remaining birchbark canoe craftsmen in North America.

Birchbark canoe: an Apprenticeship with the Indians, a new book from General Store Publishing House of Burnstown, Ontario, is the story of Gidmark's experiences. The book tells of Gidmark's initial rejection and his gradual acceptance as a white man in the Indian community. Along the way, Gidmark, the author of several books, shares the canoe building techniques he learned.

This book is a must-read for anyone interested in the outdoors and the history of the people who first travelled the continent in their own-hewn craft. To obtain your copy for $14.95 plus $1.50 postage and handling, contact: Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association, P.O. Box 500, Hyde Park, Ontario, N0M 1Z0, phone 519-473-2109.

(Review courtesy of *Kanawa*, the newsmagazine of the CRCA.)

ᖃᐅᓚᖅᑐᑦ QIKAALUKTUT
IMAGES OF INUIT LIFE
ᑎᑎᕋᐅᓴᖅᓯᒪᔪᑦ ᐃᓄᐃᑦ ᐃᓐᓇᕐᓂᑦ

QIKAALUKTUT — Images of Inuit Life was recently published in a special English/Inuktitut edition. Now, not only is it unique as a history of the inland Inuit, told from their perspective, it is also one of very few hardcover books published in their language. It tells of their life on the land, their hunts, their travels on foot and by kayak, their difficult years, and their eventual transition into settlement life. The pencil drawings reproduced in full color were done for the book by well-known Inuit artist Ruth Annaqtuusi Tulurialik, and the text was written by WCA-member David Pelly, based on material gathered from elders in Baker Lake, NWT. This limited edition is available for $24.95 (plus $2 shipping) from: Betelgeuse Books, 53 Fraser Ave., Bldg.7, Suite 093, Toronto, M6K 1Y7.

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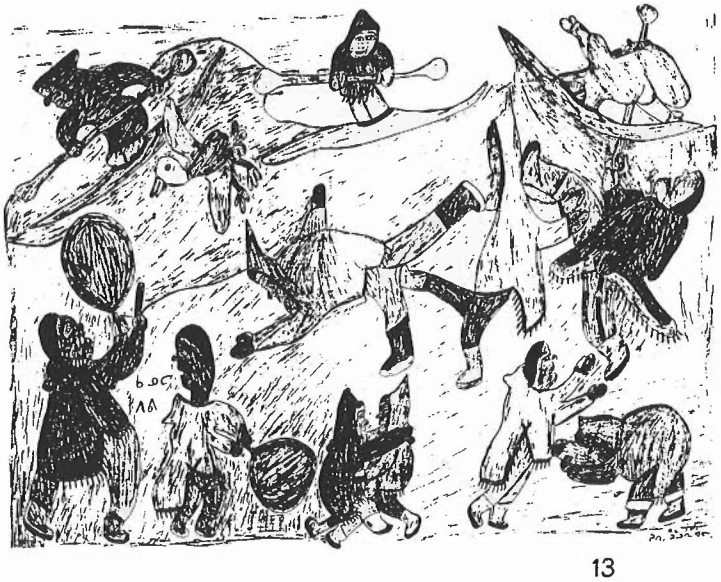


RIVER IN SPRING

When the river opens in June there is a happy feeling of new beginnings. Nature comes to life again, the current flows swiftly. The people are full of life, fighting just for fun, while off to one side a father is teaching his son the qilaujaniq (drum dance). He has just made the boy, about 14, his first caribou-skin drum. The son asks, 'How do you do this?'

Another family passes by in their kayaks: father, son, and mother. They are brave to chance the fast current. But it will carry them downriver to a new camp, a place for a new beginning.

AH, SOLITUDE!

Gail Vickars

The need for me to find time by myself to do some sorting out had been present for quite awhile, but due to other commitments it had not been possible to go anywhere. Now I had a few days off and knew exactly where I wanted to go.

Late in the afternoon of 30 April I drove to just outside Algonquin Park. I slept in my car, and three mosquitoes braved the frost to keep me company.

Next morning I was back on the road at about 6 a.m., planning to get an early start on Canoe Lake before the wind and waves would pick up. The lake was calm alright. Disappointingly calm, in fact. Frozen solid! Unbelievable for this time of the year. A fresh layer of thin ice skirted the solid mass which filled the bay. The edges were thawed; perhaps it would be possible to paddle along the shore to the open water on the main part of the lake? The only problem was, the rest of the lake looked even more solid.

Still finding it hard to believe, I walked down the trail to have a quick look at the larger area of the lake. What I saw there convinced me that, if I was going anywhere on Canoe Lake, it wouldn't be by canoe. Perhaps it would soon thaw; then again, it could take days. Disappointed, I realized I'd have to rearrange my plans.

Again driving along Highway 60 wasn't too encouraging; the other lakes I saw were frozen too. Just when I was beginning to wonder if I'd be heading back home with my canoe never having been off the top of my car, I passed open water. Mew Lake was open!

I quickly decided to head for Rock Lake. The river there was open, as well as the park fee station. I paid for the two nights I had before I was due back for work. There was some wind on Rock Lake, but my canoe was manageable. The Barclay Estate campsite was quickly reached and looked too inviting to pass up. So much for camping on an island.

The day was sunny and warm so I changed into shorts. The ring around the sun, though, wouldn't go away. Solitude? The drone of motors on fishing boats was constant; the public campground was visible and audible across the bay. Wildlife consisted of a pair of loons and some chipmunks, red squirrels, chickadees, gulls, and other birds. Patches of snow and ice dotted the woods. The bay behind me and farther along the shore still had ice on the water. I did hang my food pack in a tree although any sensible bear or raccoon would be asleep.

Next day I had the solitude I longed for. It was cold and wet; there were no boats anywhere. I went for a long walk down the trail (an old railway bed) to do some mental house cleaning. Just when I was very deep in thought, delighting in at last being totally alone (except for some wildlife), a person emerged from the woods. I was a little startled. We passed each other and continued on our separate ways without even an acknowledgement. Perhaps the man was just as startled?

When I was walking back the lake looked calm, so I thought of going out in my canoe. However, when I reached camp it was quite windy and wavy so, instead, I crawled into my sleeping bag to warm up and read. The day continued cold with constant rain or drizzle. I was able to light a fire and keep it going throughout the evening. The loons and geese flying north overhead reminded me that, hey, it really was spring!

The night was so cold, I expected to find ice on my tent and snow on the ground when I emerged in the morning. However, it was just the usual wind and rain.

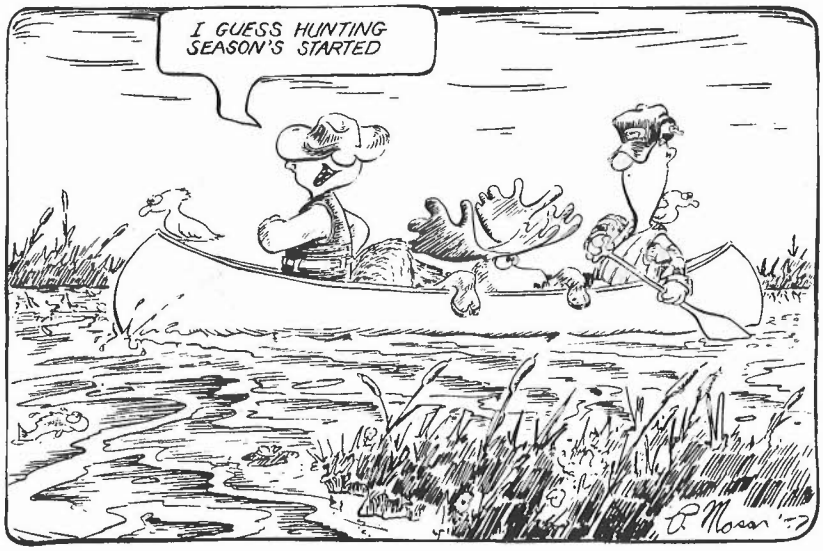
I hoped the lake would calm down while I finished packing, and I even waited awhile. But it didn't. I had to decide whether to portage or to head into the wind and waves. It looked calmer in the bay on the right. I could head that way and then paddle up the shore. Sounded good, but once out on the lake it was impossible to get to the bay without being broadside to the waves. I surely didn't want to dump; the water was very cold, like ice water.

I headed into the waves; it was hard to go straight. The wind was even harder to cope with than the waves. Somewhere in the middle of the lake, the wind won and turned me broadside. With a combination of swearing, praying, and a lot of effort I turned back on course. Some time later the wind again blew me broadside. The shore wasn't very far away but, had I dumped, it would have been too far for comfort.

By now I was near where the lake narrows into the river. The waves were smaller but the wind continued. It almost turned me completely around to face the other direction. I was feeling pretty tired now, running out of fight. My legs and feet were numb from the icy water in the bottom of the canoe as well as from not being able to lean against a seat. All praying now, no swearing. Finally the river, the dock, my car, warmth, rest. It had been such a short distance!

Soon I was back on Highway 60, heading for home. Canoe Lake still had ice in the bay in front of the store.

Ah, solitude!



CANOETOONS
PAUL MASON

7-8 October FARM CREEK, ISLAND LAKE
John Winters, 705-382-2057; book before 29 September.
This will be a trip into the region north of Lake Wahwashkesh and the Magnetawan River. This is an attractive area with a lot to offer. Participants can camp Friday night in my lower forty to allow an early start on Saturday. Limit three canoes.

7-9 October KILLARNEY PROVINCIAL PARK
Richard Culpeper, 705-673-8988; book immediately.
Pleasant flatwater paddling and portaging in this beautiful area. Participants should hope for warm dry weather but be prepared for cold and wet, as fall camping is unpredictable. Limit five boats.

7-9 October PETAWAWA RIVER
Hans and Cathy Grim, 416-767-7365; book immediately.
On Saturday we'll meet at 9:00 a.m. at McManus Lake. After the car shuttle we look forward to an exciting three days of running the many challenging rapids of the Petawawa, such as "Big Thompson Rapids" and "Crooked Chute." Experienced paddlers. Limit six canoes and/or kayaks.

14-15 October ANSTRUTHER LAKE LOOP
Doug Ashton, 519-654-0336; book immediately.
This will be a leisurely weekend loop through several wilderness lakes in the North Kawartha region. The trip is suitable for novice flatwater paddlers; however, at this time of year participants should be prepared for cold conditions. Limit four canoes.

14-15 October BLACK RIVER (WASHAGO)
Hans and Cathy Grim, 416-767-7365; book before 7 October.
A gentle, scenic trip from Vankoughnet to Cooper's Falls with an easy car shuttle. Fall colors should be good. Suitable for novices. Limit four canoes.

15 October ELORA GORGE
Steve Lukasko, 416-276-8285; book before 8 October.
With warm weather and low water levels this is a trip suitable for novices with some whitewater experience and a desire to extend their skills.

22 October BLACK RIVER (WASHAGO)
Bill Ness, 416-321-3005; book before 15 October.
A leisurely day trip on a gentle stream that takes us from Cooper's Falls to Washago. If the water levels rise again this fall there may be easy rapids to run. Suitable for novices. Limit six canoes.

29 October BRUCE TRAIL HIKE
Jasper Megelink, 416-877-0012; book before 21 October.
Easy hiking on the Bruce Trail near Georgetown. Limit ten people.

5 November ELORA GORGE
Doug Ashton, 519-654-0336; book before 29 October.
Weather permitting, a run down the "Gorge" as a season closer. Participants should wear wet suits and be prepared for inclement weather. Suitable for novices who want to develop their skill level. Limit six canoes.

11-12 November HIKING IN ALGONQUIN PARK
Tony Bird, 416-466-0172; book before 7 November.
Overnight trek along "Highland Hiking Trail," with some bushwhacking variations. Two reasonably active days at a time of year when the air is cool and there may be a light covering of snow on the ground. Limit eight people.

12 November ELORA GORGE
Michael Kerwin, 416-651-6894; book before 7 November.
For those whose season is still open as long as the rivers are still open. The gorge in November can be a stimulating trip. Often the river is fringed with a line of icicles, but if the sun shines it will be a trip to remember during the ski season. Cold conditions limit the trip to warmly wet-suited intermediate paddlers. Limit six canoes or kayaks.

Photo by Dale Miner

12 November GRAND RIVER
Steve Lukasko, 416-276-8285; book before 5 November.
The run will start in Cambridge and continue to Paris. This section of the river is mainly flat with some swifts that may be portaged. Suitable for novice paddlers. Children are welcome if the weather is suitable. Limit six canoes.

26 November HOCKLEY VALLEY HIKE
Ron Jasiuk and Ann Moum, 519-942-2972; book before 1 November.
A full day's hiking in Hockley Valley. Emphasis on natural history. Lots of hill climbing will keep participants warm. Limit six people.

2 December SEATON HIKING TRAIL
Bill Ness, 416-321-3005; book before 26 November.
Join us on a pleasant 12.8-km hike through the scenic West Duffin Valley just east of Toronto. Eight people welcome.

LITTLE STURGEON RIVER

Roger Harris

In the fall of 1988, looking for new weekend rivers to paddle, we were studying topographic maps. The Little Sturgeon River, near North Bay, looked most promising. It seemed possible to start from Highway 11 and paddle down to Highway 17. The terrain would be varied, the trip would begin on a narrow stream winding through a marsh, pass through woodlands with little or no road access, and drop through a steep descent that indicated possible falls. The end of the river was a section of about two kilometres of flatwater.

So much for the map. We began to ask our friends, other club members, and eventually anybody we met who was a paddler or came from the North Bay area for information about the river. Nobody seemed to have paddled the Little Sturgeon. The possibility of an exploratory journey so close to home appealed greatly, and the trip was on.

Now the truth !

On a May weekend, Cathy and Hans Grim, Mike Jones, Sandy, and myself set out from Toronto to meet Richard Culpeper. Richard's local reconnaissance had already indicated the marsh to be confusing and possibly impassable without a lot of soggy wading through the cattails. We intended to drive along a logging trail and run the whitewater section of the river as a day trip.

The local beaver population had modified the road with a new creek and only Hans's 4x4 with the winch got us through to the put-in at a small bridge. A couple of swifts and a short lift over a ledge and we were on our way. The river continued downhill and our anticipation was heightened.

So much for anticipation: the rapids that we planned to shoot turned out to be falls or to contain falls in awkward locations. Either we could run the top section (but we could not stop before the drop), or we could have run the lower section if we could have got a boat to the water from the edge of the gorge.

There are some beautiful, scenic falls along the route. One in particular occurs at a fault line where the river disappears in a sharp right-hand turn and drops about three metres, immediately turning back sharply to the left and its original course. These diagonal falls are spectacular.

The last three kilometres of the rapids are more or less continuous falls linked by stretches of flatwater so short as to almost discourage returning the canoes to the river.

About the portages. They are for the most part unmarked, quite long, difficult to follow, and for some reason mostly uphill. Richard employed the technique of portaging straight up the side of the valley, as soon as he heard falls. The rest of us soon discovered that scouting was a waste of time. By the time we had scrambled through the bush along the top of the gorge Richard would be waiting for us at the "put-in."

And there were black-flies. Several black-flies. Some brought friends of the mosquito persuasion.

The trip ends with a 2–3 km flatwater paddle down to a take-out on Hwy 17. The marina here will sell you a cold drink. We would have welcomed a bar. We all said we enjoyed the trip, but none of us was sure wether we would repeat it.

In conclusion: the Little Sturgeon River offers a spectacular series of scenic falls, if you like to portage. Photographers could paddle upstream from Hwy 17 and hike up the fishermen's trail.

We think we now know why few people paddle the river. Courageous spring kayakers might be interested in the trip.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

ARCTIC DOG SLED EXPEDITION A unique opportunity to experience travel in the Arctic with Inuit who live there, who know its whims, who understand its power. You will learn how to drive a dog team, how to build an igloo. You will experience -40 C temperatures, but learn how to remain safe and comfortable in such extreme conditions. There can be no better way to really see the Arctic. Route: Gjoa Haven to Spence Bay to Pelly Bay, 500 km along the Arctic coast. Dates: 15 days in April 1990. Size: maximum 12 people, no previous experience required. Leader: David Pelly, veteran Arctic traveller and expedition organizer, writer, historian. Cost: $6000.00 (Can). Includes: return air fare from Ottawa; hotel and send-off diner in Ottawa; stop-over (meals and accommodation) in Iqaluit on Baffin Island, both ways; one night hotel in each of Gjoa Haven, Spence Bay, Pelly Bay; all meals, including traditional Inuit diet and "southern" food; caribou-skin clothing; Inuit guide services; photographic seminars for Arctic conditions; 500 km of once-in-a-lifetime wilderness experiences. For information write: Arctic Sled Expedition, Box 1334, Station B, Weston, Ontario, M9L 2W9.

ODAWBAN WINTER TRAVEL EQUIPMENT The popular winter travel instructions have been revised again to reflect state-of-the-art knowledge. A new, similar-sized "sledding instructions" is nearing completion and will be available in late November for $10.00. Both are musts. I am planning a major snowshoe expedition for late February 1990; phone me in December for more information. Craig Macdonald, Frost Centre, Dorset, Ontario, P0A 1E0, phone 705-766-2885.

NORTHERN BOOKS is a new mail-order book service dealing with new, reprinted, and used books focussing on the North. Peter Browning's *The Last Wilderness* is our initial offering (see the review in the Books section). The cost is $17.95 plus postage and handling ($1.50 for the first and $0.50 for each additional book in Canada; for US shipment it is $2.50 (Can) for the first book and $1.00 for each additional one). Cheques to be made payable to Northern Books and mailed to 139 Albany Ave., Toronto, Ontario, M5R 3C5. For further information contact Tija Luste in Toronto at 416-963-8946. Also available from Northern Books is a paperback reprint of Elliot Merrick's *True North.*

DISCOUNTS ON TRIPPING SUPPLIES WCA members who present a membership card will receive a 10 percent discount on many non-sale times at:
ABC Sports, 552 Yonge Street, Toronto,
Algonquin Outfitters, RR#1, Oxtongue Lake, Dwight, Ontario,
Rockwood Outfitters, 669 Speedvale Ave. West, Guelph, Ontario,
Suntrail Outfitters, 100 Spence Str. (Hwy 70), Hepworth, Ontario.
Members should check at each store to find out what items are discounted.

WILDERNESS SKIING WITH FIVE WINDS The Five Winds Touring Club has about 160 km of marked wilderness ski trails in the Gibson River area between Georgian Bay and Gravenhurst, Ontario. Ski trips are organized each Sunday from the beginning of January until the snow melts in the spring. A day on the trails is usually an outing of six hours of skiing and sightseeing with breaks for snacks and lunch. Ski groups are composed of five to seven people with similar skiing ability. An experienced leader selects the trail. For further information contact Mike Naughton, 100 Wilson Ave., Toronto, M5M 3A1, phone 416-488-4311.

The desktop typesetting for this issue of *Nastawgan* was done by COMPU/FLOW

where it is

The approximate location of some of the places mentioned in this issue are shown by page numbers:

Ancient Trails	1	Spanish River	8
Algonquin Park	5, 14	Yukon Territory	10
Credit River	7	Little Sturgeon River	15

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WILDERNESS CANOE ASSOCIATION membership application

I enclose a cheque for $15 ___ student under 18
$25 ___ adult
$35 ___ family
for membership in the *Wilderness Canoe Association.*

I understand that this entitles me/us to receive Nastawgan, to vote at meetings of the Association, and gives me/us the opportunity to participate in W.C.A. outings and activities.

NAME_____ ADDRESS_____

_____

_____phone_____

Please check one of the following: [ ] new membership application
[ ] renewal

Notes: -This membership will expire January 31
-Please send completed form and cheque (payable to the Wilderness Canoe Association) to the membership committee chairman.