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Members of the 1955 Moffatt party ready for transport from Stony Rapids to put-in at Black Lake. From left, back row: Bruce LeFavour, Peter Franck, Art Moffatt; front: George Grinnell, Skip Pessl, Joe Lanouette. Photo credit: Mr. Tralenberg, transport driver, Stony Rapids.

The Fateful 1955 Dubawnt River Trip

Commentary by Fred Pessl

Photographs by Fred Pessl and Art Moffatt

I am not a wilderness paddler, but I did paddle in the wilderness a long time ago. That was in 1955 with the Moffatt party on the Dubawnt River system from Black Lake, Saskatchewan, to Baker Lake, Nunavut. For 40 years or so following my Dubawnt journey, I considered it a personal, private experience; formative, maturing, uniquely precious, but not something others might be interested in. My postgraduate university studies occupied several years following 1955, including a thesis project on the Illecillewaet Glacier, B.C., Canada, and three field seasons in the Mesters Vig region of East Greenland, both spectacular wilderness areas. And then I began a professional career as a Quaternary geolo-

Black Lake put-in, northern Saskatchewan, Canada, June 29, 1955. About 1,500 lbs. of food and gear stockpiled on the beach, ready to load. Wildfire smoke in the distance. Left to right: George Grinnell, Bruce LeFavour, Skip Pessl, Mr. Tralenberg.

gist with the US Geological Survey. Summer was the field season for geological mapping and research, a busy, committed time not supportive of recreational canoeing, but leading me to field work and adventure in Alaska, Northern New England, Iceland, and British Columbia; plenty of wilderness, but not so much canoeing.

Then in 1996, George Grinnell's book, *A Death On The Barrens*, was published. The critical response to the book informed me that indeed many people were interested and influenced by Grinnell's account, and mine wasn't such a private experience after all. It has taken me a long time now to act on my conviction that Grinnell's Dubawnt narrative is seriously flawed and that I have a responsibility to provide an alternative account. I have recently completed my Dubawnt memoir in an attempt to provide an objective record of that experience; it is scheduled for publication later this year by the University Press of New England.

My presentation at the 2013 Wilderness Canoe Symposium in Toronto, Canada, was my first public appearance as a Dubawnt/Moffatt spokesperson since a brief TV narrative more than 50 years ago. The Toronto experience was emotionally draining but a very satisfying one; new friends and an understanding of the remarkable adventures and wilderness journeys that energetic, visionary people have undertaken in the Arctic since 1955. This article is the first one that I have published about my Dubawnt experience.

The Moffatt/Dubawnt adventure was conceived and planned at Art and Carol Moffatt's farmhouse in Norwich, VT, across the Connecticut River from Hanover, NH, the site of Dartmouth College, in the early 1950's when I joined Art in canoeing the Albany River and contemplating greater canoeing adventures farther north.

Art and I first met in the Fall of 1951 when I matriculated in the freshman class at Dartmouth College. Art and I bonded over the next four years through our mutual interests in skiing, the outdoors, and literature. I was fascinated with stories of his early canoeing adventures, his pacifism, and especially a shared commitment to experience nature on the simplest of terms.

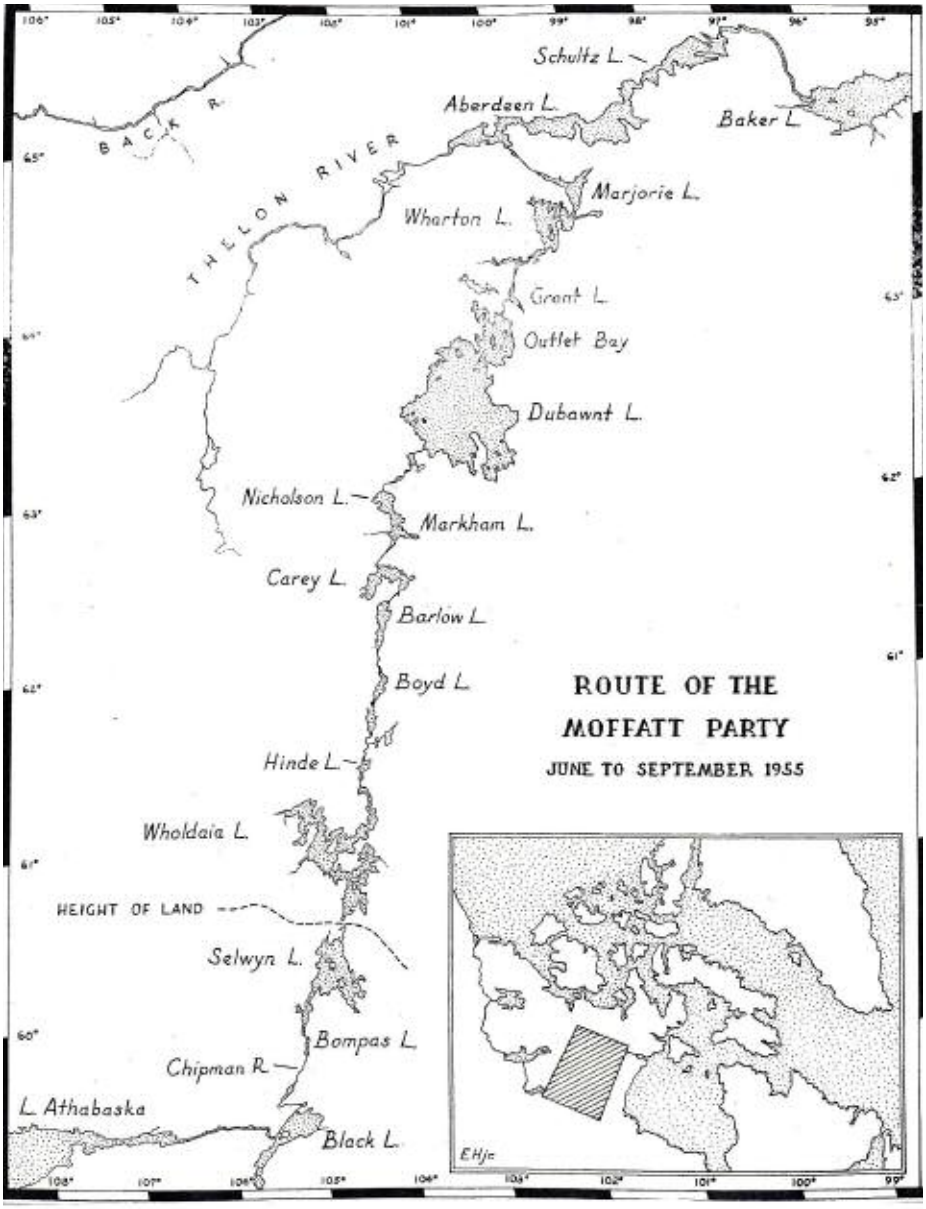
I met with Art and Carol in the Spring of 1955 at their Norwich home, partly to celebrate my impending college graduation, but mostly to dedicate the coming summer to our great Dubawnt adventure: to retrace the 1893 canoe route of J.B Tyrrell from Black Lake, Saskatchewan, across the height of land at Wholdaia Lake, and down the Dubawnt River drainage to Baker Lake, Nunavut.

Our intent was to use the 900-mile canoe trip as the framework within which to record by film and written account the change in flora, fauna, and physiography as we travelled from the

boreal forest of Saskatchewan to the Arctic tundra of Nunavut. We had studied Tyrrell's journals carefully (Art had corresponded directly with Tyrrell for advice and insight into our proposed journey) and we were familiar with his journal check points along the route, especially his description of ice-covered Dubawnt Lake. But we wanted to do more than retrace Tyrrell's journey, however challenging that might be. We intended to return with professional-quality, 16 mm colour-film footage, documenting the natural history of our journey and the daily life of wilderness canoeing.

Upon reaching Black Lake in the Spring of 1893, J.B. Tyrrell wrote: *We continued eastward over our track of last year until we reached the north shore of Black Lake, where the Indian canoe route strikes off to the north. Here we were to leave all beaten paths, and to strike into the unknown wilderness, without any other guide than the little Indian map obtained the year before.* On July 2, 1955, we were at Black Lake, similarly apprehensive about striking into the unknown, but somewhat reassured that however imperfect our maps might be they were probably better, or at least as good as Tyrrell's " Indian map." I wrote on June 29: *For the first time since leaving Detroit, I have the feeling that the real trip has finally begun. In spite of the rather dismal setback of leaving our extra paddles in Stony and the delay of awaiting their arrival, we are in our tents on a quiet, rocky point; the smell of cooking and an open fire still lingers with the dying sun. The far bank is bathed in the ruby light of twilight and perhaps the most valuable feeling of all…the independence I feel when the rest of the world is left behind and solitude becomes an intense, mystical enthusiasm.*

And Peter Franck wrote: *Everyone is pretty happy to be outside and away from Stony, even though we were still not really on our way…George is my bowman, sleeping in the same tent with me. God help me on the snoring. He doesn't seem too cooperative and sort of lazy and critical, but I hope that we will work together well soon. I always rub people the wrong way for a while.*



Map of the Moffat party route.

Our group began the trip as an awkward collection of friends and strangers, some having canoed together, others having little or no canoeing experience, and several not even having met each other. Art and I had known each other for four years and had canoed the Albany River twice together. Art and Peter Franck had canoed the Albany once together at a different time. Joe Lanouette and Bruce LeFavour were college classmates; they were young outdoors men, but with no canoeing experience. Art had met Joe and Bruce in Hanover late in the winter of 1955. I knew none of the party except Art and none of the party had met George Grinnell until he arrived in Stony Rapids on June 27. So we had much "getting to know…" during those early days and unfortunately some differences and tensions were never resolved.

On July 20, three weeks out on the trip, Art Moffatt wrote: *g.g. agitating for earlier starts in morning, earlier quitting times. But mornings are good picture times. He has apparently worked himself into several unpleasant situations by this usurping of authority, and trying to remake a situation over to suit himself…The trouble is that he does not feel he should take what comes, even though this is not his trip.…*

Wind-bound day on Wholdaia Lake. Art Moffatt birding from a bedrock ridge overlooking stunted-spruce muskeg to the wave-tossed lake, July 23, 1955.

And on July 31, I wrote: *We have been out for well over a month and although in normal circumstances this would not be very long, in terms of our isolation, our limited food and strenuous life, it is quite a long period and effects of the strain are beginning to show. An argument developed between George and me concerning the motives of each party member…whether we are to be individual or group directed. We argued in general terms, thereby avoiding some antagonism, but the issue remains. He maintains that everyone must look out for themselves and thus, indirectly, the group will prosper most effectively. I countered that in our present situation where so much depends on unity, we can not leave positive group dynamics to chance. We must be collectively motivated; that this is a matter of survival, not philosophical nit-picking. We ended agreeing to disagree.*

Skip Pessl adjusting the tie-in paddles for a carrying yoke; red "kitchen" box centre background.

But we did gain the height-of-land by working together, gaining in fitness, skills, and confidence; understanding each others' strengths and weaknesses, and enjoying the challenges of the journey together.

After 75 days of glorious wilderness travel, through lakes and swamps and rivers; at camp sites tortured by bugs and others blown free by exposed, windy vistas on to the unbelievable sense of infinity that the Barrens invoke; through the adrenalin rush of finding a canoe path through big waves, crashing currents, and threatening rocks; and into the long-distance mantra of paddling forever on huge lakes of mythic energy and unknown outlets, reality brought us down.

As the storm of September 9 grew in severity, the rain changed to wet, clinging snow, and after a few hours the ground, rocks, tents, every solid projection, were covered with frozen, caked snow. The wind was so strong that it was impossible to hold the tarp flys over the tents; they were torn away in an instant. The combination of the wind and the weight of the collecting snow collapsed our tent so that Bruce and I huddled in the middle with the cold, wet side plastered against me. Bruce's side was blown out like a balloon and threatened to take off or burst at any minute. Once during the night we heard faint shouting and after calling repeatedly, we heard an answer: "We're alright; completely soaked!" Our fear of getting wet and frostbitten had increased with each day of mixed rain/snow, near-freezing temperatures, and high winds. And now with the blizzard howling outside, Bruce and I crawled into our soggy sleeping bags, shivering with cold and apprehension.

The wind abated but continued to blow later in the morning and with faint daylight softening the fury of the storm, I crawled to the tent opening and peered out. The landscape had changed remarkably during the night. What before had been black, rugged rock was now gray, glistening ice. Puddles were frozen and the ground covered with harsh, windblown snow. The river rushed by, gray

and heavy, disappearing into dirty, yellow foam at the rapids. The wind blew stinging swirls of snow against my face and tore at the tent guy lines as I gazed around camp, looking for some sign of the others. One tent was demolished, with broken poles and badly torn fabric. The other tent was collapsed and half buried in snow. I shouted again. This time a faint call came from under one of the overturned canoes. There, under a pile of canvas and wet sleeping bags were Pete and George. Their tent had been torn apart early in the storm and they had spent the rest of the night huddled under the canoe. Together we dug out the other tent and found Art and Joe perched on a pile of wet clothes in the middle of a puddle. They had pitched their tent in a small depression; soon it flooded and then collapsed under the weight of the snow.

It took us three days to recover from this blizzard. We were dazed. It had been cold before, and uncomfortable, but never so sudden, so furious. Our equipment was not intended for such conditions, our minds were not accustomed to travelling in snow flurries with ice forming in quiet pools at river's edge and on our paddles with each stroke.

Up at daylight: four men breaking camp, two preparing breakfast; then into the canoes. Every hour we stopped, crawled stiffly out of the canoes and ran up and down the rocky shoreline until the circulation returned to warm and sting our feet. Then off again, racing northward in the swift current. Snow flurries were frequent; the temperature near freezing; the wind blew incessantly. But there was an occasional break in the leaden sky when the sun warmed us briefly. We still had time to get out!

The tragedy of September 14, when Art Moffatt died, occurred, in my opinion, not because of Art Moffatt's alleged mental instability [1], nor from some sort of Zen nonsense [2], but because Art and I tried to concurrently accomplish two mutually exclusive objectives: canoe travel and documentary filming of that journey. The demands of these opposing goals delayed and distracted our commitment to river miles. Art and I remained tragically stubborn in our commitment to filming the journey, even in the face of serious and obvious deterioration of the weather. Indeed, images of storm-bound camp sites with wind-driven snow piled against ragged tents and darkly huddled figures around a smoldering fire pit became a precious part of the story. He was, however, fully aware of the conflict between travelling efficiently and filming the journey. On July 31, he wrote: *…but all day I reflected on the need to get moving, to get out of here before food runs out and storms beset us, and the dilemma of how to make a film of the operation; the two are incompatible. However, I do have about 1,500 feet so far and another 1,000 between here and the Thelon will do it, provided we can get the really good stuff: rapids, Dubawnt Lake and ice, and so on.* One afternoon, when Art and I were out on a photo quest alone, I asked him about our travel schedule, food supply, the weather; telling him that we were very close to the bone; that we needed to

Wildfire burning in spruce/birch stand along an esker-ridge crest, Wholdaia Lake, July 1955.

Storm-bound campsite, vicinity Wholdaia Lake, July 1955.

Gloomy camp on Boyd Lake; monotonous wind-blown drizzle and 40F, August 3, 1955. From left: Peter Franck, George Grinnell, Joe Lanouette, Skip Pessl, Bruce LeFavour.

get out before the country really closed down. I think he understood what I was saying, but he replied, "Well, but what if we rush to the coast and don't come back with anything?"

Late in the season, deteriorating weather exacerbated our concerns about dwindling food supplies, damaged equipment, and unknown downstream conditions; and changed our modus operandi from cautious, land-based scouting of rapids to a floating assessment as we were sucked into the headwater V's of each successive rapid. It worked for several days and many rapids, except for one!

So what is the lesson to be learned from the Moffatt/Dubawnt experience? Or should there be one? We did not struggle to the Wholdaia Lake height-of-land and then commit to north-flowing Dubawnt waters to teach anyone anything; except perhaps ourselves in growing self-knowledge under challenge, awe, and adversity. And perhaps to understand and accept a perspective of our humble humanity within the enormity of nature.

Somewhere between the robotic distance grinds of Thum's …*well-oiled machine*… [3.] and the tragic disregard for time and season of the Moffatt leadership (and I include myself in that category), there must be a balance for wilderness canoeists on long journeys that affords safe passage with a flexibility of opportunity, weather, and peripheral interests. The goal: to avoid a narrow rush from beginning to end and to find …*value in the journey itself, in the landscape and one's spiritual relationship with it, the fauna and the flora, the solitude and physical joy of paddling*… [4.] ; to arrive at one's destination in good shape, full of a humble sense of profound experience, and maybe a day or two late.

If I had 1955 to do over again, I would separate the two objectives into separate projects, separate years. Remove the filming priorities from the travel priorities. Two projects: retracing Tyrrell's historic route, and then a documentary film project with air-supported, down-stream caches to lighten travel loads, afford exchange of exposed-fresh

After the squall, Boyd Lake, August 1955.

Skip Pessl overlooking Dubawnt River, vicinity Nicholson Lake, August 1955.

Heavy rapids on Dubawnt River below Dubawnt Lake, approaching the gorge draining to Grant Lake; Peter Franck, stern, and George Grinnell, August 31, 1955.

Art Moffatt "tumping the beast," the camera/film box with archaeological specimens packaged on top. The box weighed nearly 80 lbs., but protected the exposed film during and after the dump at Marjorie Lake.

film, to accommodate equipment repair and resupply of food and gear as conditions required. This later project: a separate party, a separate endeavor in a different year.

Andrew MacDonald, in his 1996 review of *A Death On The Barrens,* noted that the book was *…not just a true story*. [5] And indeed the subtitle of the 1996 edition is "a true story." I contend that Grinnell's book is something less than a true story; diminished by outright misrepresentation: Peter Franck did not stammer. [6] I do not recall a single incident in which I remember Peter stammering. Peter's wife, Fay, insists she never heard Peter stammer, "…not even an um or an er." The United Bowman's Association did not go ...into revolt [7] Bruce LeFavour writes about the UBA: *…the bowmen neither individually nor as a group ever contemplated taking over the leadership of the expedition. The very idea is ridiculous. Rather, as I remember it, the name and the extremely loose organization was a joke, a way for us to vent our frustrations with some of Art's actions… The UBA was simply a way for the three of us to bitch among ourselves and thereby relieve some of the tension, not in any way a revolt.*

Art Moffatt was not suicidal as Grinnell suggests.[8] Throughout the sum-

mer he made frequent reference to plans for the future and the anticipated pleasure of seeing his family again. On July 23, Peter's journal describes a conversation in which he and Art discussed Art's plan for an outdoor film project in the Sierra two years after the Dubawnt project. On August 12, Moffatt wrote: *Cold too, now, but I love these evenings alone by the fire, later at night and early in the morning I smoke, drink tea, think of home, Carol, Creigh, Debbo…of my new study and of the children there with me when I get back, and the stories I'll be able to tell them about all my adventures in the North…shooting rapids and the time I saw the wolves, white ones, and the caribou and moose and fish and birds.* On the end pages of his journal book he compiled a to-do list of plans and chores upon his return: *Wire Carol from Churchill or Winnepeg, probably Winnepeg, after seeing Wilson of the Beaver…Ask Carol to come to Mount Royal, Windsor or Laurentides…get reservations, bring me clothes. Have a long weekend up there.* Certainly not a suicidal state of mind. And I cannot imagine ever having said, *You were right all along, George.*[9].

The book is further marred by gross melodramatic exaggeration: the grizzly bear did not charge Art.[10.] *My journal describes the encounter: Quite a comical pantomime, the bear grazing from bush to bush with the unconcern of complete confidence, and two rather cautious, crouching forms approaching with noses glued to cameras. It was wonderful; we got very close before he saw us and then he merely looked, sat down, "thought it over", ambled closer to satisfy his curiosity and then made a tremendous picture silhouetted full length against the sky to examine these strange intruders. We played ring around each other for a while until the bear worked down wind of us and within 100 ft. or so. Then instead of running from the human scent, he continued right for us. Rather than be caught with the bear between us and the canoes, Art and I ran for the shore and this sudden movement was enough to turn the bear and send him scampering over the rocks and out of sight.*

I did not capsize my canoe while standing up.[11.] My journal, August 26: *And the grand booby prize of the trip to Pessl for swamping his canoe while standing up to put on a parka. Damn near tipped the whole works over. Cold hour spent drying slightly damp hardtack and very wet Skip after having to dive for dishes in about four feet of icy water. Warm sun soon took care of both and we were off again, stopping within an hour due to high winds and a nearby herd of caribou.*

Dubawnt River rapids approaching Boyd Lake; Pessl (yellow) and LeFavour (red) tight on the left bank, avoiding the heavy water, July 30,1955. The area around Hinde Lake and the river north to Boyd Lake show the return of hardwood trees (birch, some poplar) and considerable stands of black spruce.

Skip Pessl, left, and Bruce LeFavour finish building a cairn at the crest of a prominent hill overlooking Outlet Bay near the northern end of Dubawnt Lake. "Arrow" rock points northeasterly toward the outlet gorge flowing into Grant Lake, August 29, 1955.

And we did not make the south-to-north crossing of Aberdeen Lake in the dark.[12.] My journal, September 19: *Left the canoe at the shore; back for another load; quick lunch; and then into the canoes again. With a strong south wind at our tail, we managed to reach the north shore of the lake before dusk.*

Grinnell's account is a distorted, self-serving reminiscence of a man struggling to understand and justify his own tragic life. It is his Dubawnt story, for sure, but it is not the defining record of that remarkable journey.

My own Dubawnt journey in the summer of 1955 was the single most formative experience of my life. It redirected my education and subsequent professional career. It helped define a maturing political liberalism leading to a vigorous anti-war activism in the 1960's and '70s; and reinforced a growing spirituality based in Nature and a comfortable sense of my place as an animal within the enormous web of life. Sitting at the base of an ancient lodge-pole pine in southwestern Montana, watching and listening to the bone-clack-clack of contending bull elk during the Autumn rut is a privileged moment, permitted and ignored by them, carefully absorbed by me; echoing my Dubawnt past when crouching in the lee of a large boulder, caribou roamed heedlessly by, including me, it seemed, in the neutrality of their wilderness habitat.

Even after these many years, I grieve Art Moffatt's death. He was more than my mentor, perhaps a second father, even though he was only 14 years older. His pacifism, his principled life style, and his view of the world, natural and international, opened my mind, challenged my thoughts and gave me insight and courage to pursue my own dreams.

I wonder what would have been the future had he survived the Dubawnt and fully developed professionally as an outdoor writer and voice for wild spaces, indigenous peoples, habitat protection, and restraint in Arctic resource development. I believe his impact on our awareness and understanding of the Barrens would have been profound. How might we have better valued the vastness and uniqueness of that ecosystem? How different our understanding and vision of the far North might be today had our Dubawnt adventure ended in celebration instead of tragedy? Certainly, we would be better informed; perhaps more compassionate in causes of peace and probably more courageous in advocating to protect and conserve our northern heritage.

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[1]Grinnell, George, *A Death On The Barrens,* p. 50 (Toronto: Northern Books, 1996)

[2]Grinnell, George, *Art Moffatt's Wilderness Way To Enlightenment*, p.18 (Kirkland, WA: July 1988).

Wind-swept, storm-bound island cache at the south end of Marjorie Lake; camera/film box left foreground, canoe sheltering Art Moffatt's body middle-ground. RCMP search flight located the cache and recovered the body, November, 1955. Photo credit: Claire Dent, RCMP Officer, Baker Lake, Nunavut, Canada.

[3]Thum, Robert in Mahler, Charlie, *Down A Dead Man's River*, p.6 (Canoeing.com, Advanced Paddler, 2009).
[4]Luste, George, Commentary in Grinnell, George, *A Death On The Barrens,* p.282 (Toronto: Northern Books, 1996).
[5]MacDonald, *Andrew in Che-Mun*, p.5 (Spring 1996)
[6]Grinnell, George, *A Death On The Barrens*, p, 38, 70, 80 (Toronto: Northern Books, 1996).
[7]Ibid, p.53.
[8]Ibid, p.11, 49, 50.
[9]Ibid, p.224
[10]Ibid, p.178.
[11]Ibid, p.139.
[12]Grinnell, George, *Death On The Barrens,* p.243 (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2010).

Burial of Art Moffatt at community cemetery, Baker Lake, Nunavut, Canada, November 1955. Photo credit: Claire Dent, RCMP Officer, Baker Lake, Nunavut, Canada.

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Nastawgan is an Anishinabi word meaning "the way or route"

The WILDERNESS CANOE ASSOCIATION is a non-profit organization made up of individuals interested in wilderness travel, mainly by canoe and kayak, but also including backpacking and winter trips on both skis and snowshoes. The club publishes a quarterly journal, Nastawgan, to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas of interest to wilderness travellers, organizes an extensive program of trips for members, runs a few basic workshops, and is involved in environmental issues relevant to wilderness canoeing.

WCA Grants

As many of you know, the WCA was fortunate to receive a Trillium grant to help us create and update the WCA and CCR websites and also to bring colour and digitization to *Nastawgan*. The WCA has now received all of the money from that grant. The last payment and final report are complete. We received the final installment of $13,800 this spring.

However, all of the work needed for CCR website is not complete. In March, with the approval of the Board and in consultation with Marilyn Sprissler (CCR website administrator) and the CCR Board, I applied to the Mountain Equipment Co-op for a capacity-building grant to help complete the work on the CCR website and also to help sell advertising and sponsorships in order for CCR to become self-sufficient. I am delighted to report that our application was accepted and that we will be receiving more than $30,000 towards these goals. In the near future, you will see the MEC logo appearing on the websites and in *Nastawgan* as part of our commitment to MEC for their generous support. I want to express my thanks to James Raffan, Max Finkelstein, and Kevin Callan for their outstanding letters of support for this application.

Dave Young
Chair, WCA

Dubawnt Special

Fred Pessl's presence at this year's Wilderness and Canoe Symposium was a wonderful catalyst that brought about the focus on the Dubawnt River. Even more so, Skip inspired many in the audience to reflect upon their own wilderness canoe trips, on the Dubawnt or on other rivers. Some of those reflections blossomed into *Nastawgan* articles, making this issue a true "Dubawnt Special." Like the spider's web, one story led to another, weaving through 120 years of paddling, portaging, and note-taking along and around the Telzoa or Dubawnt River. Protagonists of all but two trips documented in this issue were present to hear Skip's commentary about the Moffatt trip in 1955. Obviously one not present was J.B. Tyrrell himself, but you could be forgiven if you sensed his presence in the room. And so from J.B.T. to Art and Skip to John, George, and Dick, to Fred and his crew, to Howie, and finally to Barb and George, as well as many others in-between, an amazing cast of characters pushed off from the put-in at Black Lake in northern Saskatchewan. And this brings us to cairns, another major feature in this issue. Partly because they were simply there, one built by Tyrrell's party and the other by Moffat's group, partly to tell the rest of the world the fact that other paddlers had been there too, and also because email and Spot had not yet been invented, Dubawnt cairns provided a welcome distraction in the land with very few man-made signs visible along the river. Notes from many of our members rubbed against each other for decades, stuck in jars of different varieties. Genies are out of the bottle now, helped by Brian Johnston who unscrewed the proverbial lid to let us peak inside. And peak we will, just a few pages over. While some may argue that cairn notes, except Tyrrell's, have no historical value, their real value is in the higher purpose they serve – to connect the long chain of paddlers along this portage called life. And you, too, have now become a part of that chain.

Aleks Gusev

Contributors' Guidelines

If you are planning to submit any material for possible publication in *Nastawgan*, you would do the editors and certainly yourself a great favour by first consulting the WCA Guidelines for Contributors to *Nastawgan*. These guidelines should be followed as much as possible by all contributors, so that the editorial team can more effectively edit your contribution to make it fit the *Nastawgan* style. The latest draft of the guidelines is available on the WCA website.

WCA Activities

Want to view all club activities, learn more about our extensive outings program for members, or organize and post a trip? It's easy! Visit the Outings section of the WCA website:
www.wildernesscanoe.ca

Thoughts on the 1955 Dubawnt River Trip (Art Moffatt) and the later 1969 trip (John Lentz)

By George Luste

To start, let me express my sincere appreciation for Skip Pessl's recent "Dubawnt Journal" and for his presentation at the annual Wilderness and Canoeing Symposium in Toronto on February 16, 2013.

My association with the Dubawnt River and the Barrens started my lifelong experience with the far north. At age 28 I joined John Lentz's 1969 canoe trip in the Arctic, in the NWT down the Dubawnt River to Baker Lake. By then I had considerable experience canoeing whitewater and a few prior wilderness trips with my wife, Linda – but never in the high north and never with a larger all-male group. Our 1969 trip involved six men. We had no prior experience canoeing together. Before starting something new like this, one tries to learn as much as possible from earlier canoe trips. At the time, two sources were known to me: J.W. Tyrrell's 1898 book *Across the Sub-Arctic of Canada* and the March 1959 article in *Sports Illustrated*, titled *Man Against the Barren Lands.* While the Sub-Arctic have been travelled before for many years by native people, the above are the only ones I knew about by 1969 – describing long trips from south to north across the Barrens.

What did I learn? Before the trip and after the 1969 trip?

Before, on reading the details of Art Moffatt's tragic death in frigid northern waters – the messages and lessons were there: Beware of the ice-cold northern waters. Beware of surprises. Don't assume you can see and assess properly all that is ahead on the river while in a moving canoe. Bring and wear life jackets in case you dump in the river. If you do dump how do you get your canoe and packs to shore? How long can one function immersed in cold Arctic waters? To be honest, I did not know. But the 1955 trip outcome sent a warning. And in 1969, like Art Moffatt in 1955 with a young family in New Hampshire, I was leaving a very young set of twins back home in California. In 1969 on a daily basis I looked at the picture of our twins to remind me and to be cautious.

Photo taken between Carey Lake and Markham Lake, using a tripod and self-timer; from L to R: Dick Irwin, George Luste, Mark Rubin, Keith MacLarnan, John Lentz and Bob Herendeen. Photo: Dick Irwin

After the trip, I had numerous new thoughts. More food was better than too little. Bring better hand gloves and hand cream – my hands suffered with the cold water. And so on. One interesting perception took several trips – while three canoes and six people seemed to be a safe minimum for a lengthy wilderness trips. Years later I realized that larger canoe groups go slower than a solo canoeist and presented other risks that groups have. Other canoeists bring risk that is absent when alone. (I leave this as something for the reader to consider or discuss later.)

After the 1955 trip, only Peter Franck returned to other Arctic canoe trips. From our 1969 trip three of us did return, John Lentz, Dick Irwin, and myself.

In conclusion, the following few lines come from a poem with pictures that I published in the *Beaver* magazine after our 1969 trip. It may provide some of my thoughts after I returned to Stanford.

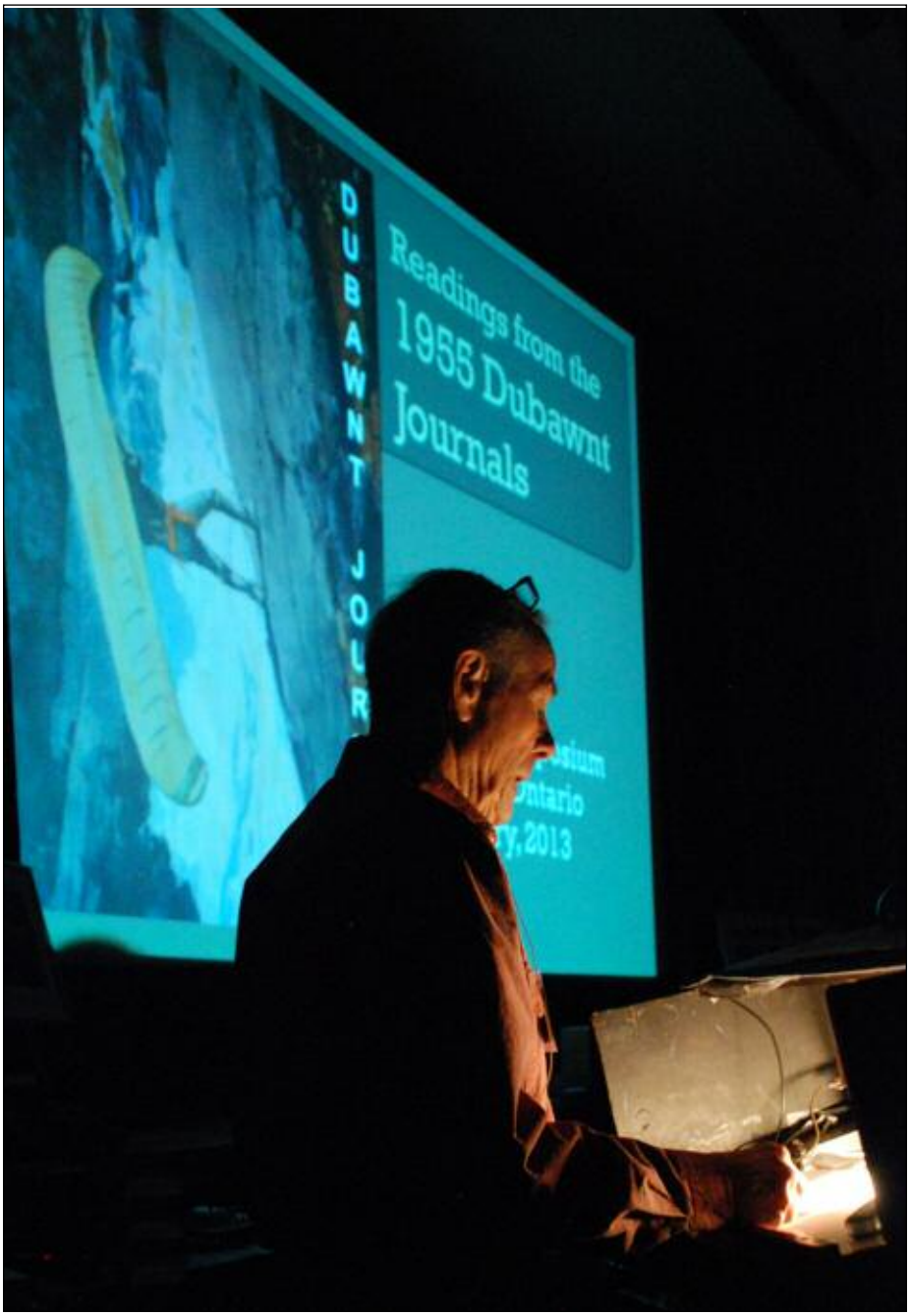
The Land Speaks

I am and you must receive me
as I am.
When we meet … do not come
with hope or a faint heart …
accept each day.
Do your best
there are no guarantees.

Take care …
avoid the seething rapids
and sleep soundly on the
soft moss …
dreaming … of glorious sunsets
and what the morrow may bring.

Between the Rocks and the River

By James Raffan



"Fred Pessl talking about his '55 Dubawnt experience at 28th Wilderness & Canoe Symposium in Toronto"

The 2013 Wilderness Canoeing Symposium sticks in memory for a couple of reasons: first, like everyone there, I was saddened by the news that George Luste was stepping back as principal shepherd of the event, but I was moved by his candor and pluck in facing his dire circumstance head-on; secondly, I was doubly inspired by Skip Pessl's presence in Toronto and his courageous recounting of the 1955 Dubawnt River trip detailed in Sports Illustrated and George Grinnell's book *A Death on the Barrens.*

In my memory of the Symposium, Skip stood up and said something like "I've been on one canoe trip in my life and it didn't end well." I see now in the printed version of Skip's remarks in this issue of *Nastawgan* that what he really said was "I am not a wilderness paddler but I did paddle in the wilderness a long time ago." What Pessl said and what I took away from the event are not the same. And that's a good thing.

There is always a gap between what happened, what gets etched in memory, and how stories are told. And, I think, in the end that is what I found so compelling about Skip Pessl's presentation. In thinking about his trip experience so long ago, and in having the courage to stand up and talk about it in public, he took anyone there who had read the *Sports Illustrated* account (and, by the way, if you haven't found the SI Archive, it's a treasure trove!), or Grinnell's book, or anyone who at least had a sketch in their mind of that trip including Art Moffatt's tragic end, into that generative space between fact and fiction.

At one level, you have two old guys — one present at the symposium, one not — duking it out in public about something that happened more than half a century ago. "It has taken me a long time now to act on my conviction that Grinnell's Dubawnt narrative is seriously flawed …" said Pessl. In his book Grinnell recounts a fish meal where, apparently, Pessl got after him: "Skip took the opportunity to point out my 'lack of group consideration and altruistic behaviour.' I retired to my tent and wrote in my journal a diatribe against self-righteous 'altruists' in general and Skip in particular."

And on another level, the audience at this year's symposium had a chance to go inside the inner workings of a canoe trip like never before. And to boot, there was the publisher of Grinnell's book, George Luste, sitting right there, taking it all in. And during the breaks and meals (and this is the true genius of the Wilderness Canoeing Symposium) people got to talk through their reactions, face-to-face.

I remember reading *A Death on the Barrens*, when it was published back in 1996, and being struck by the artistry and almost perfect arc of the story. Was it "a true story" as the cover promised? Don't

know. But it didn't really matter. It was one person's account of a tragedy written and recalled decades after the events had come and gone. But I also remember, and I've been back to this since this year's Symposium, George Luste's insightful and prescient commentary that, as publisher, he included at the back of the book. George wrote:

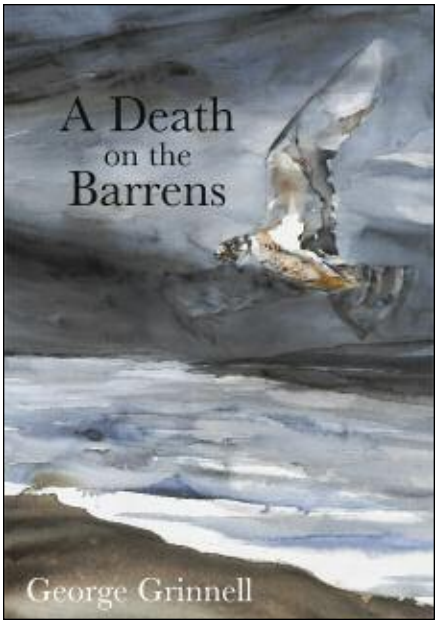
Interpreting events is a tricky business. I suspect all of us who read this book will probably go away with a slightly different interpretation of what this trip was all about and what happened. My own view has changed considerably from when I first read the *Sports Illustrated* article in 1969 to how I see it today, in 1995, after reading this book and corresponding with the author. The truth is subjective and illusory when it comes to recollection and interpretation …. I suppose we can never by [sic] absolutely certain that we have it right. This comes with being honest about our own subjectivity, its limitations and its bias.

Victoria Jason published an account of a shared wilderness journey in counterpoint to her travelling companion when she published *Kabloona in a Yellow Kayak* and its starkly engaging contrarian version of a trip that her trip mate, Don Starkell, told the world about in *Paddle to the Arctic*. Similarly, in presenting his view of the 1955 Dubawnt trip at the 2013 Wilderness Canoeing Symposium (and in his upcoming memoir), like the two Georges, Skip Pessl has given us a gift to ponder.

There are many swirling ironies and contradictions in this story — or this set of stories — not least the fact that J.B. Tyrrell, whose 1893 journey from Stony Rapids to Baker Lake through what is now the Kivalliq Region of Nunavut that Art Moffatt and the crew followed, was a prospector working for the Geological Survey of Canada. Tyrrell started the data set that has resulted in commercially viable gold and uranium finds in the Dubawnt River watershed. We venerate the finder but not so much the find. What's up with that? What is wilderness anyway?

Where we fit on this map, how we relate to this still beguiling (for how much longer?) landscape, where we place ourselves in these narrative lines scratched through time and circumstance, and what we're going to do individually and collectively with it and about it, is something well worth pondering.

Had George Luste not created the Wilderness Canoeing Symposium, had



George Grinnell not been moved to tell his story, had Skip Pessl not come forward 58 years later, none of this revisiting or rethinking, none of this pondering and planning, none of this wondering if truth lies only between the rocks and the river, would be happening. We are in their debt.

Art Moffatt birding and filming along the southwestern shore of Dubawnt Lake, August 25.

On Top of a Boulder:

Notes from Tyrrell's Cairn

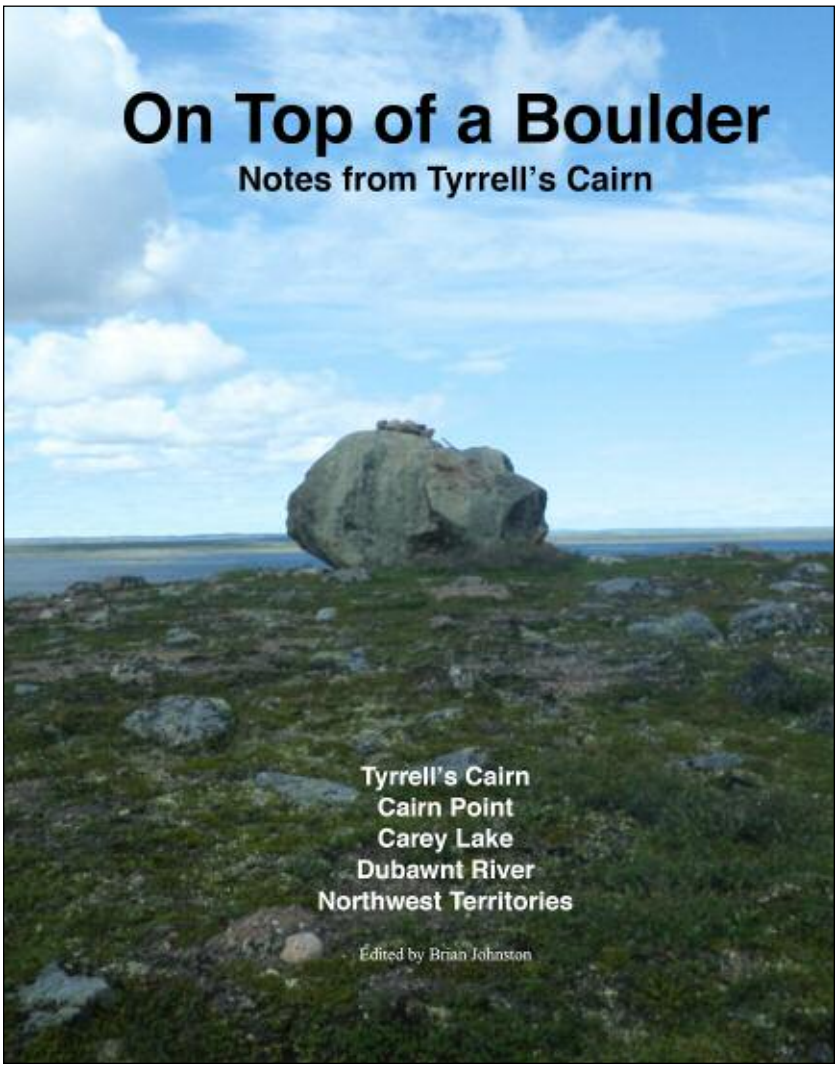
By Brian Johnston

For half a century, recreational travellers have long sought the rewards of Barren Land canoe trips. On a select few rivers, they have left simple monuments that stand as sentinels. Such cairn rock-piles mark the way for travellers and serve as a place to record their passages. Snippets of travellers' experiences are left, often on small scraps of paper for others who follow to read. In time, taken together the notes form a historical record.

Canada is home to several triads of rivers. Among these are Quebec's Rivières Dumoine, Noire, and Coulonge; Northern Ontario's Dog, Pukaskwa, and White; and Manitoba's Berens, Bloodvein, and Pigeon. In the central Sub-Arctic, the Dubawnt, Hanbury-Thelon, and Kazan Rivers form a triad. This is a unique group of rivers because cairns are found along each of them.

The Dubawnt, Kazan, and Thelon are major rivers flowing through big lakes that transition from boreal forest to tundra, much like the migration of the caribou. They span traditional First Nation and Inuit lands. These three Far-North rivers follow parallel watercourses, in general reaching northward, but also with a slight eastern component. They share a terminus, with their waters combining at Baker Lake before flowing onward into Chesterfield Inlet. To many, these rivers are best-known for those that perished or encountered hardships along their shores or in their rapids. Notable among these are John Hornby, Art Moffat, and the Caribou Inuit of the region.

As similar as the Dubawnt, Hanbury-Thelon, and Kazan are, there are important differences. The Dubawnt and Kazan have headwaters that lie north of the prairie provinces, whereas the Hanbury-Thelon begins in the highlands east of Great Slave Lake. The Dubawnt and Kazan rivers include lakes that will hold ice well into July. In contrast, the Hanbury-Thelon River is usually ice-free by mid-June. The Kazan and Hanbury-Thelon both have rich human histories and numerous written accounts that have attracted recreational canoe trippers. Additionally, the Thelon Game Sanctuary has elevated the status of its namesake river. Compared to the other two rives, the Dubawnt River is unknown. From archaeological surveys to names such as Hanbury, Pike, or Tyrrell, the Sub-Arctic triad of rivers has captured the interest of people who travel into the Barrens by canoe.



It is true that the Dubawnt, Hanbury-Thelon, and Kazan rivers all host cairns but that does not mean that the cairns are alike. The rock-pile cairns on the Hanbury-Thelon and Kazan were built approximately 50 years ago by recreational canoeists. Not surprisingly, the cairns are located at prominent portages, Helen Falls and Kazan Falls. These cairn sites regularly receive a fair number of visitors considering their locations. A substantial effort has been made to preserve and protect these cairn notes, from a waterproof box to the 1997 publication, *Arctic Cairn Notes.*

The cairn on the Dubawnt River at Carey Lake is different. It is physically distinct – the cairn is on top of a boulder. It has its origin over a hundred years ago, twice as old as the other cairns. Its locale is not at a waterfall; rather it is on the crest of a ridge overlooking the lake. The Tyrrell brothers erected it. This was when men travelled on the land for a different purpose, for they were workmen with the

Geological Survey of Canada. One of the brothers, Joseph Burr Tyrrell, was instrumental in exploring and mapping this region of Canada. He is a prominent contributor to the exploration of the Canadian Sub-Arctic. Since then, a limited number of parties have visited the cairn.

Another significant difference is in the state of the cairn notes. The paper record of the Tyrrell brothers' passage through this region has perished in the cairn. Other more recent records have suffered a similar fate, despite genuine attempts to preserve notes in containers ranging from old glass jars to metal photographic film canisters. The harsh weather of the region has taken its toll. Still, other notes survive within the cairn.

Last summer I was part of a group of canoeists who traversed 1000 km eastward along the edge of the Sub-Arctic. Upon crossing the Dubawnt River at Carey Lake we visited Tyrrell's boulder cairn. There we found the cairn notes deteriorating and decided that an effort should be made to preserve them as well as to share them.

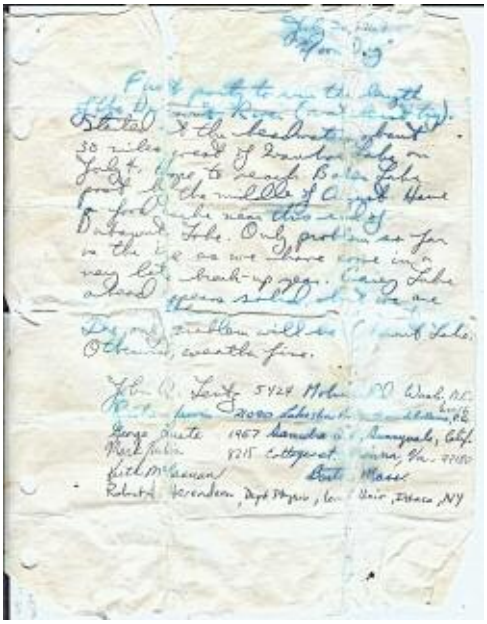
In consultation with the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, I have compiled the notes, together with transcriptions, and other relevant information in the forthcoming book titled, *On Top of a Boulder: Notes from Tyrrell's Cairn*. The intent of the book project is to document and share the cairn notes.

On Top of a Boulder: Notes from Tyrrell's Cairn reveals the past voices of those who visited the cairn and preserves their words for future generations. The cairn's life started in 1893. Since then notes have been left by Americans, Canadians, and a Swede. Teenagers belonging to camps have also left notes. Some parties have left flags.

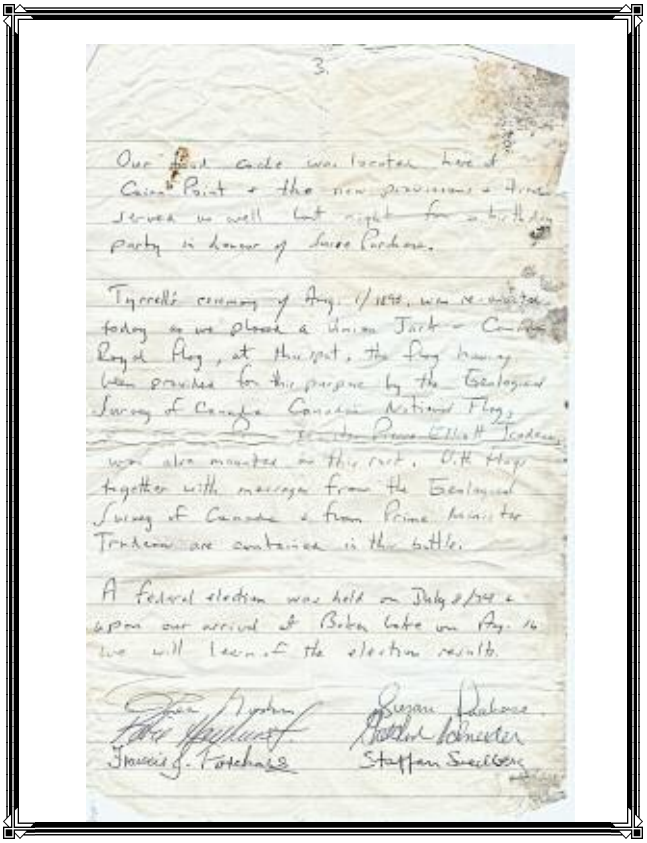
I have arranged for an all-weather version of the book along with the notes to reside at the cairn site and be housed in a waterproof case, so that future visitors may witness the historical record. Also included is a blank all-weather journal to capture the experiences of future travellers. Without such, the harsh environment erodes the historical record. I acknowledge the support of Rite in the Rain for the all-weather paper and journal as well as Wilderness Supply Company for the Pelican Case.

To those wilderness travellers who venture northward, look for the opportunity to witness and participate in the making of history. Stop at cairns to pen your experiences.

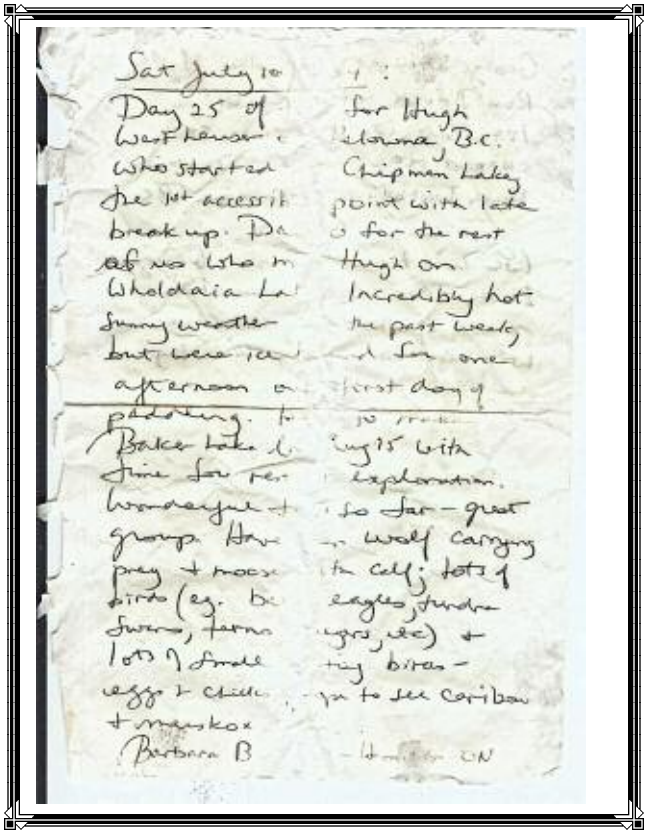
Many others share a kinship with canoe trippers who have left notes in cairns. Accompanying this article are a few excerpts from the book featuring Wilderness Canoe Association members. The remainder of *On Top of a Boulder: Notes from Tyrrell's Cairn* is awaiting you to explore and experience. To pre-order a copy, please contact Brian Johnston, at Brian@JohnstonPursuits.ca.



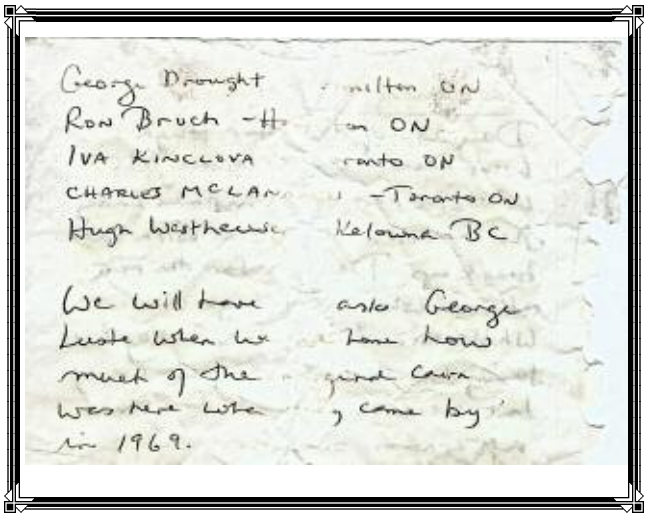
July 20, 1969 "Moon Day"
First party to run the length of the Dubawnt River (or at least try). Started at the headwaters about 30 miles west of Ivanhoe Lake on July 4. Hope to reach Baker Lake post by the middle of August. Have a food cache near this end of Dubawnt Lake. Only problem so far is the ice as we have come in a very late break-up year. Carey Lake ahead appears solid, but we are [line eroded; missing words] The only problem will be Dubawnt Lake. Otherwise, weather fine.
John W. Lentz 5424 Mohican Rd. Wash., D.C. 20016
Richard Irwin 21090 Lakeshore Rd. Anne de Bellevue, P.Q.
George Luste 1467 Samedra La. Sunnyvale, Calif.
Mark Rubin 8215 Cottage St. Vienna, Va. 22180 Keith McLannan [or McLarnan, McLaren], Boston, Mass.
Robert A. Herendeen, Dept. Physics, Cornell Univ, Ithaca, NY



Our food cache was located here at Cairn Point & the new provisions & treats served us well last night for a birthday party in honour of Susie Purchase.
Tyrrell's ceremony of Aug. 1/ 1893 was re-enacted today as we placed a Union Jack – Canadian Royal flag, at this spot, the flag having been provided for this purpose by the Geological Survey of Canada. Canada's National Flag, [missing word] Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, was also mounted on the rock. Both flags
together with message from the Geological Survey of Canada & from Prime Minister Trudeau are contained in this bottle.
A federal election was held on July 8/74 & upon our arrival at Baker Lake on Aug. 16 we will learn of the election results.
Fred Gaskin Katie Hayhurst Francis J. Purchase
Susan Purchase Gretchen Schneider Staffan Svedberg



Sat July 10 2004:
Day 25 of [missing word] for Hugh Westheuser, Kelowna, B.C. who started [missing word] Chipman Lake, the 1st accessible point with late break up. Day [missing numeral] for the rest of us who met Hugh on Wholdaia Lake. Incredibly hot sunny weather [for] the past week, but were ice bound for one afternoon on [the] first day of paddling. Hope to make Baker Lake [by] Aug 15 with time for rest [&] exploration. Wonderful trip so far – great group. Have seen wolf carrying prey & moose with calf; lots of birds (eg. bald eagles, tundra swans, terns, jaegers, etc) & lots of small nesting birds – eggs & chicks. Hope to see caribou & musk ox.
Barbara Burton – Hamilton ON



George Drought – Hamilton ON Ron Bruch – Hamilton ON Iva Kinclova – Toronto ON Charles McLandress – Toronto ON Hugh Westheuser – Kelowna BC
We will have to ask George Luste when we are home how much of the original cairn was here when they came by in 1969.

Dubawnt Lake Cairn

By John Lentz

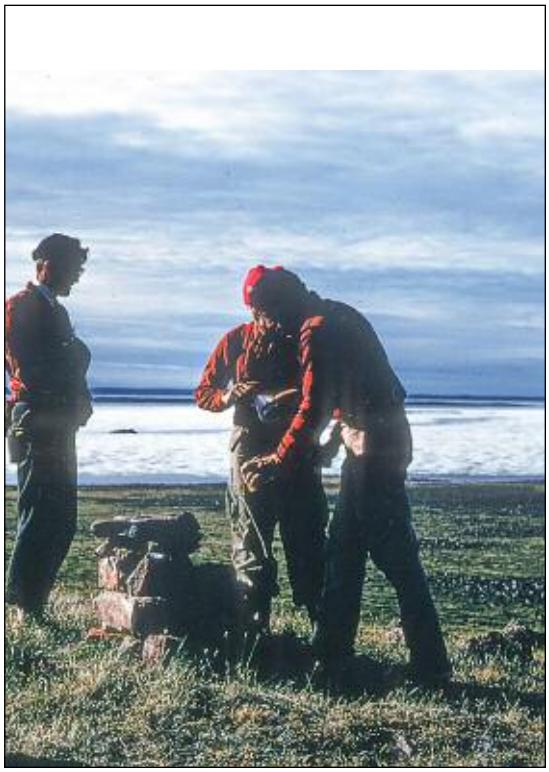
By July 30, 1969, our six-man Dubawnt canoe expedition was heartily sick of ice. Carey and Dubawnt lakes had been loaded with it, yet a widening shoreline lead beckoned us on toward Outlet Bay, the final stretch of massive Dubawnt Lake. We had barely broken camp and rounded a corner that morning when Dick Irwin spotted a small protuberance on a long hill we were skirting.

Pulling ashore, we marched to the top as much to scout the ice ahead in Outlet Bay as to investigate the odd shape on the hilltop. Once up there, we quickly forgot about ice as the little blip proved to be a small stone cairn holding a tobacco tin with a folded note inside. The paper, dated August 28, 1955, had been written by Art Moffatt, leader of the ill-fated expedition that year, which he did not survive. Moffatt's note listed its six members, summarized their travel from Stony Rapids, Saskatchewan, and concluded, "Game is plentiful and our pots are always full."

I added a short summary of our trip on the back of Art's paper, Dick took some photos, and we replaced everything. There the messages sat until Fred Gaskin paddled by in 1974. I had alerted him to the cairn so Fred knew where to look. He likewise took photos and put the paper back in place. The last visitor of which I am aware was Howard Baer in 1993. Then the trail grows cold.

The document is not in a Canadian archive or museum, and I have not seen it mentioned by recent canoeists. The location is in Nunavut, and the contents of this or any other cairn there may only be removed from their original site with agreement by that Government. If such approval was granted, under the auspices of a museum, it might be desirable for any recovery party to become familiar with basic field conservation procedures.

Both the Moffatt expedition and ours also left notes at the large Carey Lake rock. This immense boulder is a natural "drop box" cairn location; however, the site on Dubawnt Lake is far more obscure as it is easy to paddle right by it. Concerning establishment of the Dubawnt Lake cairn, Skip Pessl has indicated they were camped near the base of that hill. George Grinnell in his book, *Death On The Barrens,* states: *Art, Skip, Bruce, and Joe built a cairn, Inuit style, and placed a note in it to commemorate our achievement in reaching (or almost reaching) the end of Dubawnt Lake. Peter had taken off somewhere, and I climbed a mountain in the other direction.*

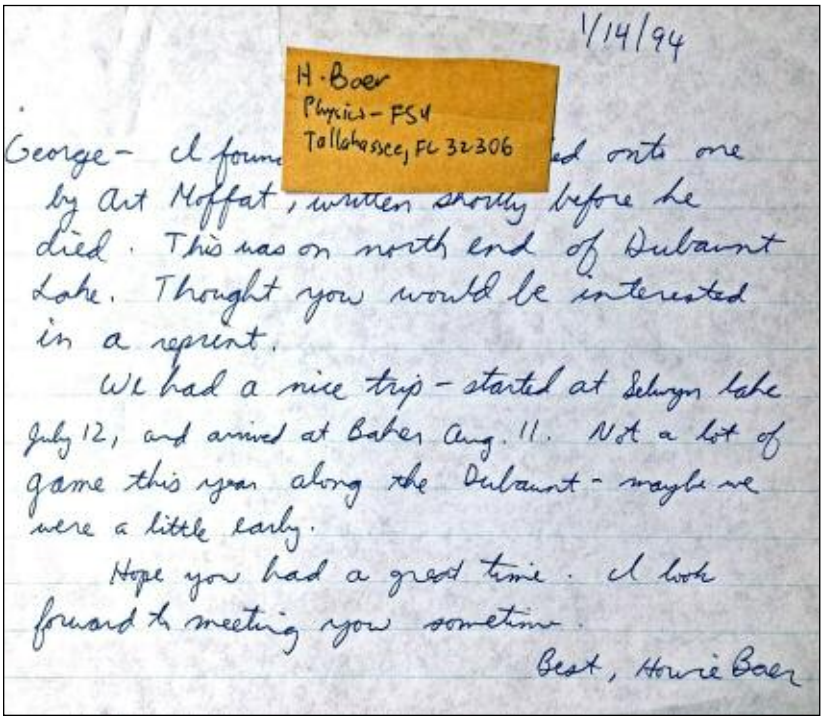


Cairn building and note depository are common expeditionary behavior to mark significant events, and approaching the end of challenging Dubawnt Lake certainly qualifies. But what about that optimistic line, quoted above, with which Art Moffatt signed off? According to their article in *Sports Illustrated* for March 9 and 16, 1959, Moffatt wrote in his journal around the end of August that tempers were on edge, and the supplies they had brought were running low. Fortunately, some caribou had been taken and this alleviated immediate hunger. Thus, Art's optimism could be justified on its face and not something of questionable accuracy penned to bolster group morale.

I believe Art Moffatt's Dubawnt Lake cairn note is a significant Northern artifact that deserves to be conserved and reside in a museum.

Dubawnt River, 1993

By Howard Baer


1/14/94

H. Baer
Physics – FSU
Tallahassee, FL 32306

George – I found ed onto one by Art Moffat, written shortly before he died. This was on north end of Dubawnt Lake. Thought you would be interested in a reprint.

We had a nice trip – started at Selwyn lake July 12, and arrived at Baker Aug. 11. Not a lot of game this year along the Dubawnt – maybe we were a little early.

Hope you had a great time. I look forward to meeting you sometime.

Best, Howie Baer

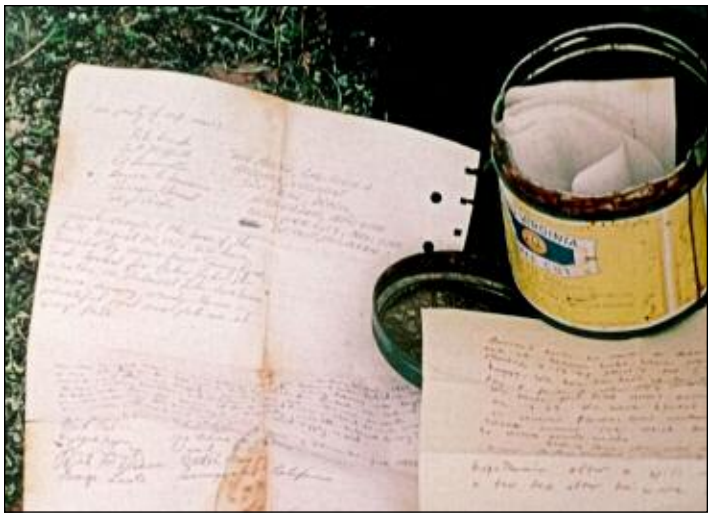
Cairn notes breed more notes – this one written to George Luste by Howie Baer in '94; photo by Aleks Gusev

The Dubawnt River had captured my imagination ever since I spent hours tucked away in the old Science Hall at the University of Wisconsin-Madison: instead of studying for my physics and math classes, I would sneak to the Geography library and peruse volumes such as J. B. Tyrrell's account of his 1893 trip down the great Telzoa, or Dubawnt, River. Nature was my religion in those days, and I was determined to spend at least a month in the wilderness each year. As part of the UW Hoofers Outing Club, I would paddle "hairy" whitewater in Tennessee, West Virginia, and Minnesota during the spring weekends, but by summer I would head north to the wilderness.

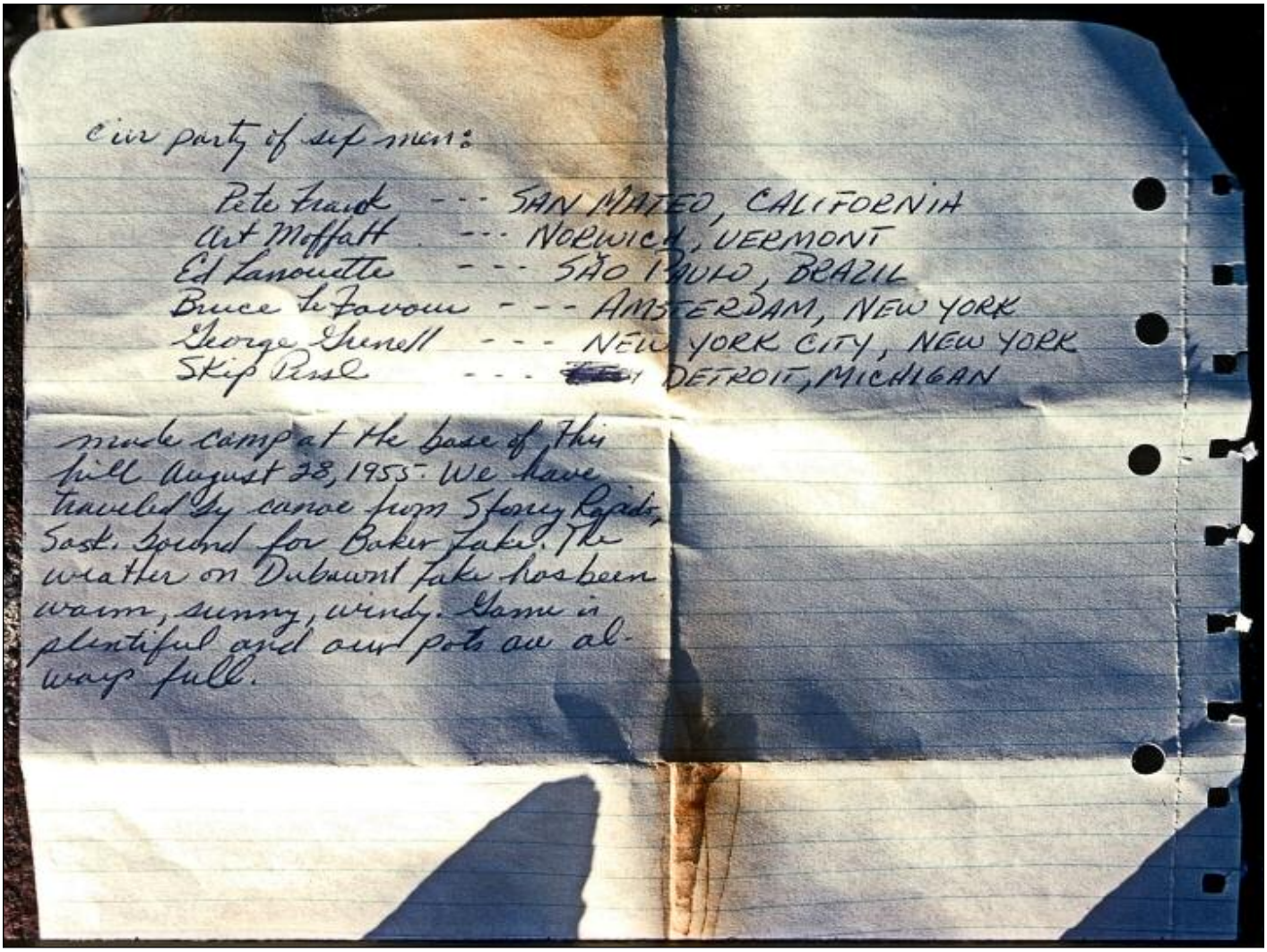
In 1980, we had paddled 550 miles on the South Seal-North Knife route to Churchill, Manitoba. In 1981, four of us had put in at Reindeer Lake in northern Manitoba and paddled the Cochrane – Little Partridge – Kazan – Tha-anne – Maguse route to Eskimo Point. Along the way, we learned from some fishermen that a group of Canadian physics professors were a few days ahead of us. This turned out to be George Luste's group. We never did catch up with them. After paddling the Kazan in 1984, the Back – Meadowbank – Quioche – Chesterfield Inlet route in 1986 and the Coppermine in 1989, what remained was the Dubawnt.

In 1993, Bill Diedrich, Dave Thiele, Will Reno, and I drove north to Lynn Lake and flew from there in a LaRonge Twin Otter to Selwyn Lake on the evening of July 11. The first part of the trip was hot and buggy as we plodded north across Flett, Wholdaia, Hinde, Boyd, Carey, Markham, and Nicholson lakes. As we approached Dubawnt Lake on July 22, the climate changed and warm weather was a thing of the past. Gone too were the bugs. As we entered Dubawnt Lake, the surface was strangely flat because indeed most of the lake was ice covered, just as Tyrrell had found it exactly 100 years earlier. I recall the lake trout were surfacing in abundance. July 23 saw strong north winds blow in, so no paddling for us. We started paddling late evenings when the wind was down, picking our way amongst islands along the west shore to avoid the ice flows which were on-and-off blocking our route. We made Outlet Bay on the north shore by July 25.

My journal entry for July 26 reads: *This morning awoke and climbed the rocky hill behind camp after Bill's excursion the night before. Tobacco can left by Art Moffatt group in cairn at top of hill. Notes were left inside by Moffatt, George Luste group, Fred Gaskin group, and two others. I took a picture of the Moffatt note, and placed a note written by Bill inside. Saw first caribou of the trip, a solitary individual grazing just north of the hill. .... Paddled across Outlet Bay today, to have lunch at river mouth. Weather calm with a slight north wind. Began descending heavy rapids below Dubawnt lake. First one we ran tight left, then long set of rapids we ran tight right. Then long calm but fast section and then we ran a rapids tight left. At this point, whitewater getting very large, so we*



Content of the Dubawnt Lake cairn when Howie Baer's party found it in '93; Moffatt's original note ('55) and Lentz's note written on the same piece of paper ('69) are clearly readable; photo by Howard Baer



First known photograph of the Moffatt's party note, left in the cairn at the north end of Dubawnt Lake in '55; photo taken in '69 by Dick Irwin

pulled out and began portaging on left, basically about 1/2 mile to head of canyon. Terrain on left difficult for portaging – lots of big rocks and chest-high willows. Now camped by large rapids at head of canyon, and have lots of portaging in store for tomorrow. Saw fresh bear prints near river bank.

July 27: Awoke this morning and hiked down the Dubawnt Canyon. Lots of water rushing through, with big holes – class 5 big water. Was harassed by a Peregrine falcon. Returned to camp and made couscous for breakfast. Then picked up red canoe and began portage.

We divided portage into 3 stages. Finally, at 4pm reached washout rapids at bottom of canyon, where we put in and ran the last few hundred yards into Grant Lake. Ice bergs on Grant Lake.

July 28: High winds and blowing rain kept us in tents all day.

July 31: Went out this morning and east wind felt like a hurricane. Began paddling with intense wind. Just crossed bay, then climbed big hill because it was there and wind was high. Then paddled down river. At first things were tough, but then current began helping a lot. Paddled several class 2 rapids then got near Wharton Lake. Ran a class 2-3 S-turn channel, then portaged a big water class 4. .... We'd known of the Moffatt trip from a short entry in Nick Nichol's Canoe Canada book, and had also read the Sports Illustrated article. It seemed eery to read his note, and realize that only a few days later he would capsize and die of hypothermia on the Barrens. The next year, I sent a letter to George Luste, telling him I read his note, and I enclosed a print of the Moffatt note. The remainder of our trip was very enjoyable, but the usual struggle against wind, heavy waves on big water, and lots of whitewater. The big Lakes – Aberdeen and Shultz – were especially windy. At the confluence with the Thelon river, we did indeed find driftwood just as Tyrrell had: a modest fire gave us no small comfort. We made it out to Baker Lake on August 11, covering 672 miles in 31 days. Of course, while we flew out of Baker Lake, Tyrrell had to paddle/snowshoe over a thousand miles back to Winnipeg.

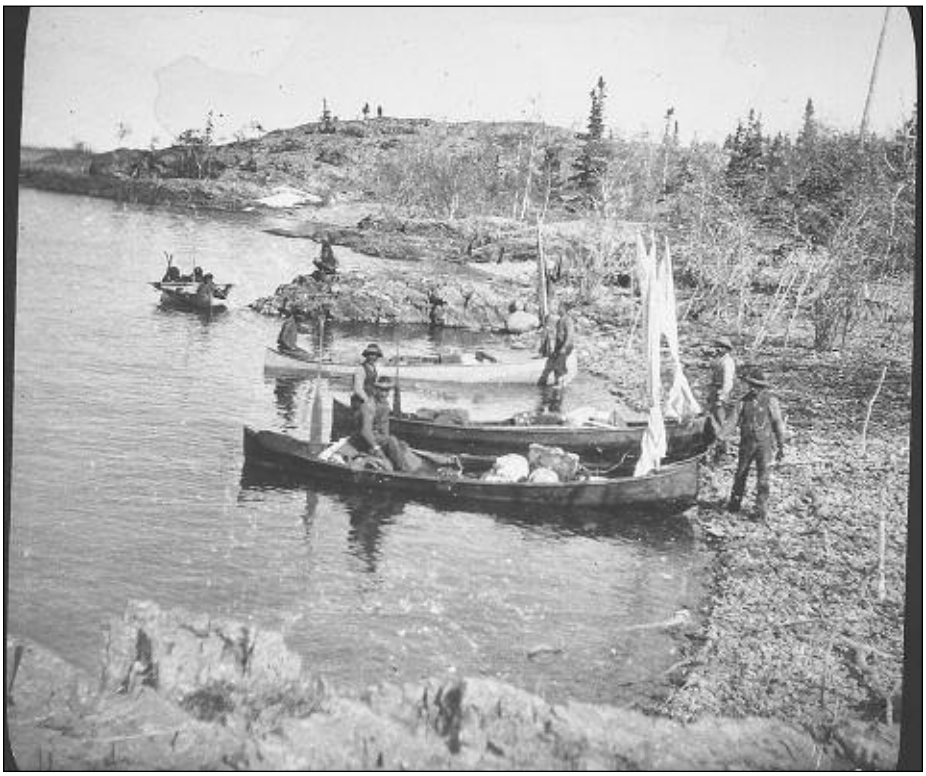
Retracing Tyrrell's Canoe Journey in the Barren Lands and Dubawnt River – 1974

By Fred Gaskin

Photos by J.B.Tyrrell & James W.Tyrrell & Jack Purchase

In preparing for our Dubawnt River canoe expedition in the summer of 1974, I was fortunate to obtain a copy of the 1896 Annual Report for the Geological Survey of Canada, prepared by Joseph Burr Tyrrell, from George Luste who had travelled Tyrrell's route by canoe in 1969. This report was a most valuable reference for our trip as it highlighted the challenges and experiences and almost miraculous survival of Tyrrell's historic expedition of discovery in 1893. The Tyrrell's trip is the subject of a book written by J.B.'s brother, James W. Tyrrell, the trip topographer and interpreter. The book, *Across The Sub-Arctics of Canada,* provides an excellent account of the adventures and dangers experienced during the journey.

J. B. Tyrrell's career was truly extraordinary. He was born in Weston near Toronto in 1858 and died in Toronto in 1957. As a part of Canada's centenary celebrations in 1967, a committee chaired by former Governor-General, the Rt. Hon. Vincent Massey, selected twenty-five "Great Canadians" to represent a "Century Of Achievement." Joseph Burr Tyrrell was included as one of the twenty-five "Great Canadians" of Canada's first century. In his ninety-nine years he was the greatest land explorer of his day. In June 1883, Tyrrell discovered dinosaur skeletons in Alberta's Red Deer valley, which stands as the most significant dinosaur discovery in North America and is highlighted today in the Royal Tyrrell Museum. In the same month, Tyrrell discovered a seam of bituminous coal – the largest coal depositin Canada. He was employed by the Geological Survey of Canada from 1881 to 1898, after which he became a consulting geologist and mining engineer. From 1924 to 1954 he was the president of the Kirkland Lake Gold Mining Co. and is credited with several major gold discoveries. He wrote extensively on our early explorers – Samuel Hearne and David Thompson – and headed the Champlain Society from 1927 to 1932. Tyrrell served as honorary president of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society from 1929 to 1957 and therefore it is with considerable pride that the story of our own 1974 account *Retracing Tyrrell's Journey In To The Barren lands* appeared in the December 1976 journal of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society.



Tyrrell's party beached on the north shore of Athabasca

Equipped with three canoes, Tyrrell's eight-man team consisted of himself, his brother James, three Iroquois brothers – Pierre, Louis, and Michel who were skilled in whitewater canoeing – Jim Corigal and Francois Maurice of local native background, and John Flett, an experienced northern traveller. The expedition covered a total distance of 3,200 miles canoeing, snow-shoeing, and walking. The 1893 trip plus his 1894 expedition on the nearby Kazan and Ferguson Rivers attracted the public's attention to Canada's north.

Tyrrell arrived in Edmonton from Toronto on the Canadian Pacific Railway. The canoe expedition commenced at Athabasca Landing on the Athabasca River, some distance north of Edmonton. They eventually arrived at Lake Athabasca, which is where we commenced our canoe journey at Uranium City. Travelling east along the north shore, both Tyrrell's trip and ours arrived at the Indian hamlets of Fond-du-lac and Stony Rapids where Tyrrell met with Indians who helped him by drawing maps showing the route to the north. Portages led to Black Lake, although in our situation the portages were impassable due to recent forest fires, and so our passage was by truck – not exactly in the Tyrrell tradition! Travelling north from Black Lake, James Tyrrell noted that they were headed into the *great untraveled wilderness,* which in our situation meant no one between us and the hamlet of Baker Lake, 870 miles to the north-east.

From Black Lake, the route continued upstream to Selwyn Lake and the height-of-land portage to Flett Lake, and then on to Wholdaia Lake, followed by the descent of a river known to Tyrrell as the Telzoa River meaning "broad shallow

river," and now identified on maps as the Dubawnt River. On July 29, 1893, Tyrrell arrived at a lake he named Carey Lake in honour of his in-laws and we arrived here on July 22, 1974. This lake had considerable significance in that it was here, James Tyrrell describes in his book, that Tyrrell found large herds of reindeer (caribou) estimated not in numbers but in acres or square miles of reindeer. Twenty animals were killed with shotguns and revolvers and then fires made to dry the meat for the journey ahead. Before leaving "Reindeer Camp" Tyrrell posed his team on an immense boulder on the summit of a point overlooking Carey Lake and took a photo to have a record of their camp on Carey Lake. He then built a cairn of rocks on the boulder to contain a record of the journey to date and above the cairn the *flag that for a thousand years has braved the battle and the breeze* left floating overhead.

We planned to repeat this event and arranged with the Geological Survey of Canada to provide us with Canada's Royal Flag to re-enact Tyrrell's placing of the Union Jack on the same boulder overlooking Carey Lake. Jack Austin (later Senator Austin), principal secretary to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, provided us with the National Flag from the Prime Minister and his personal message for our cairn and ceremony on the "Reindeer Camp" boulder.

We continued downstream in our approach to Marjorie Lake and encountered a set of rapids. It was a bitterly cold day in mid-August as we carefully scouted and then ran the rapids. We were aware that on a cold mid-September day in 1955, a canoe-trip led by Arthur Moffatt of Vermont ended in tragedy as two of their three canoes upset in these same rapids, following which Arthur Moffatt died of hypothermia. Several days earlier, while crossing Lake Dubawnt, we had been attracted to a large hill on a peninsula jutting into the lake. A hike to the top revealed a small cairn with a message left by Arthur Moffatt dated August 28, 1955. *The message stated, The weather on Lake Dubawnt has been warm, sunny, windy. Game is plentiful and our pots are always full*. Arthur Moffatt perished sixteen days later. He had corresponded with J. B. Tyrrell in 1953, who warned Moffatt of the dangers of the rapids and the risk of starvation.

There were many events from Tyrrell's journey which we repeated as we retraced his route through the Barren Lands, including our visit to the site below

Rapids in the Telzoa River (Dubawnt River)

Eskimos at their encampment on the Telzoa River (Dubawnt River) between Schultz Lake and Baker Lake

Tyrrell's group photo and flag ceremony on the "immense boulder" at Reindeer Camp on Carey Lake

Dubawnt lake where Tyrrell records cutting fire wood at the last stand of spruce trees on the Dubawnt River at latitude sixty-three degrees. Forewarned is forearmed – we did likewise!

Tyrrell arrived at Hudson's Bay, having travelled through Chesterfield Inlet, on September 12, 1893, and then faced a journey of some five hundred miles down the cost of Hudson's Bay to Churchill in winter conditions. The ice forming along the shore eventually forced the crew to abandon the canoe journey and then continue on foot until they were exhausted and too weak to go on. Jim Corigal and John Flett, the only two with any strength left, volunteered to continue on in a desperate attempt to reach Churchill. After two days covering twenty miles they reached Churchill and then returned with a rescue party and dog teams to take the rest of the party to Churchill to recover. Following a much needed rest and after freeze up, the party then travelled south by snow shoe during November and December overland to Winnipeg, arriving on New Year's Day, 1894. Telegrams were sent to Ottawa and Toronto and the following day newspapers announced the safe arrival at Winnipeg of the long overdue, and feared lost, Tyrrell expedition into the Barren Lands!

Our arrival at the hamlet of Baker Lake, eight days behind schedule, provided a welcome rest and an admission that rapidly deteriorating weather conditions ruled out any possibility of paddling our canoes through Chesterfield Inlet and tide water to Hudson's Bay. With our timetable in disarray, Jack and Susie Purchase, Gretchen Schneider, and Staffan Svedberg (from Kiruna, Sweden) prepared to return south. Katie Hayhurst and I elected to remain and by joining up with two local residents, William Aupuluktuk and his son, Thomas Kudloo, and their motorized freighter canoe, we were able to continue on Tyrrell's route to Hudson's Bay. Tyrrell had tried but failed to persuade Baker Lake Inuits to provide assistance for the journey through Chesterfield Inlet to Hudson's Bay and then down the coast of Hudson's Bay. Although going down the coast of Hudson's Bay was out of the question for us, we did succeed where Tyrrell failed, in obtaining native assistance in getting to Hudson's Bay.

We spent four days travelling east through Chesterfield Inlet living off the land with Thomas conducting a successful caribou hunt. He beached the freighter canoe when he spotted three caribou not far from shore and with his rifle shot and killed the three caribou – two with one bullet. The remainder of the afternoon was spent skinning, gutting, and butchering the three carcasses and preparing a large cache of most of the meat under a stone cairn to await the return trip to Baker Lake. The next day and night was spent at a summer encampment where a few families from Baker Lake were harvesting arctic char for the southern market. On our fourth day we passed freighter canoes from Chesterfield Inlet in which the locals had come out to check their seal nets, and later we arrived at the hamlet on September 1, and thus concluded a canoe journey of 1,060 miles during 64 days, retracing Tyrrell's route from Lake Athabasca to Hudson's Bay. William and his son, Thomas, had come to visit his dying father but arrived too late, as his father died two days before our arrival. We all attended the funeral the following day.

Two months later I was invited to participate in the festivities of the annual "Tyrrell Day" at the J.B. Tyrrell Senior Public School in Toronto, and there had the good fortune to meet Joyce Tyrrell, J.B.'s daughter-in-law. A few weeks later, Joyce introduced me to Miss Parker, J. B.'s nurse-companion during his nineties. Miss Parker had many stories to tell which she in turn had heard from J. B. Tyrrell. One favourite story refers to Tyrrell`s trek in the snow along the coast of Hudson`s Bay. J. B. had fallen behind and he accidently lost his glasses and then immediately stopped. Without his glasses his vision was severely impaired and he would never find them in the snow. He remained standing motionless and waited for the members of his party to note his absence and then return looking for their missing leader. Eventually Tyrrell`s absence was discovered and they, of course, returned, finding first Tyrrell and then his glasses, and then they all resumed their walk in the snow.

No doubt Joseph Burr Tyrrell had hundreds of wonderful stories covering his extraordinary career of exploration. He was educated at the University of Toronto, and all of his papers, materials, photographs, and lantern slides were left as a bequest to the University of Toronto Library (Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library).

Acknowledgement: Tyrrell's images in this article were digitally reproduced with kind permission of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.

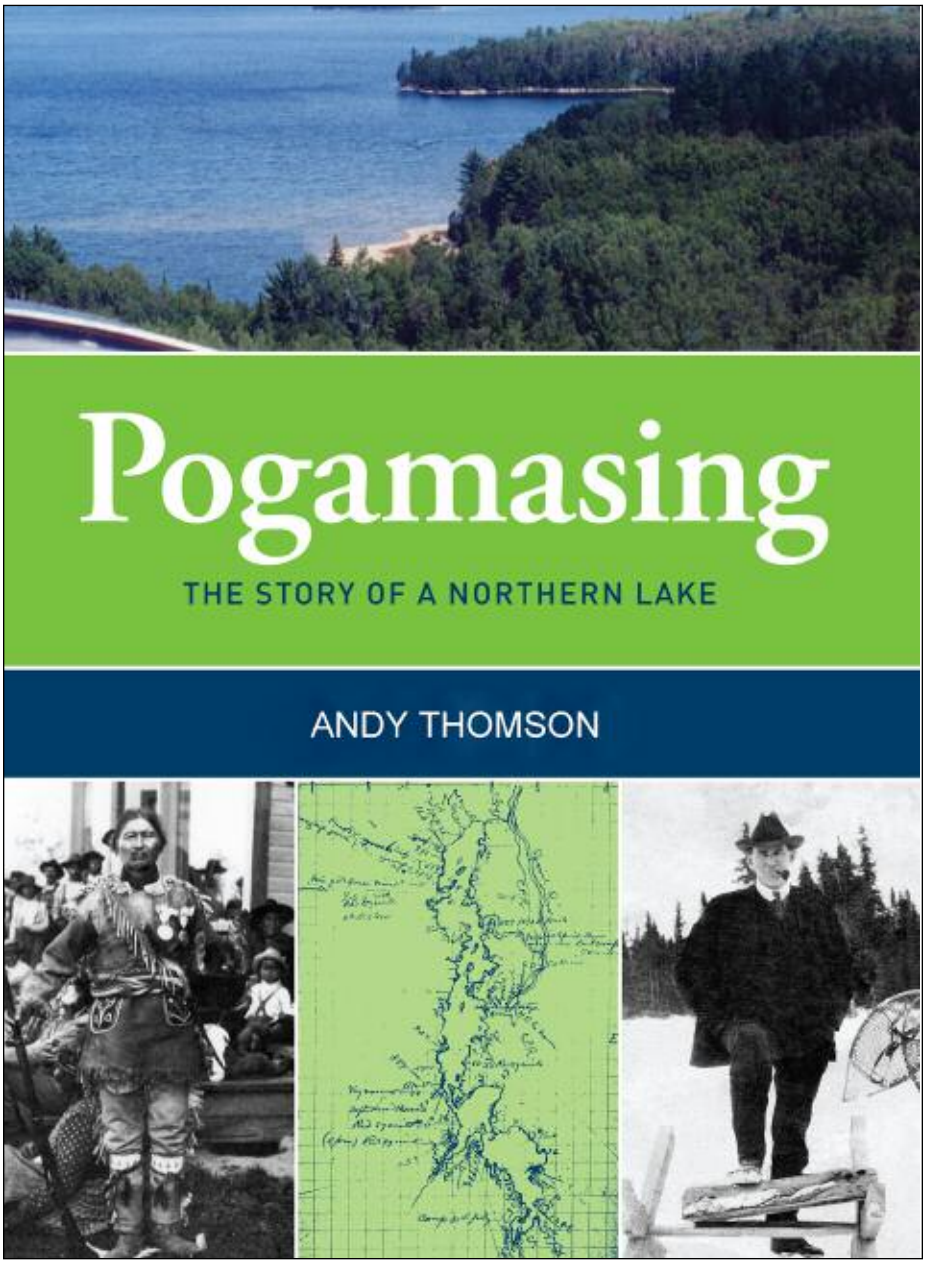
Fred Gaskin with a family of Eskimos from Baker lake at their summer encampment on Schultz Lake

Pogamasing, the Story of a Northern Lake

by Andy Thomson

Last spring in *Nastawgan*, Andrea Fulton wrote an article on the West Branch of the Spanish River. She mentioned that Lake Pogamasing would make a nice day trip from the river. Pog is that and more. It is also an entry point from the Spanish to a series of 'trippable' lakes to the west and south. What cannot be seen, however, is another intangible attribute of the Pogamasing area: it represents a microcosm of the development of the Canadian wilderness for the past 150 years. A combination of stories from the lake's residents and our country's archives led me to this fascinating discovery and ultimately to a book, *Pogamasing, the Story of a Northern Lake*. My grandfather, W. B. Plaunt, operated a lumber company during the 1930s at Wye (now Sheahan), a stop on the CPR close by the Spanish River and a stone's throw from Pog. After he closed the operation in 1940 he converted a former logging camp on Pog to a family camp where I have spent most of my summers since then. During the 1970s I ran canoe trips in the area so I got to know the Spanish River watershed and became intrigued with what I saw of the former logging structures.

Before lumbermen, there were Aboriginals and there was no doubt that they had lived at Pog. In a study of the Spanish River for INCO Metals, archeologist Chris Hanks included evidence that Aboriginals had lived on Pog: stone tools and arrow heads, a burial bundle, and five graves in the Native cemetery. He also reported that there had been a Hudson's Bay post on the lake in the 1880s. A biography of Grey Owl by Donald Smith linked the HBC post on Pog to the Espaniels, a Native family of Biscotasing. When Archie Belaney returned to Canada after WW I, he led the life of a troubled man in Biscotasing. There he met Alex and Annie Espaniel who became such trusted friends that Belaney described Alex as "a man I am proud to call my adopted father." The crucial information for me was to learn that Alex was the son of Louis Espagnol, the manager of the HB post on



Book cover

Pogamasing. So how was I to find out more about him? Naturally I googled his name, and was astounded to find that Espagnol had been the subject of a paper delivered at the Rupert's Land Symposium at Oxford University the previous year.

Before I talk about Espagnol's role in the fur trade I should deal with the origin of his name as it is directly linked to the Spanish River, and two towns in the area. His granddaughter, Jane Espaniel McKee, wrote that her family descended from a Spanish trader she identified as Emmanuel who came from Spanish America to the North Shore area of Georgian Bay. He married into an Anishnabe band and became a chief. His son also became a chief and because he fought for the British in the War of 1812 he was awarded two George III medals. This was the man who the HB clerks

The beloved dukw

called the 'Spaniard' or 'Espagnol,' possibly because they couldn't spell or pronounce his Native name and it was easier for them to give him a nickname associated with his Spanish heritage. The same clerks then called the river where the Spaniard and his family camped, the 'Spanish River.' When Espagnol's youngest son, the man who was the subject of the Oxford paper, began to work for HB he was known as Sakquakegich. However, he adopted the European tradition of using a given name, Louis, with a family name, Espagnol.

The Lake Huron District was formed after the amalgamation of the HB and the North West Company in 1821. The former North West post of La Cloche became the headquarters for the new HB district. The first factor, John McBean, created this map, which is the first acknowledgement of Pogamasing. Surprising, it is not by this name, but rather 'Pimgashcaushing'. How the name got changed is a mystery. After several decades of unstable fur returns caused by increasing competition, the arrival of Roderick McKenzie as the new chief trader at La Cloche in 1866 brought about an important initiative.

Since most of the HB posts were on major waterways it was easy for his competitors to intercept his hunters. McKenzie's solution was to establish four new inland posts to make it easier for the Natives to trade with him. One of the new posts was on Lake Pogamasing because of its central location in the upper Spanish. There is likely a secondary factor: it was also the hunting ground of Louis Espagnol, now an employee of HB. It was a natural fit, the right location with the right man.

The Pogamasing post operated for twenty years under Espagnol, from 1869 until 1888. He was a remarkable manager who received positive reviews from his district bosses. A few were bothered by his constant demands for a higher salary no doubt because he was paid less than white managers. Surprisingly, he always received the raises, because his supervisors realized that if they didn't give it to him, he could become a daunting competitor. One of their attempts to weaken his demands was to see if his account balance with the company was in arrears. It never was, because he always kept a surplus. In fact, Espagnol had lent $300, a year's salary for him, to another manager.

With weather and competitors to deal with, HB could always adjust and carry on. But one factor they could not cope with was progress. In 1880 the federal government approved the building of the transcontinental railway to the Pacific. Although the railway was initially not planned to be constructed in the Spanish River valley, this is exactly what happened.

Espagnol's realization that the railway would be a threat to his people's way of life altered his priority, from post manager to band chief. When the railway construction reached the area in August 1884, he wrote to Indian Affairs in Ottawa requesting a reserve on Pogamasing for his band of a 100 or so people from three separate areas. The request was denied, because two of the groups were members of the Spanish River and Whitefish Lake Bands, and already had a reserve under the Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1840. The third group was turned down because they lived north of the Lake Huron watershed and did not yet have a treaty with the Crown.

But the worst was yet to come. Once the railway was constructed through the

Pog area, it brought in white trappers. Since there were no provincial trapping regulations, anyone could trap where they pleased and damn the consequences for the Aboriginals who self-regulated their own hunting grounds. By December of 1884, Espagnol wrote a second letter to the government to plead for help. He wrote: "All of my old Indians are in great need … the white trappers have stolen all of the beaver." Nothing was done to stop the intruders. A few elderly Natives were treated by a Sudbury doctor; however, any food distributed to them was docked off their treaty payment. Forty-five years later, Archie Belaney, now known to the world as Grey Owl, complained that transient white trappers were still destroying the fur resources of the country.

The Pogamasing post was closed in 1888 and within a decade only two posts in the district were still operating: Biscotasing, opened to replace Pog; and Sudbury, but now for a very different market.

The demise of the fur trade and the coming of the railway signaled a transition to a new economy in the area. Lumbermen had been chomping at the bit to get to the upper Spanish that the railway had opened up. But before a logger's axe could strike a tree, the government required an assessment of the resources.

This assignment fell to the Provincial Land Surveyors who were to assess its natural resource potential, and measure it for timber limits and townships. If you look at any township map, you will notice the horizontal and vertical lines that create the six mile squares that mark each township. I had no idea how those lines were created until I found Hume Proudfoot's 'split line' drawing of the first baseline survey to Pog. Then I realized that these lines were cut through the bush: they had to be perfectly straight and measured with a 66-foot chain. These lines had to be coordinated with previous surveys that eventually became townships and timber limits.

What also astounded me was how the surveyors accomplished this challenging task in winter as they had only dog sleds, toboggans, and snowshoes to travel. One of the surveyors of the Pogamasing area, Alexander Niven, described the kind of

Lands & Forrests (now MNR) map

food they had to live on for the four to **five months they were in the bush: "Our food was of the usual kind … flour, pork, beans, split** peas, and tea, with a little sugar for the cook. We carried a muzzle loading rifle and shot a caribou, caught a few fish through the ice, and shot about 76 partridges with a horse pistol." Their accommodation was just as basic: canvas tents, a couple of blankets spread on spruce bough,and a fire between their tents.

Surveying was one of the areas of employment for Aboriginals and they proved to be highly valuable for their bush skills and in particular, their 'unerring sense of direction and distance.' For example, T. J. Patten would give his Native guides instructions to meet him some 25 miles ahead where the survey

line would intersect with a river or lake. After he showed them the direction with his transit, they headed off, sometimes having a detour of many miles. When the survey party reached their agreed point, all the surveyor had to do was fire his rifle and within 20 minutes they would arrive. On one occasion his Native scout was so close that they had to take his tent down, as it was dead centre on the survey line.

Although logging was not to begin until the timber surveys were completed, Mother Nature intervened, or some think, an arsonist, and a huge forest fire broke out in 1891 along the Pog/Spanish/ CPR corridor. This forced the government to auction the burnt timber or lose it to the almighty borer worm.

There were many companies that logged on Pogamasing but it wasn't just in the timber agent books that I learned who they were. One of my other discoveries was to recognize these saw log markings which are called timber stamps. As we paddled around the area I found floating logs with different symbols. I was able to identify most of them with names I found in the agent books. Some were obvious such as JC for John Charlton. But many, such as this 7UP stamp, were brainteasers.

Louis Espagnol

By 1900, the burnt timber was cut, and then the surveyed timber berths were auctioned. The Pog Limits were logged by two companies until 1929 when my grandfather and his partner, Ed White, purchased the limit. Prior to this, their company, White and Plaunt, had been cutting pulp for the Spanish River Pulp and Paper Co. further north around Duke Lake, the headwaters of the east branch of the Spanish. There was a lot of jack pine that didn't interest the pulp company, and since White and Plaunt were also in the railway tie business, they wanted to find a location down the river close to the CPR where they could set up a mill. This brought them to Wye on the CPR, a mere 100 metres from the Spanish, and a kilometre from Lake Pogamasing. The mill and the village were constructed during the first half of 1929, which was the worst time to be setting up a new operation. By the end of October, Canada and the world were in a severe economic depression and shortly afterwards Ed White left the partnership.

I could say a lot about my grandfather as he had a commanding personality. Contrary to what we sometimes hear about lumber barons, my grandfather really cared about his employees. He provided medical care for the men and their families for a dollar a month including their medicines. He profit-shared with the log cutters, and for the mill workers, he cancelled their company store debts at the end of every season as he knew the wages at that time weren't structured for men with large families.

It was difficult to sell lumber during the depression but he kept the operation going, selling a bit here and there. The lumber that piled up over the years was sold once the war came, although the war time profit regulation prevented him from making a windfall.

Today we use the Budd car, VIA's passenger rail service, to get to Sheahan, the new name for the former stop at Wye. For years while waiting for it to ar-

rive, I'd look at the field behind the station where I knew the village had been and wonder what it had looked like, and what life was like there, so many years ago. It wasn't until I found this photo of Wye that I could actually envision the village with its bunk houses, office, and family homes. Across the tracks, alongside the river was the saw mill, although not as it looks in this coloured photo.

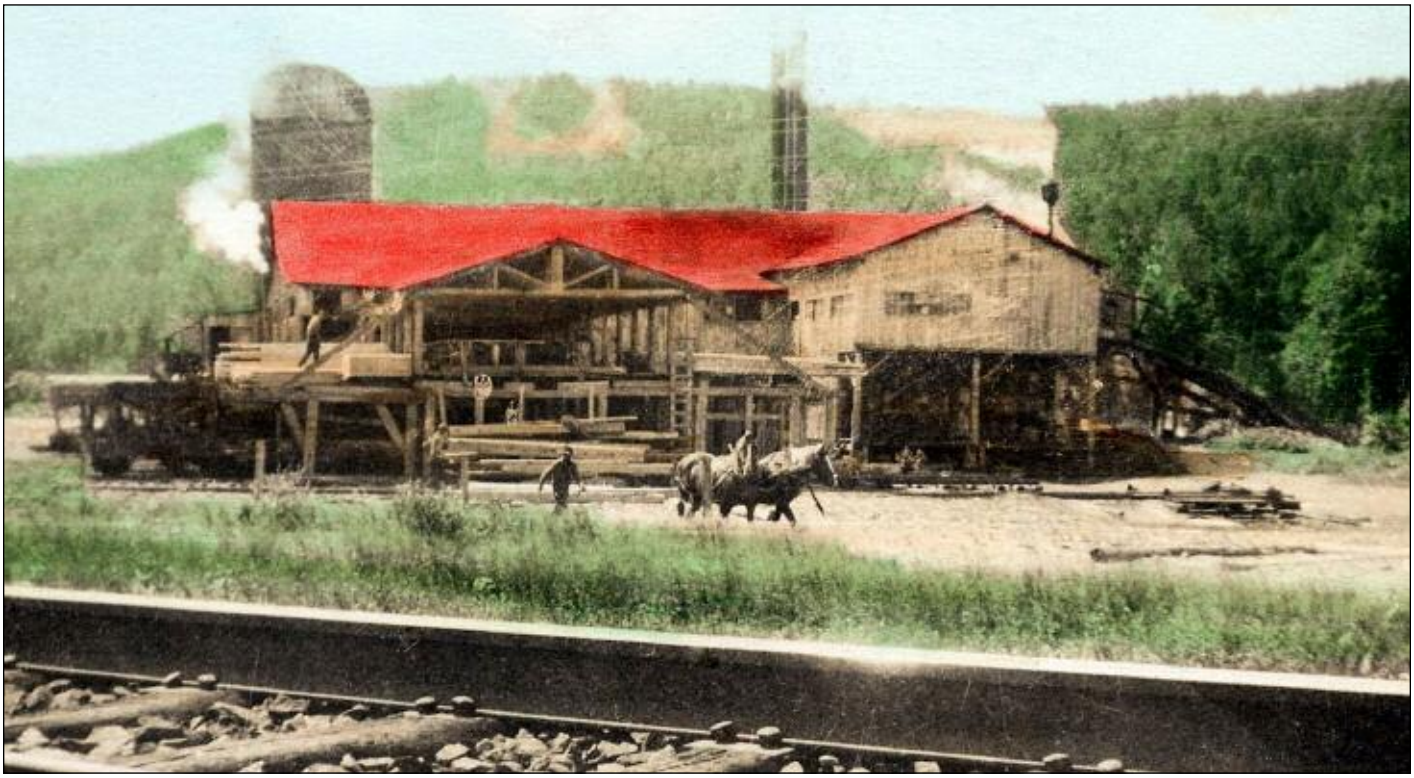
But the one lasting artifact which has outlasted all the buildings, equipment and people is a 16 mm colour film that my Uncle Bill took in 1939/40. It illustrates so vividly the complete lumber operation of that era: from cutting and skidding in the fall; hauling sleighs of pine logs by teams of horses to the frozen lakes in winter; driving logs down the flooded creeks in spring; and operating the sawmill in summer. I combined the movie with my uncle's interview that I taped in 1972. It is possible to see how lumbering was done and hear it described by a man who knew it well. If interested, you can view it from my website (see below).

The end of the Second World War initiated a new era for Lake Pogamasing as many men, and later their families, wanted to get away to the wilderness to fish. Some built their own camps and two fishing lodges, Pog Lodge and Butchart's Camps, were launched. Let me touch on three aspects that demonstrate what makes our lake distinctive: family, fishing, and transportation.

For our family, my grandfather began the transition of the former cookery to a family camp by bringing furnishings from the former village such as bunk beds, box stoves, and kerosene lamps. Windows from the school house were installed to lighten up the gloomy interior. What so many people found out later, my grandparents knew instinctively: create a place for your family in the wilderness and they will return. We are now into our fifth generation, numbering about 75, and only a few have left. This family priority is found in most other camps on the lake, as I'm sure it is for others where they put down roots in a cabin, or travel together on a canoe trip. That sense of family has expanded to a sense of community with others on the lake, and we are lucky that in a remote area we could always count on each other.

A second distinction for our lake has been its fishing. Pog has enjoyed a legendary reputation for lake trout – the name 'Pogamasing' may have been created by its original inhabitants because of it. For both the Aboriginal and logging periods, trout was an abundant and reliable source of food. A Wye villager told me they could always catch 'buckets of trout' every time they went out. Unfortunately, the lake trout numbers declined in the early fifties, either because of over-fishing, or from dropping the water levels in the fall which froze the spawn. After bass was introduced, they soon became the dominant game fish. But the biggest fish story for our family was the day my father went out bass fishing and came home with a ten-pound pickerel. Why was this unusual? We had no idea there were pickerel in the lake. A few questions over at the landing brought smiles and an explanation.

Transportation to our camps is a major challenge given that there is no highway to the lake. A few fly in, but most of us take the Budd car. At one time, once we arrived at Sheahan, it was load and unload, several times, until we arrived at camp. It was much like a



The mill

Plaunt camp

canoe trip, but with people who didn't know how to pack. For our family we had to trek to the river, cross the Spanish, travel to the landing and then, take a three-kilometre boat ride to our camps. The major obstacle was the river and it was a grueling task at times. A family friend suggested the perfect solution to our problem was an amphibious landing craft like one he commanded during the war. But where to get one?

Then one day in 1959 my uncle spotted an ad for a dukw in the *Globe* and in no time it was on its way to Sudbury. After some mechanical repairs we headed out early one June morning to give it a test run: up the Spanish River to Sheahan. It was a challenging trip as we had to deal with the strong spring current, pulp logs, and boulder rapids. We made steady progress, utilizing the six wheel drive, winch, and propeller in different combinations and situations. However, on the afternoon of the second day the dukw engine flooded with water, and it stopped dead, just three kilometres from our destination. Fortunately we were able to resurrect the drowned dukw, and by the first of August we had the answer to our transportation woes. It was now a 50-minute trip with only one loading at the station and one unloading at camp.

But the amazing discovery for me was to learn how the story of Pogamasing and area was a microcosm of what happened in the wider Canadian wilderness in the last 150 years. The area bore witness to so many of the key actors: Aboriginals, fur traders, railway men, surveyors, loggers, mill workers and their families, and people who loved to get away to the wilderness.

How to get there: You can access Pog from the Spanish River from two points: there is a portage alongside the creek from Big Pog (there is a CPR bridge over the creek beside the Spanish), or the easier portage is at Sheahan where there is a bush road (we call it the dukw road) about a kilometre down from the CPR bridge over the Spanish. If you plan a side trip to Pog from the Spanish and want to return to the river in an interesting way, head to the south-west arm to a portage off Half Way (or Rubenstein on some maps) Bay. This will take you to Kennedy, Bluewater, and then down the Mogo Creek back to the Spanish.

If you aren't coming down the Spanish to get to Pog you can take the Budd car from either Cartier or Sudbury, get off at Sheahan and head to Pog as above. For an interesting lake trip from Pog, head up Little Pog Creek to a series of lakes and portages that will take you to Little Pog and eventually to Biscotasing and then come down the Spanish or take the Budd car out.

For more on Lake Pogamasing, see *http://pogamasing.com.*

The Lethe River

By Greg Went

There is said to be a river that flows through Hades called the Lethe River. It is also known as the river of forgetfulness. All who drink the waters of the Lethe River forget what came before. Pondered that statement for some time. The forgetting part. Isn't that the goal of all wilderness canoe trips? To forget. At least for a little while. The problems at work, at home, with extended family, with finances. Concerns that are ever with us back in the city. To me that's the great benefit of the wilderness experience. It is so different from our daily lives. In the wilderness we are immersed in a natural environment bereft of everything that we are used to back in the city. Electric lights when it gets dark, hot water at the twist of a handle, a roof to protect us from wind and rain, complete meals that go from freezer to table in minutes.

Things are different in the wilderness. There you are exposed to the elements all day and all night. You travel during the day over terrain not marked with road signs and rest areas. You set your course of travel with the compass, map, and GPS that you have with you. Your lunch stop is food from the duffle bag that is in the canoe. Your protection from the elements is the windbreaker and rain gear on your back.

In the evening, when you are on shore for the night, there is still much to do before you can crawl into your sleeping bag. The tents have to be set up. Storms are frequent and severe. The tents have to be secured to withstand the worst of them. A fire has to be started. That involves a search for firewood. Surprising how much wood you need to cook the evening meal, boil some water, and to keep the fire burning until the last of the travellers heads for the tents. And finally, the canoes and gear have to be secured for the night. We always tie the canoes to a tree with one of the lining ropes. In the Barrens, where this is not possible, we put rocks in the canoes to keep them from flying away in a bad windstorm. I tend to be overenthusiastic about the amount of rock fill that ends up in the canoes. The buddies always grumble the next morning about the onerous task of emptying the canoe of rocks placed in them the night before. An engineer buddy always tries to calculate the minimum rock weight that should keep a canoe from moving. Me? I try to calculate the amount of rock fill that will allow me to sleep undisturbed all night. It always seems to be a much higher volume of rock than what the engineer buddy figures is adequate. It just seems that every action, everything that we do to accomplish goals on a wilderness canoe trip is completely different from the way we accomplish goals back in the city. I think that's why we paddle and drink the waters of the River Lethe.

There's probably more, but I forget.

Food for Paddlers

As mentioned in the Ashuapmushuan River trip report to be presented in the next Fall, issue, Rick Sabourin and Diane Lucas treated the group to a wonderful dessert on our layover day. Not only did they make the cake, which required careful attention to a fire on a very hot day, but they also carried a very heavy Dutch Oven over many portages in order to make the cake. What a team!

Pineapple Upside-Down Cake

1 golden cake mix, prepare as per instructions on the box
1 small can pineapple slices, eight slices in the can
Maraschino cherries
1/2 cup butter
1/3 cup brown sugar

Instructions

Over a fire, melt the butter in a Dutch Oven or other pot for use on open fire. Stir the brown sugar into the butter. Remove the pot from the fire and lay the pineapple slices over the butter/sugar mixture. Add the Maraschino cherries to the centre of the pineapple slices. Pour the prepared cake mix over the pineapple. When the fire has burned down to good hardwood coals, put the Dutch Oven over the fire. As the coals die down, add small amounts of new wood or fresh coals to the fire. Total time on the fire is about 30 minutes. Check cake with a toothpick to determine if done. Make a whiskey sour with the extra cherries for the chef who must tend the fire.

If you would like to share your favourite tripping recipes, please contact Barb Young, 12 Erindale Crescent, Brampton, Ont. L6W 1B5; youngjdavid@rogers.com.

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