



*Dorothy with David and Buddy on the way to Sunday service*

## A Family Canoe Trip in 1922 Port Perry to Silver Lake

**Merritt Price**

Recently, as happens to many families, I was helping my mom clear out the family home for sale. From down in the basement, up came dusty forgotten boxes of old photographs and memorabilia. Distracted from the task at hand, I started exploring these reservoirs of memories when, to my surprise and delight, I came across a journal that my grandfather, Merritt Price, had kept of a family canoe trip he made with his wife, Dorothy, and his two eldest children: David, then a four-year-old; and Lloyd, better known as “Buddie,” my father, who had

celebrated his second birthday that April. (I guess they decided that Bruce, their third son, was too young – only six months, after all!)

My grandfather, a Methodist minister in Whitevale at the time of this trip, was also a burgeoning businessman, so part of his purpose in exploring the lakes he did was to find some property on which to build a few cottages for summer rentals. As the journal relates, he did find what he was looking for – and I know from other family tales that the cottages on Silver

Lake were a happy focal point for my dad and his brothers for many years.

I have shortened some entries and omitted entirely the days in September that recount the work of clearing the new land, but I've tried to keep faithful to the story and my grandfather's voice. I hope you enjoy this glimpse back in time to an era when women went canoeing in long white dresses!

Beth Bellaire

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### Monday, Aug. 21st 1922 –

Up at 4 am. Set alarm clock. Most of duffle packed Sat. and we had all our clothing in the kit bags at 6:30. I took the canoe on "Lizzie." Put a board across the front doors behind the windshield and tied it on and set the canoe on the outward (right) end and over the top of back seat. The luggage was stowed away, the roll up on the left fender to balance and David, Lloyd, and I left at 8:00 for Port Perry – wife came with Mr. Leary's car. We arrived at Port Perry at 10:40. We had lunch on Lake Scugog

wharf with the canoe all loaded, and ready to set out. We got 9 snaps – one of wharf etc., one of us in canoe – [Unfortunately, none of these survived the years. BB]

We left Port Perry wharf at 12:30. Hot and calm with the smallest notion of a breeze in the southwest. We got slightly sunburned on the backs of our necks as we were going northeast. We passed Seven-Mile Island at 2:30. I paddled mostly all the way alone, wife helping a little sometimes. There is quite a pretentious club house on this island. Also a good number of summer cottages opposite Port Perry for 5 miles down and a number of Derek Shooter "Lodges."

We arrived in a nice open spot in the woods on the southeast shore at 3:15 and landed. There was a shack owned by a hunt club from Oshawa, but it was unoccupied and we decided to make camp. Tent up duffle out and supper on way as we were hungry.

Menu: Tomato soup with macaroni, bologna, brown bread and butter, cookies, tea, honey, *canned corn*. We ate so much else we couldn't find room for the

honey so we saved it for next time.

We were tired and rather sleepy and to bed at 8:30. Very few mosquitoes, fairly warm night. Plan of tent below.

### Tuesday, Aug. 22 –

Good night's sleep – mosquitoes got rather numerous about daylight so we got out our oil of citronella and showed them. It had rained a little in the night. Up at 6. Breakfast at 7. Oatmeal porridge, brown bread and butter, marmalade, rice pudding, and tea. Dorothy did some sketching and painting in forenoon. I rigged up a sail for canoe out of w[ater]proof sheet and 2 poles and cross piece. Trolled about one hour but got nothing but WEEDS and more weeds. Saw quite a fat Black Duck, cranes, bitterns, kingfishers, gulls, etc. etc.

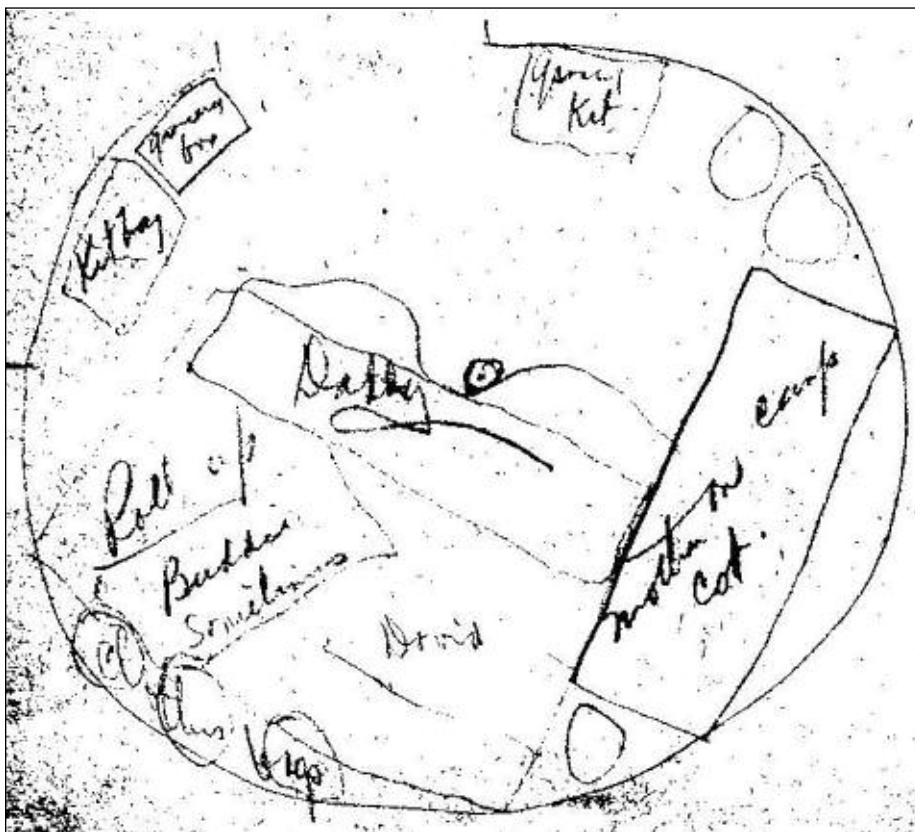
Dinner at 12 – smoked bacon, port and beans, rice pudding, bread and butter, water.

Expense account: Gas \$1.95, films \$ .90 , butter \$ .70, marmalade \$ .23, Bread \$ .27, granite mug \$ .15 On Aug. 21st.

We slept around all afternoon. I fixed up a sail for the canoe with two long sticks, a cross stick and the mackintosh sheet – tried the fishing and got two grubby perch and kept them for bait but something carried them off during the night. I wrote some letters and went to bed early and slept well.

### Wednesday, Aug. 23 –

Up at 5:30 – breakfast at 7. Most of kit packed before breakfast. Beautiful morning – lake perfectly calm. Away at 8 – went around west end of the island. I was trolling but caught nothing but weeds. We landed at the point of Mariposa Township opposite Caesarea at about 10 o'clock. Rested for an hour and crossed to Caesarea 2 1/2 miles in 40 minutes in a dead calm. Caught some more weeds. Stayed at C. till 2:30 waiting for mail and got nothing. Posted a letter to Mother. Bought icecream (50 cents) and biscuits and chocolate (54 cents) and bread (18 cents), red currant jelly (26 cents) and pressed beef (10 cents) and stamps (37 cents). Ate our dinner on the shore at C.



Tent plan

Put up the sail before leaving. Light breeze getting a bit stronger brought us down the lake 9 miles to the river. Thunderstorm threatened but only rained a few drops. River mouth very wide full of channels with rice growing between them. Great fun charging through a wall of rice! Sailed two miles up river – hard to find a landing place because of rice and weeds and muddy shores. Finally pitched our tent on the northwest shore near an old deserted house at 6 o'clock. Got a good supper – pork and beans, sago pudding [south Asian pudding similar to tapioca], tea, etc. Boat in water 12 hours and didn't leak a drip.

#### Thursday, Aug. 24 –

Had a miserable night at Mosquito Camp! Up 3 or 4 times killing mosquitoes – tent all smeared with their corpses and gore inside. Up next morning before 6 – paddled back down the river a mile to a farm house and got one pint of cream for 10 cents., one dozen eggs for a quarter, and a pail of drinking water. Dropped the eggs getting over a fence – 5 were used scrambled for breakfast, six were good enough to make the next portage. Set sail at 9 am with a fair breeze for Lindsay. Motor boats all scoffed at our sail. River about 1/2 mile wide, grown full of rice and lily pads except a channel about 30 to 50 feet across.

Arrived at an island in the river opposite a cemetery 12 miles from Lindsay at 10:50 and had a cold lunch. Arrived at Lindsay locks at 1 pm and portaged dam and then ran canoe over rollers – a drop of about 10 feet. Got some supplies and paddled 2 miles down river and filled our water pail. Hoisted sail at 2:30 and sailed down channel which was twisty. Lighthouses marked the outside of each bend. We met a steam boat, the "Lintonia" [a steamboat that sailed the Trent-Severn waterway between Lakefield and Young's Point]. At #10 lighthouse, we stopped for a chat with 2 fellows in a motorboat who advised us to camp on an island nearby.

We went over and the so-called "island" abounded in poison ivy and a special quality of burrs which decorated the wife's skirt and which hubby scraped off

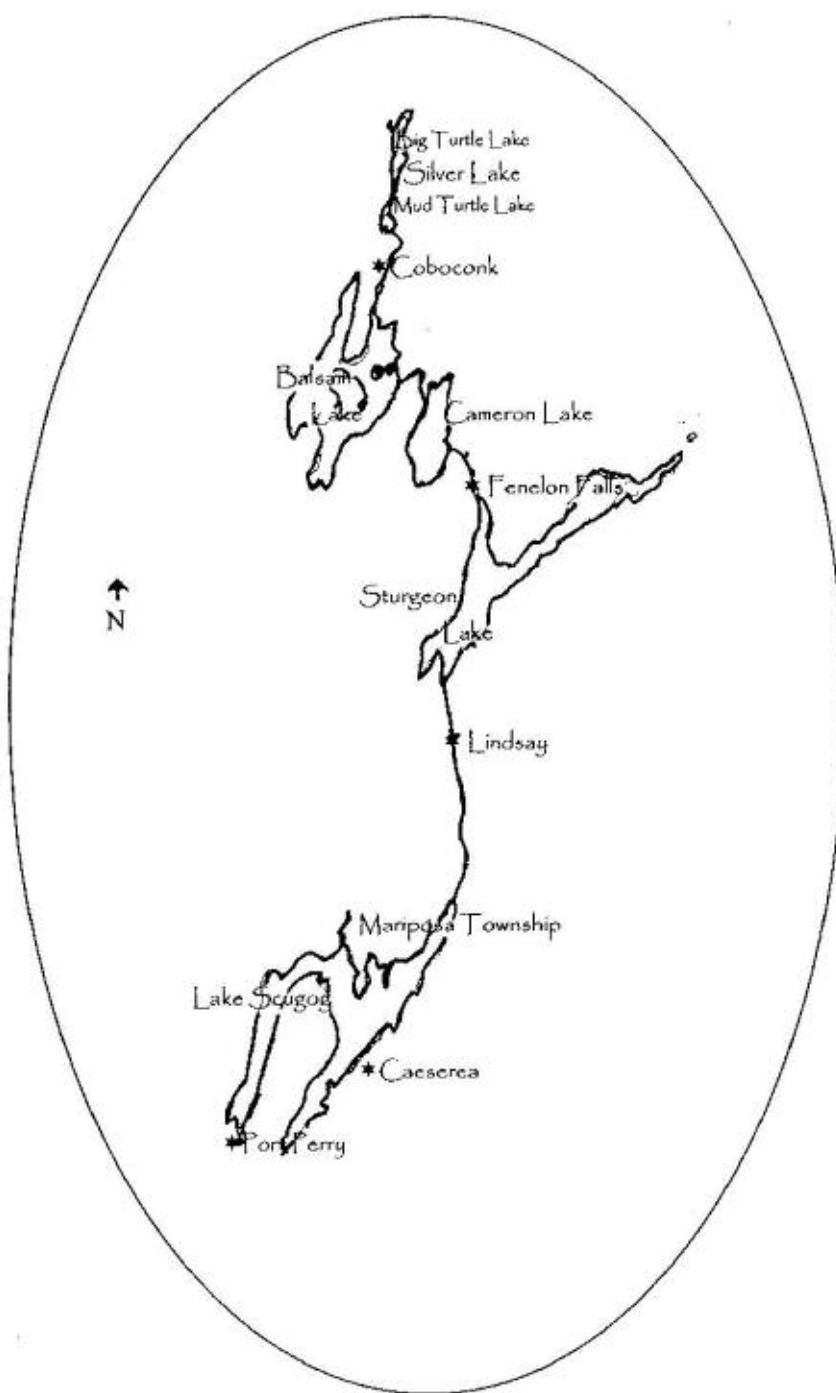
with a knife. Our sojourn on said island was very brief – just time to make tracks. We took down the sail as the wind was getting strong and paddled down to between #11 and #12 lighthouses where we camped on the southeast shore of the bay. The river here was about 3 miles across, the channel marked with buoys, but reed and weed patches were here and there all over. The shore was high and we pitched our tent in a little triangular field. The water was weedy and full of deadhead

stumps and floating logs near the shore and we had to push some away to make a landing.

Expense account – bread 15, cookies etc. .47, 2 tomato soup .20 each, grape jelly .15, orangeade .40, sugar .25, white snow pancake flour .15.

#### Friday, Aug. 25th – Hurricane Camp

Rained last night, but we were snug. Got up at 6, had breakfast and went frog hunting for bait. As we were getting our







*Merritt fishing for dinner*

breakfast ready, a tug with a raft of logs in cribs went up the river for the mill at Lindsay. It was threatening rain, and a heavy storm came up in the middle of the morning, lots of rain and terrific wind. The wind kept up all day, and in the afternoon, it got so strong, I cut another pole for a brace pole in the tent. We washed out the canoe in the evening. We were in the tent almost all day.

#### **Saturday, Aug. 26th –**

We got up at 6am and went fishing for 1½ hours, both trolling and still fishing with frog as bait but got not a single strike. We had breakfast at 8:30: oatmeal porridge, coffee, marmalade, etc. Broke camp at 10:45 and went down 1½ miles into Sturgeon Lake. A stiff wind sprang up, and we landed on the east shore near the river mouth at a boat house. Had a cold lunch of bread and butter, peanut butter, currant jam, water. The bank of the lake was 20 feet high and very steep. After dinner, we went up the bank and I wrote a letter while the boys had a sleep.

We picked some wild grapes.

The wind kept up and was quite strong, so we were glad when an old deaf chap came down to the boat house and consented, much to wifie's relief, to take us across the lake to Bell's Point, fare 50 cents. Bell's Point is a resort with one "pauition" built and another building and a number of cottages. Leaving there at 3:30, we paddled along the shore and trolled but again weeds were the only result. On rounding a point close to shore, we grounded on an old stump. And wife had a bad minute until she found we weren't punctured and hadn't upset. Then we passed a number of deadheads and also some in the morning, so we named our trip for the day – "Stump Voyage" – The stumps were due to the lake level being raised a number of feet when the Trent Canal was built.

We arrived at a point at 5:30, ½ mile from Fenlon Falls, and pitched camp on the east side of the river in what appeared to be the foundations of an old saw mill or such like. A beautiful campsite, with

no weeds in the river – first water clear of them so far was at Bell's Point for a couple of miles, but the river is rocky and clear of all weeds etc. A grand supper of pork and beans, toast, Sago Pudding, fried eggs, tea, etc. We were to bed at 10 after I had paddled up to 7.7 and bought some supplies as per list below.

Butter .38, soda .05, rolled oats .23, tea .33, Aunt Jemima .25 Total 1.24

Boots 2.00, stockings 1.25 for wife, bread .18, cakes and currant loaf .47, ice cream brick .25, flash light battery and bulb .85, cotton plaited rope .16, large blanket pins .10, celery .10, marmalade .35. The Salvation Army band was playing on the corner.

#### **Sunday morning, Aug. 27th –**

Had a splendid night with no sign of a mosquito. Breakfast at 9 o'clock. Went to the Methodist Church but found it locked up – a Union Service was being held. We got into a Baptist service by mistake. Paddled home and had a good dinner and all slept after dinner. Wrote letters in the

afternoon. Got some milk from a house on the edge of the town – 12 cents a quart – and water from a spring up the hill. To bed early.

**Monday morning, Aug. 28th –**

An old duck and a  $\frac{1}{2}$  dozen young ones flew over the tent about 20 feet high just after we got up. Packed up about rest of kit. Posted home on G. T. R. [Grand Trunk Railroad]. Went up to town and bought some supplies. Fished morning, afternoon, and evening and only got one bite. Killed a black snake nearly 2 feet long. We wrote several letters. Got a bundle of papers at post office. Packed up our kit ready to move on early Tuesday morning. All paddled over for water and milk and did not get back for supper until after 7. All had bread and milk for supper and had a real warm and comfy night.

**Tuesday, Aug. 29th –**

Up at 7:30 as it was raining, a miserable drizzle, at daylight. Cleared up about 8:30, so we packed up and cleared out about 9 am. Began to rain again just as we started, so we “lay to” under an overhanging cliff for 15 minutes and then paddled up to Fenlon Falls. Dorothy and the boys stopped in the “lock keeper’s house” while I portaged over 3 locks, a carry of 150 yards. Weather cleared before we set out again at 10:30. Got some supplies (60 cents) and our first roll of films which were developed and turned out well.

Had a heavy head wind across Cameron Lake, 3 miles, until we reached the northwest shore at a white cottage. Paddled along  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to canal entrance and up canal  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile or more to lock: 4 ft. 5 inches lift to Balsam Lake, the highest water on the Trent Canal. We waited from 11:50 to 12:15 on the “Lintonia” and locked through with her. She was on an excursion trip to the old Indian fort at Balsam Lake. Paddled under the road bridge and around the first point and stopped for lunch at 12:45 on one of the street ends of “Rosedale.” Left at 1:30 quartering into a heavy wind, 1 mile along shore and 1 mile into the shelter of an



*Buddy and Dave with the 14 lb. muskie*

island. We landed and the boys enjoyed an Adam & Eve paddle.

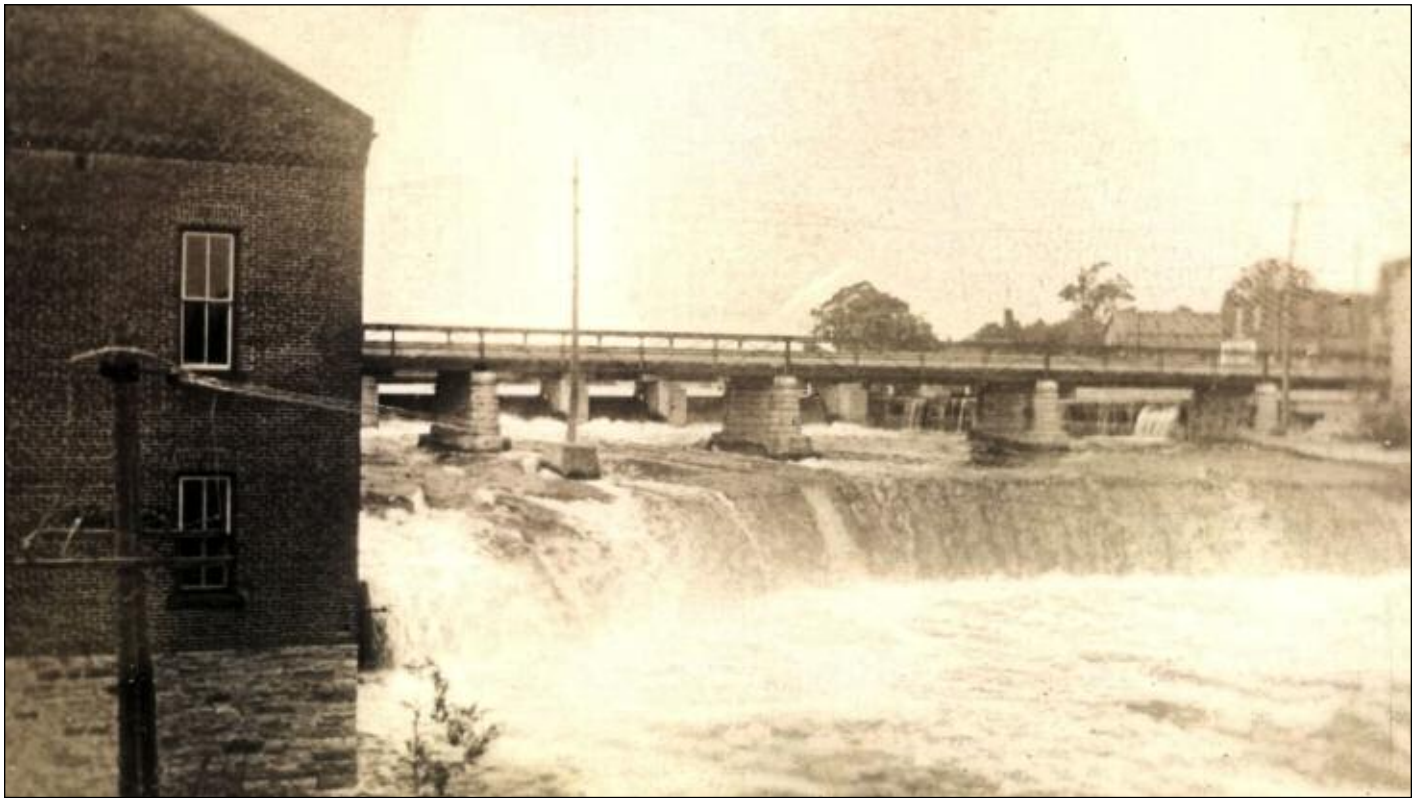
We landed on another small island and pitched our tent as the wind was still strong. Fished and got a small strike, but it got away. To bed early at our Trespass Camp, as we were “warned” that our tent was not appreciated by the owner’s husband who paid wife a motor boat call.

**Wednesday, Aug. 30 –**

Up at 7:30. Trolled  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours and got one small bass,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Lake very calm,

like glass. Waited for tent to dry and started at 11 am. Passed Ball’s Island and 2 islets and halted for lunch on “Ghost Island.” Two miles up lake to Gull River and 1 mile up river to Coboconk. Landed at portage or liftover at left end of dam in a splutter of foam and fear at 2:15. Cadged stuff up and loaded and waited for mail which was due at 3 but was  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour late. Bought \$1.09 of supplies. Went across pond and camped on northeast shore among a grove of oak and pine trees in a beautiful sheltered spot. Bought 2 quarts milk for 30 cents.





***Dam at Coboconk***

Fished below dam, got one strike, but got away. To bed at 9:30 after a good supper of bread and milk for wife and I. Fished for crawfish with flashlight and got 4.

**Thursday, August 31st –**

Up at 6:30. Breakfast at 7:00. David and I went to dam, and I caught a black bass 16½ inches. Lloyd had a swelling on his right jaw and neck, but seemed cheery and OK otherwise (spider bite or tonsillitis?)

Came home at 9:30 and paddled up river alone to Little Mud Turtle Lake. Fairly swift current. Coming home, caught 2 bass, one 11 inches and one 16 inches – all three with live crawfish (2 inches long). Good dinner: fried bass, tea, tapioca custard pudding. Wife and kiddies had a sleep and I went up river to the lake to fish but no luck. Came home at 2:30 and wrote letters and diary. Went to post but no letters. Cows serenaded us in afternoon.

**Friday, Sept. 1st –**

Up at sunrise and shot a duck. A young mallard. After breakfast, went down to dam and got two bass 13 inches and 14

inches. Caught some crawfish before dinner. Went up river after dinner and got one 17 inch bass and two small ones 10 inches and 11 inches, which we had for tea. Went below dam on pier and caught a 16 inch bass – got water at a spring up the river. No more luck fishing. We all went up river ½ way to lake after supper and we went across for milk on the way home. After we put kids to sleep, we went after crawfish with flashlights and a 3-tined fork. Dorothy carried the pail with a catch of 17.

**Saturday, Sept. 2 –**

Up at 5:30. Packed 5 bass and one duck and shipped express to Mrs. Leary, Markham, Ont. Packed kit and started up river at 9:30. Made Little Mud Turtle Lake in 20 minutes. Examined one camp site and paddled on up the chutes into “Silver Lake.” Camped on a point for dinner. Moved on in afternoon to another point for night. Cut bed of balsam boughs.

Caught 5 bullfrogs (red felt on hook) in evening.

**Sunday, Sept. 3 –**

Heavy thunderstorm last night. Very

hot and bed on slope causing whole family to roll down on Daddy – Looked over point at chutes between Silver and Big Turtle [later named Shadow] Lakes and liked it so well we moved camp after breakfast. A settler fishing caught a big bass at our front



***Merritt ready for the portage***



*Getting a tow*

door. Went  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile up lake, through yard of an old house, across road and 150 yards anglewise across field to a beautiful spring for water. A quiet day, to bed early, beautiful sunset and calm evening.

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And so ends the traveling portion of my grandfather's diary. In one of my grandmother's letters, mailed home to her family in England, she rhapsodized about the site: "The view is beautiful. We are so happy here that I don't want to leave it. We will likely stay here until next Thursday when we leave for home.

Merritt is shooting ducks and catching all the fish we can eat, including a huge 14 lb. 3 foot lunge. There is a log drive on here just now – 20,000 logs coming down the lake, really very interesting and very exciting. The holiday is doing us all good – I don't know when I've enjoyed anything more."



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**Published by the Wilderness Canoe Association**  
**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.

## Elora Gorge Threatened

The Elora Gorge is one of the most scenic and easily accessible sections of whitewater close to Ontario's urban centres. Every summer new canoeists and kayakers get their first taste of moving water here, while at high water levels it provides some of the most challenging expert level whitewater in southern Ontario. The WCA and other paddling clubs have run trips here for decades. The only access is along a trail across private land on river left to a cove at the foot of the cliffs near the top of the gorge. This property is now being re-developed with a plan to build condominiums along the river.

The result is that access to this valuable recreational resource is threatened. Additionally, there is a related proposal to build a small hydroelectric generating plant at the head of the gorge which has the potential to damage this unique environment. A number of paddling clubs are organizing to represent the interests of recreational river users. On November 21, 2009, the WCA has made the following submission to the township Planning Coordinator to help ensure our legitimate interests are taken into consideration.

Dear Ms. Grant:

I am Outings Chairman of the Wilderness Canoe Association, a recreational canoeing organization representing over 600 Ontario paddlers. Our members have visited Elora to paddle the beautiful Elora Gorge for decades. The Grand River, as it pours over the dam around the Tooth of Time and down through the gorge section below is one of

the most spectacular and scenic river paddles in Southern Ontario. As the water level changes, it creates whitewater paddling opportunities for paddlers of all levels from beginner to expert. After running the river, paddlers finish the day at the many main street shops and restaurants. In sum, it is a unique paddling destination for many canoeists and kayakers.

Consequently, our organization is most concerned to learn that a condominium development is under consideration for the Ross Street property formerly occupied by the Little Folks Furniture factory, which includes plans to block access to the gorge at the cove. Paddlers, as well as members of the local community and visitors to the Elora Gorge Conservation Area have, enjoyed and benefitted from this access for generations. While there are clearly issues around the property owners' rights to develop the area as well as environmental needs to preserve the natural beauty of this special spot, we believe that these can be accomplished in a way that will also allow river users' interests to be protected. We trust you will work with members of our paddling community to ensure that an optimal solution is reached in which everyone will come out as winners.

We have additional concerns around suggestions to create a second hydroelectric generation facility at the head of the gorge, which we feel has strong potential to degrade the scenic beauty as well as the fragile natural environment of the gorge. We find it incongruous that a development proposal that purports to

protect and cherish the gorge's environment also includes such an element. An additional generating plant has no place in such a location in our estimation.

We hope the position of the Wilderness Canoe Association and the paddling community at large will be taken into serious consideration as these plans evolve. We would appreciate being kept informed of all developments around this proposed project. Thanks.

Sincerely,

Bill Ness, Outings Chairman, Wilderness Canoe Association

### Deadlines

The deadline dates for submitting material for the four issues in 2010 are: the first day of February, May, August, and November. If you have questions, please contact the editor; addresses on the last page.

### WCA Annual General Meeting

Saturday, 20 February 2010, Sainte-Marie-Among-the-Hurons and Wye Marsh, Midland, Ontario. Join us this year for our AGM and learn about the successful reintroduction of the trumpeter swan in Ontario. Details and registration form are printed on the inside back cover of this issue of *Nastawgan*, and in the WCA website.



# Update on Activities at Canadian Canoe Routes

The site administrator spent the weeks immediately after the acquisition eliminating 12,000 spammers and 300,000 of their droppings. Her measures have reduced spam postings to a few per year, from tens of thousands. Those early days saw also much stressful, time-consuming, and difficult work by CCR's Moderators. Their efforts have greatly improved the quality of discussion in the Forums; intervention is only infrequently required now and the Moderators are able to devote more time to site-improvement initiatives.

A major upgrade and several version upgrades were made to the software. These upgrades have allowed several important enhancements to the Forums, for example the introduction of sub-forums. The Home page now provides regularly changing content of interest to users, making it more attractive and inviting to users and increasing its appeal to advertisers.

Several new Forums were opened; the following may be of particular interest to WCA members:

- WCA Members Forum (for the use of WCA members only):

<http://www.mycr.com/SectionForums/viewforum.php?f=136>

- Lost Canoe Routes Forum (to document and restore lost routes):

<http://www.mycr.com/SectionForums/viewforum.php?f=143>

- US Route Forums (to expand CCR's coverage to routes in the contiguous US):

<http://www.mycr.com/SectionForums/viewforum.php?f=127>

- WCA Route Protection Forum (a private Forum for the protection and preservation of canoe routes).

We have added more than 1,500 links to trip reports at other sites. CCR now provides access to well over 2,000 trip reports, just a few clicks away. A great deal of work behind the scenes has allowed the posting of 15 display ads, the maximum possible without considerable extra effort. The ads are generating a substantial revenue stream.

Several measures of the success of the initiative:

- The site has repeatedly broken its records for activity, one day reaching over 16,000 hits.

- The number of members is up by 30% in the two years since the acquisition.

- The introduction of sub-forums has greatly increased the number of trip reports submitted (and also made those reports easier for users to find).

In progress:

- Complete revamping of site organization

- Amalgamation of the WCA and CCR sites

- Opening of more spaces for ads, to enhance the revenue stream

In addition, we are well into the planning stage of a complete revision of the Routes folder:

- Integration of more types of Routes, GPS tracks, photo files, and other types of files

- Major improvement of the search, display, and print features

- Consolidation of Route information (presently at several locations) into a single source



## A warm welcome to our new Membership Secretary!

Emmy Hendrickx has now assumed the duties of Membership Secretary and has the WCA membership database. I will assist Emmy as needed initially but I believe she will do a great job for the WCA. In future please direct broadcast email requests to her.

It's been great fun and I have really enjoyed the regular contact with members. However, after three years, it's time to let someone else have that fun. As for me, I hope to have a bit more time to spend with my granddaughter. I'm hoping her parents will let me get her in a canoe next summer.

Anne Bradley, Past Membership Secretary WCA

# Wilderness Canoe Symposium

The 2010 Symposium will be held at the usual place, Monarch Park Collegiate, in Toronto, on 5 and 6 February 2010 . For information, go to [www.wcsymposium.com](http://www.wcsymposium.com)



Lunch break at the 2009 Symposium

photo Toni Harting

## Food for Paddlers

Barb Burton (current WCA board member and highly experienced canoe tripper) sends along some advice and recipes:

### Dehydrated Coleslaw Salad

I used to carry a cabbage, carrots, and onions on canoe trips to make fresh salads. In my smarter (weaker?) years I make huge bowls of shredded red and green cabbage, carrot, and red onion and dehydrate it. It dehydrates 3:1 and reconstitutes to about half its original volume but is still tasty. Dehydrate for approximately 10 - 12 hours until crumbly. I use one ounce by weight or a half cup by measure of the dried cabbage mix per person. To prepare, barely cover the dried mix with cold water and wait until the vegetables are almost rehydrated (about 30-60 minutes). Finish

the process by adding dressing, nuts, seeds and dry fruits and let sit another 30 minutes before serving.

The recipe below adapts beautifully using the above mixture in place of the cabbage, bean sprouts, and green onions; or follow the recipe "as is" to be the hit of your next pot luck!

### Chinese Cabbage Salad

(serves 12; use half the noodles, nuts, and dressing quantities for a typical group of 6)

1 medium cabbage, finely chopped  
approximately 1 cup bean sprouts  
1/4 cup sunflower seeds  
2 green onions, chopped  
1/2 cup slivered almonds, toasted  
2 Tbsp. sesame seeds, toasted

1 package Ichiban chicken soup package, crushed

Optional: for main course, add 1 cup diced cooked chicken and 1 cup chopped mushrooms

Dressing:

1/2 cup oil  
2 to 4 Tbsp. soya sauce  
3 Tbsp. vinegar  
1 Tbsp. white sugar  
salt & pepper to taste

seasoning from the soup package

Add the noodles, seeds, and dressing last. Toss.

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



# WCA Fall Meeting, October 2-4, 2009

The weekend at the Madawaska Kanu Centre was attended by about 60 participants. It was our third year at MKC and a great time to see the autumn colours at their peak. Participation seems to be increasing each year as word gets out of the fabulous venue and paddling options.

On Friday evening, Jay Neilson presented a Rock and Roll video of a trip down the Petawawa. The photography was breathtaking. Saturday's activities included a flatwater paddle on the Bonnechere River (hail included at no extra cost), led by Bill Cormode and Kathryn Rees; whitewater on the lower Madawaska with Aleks Gusev; and honing our white-water skills on Chalet Rapids with

Bill Ness. After a sumptuous meal from the chef at MKC, we enjoyed presentations by Bill King (hiking Ellesmere Island), Dawn and Dave Robinson (Romaine River), George Drought and Barb Burton (Back River), and George Luste (Missinaibi River). Sunday's itinerary included kayaking on Bark Lake with Virginia "Ginny" Marshall (instructor), hiking, and some paddlers running the middle Madawaska. The water levels were exceptional and the weather was great.

Thanks to our hosts Dirk and Claudia, who embraced us with their warm and welcoming personalities.

Diane Lucas

## Sample comments from participants:

*"Great variety of Saturday activities for all interests and ability levels.*

*We love the option of a room!*

*Loved George & Barb's presentation, George Luste's & Bill King's – great to have the 'famous' members here!*

*Delicious meals!"*

*(Lesley Mason & Titi Radu)*



photo Aleks Gusev



# 2008 David Thompson Brigade

## Rocky Mountain House, Alberta, to Fort William, Ontario

### 3,248 km, 66 days, 4 provinces, 2 watersheds, 200 years of history

Story and photos: Eric L. Williams (Gouvernail, Paddle Canada 1)

In 1807, North West Company (NWC) explorer, surveyor, and map maker David Thompson discovered the Howse Pass, a Canadian trade route to the Pacific Ocean. In May 1808, he returned to Rocky Mountain House, loaded a single *canot du nord* with furs, his family, and crew, and headed east. A day later, David Thompson left his wife Charlotte and their three young children with Charlotte's brother Patrick at Boggy Hall [1807]. Charlotte would spend the summer of 1808 with her brother, and while there gave birth to her fourth child.

David Thompson and his crew headed east on the North Saskatchewan, south on Manitoba's lakes Winnipegosis and Manitoba, east along the Assiniboine River, north on the Red River, and then headed north to the mouth of the Winnipeg River on Lake Winnipeg. After several weeks of upstream paddling, the lone heavily-laden *canot du nord* successfully arrived at Rainy Lake House [1785] on 22 July 1808, where Thompson passed on his good news about the Howse Pass to two fellow

NWC Partners. Two days later, Thompson, this time with two *canot du nord* laden with trade goods, headed west along the same route, arriving at Kooteney House in November 1808. Along the way, David picked up Charlotte and the kids and met for the first time his new son, John.

In 2008, to celebrate the Bicentennial of David Thompson's Canada-defining explorations and map-making, 300 modern-day voyageurs undertook to retrace Thompson's 1808 voyage. Their goals along the way were to reinvigorate interest in David Thompson's considerable contribution to the Canada which we know today; remind the communities along the way of their amazing natural resource, water; and to ignite interest in paddling, a truly Canadian heritage activity. Each 2008 David Thompson Brigade member arrived with an additional individual objective: to live out their personal dreams of seeing Canada as David Thompson might have seen it in 1808. The voyage by *canot du nord* allowed each Brigade

Member a unique opportunity to embrace, and to be part of for a time, the many unique and truly Canadian cultures along the way. Each day presented new challenges, required renewed commitment, and offered new insights into Thompson's era, Canada, and indeed our very selves.

Author's note: Throughout this article, the Forts and Houses that Thompson passed and visited along his 1808 route are named with, in square brackets, the date(s) they were built. Example: Boggy Hall [1807]

#### 10 May through 1 June 2008 – The North Saskatchewan River

One of the key objectives of the 2008 David Thompson Brigade was to try to experience first-hand, in as many ways as possible, what the travellers of Thompson's era saw, heard, and felt. The 2008 Brigade began the process at Rocky Mountain House National Historic Park during a tour the day before our journey began. They experienced the North Saskatchewan River much as Thompson would have in 1808, toured the archaeological remains of Rocky Mountain House [1799 and 1802] as Thompson knew them in 1808, and caught a glimpse of a trading post from that era. Our transformation had begun.

Saturday 10 May 2009 required an early start on what was a clear, cold, and refreshing day. The *canots du nord* were jockeyed along icy roads to the put-in just upstream of Rocky Mountain House as David Thompson would have known it in 1808. Five-foot ice banks adorned the shores of the frigid North Saskatchewan River. Nervous crews entered their *canots du nord* for the first time, and gingerly got the feel of their craft, each other, and the River. The



North Saskatchewan River at Rocky Mountain House

remnants of the recent Alberta spring snow storm provided numbingly refreshing conditions, and the bright sun sparkling on the snow and the moving water added a surrealistic aura to the auspicious occasion. No doubt Thompson and his crew had similar experiences.

Most of the 2008 David Thompson Brigade crews were comprised of local canoe clubs from Western Canada. The two Paddle Canada crews, ages 22 through 74, had been recruited from across Canada and had not met previously. Paddle Canada's two *canots du nord* were also unknowns to all. The 50-year-plus old, 340-pound fibre-glass canoes looked quite authentic, handled well in big water, but were renowned as the heaviest entries in the adventure.

For the first few days of the trip we utilized most of the seats in the 25-foot canoes. The Avant (bow) and Gouvernail (stern) seats accommodated one paddler only, while the center four seats could accommodate two, if required. After the first few days we usually travelled with only one paddler per seat, or six in total; the centre four seats being used during arrival ceremonies only. This allowed the paddlers to switch paddling sides every two minutes or so, the change being very welcome on the long 8 – 10 hour, or longer, paddling days during which we maintained a fairly steady 40 to 50 strokes per minute. The view from the rear seat of a *canot du nord*, or the lack thereof, meant that we had to rely on good communications from the whole crew to navigate the optimum route down the river, avoid the many shallows and obstacles, and anticipate other hazards. Commands had to be relayed down the canoe to overcome the noise of the water, winds, and crew chatter. Once received by the Gouvernail, it took several strokes for the vessel to start to respond to the manoeuvre. It took quite some time for the modern-day paddlers to become proficient at managing their big canoes.

Our first official stop was at Drayton Valley. After the long, cold paddle, which included rain, sleet, and snow, it was good to be out of the *canots du nord*, walking, and getting the blood flowing



*Preparing send-off from Rocky Mountain House*

again. A high multi-layered geological cliff face was the backdrop for our first official 'arrival' ceremony.

The light green tinge that misted the deciduous foliage in these early days of our trip must have been much as what Thompson experienced in 1808. We were amazed at how quickly the foothills gave way to the flat of the prairies as we passed Upper Terre Blanche [1799] and Fort White Earth River [1810]. St John's School of Alberta proved gracious hosts

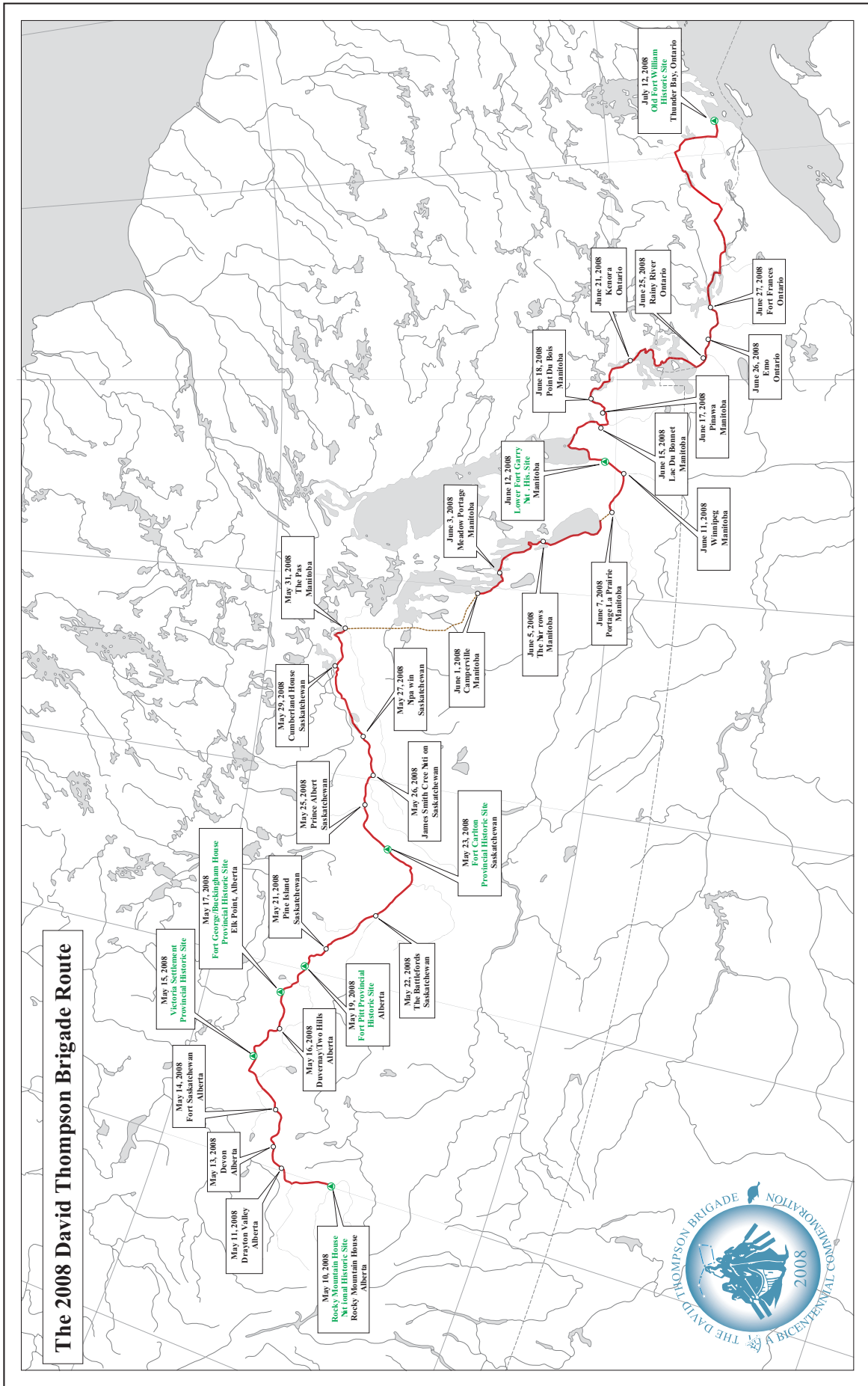
for the Brigade.

Arrival Ceremonies with the many communities that graciously hosted us along the way were a bonding activity for the Brigade as a whole. They were the Brigade's introduction to the community, so it was important that we made them look as realistic as possible, satisfy the community's specific needs, and be on schedule. Radio communications were an important tool to ensure timely arrival.



*Cumberland House First Nation arriving Drayton Valley*







Where a community was hosting a reception for the Brigade, the Brigade would gather — we called it ‘clustering’ — a few kilometres upstream of the community about an hour before our scheduled arrival. There we would make our *canots du nord* and ourselves presentable after our long day’s paddle, don our voyageur garb, hoist our Brigade flags, and review the ‘arrival’ process. If a member of the Brigade was from that community, they would have the honour of being the Avant in the lead canoe. Many communities requested that the Brigade arrive singing voyageur songs, such as “En Roulant Ma Boule” and “Alouette”. Paddle Canada 1, with their considerable ‘younger member’ musical expertise, usually had the honour of being the second canoe to fulfil that purpose.

The Brigade usually arrived in a ‘string of pearls’ formation, with the canoes being in a uniform several-canoe-lengths apart single-file formation. When the lead *canot du nord* approached the reception location, it would fire a single musket volley to let the community know we were approaching. (Two hundred years ago it was not a good thing to be perceived to be sneaking up on a community.) A single musket shot would normally be the reply from shore, indicating that we were welcome to approach. In the case of a fort this was often a cannon volley. The Brigade would then complete a circle or figure eight alternate cross-over formation in front of the arrival area so that the whole Brigade was visible to the onlookers. Quite often ten to twelve *canots du nord* were involved.

Then the Brigade would position themselves side-by-side facing the reception area, a sort of synchronized upstream sideways displacement, and the lead *canot du nord* would approach the receiving line to offer gifts and request permission to come to shore. Once permission was granted, the Brigade would offer up the traditional voyageur salute, and then race to shore as quickly as possible in a straight line, stopping at the last minute before the *canots du nord* hit the shore. The onlookers seemed to enjoy this spectacle. We then asked the crowds to stand back while we disembarked and moved the canoes to a safe location.

Meet and greet sessions usually followed, wherein we answered the crowd’s questions, posed for photos, and described our equipment and dress. Greetings from the community and government officials, special ceremonies such as the official opening of a voyageur park, voyageur feasts (buffalo or bison stew, fry bread, fruit), dances, and fire works quite often rounded out the evening. These celebrations were the communities “Bi-Centennial Celebrations” of Thompson’s passing through, and quite often linked to the establishment of their community. These were very special times. And the 2008 David Thompson Brigade brought a very special energy and focus to these events.

Following a warm reception by the Edmonton Historical Society, jet-boaters seemed to be the only ones who took notice of the Brigade when we paddled past Fort Augustus [1801, 1812] and through downtown Edmonton. The Brigade was happy to paddle out of the city and back into the flatness of the Canadian west. Fort Saskatchewan featured a lofty receiving stand, a takeout made tricky by the fast current, and a long uphill parade to the reception.

Victoria Settlement, a post-Thompson-era community, introduced us to the warm prairie winds. We passed Fort White Earth [1810] on our way to the twin communities of Duvernay and Brazeau. The Brigade scouting reports were correct, the ice cream stand in Brazeau was amazing and much enjoyed by the modern-day voyageurs. A well-attended, bountiful bison stew and fry

bread feast, lively Ukrainian dances, and fire works made for a memorable evening. Thompson would have been happy to be remembered so.

The island Fort de l’Isle [1799] as Thompson knew it is, of course, long gone. The North Saskatchewan River, with a consistent width of about 100 metres and a uniform speed of 6 to 8 kilometres per hour, remains much as Thompson knew it. There were few obstacles and we were well briefed on those that did exist.

From its lofty vantage point, Fort George / Buckingham House [1792] offered the Brigade a unique view of the North Saskatchewan. After the long hike up the hill, the archaeological remains allowed us to explore the very places that David and Charlotte were housed during their stay. Laverne Thompson, a seventh generation direct descendant of David Thompson, was a media favourite on the Brigade. Tears rolled down his face as David Thompson Society President, Andy Korsos, explained that his ancestors had slept in this very spot those many years ago,

One aspect of our trip that was not period correct was our choice of paddles. While many of us yearned to use the traditional wood voyageur-type paddle, complete with their red painted blades, pressure was on from the Brigade to use modern technology, more efficient bent-shaft paddles. The epoxy, wood, and carbon fibre technologies would have mystified Thompson and his crew, although I am sure they would have been impressed by the increased efficiency. We learned early not to use the carbon fibre



Start 80-kilometer *canots du nord* race at Prince Albert



*Typical First Nations encampment In Thompson's era (Winnipeg Natural Science Museum)*

paddles for voyageur salutes (banging the paddle shaft on the gunnels), or performing serious pry strokes.

Unlike the 1808 Thompson Crew, the 2008 Brigade had appointments to keep at the various communities along the way. Being late was not an option. The communities along the way expected us to arrive on time and looking, sounding, but not smelling, like real voyageurs. On several occasions when weather made us late to schedule, modern-day transport

was utilized to relocate us just upstream of the community in time to get our vessels back in the water, don our voyageur garb, unfurl our flags, practise our voyageur songs, load the musket, check the radio batteries, and paddle into town in the nick of time. The 2008 David Thompson Brigade never kept a community waiting!

Fort Vermillion [1802 / 1811]. Umfreville's House [1784]. Pine Island Fort [1785]. The North Saskatchewan is

a big river. Plenty of time for wind and waves to develop on the long stages. On several occasions most of the Brigade was blown off the water by inclement weather. Pine Island was such an example. Safety was the first priority. At these times the crews trailered their *canots du nord* and gear, and transported their crews by vehicle to the next stop. Not period correct? Thompson had the luxury of heading to the nearest shore, setting up camp, and waiting for a break in the weather. Thompson's era did not have the modern-day luxury of modern-day bomb-proof rain gear as we know it, and usually relied on the overturned canoe and oiled tarps to provide them shelter in the most severe weather.

Manchester House / Pine Island [1786], Summerset House [1799], Fort War Road [1785], Battle River [1805], and Battleford seemed to pass by quickly. Fort la Montee [1810], now known as Fort Carlton, at the cross roads of two major trade routes, offered a good look at life at a Thompson-era fort. Then onto Fort Sturgeon [1781 / 1795] and Fort Providence [1781], modern-day Prince Albert. A day off, and to keep us busy, an optional cash-prize 80-kilometre *canot du nord* race.

Fort St. Lewis [1794] / James Smith First Nation offered a rare chance to stay at a First Nation's Reserve, and they made us feel very welcome. A Chief commented: "I never thought, in my wildest dreams, that I would ever see the voyageurs paddling east and leaving our land." The typical brigade school program was delivered by the ground team before we departed the next morning.

McLeod's House [1793] (Nipawin) and Hungry Hall House [1792] (Tobin Lake), both at the bottom of dam reservoirs, demonstrated some of the downsides of progress.

Most nights were spent in our modern-day camping gear at road- and water-side parks in the various communities which welcomed us. About ten of the nights the paddlers were unable to reunite with the ground crews, and spent the night as Thompson did on shoreline campsites, much as modern-day voyageurs do.

Cumberland House [1793] / HBC



*Quiet times in Northern Manitoba – photo Ross McDonald*



1774. Samuel Hearne erected a Hudson's Bay Post here in 1774. The Brigade's Cumberland House First Nation 'Black Bart' Crew, whose young crew completed the entire trip, showed a dedication and commitment that we all envied. It was obvious that paddling is very important in this historic community.

The three weeks the Brigade spent on the North Saskatchewan ensured that most of us were in pretty good physical shape for the big lakes and upstream battle ahead, familiar with our vessels and fellow paddlers, and accustomed to our early-start long paddling days. Our warmup was over.

## 2 June through 13 June 2008 – The Big Lakes and Rivers of Manitoba

After three weeks of being aided by the constant 6 – 8 km/hour current of the North Saskatchewan, we encountered the big fresh water lakes of Manitoba at Duck Bay. Without the shelter of the North Saskatchewan River valley we were constantly at the mercy of the winds and waves of Lakes Winnipegosis, Manitoba, and Winnipeg. We broke camp at first dawn to take full advantage of the early morning calm, and enjoyed the fresh breezes, singing birds, and magnificent sunrises. As the morning hours passed, we became accustomed to the big wave action of the large shallow lakes. With safety in mind on the horizon to horizon lakes, we travelled in defined groups and practised regular radio and satellite telephone check-ins. Duck Bay, Camperville, Meadow Portage, Lake Manitoba House [1802], and The Narrows offered pristine scenery and seas much like Thompson and his fellow travellers would have experienced.

Hundreds of local school children and First Nations representatives colourfully welcomed us to The Narrows of Manitoba. That night the warm sunny day gave way to cold stormy weather. Our hosts at The Manitoba Narrows recommended that we follow the east shore of Lake Manitoba to Portage La Prairie instead of the originally planned west shore. Respecting the prevailing direction of stormy weather, but ill prepared for this phase in that our detailed maps



*First Nations welcome 'The Narrows', Manitoba*

were for the west coast, we headed out at 6 am into the deceiving conditions. Lake Manitoba is quite shallow, and even the offshore winds kicked up significant enough wave action to make forward progress challenging. The winds were from the rear left quarter that morning, and the *canots du nord* tended to slide to the right at the crest of each wave. It took constant effort of the Crews, and in particular the Gouvernails, to straighten the

course of the vessel before encountering the next rock-strewn trough. The crew change that morning could not come too soon. Shortly after the crew change, the Brigade decided to forego further paddling for safety reasons. The Johnson farm provided shelter, towels, hot beverages, and baked goods for eighty bedraggled paddlers. The next trick was for the ground crews to locate and extricate the Brigade from their remote un-



*Boundary Island solitude on the Winnipeg River*





*Historic voyageur campsite, South Dog Island, Lake of the Woods*

planned stop.

After the vastness of Lake Winnipegosis and Manitoba, the Assiniboine River, Portage la Prairie [1794], Adhemar's Fort [1793], and Red River seemed all too small and civilized. Thompson and his crew could not have imagined the settlement that followed. While the Brigade enjoyed a layover day at The Forks Fort [1803] / Fort Gibraltar [1805] (modern day Winnipeg), we were eager to be on our way. Several modern-day locks circumvented portages on the Red River as we headed north past current-day Lower Fort Garry. Riviere Aux Morts Post (1803) marked the start of our transition through the delta to lake

Winnipeg. A large stationary overhead electrical storm literally made our hair stand on end, and was our wary companion for the 30-kilometre open-water paddle to current day Grand Beach.

The following morning brought a 50-kilometre open-water paddle on Lake Winnipeg, and the start of the next phase of the voyage, the uphill battle on the Winnipeg River.

#### **14 June through 8 July 2008 – Upstream on the Winnipeg and Rainy Rivers**

Our feelings were mixed. It was good to be safely off the big lakes of Manitoba, however, some serious upriver challenges

lay ahead as our pace now reduced to four to five kilometres per hour. Fort Bas de la Rivière [1792]. We adjusted our path of travel from the middle of the river, taking full advantage of the current while travelling downstream, to following a path closer to shore to avoid the major currents and utilize the eddies where possible. We were amazed at the power we could generate when required to ascend all but the most vigorous on-coming current. Our portaging skills were also challenged as we encountered the major dams at Pine Falls, White Mud Falls, Great Falls, and McArthur Falls. 'Many hands on,' canoe wheels, and the Brigade trailers were techniques used at one time or another as we continued to ascend the mighty Winnipeg River. The dam reservoirs did offer some relief from the current, but were still challenging. Most of civilization was on our right, the west shore, while the eastern shore remained undisturbed for the most part from earlier eras.

The portage at the Seven Sisters Dam, just upstream of Lac Du Bonnett, quickly took us into Canadian Shield waters and their ancient rocky shores. Rugged shoreline campsites, 'bears will be in camp tonight' warnings, and the onset of swimming - albeit very cold water - were all welcome features.

Surgeon and Slave Falls Portages were each unique. At Slave Falls we portaged through the middle of an operating generating station power house, there being no other way around it. Manitoba Hydro came to the rescue at Slave Falls to evacuate out an ailing Brigade member.

Proceeding upstream from Point du Bois we encountered several strong rapids. A few required short portages and/or lining, but for the most part the crews managed to power their way up these challenges. An eddy for a short break. Then do it again. Just when we thought we were paddling as hard as we could, we would have to paddle even harder so as to not be drawn downstream and into possible difficulty. This part of the trip clearly was the Brigade's most significant team-building challenge to date.

Then came the "Welcome to Ontario" signs, and our Lake Boundary Island



*Tight squeeze on Quetico portage – photo Don McMurtry*





**Concentration on the Kaministiquia River – photo Don McMurtry**

campsite. Swimming, fishing, and rest were the order of the beautiful afternoon.

We continued east, portaged over Whitedog Dam, and then turned south to Minaki. Our wilderness experience of the past few days gave way to an increasing number of lodges, cottages, navigation buoys, and curious boaters wondering just who we were. We chose the Poplar Lake Portage, after a portage-clearing exercise was completed, to avoid the high and fast water of the Dulles, and then headed to Rat Portage House [1795], known today as Kenora. A British film crew was waiting for us as we shot and navigated the final rapids to Lake of the Woods.

Our layover day in Kenora provided a lively reception, a museum tour including Don McMaster's David Thompson art collection, laundry, shopping, and time to relax. The next day we headed south on Lake of the Woods and its 14,632 islands, which still offer navigational headaches to many as they must have in Thompson's era. South Dog Island, the traditional voyageur site, was our home for the night. It was also home for the ticks. We wondered if the camp-

site had ever hosted twelve *canots du nord* and their crews at one time before. A circling electrical storm made for an interesting night, then the wind and waves picked up as we headed south on the east shoreline. The Brigade, for deteriorating weather and safety reasons, aborted the day's paddling plans and trailered our vessels to the planned campsite for the night.

The Sable Islands and their Inside Passage sheltered us as we entered the Rainy River the next day. The American border was just a stone's throw away, and armed with our Passports, just in case, we continued paddling upstream to Rainy River, where Thompson would have known Rainy River House [1794]. Our final school program and a warm community centre reception. That night



**Brigade merchandise encampment at Kakabeka Falls**





*Arrival at Grand Portage*

we were introduced to Rodney Brown and his inspiring voyageur music. A long, hot upstream paddle was required to get us past the Manitou Rapids [1793], where David Thompson would have stopped at Manitou Rapids House in his travels. A kind resident on the US side donated drum after drum of delicious ice cream to the hot and tired paddlers. It was tough to get back in the canoes again. Following a warm reception at Emo and delightful fireworks display, the heavens opened up. Despite our best efforts, most crews had to abort the next days' paddle to Rainy Lake House [1785] / Lac la Puie, and return to Emo and the ground teams for transport to Fort Frances. The weather had won again.

After a rain-soaked Saturday provisioning and packing for our week jour-

ney to French Lake in Quetico Provincial Park, it was good to be on the water again. We stayed several kilometres north of the Canada – United States border as we paddled east on Rainy Lake. Paddling in groups, with good attention to navigation, we continued our ever-easterly route. Kettle Lake Portage, which is on the US side of the waterway, was a concern. We had been warned that US immigration might be an issue. Our worrying was for naught; but we will pass on the advice we got from others: "Be Prepared!" A canoe railway cart made passage over one steep portage very easy; just float the canoes onto a submerged cart, pick up the phone, and the train operator will take care of the rest. Even our gear enjoyed the ride.

Our ground crews replenished our

food supplies at Lac la Croix, and a local lodge provided safe haven, delicious meals, and even fire works to welcome the Brigade. The Brigade hugged the north shore after departing Lac la Croix, and then entered unequalled Quetico Provincial Park. We followed the Maligne River system as we paddled onward to French Lake. The Quetico Provincial Park staff accompanied the Brigade in their own *canot du nord*, helped widen the existing portages to ease our way, and recommended good camping opportunities. Quetico provided some of the best experiences of our trip. The warmer weather and water, pristine paddling and camping opportunities, no commitments to meet at night, and just being on our own for the week was absolutely incredible. We passed the Sturgeon Lake House island; it was difficult to imagine it as it was in Thompson's era. Then the final Pine Portage into Pickerel Lake. The Brigade enjoyed an extra night on the lake before arriving at French Lake.

The Brigade enjoyed a sunny day off at French Lake, the very spot where Thompson had spent a month. It was hard to believe that anything could have changed since Thompson last passed through in 1812. The historic French Lake Portage was considered, but the very rough conditions proved too much. Once again we utilized our wheels to relocate to Winigoostigwan Lake. The crews portaged over the road-based Brule Portage to Baril Lake, a short paddle, then Baril Portage and Lac Des Mille. The winds, finally, favoured a good sail in moderate seas as we passed Mille Lac House [1802] before we arrived at the Atlantic watershed at the historic Savanne Portage.



*David Thompson presenting journal/map to William McGillivray at Fort William*



### 9 through 10 July 2008 – The Dog and Kaministiquia Rivers

The ground crews successfully navigated the logging road to Slab Lake on the Dog River, and we began the 20 kilometre maze to Dog Lake. With the downstream current it was hard to really get lost; however, we did wonder if there really was an end to the meandering, island-filled waterway. The ground crews awaited at the south end on Dog Lake to transport us to Mountain Portage House [1805], more commonly known as Kakabeka Falls.

The day before our grand arrival at Fort William, the Brigade had been invited to trailer the canoes to historic Grand Portage on the American side, and do our now well-practised arrival ceremony there. Most of the Brigade participated in this side trip. A low-lying mist as we paddled in made the ceremony even more mysterious.

Saturday 12 July was a beautiful clear

day blessed by warm, gentle breezes. A hearty breakfast at Stanley prepared the Brigade for its final paddle to Fort William [1803] Historic Park. Although Ontario Hydro had regulated the water level for our descent, the many rocks and ledges left lasting souvenirs on many Brigade *canots du nord*. A Brigade from the Matis First Nation arrived from the east just prior to our arrival. Resounding canon and musket fire, the cheers of the awaiting crowds, and the knowledge of a journey completed brought tears to many eyes of the Brigade. The 2008 Brigade had done it. Three thousand two hundred and forty-eight kilometres, four provinces, sixty six days.

Paddle Canada's own David Bates, acting as David Thompson, symbolically turned over his log and map to Willam McGillvray.

The 2008 Rendezvous at McGillvray's Great Hall could begin!

### Further Information:

*Columbia Journals*, David Thompson, edited by Barbara Belyea, McGill – Queen's University Press, ISBN 0-7735-0989-5

*Epic Wanderer – David Thompson & the Mapping of the Canadian West*, D'Arcy Jenish, University of Nebraska Press, ISBN 0-8032-2600-4

*The Big Lonely*, Rodney Brown and the Northern Roots Band, [www.rodney-brown.ca](http://www.rodney-brown.ca)

2008 David Thompson Brigade website: [www.2008thompsonbrigade.ca](http://www.2008thompsonbrigade.ca)

Paddle Canada 1 blog: [www.paddle-canada1.blogspot.com](http://www.paddle-canada1.blogspot.com)

The 2008 David Thompson Brigade *Digging Water – a voyage by north canoe*, DVD production by Jay MacMillan: [jaymac\\_fireeyed@hotmail.com](mailto:jaymac_fireeyed@hotmail.com)



*The Great Hall at Fort William*



# La Vase Portages Struggles for Protection

Chris Mayne

As a canoeing enthusiast you might expect that a small northern Ontario city would be delighted to have a historical canoe route running through the heart of their community, that local and Provincial politicians would be tripping over each other to recognize and protect such a well-known waterway representing thousands of years of First Nations heritage and recognized across Canada as part of the historic trans-Canada Voyageur canoe route.

You might think that if much of the route had already been subject to industrial and residential encroachment, crossed by highways and railway lines, and that if there was only a small section left running through the last of the remaining Crown Land, that it would be even more important to protect and conserve it. If volunteer groups had stepped forward to raise money and bought back previously sold sections of the route, were brushing the trails, and had guided more than 200 persons in the last few years over this historic height-of-land portage, you might think that political

support for such a significant piece of Canada's heritage would be a "slam dunk, no brainer" and would receive strong protection support from the local Conservation Authority, the City of North Bay, and the Province of Ontario – but you would be dead wrong.

To begin with the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority, who was given responsibility to oversee La Vase Portages in the late 1990s: financial challenges over the last number of years left them little time or opportunity to address any of the La Vase Portages issues. The Trout Lake trailhead of La Vase Portages of about 100 acres was actually donated to the NBMCA in the late 1990s when local La Vase advocate Paul Chivers noticed the privately owned property was for sale.

Forming the group "Restore the Link" and with the help of the Rotary Club of North Bay, over \$100,000 was raised, the land purchased, and then donated to the NBMCA for safe-keeping. About the same time, internal manage-

ment issues almost brought the NBMCA to bankruptcy and little further attention was paid to the portage route.

In 1996, an enterprising company, Tarmagon Construction, staked and claimed about 100 acres adjacent to the La Vase Portages to expand aggregate extraction in the area. The proposal went unaddressed by NBMCA until 2004 when the proponent's plan came before North Bay City Council to request a rezoning of the property from Rural to Rural Extractive, that would allow for the mining activity. On the basis of a poorly attended public meeting, the Conservation Authority was about to propose a 60-metre development setback that would have seen half of the scenic shoreline blown to smithereens, when a new advocacy group "Friends of La Vase Portages" was formed to address aggregate expansion and public access issues along the La Vase Portages corridor.

As public concern focused on the issue, the North Bay City Council, already well known for selling off other Conservation Authority properties to address debt and tax base issues, Council decided to return the contentious La Vase Portages issue back to committee – for three years.

In the meantime, Friends of La Vase Portages brushed the old trails, got involved with land access issues, and began hosting an annual heritage canoe day that has seen hundreds of individuals and small groups retrace the path of the Voyageurs over the historic height-of-land canoe route.

Fast forward to the Spring of 2009. The City of North Bay planning office, working towards completing an Official Plan update, decided it was time to bring the rezoning issue back to North Bay City Council. A development setback of 120 metres was proposed by City planning staff following the recommendation of the North Bay Mattawa



*Beaver dam on Cooper's Lake*





*Cooper's Lake*

Conservation Authority and the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture in regard to the proposed aggregate extraction area.

Led by Community Services Chair and City Councillor Mike Anthony, supported by Councillors David Mendicino, Tom Graham, and Mayor Vic Fedeli, the 120-metre setback was considered too generous and the original 61-metre setback that would see much of the scenic shoreline – a cultural landscape in planning terms — destroyed and lost forever, was once again proposed.

Friends of La Vase Portages again lead public concern, hosted a public meeting, and saw many members of the community attend the Council meeting to request that a “tougher buffer” be allowed for and that the historic canoe route receive stronger protection. Ultimately, Council agreed to a compromise that now hangs ominously over La Vase Portages.

North Bay City Council agreed that aggregate extraction could indeed take place along the portage route, but the development setback would be set by the Province of Ontario as the relevant administrative body; it really was not a Municipal decision. The expectation was then that the application would proceed to the Ministry of Natural Resources for the appropriate Aggregate Extraction permit, where issues such as Provincially Significant Wetland and Cultural Landscape setbacks would receive due consideration.

But why proceed with a messy aggregate application that requires public discussion when a mining claim is much simpler, requires no public discussion, and is also likely to waive their own 400’ surface rights reservation in favour of the generally accepted industrial setback of 61 metres?

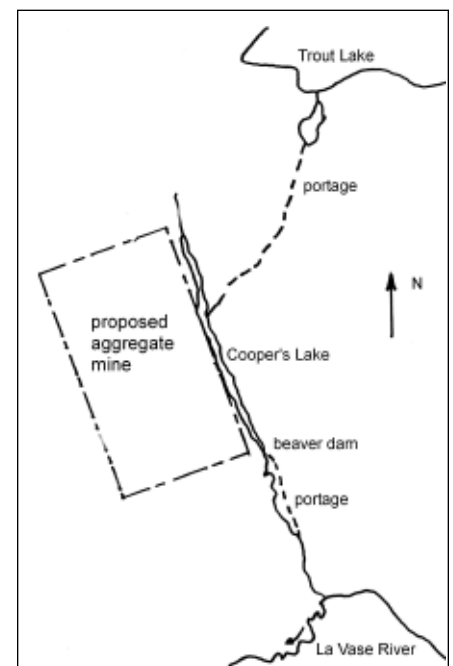
Citing a “lack of discretion” in the issue, The Ministry of Northern Development, Mines & Forestry is now poised, as of October 2009, to grant a 21-year mining lease to a proponent who has not yet applied for the appropriate aggregate extraction permit through the MNR, and is likely to waive the 400’ surface rights reservation in favour of a 61-metre setback from the waterway, that may see about half of the scenic shoreline blasted and hauled away as crushed rock.

The cultural landscape, the natural beauty of the area, and the sense of paddling through an area that looks just as it would have to the Voyageurs and First Nation peoples as they paddled this waterway for centuries, will be lost forever.

The community of North Bay, First Nations peoples, the paddling community across Canada, and others who deeply value the significance of this historic Voyageur canoe route will have had no say in this decision. Pleas for a moratorium on development until the public and other relevant Ministries have had an opportunity to comment will have fallen on deaf ears.

In reading this article, if you can support stronger protection for La Vase Portages and believe the MNDMF should indeed listen to other partners interested in this area, in the hope that it is not already too late, you can sign our petition to the Province at: [www.gopetition.com/petitions/lavaseportages.html](http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/lavaseportages.html) or email Minister Gravelle at: [ndmminister@ontario.ca](mailto:ndmminister@ontario.ca) Any support you can lend to this issue would be greatly appreciated.

(Chris Mayne is an avid canoeist, the Founding Chair of Friends of La Vase Portages, and a City Councillor in North Bay.)



# BOOK REVIEW

**A Modern-Day Voyageur Family** by Timothy J. Kent, published by Silver Fox Enterprises, (P.O. Box 176, 11504 U.S. 23 South, Ossineke, MI 49766, USA), 2009, hardcover, 760 pages, US\$59.95, (p&h to Canada US\$16.00).

Review by Toni Harting

We are truly fortunate that self-publishing of books has now matured to such a degree, that we can enjoy works that would probably not have found a commercial publisher because of their size or subject matter. A good example is the present book by Tim Kent, an independent scholar and lecturer and one of the pre-eminent historians of the fur-trade era, who brings us the latest in the impressive collection of fur-trade related books he has researched, written, produced, and published.

This is indeed a most impressive creation. Not only because of its 760 pages, but also because it relates in often minute detail the experiences of a family of four (father, mother, two young sons) who, in 15 stages over the course of 15 years, from 1984 to 1998, canoed the whole 3000-mile length of the mainline voyageur fur-trade route between Montreal and Lake Athabasca, while retracing the steps of many of their French ancestors.

The trip reports alone of the various stages makes this a very valuable resource book for canoe trippers looking

for interesting and useful information to enrich their paddling adventures. There are numerous insightful tips on the scenery, flora and fauna, geography, good camping spots, rapids and falls, and more such invaluable information. Eighteen simple but clear maps help the reader follow the adventurous family on their route.

However, this compelling book offers much more than a fine collection of day-by-day trip reports. Anyone interested in the fur trade will find numerous details that make these long-gone times come alive again. Not only active trippers but also non-paddling armchair travellers will surely enjoy this important, entertaining book, written in a pleasant, easy-to-read personal style.

An extensive appendix presents much information on how the Kents did their canoe trips: canoe (17 ft; 69 lbs), equipment, garments, gear, organization, maps, food, beverages.

As with Kent's other books, the research behind this project has been thorough, meticulous, and extensive. Understandably, the huge amount of research makes it not practical to include a complete list of references. However, an excellent and extensive index is provided.

The book comes with a DVD containing over 370 color photographs the Kents made during their trips. These are mostly good family snapshots, illustrating the enjoyment and dedication of the four travelers, especially the two boys, of course.

# THE LAST TIME

Just got back from this year's wilderness canoe trip. We took the buddy's car, so when we got back to my house we just unloaded my bags and the buddy left for his house. It seems everyone was in a hurry to get back to their normal lives.

And what is normal? The nine-to-five slow death? The constant struggle with traffic in this big city that I live in? The bewilderment I feel trying to help an adopted son find answers to problems that I cannot fix? The deep fear that there might not be enough of me to go around to satisfy the requirements of husband, father, employee, home maintainer, and wilderness canoeist? The unending dilemma that when I am in the wilderness I want to be home, and when I am home I want to be in the wilderness?

The bags are just stacked in the garage. I'm afraid to unpack the bags this year. The reason is that I fear it might be the last time. The last wilderness canoe trip that I will ever take. Maybe by delaying the unpacking task, I am delaying facing the reality that all of us will have to face at some time.

And what reality is that? That it is time to let it go. To say thanks with all my heart for the many years and the many great experiences that I have had in the wilderness. But I am afraid. Afraid of what accepting that reality means in my life. It means that one phase of my life has ended forever and I am now in the final phase of my life.

Two weeks later. I still haven't unpacked the bags. I don't want to unpack the bags. Ever.

I know how it ends.

Greg Went





# WCA ACTIVITIES

## WINTER 2009/ SPRING 2010

### WANT TO ORGANIZE A TRIP AND HAVE IT PRESENTED IN THE SPRING ISSUE?

Contact the Outings Committee before February 15

For questions, suggestions, proposals to organize trips, or anything else related to the WCA Outings, contact the Outings Committee: Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, [bness@look.ca](mailto:bness@look.ca); Mary Perkins, [mary.perkins@sympatico.ca](mailto:mary.perkins@sympatico.ca), 905-725-2874

Our ability to offer an interesting and diversified activities program depends on our trip organizers' generous donation of their time and enthusiasm. We appreciate the important contribution these members make to our club. If you are an active paddler, please help us. Become an outings organizer.

*WCA outings and other activities may have an element of danger of serious personal injury. You are responsible for determining if your equipment, skill, and experience are adequate to participate safely in a club activity. Participants are ultimately responsible for their own safety and well-being when participating in club events.*

*All moving-water trips rated intermediate level or higher require participants to have fully outfitted whitewater canoes (thigh straps, air bags filling the boat, throw bag, secured spare paddle), and to be wearing helmets and weather-appropriate clothing (wetsuits or drysuits for winter, spring, fall trips).*

#### All Winter **ALGONQUIN PARK WINTER CAMPING IN STYLE**

Jay Neilson & Frank Knaapen, 613-687-6037, [jneilson@nrtco.net](mailto:jneilson@nrtco.net) — Stay at our winter tent and enjoy glorious snow fantasia in Algonquin Park. The tent comes complete with a very large 10ft.x6ft. straw bed and interior wood stove. Contact us for assisted or self-supported use.

#### All Spring **WEEKDAY WHITEWATER**

Jon McPhee, 905-640-8819, [jon.mcphee@rogers.com](mailto:jon.mcphee@rogers.com) — I like to get out during the week to paddle whenever weather and water are good. Favourite destinations are the Black and Head near Washago, as well as the HWY 7 rivers. Call me if interested, and I'll put you on my contact list. The Black at Washago is suitable for novices with moving-water experience. The HWY 7 runs are for good intermediates or better. Drysuits or wetsuits a must, as are properly outfitted whitewater boats.

#### January 23 **CROSS-COUNTRY SKI DAY**

Diane Lucas, 905-826-0875, [lucasde@yahoo.com](mailto:lucasde@yahoo.com) — Book by January 21. Join us (Diane Lucas, Rick Sabourin, Bruce & Beth Bellaire, Barb & Dave Young) for a day of cross-country skiing, followed by a potluck dinner at the home of Rick Sabourin (near Erin). Sauna will seat up to eight people. The ski location may be as close as Albion Hills or as far away as the Duntroon Highlands, depending on the snow conditions.

#### January 23 **PADDLERS' PUB NIGHT**

Gisela Curwen, 416-484-1471, [gisela.curwen@gmail.com](mailto:gisela.curwen@gmail.com) — Contact by January 13 to register so we can book sufficient room. Join other paddlers for an evening of food, drink, and good cheer to chase away the January blahs. It will be a great chance to get together

and plan next season's adventures and re-live last summer's outings, or just watch a few paddling films running on the big screen in the background. As in the past, we are organizing this evening together with members of the Ontario Voyageurs Kayak Club. Meet 7 pm at Toronto's Twisted Kilt Pub (previously the Bow & Arrow), 1954 Yonge Street (second floor), just north of Davisville subway station. The pub is under new ownership and things are running a lot better than last year. (Check out their website [www.thetwistedkilt.ca](http://www.thetwistedkilt.ca).)

#### February-March **WINTER IN HALIBURTON COUNTY**

Ray Laughlen, 705-754-9479, [rlaughlen@gmail.com](mailto:rlaughlen@gmail.com) — I live in Haliburton and like to get out whenever I can- weekdays or weekends. If you want to ski or snowshoe in my neck of the woods, I may be able to help you with guidance, logistics, organization, or just as a trail partner. I prefer bushwhacking to manicured trails. Winter camping is a possibility. Contact me and we can talk.

#### February 13-15 **BIG EAST LAKE WINTER CAMPING WEEKEND**

Ray Laughlen, 705-754-9479, [rlaughlen@gmail.com](mailto:rlaughlen@gmail.com) — Book before February 6. We will snowshoe in Saturday and set up camp. Sunday is for relaxing or a day trip. Then Monday, we will break camp and snowshoe out to the parking lot.

#### February 5-6 **WILDERNESS CANOE SYMPOSIUM**

Get rid of the mid-winter blahs and prepare for the next paddling season by joining fellow WCA members and paddlers from across the continent for George Luste's 25th annual Wilderness and Canoeing Symposium at Monarch Park

Collegiate in Toronto. See full information on our website [www.wcsymposium.com](http://www.wcsymposium.com)

#### February 20 **WCA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Register today! Join us at Ste.-Marie-Among-the-Hurons / Wye Marsh near Midland for our AGM. Learn about your club's activities over the past year and what's new for 2010. Meet and talk to your Board members. After lunch we will visit the Wye Marsh and learn about their Trumpeter Swan Recovery Program that has successfully brought back this species that was hunted to extinction in southern Ontario. See details and registration form on the inside back cover of this issue, and on the WCA website.

#### March 27 **MOIRA RIVER**

John & Sharon Hackert, [jhackert@sympatico.ca](mailto:jhackert@sympatico.ca) — Book as soon as possible. This is our season opener and a chance to recover our skills after a long winter. We will start at Chisholm's Mill and finish at Latta in the morning, eat lunch in our vehicles, and run Lost Channel in the afternoon. This is a good opportunity for new spring paddlers to introduce themselves and demonstrate their competence. The river is not particularly technical and we will only be about an hour from our cars. This trip is open to anyone who doesn't mind swimming in ice-cold water. Tandem canoes must have a centre airbag. Wetsuits or drysuits are required. If winter is late and weather/water conditions are unsuitable, we will postpone the trip. Limit of six boats.

#### March 27 **UPPER CREDIT RIVER**

Barb & Dave Young, 905-457-7937, [youngdavid@rogers.com](mailto:youngdavid@rogers.com) — Book by March 21. Join us for an early spring run on the Credit from Inglewood to Glen Williams. Some competence in moving water is

helpful. Suitable for novices. A potluck dinner will follow at the home of Barb & Dave in Brampton.

#### March 28 **LOWER CREDIT RIVER**

Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, bness@look.ca, book before March 21 — Join me on this classic early spring favourite of Toronto area paddlers. We'll catch the Credit in Streetsville and run down to the mouth at Port Credit. The river is a delightful continuous Class 1 to 2 with lots of play spots. However, as sweepers can present a hazard and the water will be cold, participants should have solid basic moving-water skills, and wear a wetsuit or drysuit. If we have a late break-up, we'll move the trip to March 29.

#### April 2 **MOIRA RIVER ENCORE**

John & Sharon Hackert, jhackert@sympatico.ca — Book as soon as possible. This is a repeat of the March 27 trip.

#### April 4 **ELORA GORGE**

Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, bness@look.ca, book by March 28 — This time of year the gorge should provide a challenging intermediate run, packing a lot of interesting Class 2 to 3 whitewater into a short distance. It's a great place to play at this level. Afterwards we can warm up and swap paddler gossip at Tim's down the road.

#### April 10 **BEAVER CREEK #1**

John & Sharon Hackert, jhackert@sympatico.ca, 416-438-7672, book as soon as possible — This will be a challenging whitewater run suitable for advanced-level paddlers with fully outfitted canoes (centre bags for tandem boats) and proper cold-weather attire. If the river isn't open yet we could switch to the Moira. Limit five boats

#### April 17 **BEAVER CREEK #2**

John & Sharon Hackert, jhackert@sympatico.ca, 416-438-7672, book as soon as possible — See description above.

#### April 16-18 **BEAVER CREEK, MOIRA, AND LOWER BLACK RIVERS**

Jay Neilson & Frank Knaapen, 613-687-6037, jneilson@nrtco.net — Book immediately. We'll start out Saturday morning on the upper part of the Moira (Lost Channel section), which is the easiest of the three. Water levels should be well below peak, but as the water is still very cold, full wetsuits or drysuits are mandatory. Suitable for physically fit paddlers comfortable in at least Class 2 water. Some of the rapids on the Black and Beaver, should you choose to run them, have "must catch" eddies, and provide great rock and roll Class 3 paddling. However, all difficult rapids can be portaged or lined.

#### April 17, tentative **BLACK RIVER (WASHAGO) & HEAD RIVER**

Jon McPhee, 905-640-8819, jon.mcphee@rogers.com, book by April 3 — See Black River, Washago, at

<http://www.boatwerks.net/whitewater/running.php>. The actual date will depend on optimal water levels. This section of the Washago Black River is a short run from the concrete bridge on Hwy 169 south of Washago to the first concession road west. It's a short stretch of river, but we will take about three hours of paddling, working the river. It is an easy, fun run where paddlers can practise eddies, ferries, and surfing, with little or no consequences (except for the COLD water). If the water level is suitable, and there is interest, we can drive over to the nearby Head River. The Head is small and technical, and has been described as a mini-Beaver Creek. In this short section there are a number of Class 2-3 ledge rapids that require precise manoeuvring. This river is best for skilled intermediates. There will probably still be some snow in the bush and the water will be cold. Tandem canoes must have a center airbag. Wetsuits or drysuits and helmets are required. Limit five canoes.

#### April 24 **LOWER BLACK RIVER-TWEED**

Jon McPhee, 905-640-8819, jon.mcphee@rogers.com, book by April 10 — See Black River, Queensborough, at <http://www.boatwerks.net/whitewater/running.php>. This is not the same river as the Black River at Washago. This Lower Black runs from Queensborough to Hwy #7, north-west of Tweed, and east of Madoc. It is 10.5 km of Grade 1 to 4 rapids. The more serious ones can, and at least one will, be portaged. The river is primarily pool-and-drop, but a number of the rapids are longish and narrow and require the ability to manoeuvre a canoe at an intermediate level in whitewater. There will be some eddies that you must hit, and some definite lines that you must run. The book 'Eastern Ontario White Water Rivers' ranks this river as the next step above the Moira. If you are not comfortable running the Lost Channel section of the Moira, you will not be comfortable here. On the other hand, it is a fun run on a pretty section of river. There will probably still be some snow in the bush and the water will be cold. Tandem canoes must have a center airbag. Wetsuits or drysuits and helmets are required. Limit five canoes.

#### April 24 **UPPER MADAWASKA RIVER**

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before April 17 — A day of whitewater excitement for advanced paddlers. The upper Madawaska is a fast-flowing pool-and-drop river with quiet stretches interspersed with some very serious rapids. All rapids can, and some must, be portaged. Wetsuits or drysuits, helmets, and fully outfitted whitewater boats with full flotation are a must. Limit six boats.

#### April 24-25 **SPENCE'S CELEBRATED SALMON-MOIRA WEEKEND**

Glenn Spence, 613-475-4176, book after February 20 — Just north of Belleville, these two rivers offer exciting whitewater and fine scenery. The Salmon is the more gentle run, with some small rapids for you to practise your skills. The Moira has larger rapids possibly up to Class 3. You

can bivouac at my house and enjoy a potluck dinner. These are two of Southern Ontario's finest spring rivers. Intermediate paddlers welcome. Limit six boats.

#### May 1 **UPPER MADAWASKA RIVER AGAIN**

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before April 21 — Please see description above. This is your chance to pick up the Thermos that you left at the lunch stop last week.

#### May 1-2 **SPRING IN MUSKOKA**

Gisela Curwen, 416-484-1471, gisela.curwen@gmail.com, book before April 15 — We will paddle some lakes yet to be decided, experience the returning birds, and discover other flora and fauna emerging from hibernation. Maybe we will find the first turtles sunning themselves on logs, and listen to the choruses of spring peepers, as in previous years. We'll hike and explore the surrounding area and clean up portages, if needed. Limit four canoes.

#### May 8 **MINESING SWAMP**

Ray Laughlen 705-754-9479, rlaughlen@gmail.com — Book by May 1. The trip down the Nottawasaga River through Minesing Swamp is a slow-paced, relaxing spring paddle. The swamp is a unique area rich in birds and wildlife. We'll enter the Swamp via Willow Creek and follow the river down to Edenvale. A pleasant day's paddle for canoeists of all skill levels.

#### May 8-9 **OPEONGO & UPPER MADAWASKA RIVERS**

Jay Neilson & Frank Knaapen, 613-687-6037, jneilson@nrtco.net — Book immediately. The Opeongo has long sections of Class 2-3 rapids, making it suitable for solid intermediates or better. The Upper Madawaska is one of the most challenging rivers in Ontario. Water levels will be very high, requiring Class 3 rock-and-roll paddling skills, with some Class 4 thrills for experts. The big drops can be portaged, but the river still requires advanced whitewater skills. Fully outfitted whitewater boats, and complete wetsuits or drysuits are mandatory.

#### May 15-16 **OPEONGO & UPPER MADAWASKA RIVERS ENCORE**

Jay Neilson & Frank Knaapen, 613-687-6037, jneilson@nrtco.net — Book immediately. See above for details. The water should be a little lower and more suitable for Class 2 paddlers who want to take on some Class 3 paddling.

#### May 8-9 **BIRDING AT POINT PELEE**

Anne Bradley, 519-855-4835, annebradley@sympatico.ca, book before May 1 — Enjoy the spring warbler migration. We will camp at Wheatley Provincial Park and wander the trails of Point Pelee and Hillman Marsh. Flatwater padding opportunities available. Binoculars mandatory.

#### May 21-24 **MAGNETAWAN RIVER**

Alan James, silvergoblin2009@gmail.com



—— Book before May 10. I will be paddling on the Magnetawan River for the long weekend in May and would enjoy some company. This is a four-day trip suitable for experienced whitewater trippers. Participants must have properly outfitted boats and cold-weather camping gear/experience.

May 22-24 **LOWER MADAWASKA RIVER**  
Larry Durst, 905-415-1152, ldurst@devoncommunications.com — Book as soon as possible. Join us for the 10th annual spring paddle/wine-and-cheese party and find out first-hand why mostly sane, reasonably intelligent, and somewhat mature persons subject themselves to the vicissitudes of spring camping. We paddle from above Aumonds Bay to the take-out at Griffith, a distance of only 28 km. The pace is leisurely with only the Sunday being a full day of paddling and most of that spent on the Snake Rapids section of the river. Lots of time to play, chat, and nibble! Rapids will range from Grade 1 to 4 and there are a couple of short portages around falls. The water will still be cold, and the water levels are likely to be quite high. In the past we have had sun, rain, hail, and snow...all on the same day, so participants will need to dress and pack appropriately. Suitable for intermediate-level paddlers. Limit six boats. Book early as this trip "sells out" every year.

May 22-24 **PETAWAWA RIVER**  
Jay Neilson & Frank Knaapen, 613-687-6037, jneilson@nrtco.net — Book as soon as possible. Join us on the classic run from Lake Travers to McManus. There will be a potluck dinner and accommodation at our place on Friday night. This is a great opportunity to watch expert paddlers take on Rollway, one of Ontario's wildest whitewater thrills. There are plenty of Class 3 rapids for intermediate paddlers on this run. All the more difficult rapids can be walked around, and there is lots of scenery to enjoy from either the river or the trail on this beautiful river. Fully outfitted whitewater boats, and complete wet-suits or drysuits are mandatory.

May 29-30 **ORCHIDS ON THE BRUCE**  
Anne Bradley, 519-855-4835 or an-nebradley@sympatico.ca, book before May 1 — Explore the many facets of the Bruce Peninsula and marvel at the orchids. There's an abundance of natural beauty, from the cobble beaches and cliffs overlooking Georgian Bay to the sandy beaches, bogs, and fens of the Lake Huron side. Flatwater paddling opportunities are available, but foot travel will allow us to see more.

May 29-30 **INTERMEDIATE WHITEWATER CLINIC**  
John & Sharon Hackert, jhackert@sympatico.ca — Book before April 19. This is the thirteenth year of our clinic, which is designed to help improve your basic skills. We will paddle the Lower Mad on Saturday and practise our basic skills at Palmers Rapids on Sunday. The emphasis will be on front ferries, eddy-outs, and

peel-outs. Your paddle strokes will be critiqued. You will also have an opportunity to practise self-rescue techniques. Open to properly fitted solo and tandem canoes. Tandem boats must have centre air bags. Wetsuits or drysuits will be needed. We will camp at our cottage.

June 12 **GRAND RIVER**  
Doug Ashton, 519-620-8364, doug.ashton@rogers.com — Book by June 1. This very popular annual trip seems to be a great draw for all levels of paddlers, including families. Over the last five years we have enjoyed perfect weather, portage-free paddling, and a social barbeque that has followed our outing. This is a wonderful day to enjoy an easy moving river and to socialize with other WCAers. The trip will start in south Cambridge, where we will put in, and then paddle to Paris. We will pass through scenic farm country, negotiate some easy Class 1 water, and stop for lunch along the way. Those interested are welcome to join us back at our house in Cambridge for some food, beverage, and social time.

June 12-13 **NOIRE RIVER (QUEBEC)**  
Jay Neilson & Frank Knaapen, 613-687-6037, jneilson@nrtco.net — Book as soon as possible. We drive to the Black River Inn after crossing the Ottawa at Pembroke. The Inn's proprietor will shuttle us to 50:50 Rapid for approximately \$75. There are loads of play spots on this section of river, and the weatherman willing, we'll do some body surfing in the hot sun. It doesn't get much better than this.

Early July **RIVER SAFETY & RESCUE FOR TRIPPERS**  
Sara Rykov, 416-588-8246, sara.rykov@gmail.com — Contact me by April 1. Exact date to be determined. We are considering a weekend river safety and rescue course with Paddler Co-op for next summer. The course will specifically focus on the needs of canoeists who must deal with problems in remote locations with limited equipment. We think it will provide valuable skills and greater self-confidence for both trippers and playboaters, anyone who ventures in a canoe down a swift river. This is a paid, professionally taught course. Amount including tax will be approximately \$175. If interested, please contact me so that we can determine if there is sufficient interest. A minimum of six participants is required for the course to go. No maximum. (This is a great opportunity for our WCA trip organizers to take advantage of their club educational credits!)

July 1-4 **WHITEWATER SKILLS BUILDING CLINIC**  
Jon McPhee, 905-640-8819, jon.mcphee@rogers.com; and Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, bness@look.ca — Book as soon as possible. This is a four-day workshop on the Madawaska River for novice to budding intermediate whitewater paddlers. We will focus on the basics of moving-water boat control and manoeuvres, water reading, and safety. Both tandem and solo paddlers are welcome. The

weekend will be spent at Palmer Rapids and on the Snake Rapids section of the Madawaska River, one hour northeast of Bancroft. The location offers some of the best novice to intermediate whitewater in Southern Ontario. In order to be able to work closely with participants, registration is limited to six boats.

**ADDITIONAL TRIPS**  
Check our website at [www.wildernesscanoe.ca/trips.htm](http://www.wildernesscanoe.ca/trips.htm) for additional trips. Members may submit additional trips to the Outings Committee anytime at [bness@look.ca](mailto:bness@look.ca). If you miss the *Nastawgan* deadline, your trip will still be listed on the website. Also, check the bulletin board at [www.wildernesscanoe.ca/bulletin.htm](http://www.wildernesscanoe.ca/bulletin.htm) for private, non-WCA trips or partner requests.

**NEED A PARTNER?**  
If you're a tandem canoeist in need of a paddling partner, whether for a single trip or on a more regular basis, our website provides a valuable resource to help you connect with other members who want to get on the water. If you need a partner, please submit a message for posting to our website giving details.

## Partners Wanted

Thlewiaza River, Northern Manitoba, Summer 2010. The Thlewiaza is Farley Mowat's great river where he first met the Eden Edehli people shortly after WWII and documented his scary spring ride in 'No Man's River' and 'Curse of the Viking Grave.' Here are two recent summer trip reports:

[www.out-there.com/bil-thle.htm](http://www.out-there.com/bil-thle.htm) and [gorp.away.com/gorp/location/canada/manitoba/pad\\_thl.htm](http://gorp.away.com/gorp/location/canada/manitoba/pad_thl.htm)

Contact Jay Neilson and Frank Knaapen at 613-687-6037 or [jneilson@nrtco.net](mailto:jneilson@nrtco.net)

**For sale** Solo canoe, 15 ft. length, 30 in. beam, kevlar-glass cloth laminate. Extremely efficient on flat water, good in white water. Included: wood, take-apart double-bladed paddle. Total \$600.

**For sale** Toboggan, nine feet, custom-made, ready for winter camping. \$45.

**Free** Two light-weight reflector ovens. Topo maps for wilderness trips.

Jim Greenacre: 416-759-9956.

## Where it is...



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