## TWO ON THE NAHANNI

R.M. Patterson, The Dangerous River, Gray's Publishing C., Sidney, B.C., Canada.

Joanne Ronan Moore, Nahanni Trailhead, Deneau and Greenberg Publishers, Ottawa, Ont., Canada.

Reviewed by: Dave Auger

The chief similarity in the two books is that both describe wilderness adventure on the South Nahanni River in Canada's northwest. The Dangerous River is the story of an attempt by Raymond Patterson and Gordon Matthews to prospect for gold on the lower Nahanni. They first arrived there in 1927 and returned upstream by canoe with a "kicker" -in the following year to stay one year. Nahanni Trailhead is the story of a newlywed couple's $12 000 year-long honeymoon at their cabin which they built upriver from Broken Skull River - fifty years after Patterson and Matthews.

The adventures of Patterson and Matthews are colourfully and comically described. For almost every wilderness camper Patterson's entertaining account of situations and problems they face will strike a familiar chord. Nahanni Trailhead will be of more interest to those who have canoed the South Nahanni or to those who are planning to build a cabin of their own. Most of the book, which is written as a diary, describes incidents in and around the cabin which Joanne, and her husband built in the summer of 1978.

With the airplane making the South Nahanni much more accessible in 1978 than in 1928, it's difficult to compare the two wilderness experiences. Whereas Patterson and Matthews encountered but a handful of other individuals (among them Albert Faile), the Moores had helicopter visits from Lands & Forests people, frequent Cessna visits from friends and local pilots; to say nothing of the stops by canoeists on the river in the summertime.

Each book describes a rather amusing incident involving guests who overstayed their welcome. The trials and tribulations suffered by an unappreciative guest at the Patterson Matthews cabin are hilariously described. One particular incident involved his trying to flip pancakes with one of those cursed frying pans with the fold back handles ("for easy carrying", they say). Patterson sets up the story very well, and then proceeds to describe, in great detail, an almost unbelievable chain of events. In Moore's book, an amusing situation to reflect on now (though not at the time, I'm sure) involved a pair of visitors who felt that because they wanted to fly out of the Nahanni River Valley, a plane should be at their beck and call - regardless of weather and risks to the pilot. When the weather actually did clear up the situation was defused, but Joanne Moore's description here is very thorough.

In short then, I found The Dangerous River to be a thoroughly enjoyable, well written adventure classic, and Nahanni Trailhead to be an interesting diary of a unique experience shared by a couple united in their love of the outdoors.

# wca workshop weekend

Article: Joyce Peterson

Photo : John McBride

Bill King provided us with wilderness first-aid techniques that could be used by anyone in an emergency.

Carol and Bruce Hodgins along with Ed Hileman, gave us many suggestions for a healthy diet while tripping. The tasting session provided us with an opportunity to be active participants!

Saturday evening we were presented with slides and commentary of trips to Pukaskwa by Sandy Richardson and the Nahanni River by Glenn Spence.

Craig MacDonald, who works at the Leslie Frost Resource Centre, provided us with an insight as to why the many voyageur and native canoe routes, which were instrumental in opening up our vast country, are not being maintained and as a result, another part of our historic past will eventually disappear.

The spirit of some 120 Wilderness canoeists on this get-together was only dampened by the intermittent-come-consistent rain. The beauty og Haliburton and the opportunity to re-live our camp days (for better or for worse) provided an interesting atmosphere at Camp Kandelore!

Friday evening found us settling in by flash and candlelight, while others (who were quicker at deciding who was going to sleep in the top bunk) were provided with an interesting opportunity to travel, via slides, the many spring, summer and winter voyages of fellow canoeists.

Saturday we were offered an array of workshops and a chance to visit the impressive Kanawa Canoe Museum which is situated on the campsite.

Richard Nash explained the historical highlights of the many different types of canoes used by our native people, which are exhibited in the museum. Richard also showed us the art of carving a paddle and explained his construction of birch bark canoes.

Sunday, under somewhat brighter skies, the tripping part of the weekend commenced, but not until Betty Greenacre's photography workshop. Betty shared some great hints on how to take good pictures, which we immediately tried to do on a photo walk around the camp.

Tom Boardman led an interesting nature walk while several of our members decided to do some canoeing before returning home. Canoeing around the lake provided a beautiful last look at nature's grandeur of colour.

The new format of this WCA weekend proved extremely successful and we look foreward to more such interesting weekends. Many thanks to everyone involved, with a special thanks to Anneke and Dave Auger.