

Wednesday, July 30

Wednesday morning saw us gulping down delicious pancakes under overcast skies that had a look of uncertainty about them. We continued our travels along the meandering river hoping that a moose sighting or a set of rapids would liven up the day.

By noon the skies had cleared and we stopped on a large sandbar to eat and dry out from the day before. We had made good time during the morning and could easily afford the extended lunch.

Our route outline described a thousand km. portage around a sawmill for the afternoon. Something we were not looking forward to but were eager to get over with. As we approached the area, we expected to see a log boom around each corner until finally we were at the sawmill and faced a "pull-over" over the one log on the downriver side of the log boom. Not too hard to take.

The terrain was becoming more rugged now and the river was widening and straightening out. We shot many sets of easy rapids which helped us made even better time than in the morning. By mid afternoon we came to a long stretch of rapids that ended just beyond a hydro road bridge. We set up camp next to the road and spent most of the rest of the afternoon canoeing and swimming in the rapids.

While supper was cooking, Tom took a stroll to the top of a nearby hill that had one of the hydro towers on it. He came back with a rather unique looking flower that none of us had seen before which turned out to be pale corydalis, a beautiful little flower.

Our stopping early had left us lots of time after supper to sit around and enjoy the evening. The night was clear and the dew was unusually thick, even before we retired.

Thursday, July 31

Fun was on the menu for Thursday. A beautiful day during which we ran many rapids, did lots of lining and saw some spectacular waterfalls. We encountered a large group of thirteen and fourteen year old boys that were out on a twenty day canoe trip. Quite a feat for that age group.

Just prior to lunch break Gerry slipped on a rock while getting out at a portage and cut his head above the eyebrow. There wasn't a lot of blood but it sure swelled up in a hurry. We eventually convinced him that he should let us stitch it.

So, with Skeets and I trying to keep the black flies from biting Gerry, Tom did the needle work required to freeze the area. With the brow well frozen I did the sewing while Tom assisted. We only put in two stitches but the whole affair seemed like a major operation to us. However, it went off without a hitch and from what I hear there isn't even a noticeable scar.

All of this was going on under the watchful eyes of a red-shouldered hawk as it whistled continually at us. We took advantage of the unscheduled stop and had our lunch.

Gerry seemed pretty groggy for the rest of the afternoon so we didn't push it. Upon coming to a logging road bridge we picked a flat spot nearby and called it home for the night. The fireweed along the road was very thick and exceptionally pretty as it was a lot more dense than usual. Also,



Tom, our mushroom expert, spotted a huge fly agaric (*Amanita muscaria*.) A deadly mushroom that was once used as a poison for fly-paper.

Friday, August 1

The section of river that we were on seemed to be one set of rapids after another for hours but we really enjoyed it. Ivan and Gerry tipped in an exceptionally tricky rock garden that had very fast water flowing through it. Skeets and I had made it through without any problems but looking from the bottom up we weren't sure how we had done it. Both Ivan and Gerry were scraped and banged but they survived the turbulent trip through. After that, Tom and Martin wisely lined around that section.

The rest of the morning was pretty well spent riding fast water as it meandered from bank to bank between high hills. A beautiful way to travel when all you have to do is follow the current. Looking ahead you could actually see the whole river slanting downhill as it snaked between the hills.

After things had flattened out a bit we stopped for lunch where a small trout stream entered the river. I say trout stream because the path along it back into the woods was more like a highway. It was well used but we didn't take the time to see if it had any trout left in it.

A few sets of rapids after lunch led us to a continually widening river that was approaching the northern end of Wanapitei Lake. The last six km. were tough going as we had to fight a relentless head wind.

Arrival at the Junior Ranger camp was shortly after five and we were delighted to get out of the wind. While unloading we noticed that the rangers had company in the camp. A small black bear had been treed by the curious onlookers and wasn't about to come down with the audience that it had.

Tom's car was loaded, and I mean loaded, for the drive back to pick up the truck. A trip that seemed to take forever and with the maniacs on the gravel road for the holiday weekend, we were thankful to see pavement where there was at least a center line.

The trip itself was a great experience along a route that had a lot to offer. The route is ideally suited to the novice as almost all the runnable rapids are not that difficult with the water level that we encountered.

