

CHE-MUN

(Ojibway for canoe)

THE NEWSLETTER OF CANADIAN WILDERNESS CANOEING

OUTFIT 52

CHE-MUN

SPRING 1988



Lands Forlorn

Che-Mun presents

The Classics

First in a series about
great northern books

Page 6

Blasting the Barrens

A nuclear summer?

Page 10

Image from a lost time

This photograph was taken in 1912 by George M. Douglas on the Coppermine River. It was during travels described in his classic book *Lands Forlorn*. The photo shows two Coronation Gulf Inuits dressed in traditional caribou skin robes. You also can't help but notice the man in the background. Mugging with his mug is that legendary character of the north - John Hornby. Just one of the many fascinating people who crossed Douglas' path.

Spring Packet



Winter is a time for planning . . . and letter writing. Many Che-Mun subscribers wrote to tell us what they're up to and what they think of things. We certainly welcome your thoughts, comments, photos, reports and anything else you'd like to send along!

Carl Traeholt, Hjallesvej 68, 5320 Odense M, Denmark, wrote to wish all a Happy New Year and mention that he is glad that all the "quarrelling" is over.

"I hate the Danish winter. So it is tough times at the moment. I can only sit and dream of better things. If there were only some snow then I could go skiing but it's always melting and everything gets wet and it is so awfully uncomfortable.

"I'm trying to get hold of other canoeists and maybe we'll make our own canoe symposium. At the moment we can gather about 20 canoeists who've been paddling in Canada. We will be having a meeting shortly. I am the only one who has paddled in Asia but I know another guy who went to Venezuela on the Orinoco River. I should probably introduce them to Che-Mun. (Editor's Note-Good idea!) I am sure they would enjoy it. Maybe some of them know it already.

Mark Becker 8 Rahway St, Burlington, Mass 01803 has been keeping Che-Mun updated on his adventures this past year and they certainly have been interesting.

"Now that the holidays are over I can get down to taking care of some serious business-like renewing my Che-Mun subscription. I want to tell you that the Thunder Road Expedition's Colorado to Maine canoe trip (see Outfit 48) was successfully completed September 19 in Sebaco Maine after 145 days and 3,547 miles. I am in the middle of putting together a slide show, reading, pondering and writing about the contents of my journal. I am a bit bogged down trying to decide how to use what I have."

The route of the group from Fort Lupton included the South Plate, the Platte, Missouri, Mississippi, French, Mattawa, Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers.

Mike Bunn 122 North 5th St, Clinton, Iowa 52732 is a veteran solo traveler. Each year it seems he's heading further and further north.

"I thought Che-Mun would be interested in a solo canoe trip I made this past summer. I ran the Back River with no food

drops from Muskox Lake to Baker Lake by way of the Meadowbank River, Amer Lake and the Thelon River. I've spent several seasons canoeing in northern Canada and it seems that the further north I go the better it gets. This summer was the best trip yet."

"I have had a subscription to Che-Mun since 1979 when Nick Nickels ran it and always look forward to each issue. Keep up the good work."

A short excerpt from Mike's trip log; "I encountered the first major white water of the trip on my first day. Muskox Rapids is a two-mile Class II and III run that was great for building my confidence. Maybe too much.

"One day I was lining the final drop at Malley rapids and let the stern line get away from me. I fought back the panic attack as I grabbed for the end of the line with the loaded canoe turning broadside. At the last minute I caught the line and regained control just above a ledge at the bottom of the rapids, but it made me realize how serious even a small mistake could be.

"I carried no radio and the odds of being rescued this deep in the Arctic Barrens would be very slim. This was a lesson I remembered for the rest of the trip."

Ron Hirsch, 275 Prospect St, East Longmeadow, MA 01028 is a very giving Che-Mun subscriber. Ron submitted the article on Page 10 of this issue on Atomizing the Arctic. It is no doubt from a series of similar articles that Ron saves to inspire him about the future of mankind. The following letter arrived with a copy of the article.

"Enclosed is a story which should make your winter nights warmer. It appeared in a *Mechanix Illustrated* May 1946 which I found recently in an attic. I think Che-Mun should endorse this proposal. Just think of all the additional months of canoeing we could have. We could be canoeing in the Arctic right now! No more bugs, muskeg, smelly muskox or frigid water.

"I am sure the Canadian Parliament will be in favour with all the new developable land. It will make the James Bay Project look like a small subdivision.

"I know you will do your best to make this a reality"



Sid Magee and Ron Hirsch show how two Che-Mun reader's ingenuity can save a lot of money. For their Thelon River trip

a while back they air shipped their Mad River inside their Old Town for the cost of one canoe!

CANOETOONS

PAUL MASON



Che-Mun Editorial

Chevolution

The times are a changin' at Che-Mun.

Recent financial considerations have forced us to slightly alter the format of this publication.

And the good news for subscribers is that there won't be a price increase. New Canadian postal rates mean a 50 per cent mailing cost increase for us. However, it will now cost the same to mail 12 pages as 8. So starting with this outfit Che-Mun will boast a dozen pages with each issue and something else too.

You will notice some new (and appropriate) advertisements. That keeps costs down. Yours and ours. As circulation grows I want to keep Che-Mun evolving. This means keeping the same look and feel. It would be a lot more economical to print Che-Mun on cheap paper and fold it into a smaller envelope.

But the idea behind this newsletter is not money. It's wilderness canoeing. So we will keep true to the trail we've been trodding, and hope you agree.

Incidentally, Che-Mun is now read in 30 states, eight provinces and both northern territories. We've had offers from other canoeing magazines to take us over and absorb us into their publications.

No deal.

From your letters I believe that most of you like Che-Mun and are happy with the way it is going. Having a lot of room for improvement means a long future to look forward to.

But it can't happen without you.

One further note. We promised details of this year's Hide-Away Canoe Club trip. It is an ambitious one, crossing the Ungava Peninsula in northern Quebec. We will be visiting a meteorologic marvel and trying to solve a historical mystery as we follow in the footsteps of a famous American explorer and filmmaker. Full details in Outfit 53.

Michael Peake, Editor

Here come

The Classics

Beginning with this issue Che-Mun will present a feature we call The Classics.

We intend to take a look at several historically important canoe books, starting this issue (pages 6 and 7) with *Lands Forlorn* by George Douglas. The Classics will examine significant contributors to northern literature. We will tell you what makes these books special and why, how much a good copy is worth and show photos from each.

These are books that every serious wilderness canoeist should be interested in. Some of the other books to be featured in The Classics include, *Sleeping Island* by P.G. Downes and *Sport and Travel in Canada's Northland* by David Hanbury. These books are not truly rare. They are available to anyone willing to dig a bit.

We welcome your comments and suggestions on what books you would like to see discussed in The Classics.

This feature will run in alternate issues.

Looking back

The following is a list of back issues of Che-Mun. Those marked with an asterisk are available in photocopy only. Unless marked otherwise all issues are \$3.00 and include postage.

Outfit 38- Fort William Rendezvous, Magpie River Trip Report.

Outfit 39*- Trans Canada Canoe Expedition, David Pelly interview.

Outfit 40*- Tribute to Eric Morse and Les Voyageurs.

Outfit 41- Grand Canal Project/Thlewiaza River Trip Report.

Outfit 42- Across the Barrenlands, Morse River Expedition Part One (\$6).

Outfit 43- Across the Barrenlands, Morse River Expedition Part Two (\$6).

Outfit 44- Bill Mason & Dog(University) River, Athabasca letter.

Outfit 45- Rivers of Canada flow chart, Pipe River Story by Eric Morse.

Outfit 46- Hudson Bay to Ungava Bay canoe trip, Stew Coffin report.

Outfit 47- Heritage Rivers Board, Trans Canada canoe trip.

Outfit 48- Eric Morse memoirs, Canoeists Slide Fest and Historical Symposium.

Outfit 49- Sea kayaking in the Queen Charlottes, Hudson Bay sell off.

Outfit 50- Andy & Fergie canoe the Thelon, Che-Mun Anniversary issue (\$5).

Outfit 51- The joys of traditional canoeing, Quetico Provincial Park.

Third time's a charm Symposium III

The third year of that ever-growing extravaganza - the Wilderness Canoe Association Symposium or George Luste Presents - was held in Toronto on January 29 and 30.

It used to be subtitled 'Canoeist's Slide Fest' but the increased amount of movies have made that title obsolete. This year's attendance topped the 300 mark and it was held at the spacious and more importantly, soft-seated, North York City Hall - part of Metro Toronto.

There were six sessions spread over Friday night and all-day Saturday. Each speaker was allotted a half hour including questions. The times were well adhered to and nothing ran late. While the WCA sponsors this event it is the connections and stature of Toronto canoeist George Luste that make this event special. Luste, a University of Toronto physicist, has paddled extensively across Canada's north and possesses a canoeing library few in the world can top.

It is the people who make an event like this interesting . . . both the speakers and those who go to listen. There is a great networking and interchange of ideas at any show like this and the numerous breaks made this easy. The Far Northwest was the general topic of this year's talk which meant Alaska, northern B.C., Yukon and western Northwest Territories.

Herewith a selection of speakers; their topics and comments.

Linda Mason, now a Toronto teacher, canoed with a group down the Yukon River and spent a year living in a home-made cabin several years ago. Along their way down to build their winter locale on the fast flowing Yukon River they found an abandoned raft with an old wood stove still on it. They took it along for a few days with their canoes and brewed fresh coffee while gliding down the river. Along with usual stories and photos of the Alaskan flora were the marijuana plants growing in the backyards of Fort Yukon. Linda and her party met a solo canoeist who

travelled with them for a few days. He had only a tablecloth for a tent and all his food was in paper bags. During their winter in the bush one of the delicacies they enjoyed was sweet and sour moose.

Henning Harmuth, of Washington, D. C., also showed his slide show of a trip down the Yukon River in 1956! Though this was just over three decades ago it was fascinating to see how much has changed. Henning was among the last to see the famed river paddlewheel boats in their final year of operation. A visit to the now tourist mecca of Dawson City produced a reverse phenomenon - faded, shuttered buildings, quiet since the gold rush, where these days tourists gamble and showgirls kick up their heels. Henning showed a photo of the last RCMP detachment housed in a log cabin in Old Crow. In one town, the jail was a tent! When asked how that could afford security the Mountie replied, "Where's he going to run to?" These sights, including a mass Christian conversion of the natives, are among those seen in Henning's collection of historically interesting and fine quality old Kodachrome slides.

The Canol Road is something many of us have heard but know very little about. Peter Browning treated the crowd to his tale of a hike along this famous boondoggle. Browning is the author of *The Last Wilderness*, a wrenching story of a difficult trip down the Snowdrift River near eastern Great Slave Lake. The Canol Road was a pipeline building project between Whitehorse and the Mackenzie River to ensure a southern supply of oil during World War II. The threat of Japanese submarines stopping Alaskan oil shipments was the reason. Built between 1942-44 at incredible cost the project delivered Norman Wells oil to the outside world through a 4-inch pipeline over a 600 mile route that, in today's dollars, would cost billions. The road is still driveable for several miles but most of the bridges spanning rivers have long since disappeared. Browning explored the still-standing pumphouses and other decaying remnants. All the building and bridges were made with imported U.S. lumber. There are still shells of vehicles and much of the wood has been scavenged. It is eerie to think that a road was scratched across the northland in such a short time and still stands. Browning had several adventures trying to cross swollen rivers - he got swept a mile

downstream in turbulent icy water during one attempt. Incidentally the Canol Pipeline transported 1.1 million barrels of oil in its brief existence. Today 8.5 million barrels move out of Alaska - every day.

Robert Perkins is a Massachusetts author (*Against Straight Lines*) who offers a different perspective on travel in the north. Perkins showed slides without descriptive narrative while reading from his journal of a 72-day solo trip down the Back (that's right - it isn't in the northwest). Perkins' diary was kept alphabetically, that is not Day 14, Day 15 etc but a different letter for each day, eg. L for loon, H for house (tent). Perkins has a poetic approach to the land and its surroundings. He believes that those with a feeling for the land should also be investigating it - not just scientists. Perkins has done a film (video) on his solo Back trip, with a bit of help from a short visit from a fly-in film crew. He is in the process of selling it to American network PBS.

Other speakers and topics included; Bill Hoyt and his movie 'On to the Polar Sea' about a trip down the Bonnet Plume River, Vermont's Kay Henry, president of Mad River Canoe, who did a family trip on the Yukon's seldom travelled Macmillan River. And speaking of family trips they don't come any bigger than the Shepardson's three year, transcontinental journey, Carl and Margie shared their experiences. Jack Goering showed slides from his trip with Eric and Pamela Morse up the Rat and down the Porcupine in the mid-sixties. Brian Gnauck, from Michigan, showed a well-made film of his group's trip down the turbulent Natla-Keele Rivers, north of the Nahanni and the beauty of northern Alaska was evident in the talk by Buffalo's Jim Magavern who paddled the Killik River which drains the Brooks Range.

The plan is to keep growing and hold another WCA Symposium next year, at the current rate of expansion - perhaps to be held in Toronto's new domed stadium!



Veteran WCA paddlers Herb Pohl and Jim Greenacre chat with Massachusetts author and paddler Robert Perkins at the third annual Canoeists Historical Symposium.

Sounds super



The Toronto-based Gibson, now working with his son Gord, are producing a superb line of natural sound recordings called Solitudes. There are 11 different volumes available in tape, record and the incredibly true CD format. While these volumes are of general interest to a wide spectrum of the population some are absolute musts for canoeists.

Volumes One and Six are custom made for any true wilderness canoeist. As a recent purchaser of a CD player I have marvelled at its uncanny sound and amazing clarity. I recently put on Solitudes Vol. One while re-reading the classic northern adventure book *Lands Forlorn*. There are two parts to this album; By Canoe to Loon Lake and Dawn by a Gentle Stream - and they are both mindboggling.

Just to listen to the gentle flow of water, the sweet chirping of songbirds and the natural hum of the forest is among the most therapeutic experiences possible in one's own home. Volume 6 also has two parts, as do most of the recordings; Storm on a Wilderness Lake and Night on a Wilderness Lake. The effects are equally spine-tingling. The howl of wolves on a CD will make every

domestic pet jump to prompt attention. Believe me, I know!

Other volumes include Dawn on the Desert, Night in a Southern Swamp, the Sound of the Surf (talk about hypnotic!), Among the Giant Trees of the Wild Pacific Coast and many others. They also sell a sampler album which has selections from all 11.

What you get are the sounds of nature themselves. No talking. No Music. Just the real thing, an hour's worth on each.

For those of you who want to hear AND see recorded nature they also make videos. Loon Country by Canoe and Wave Watching are both recorded in stereo, again, with no music or voice.

The quality of these recordings is first rate. Solitudes are the perfect backdrop for a canoeing slide show or while reading or relaxing. Their appeal is surprisingly strong and they will trigger in those of us bound to the city for much of the year the reason we can't wait to grab our paddles and go.

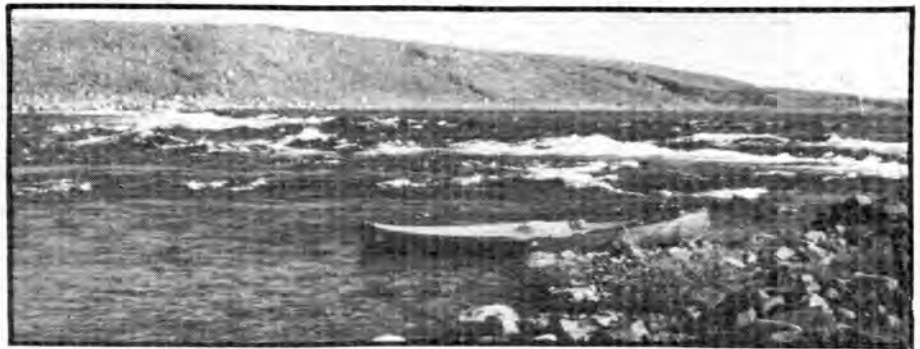
Solitudes should be available at better record shops. If you have trouble locating them write to Dan Gibson Production, Box 1200, Station Z, Toronto, Ontario M5N 2Z7.

Canadian film-maker Dan Gibson has been doing his award-winning thing for many years.

His numerous films and sound recordings have won many awards over the years. This includes the stunning feature film 'Wings in the Wilderness' which contains some of the most astounding footage of birds in flight ever shot - and it was done almost 20 years ago.

Bunn on the Back

Che-Mun reader Mike Bunn (see page 2) sent us some photos from a 1987 solo trip down the Back River. That's an Arctic Char in his hands.



Lands Forlorn

A Story of an Expedition to
Hearne's Coppermine River



by Sean Peake

In 1911, George Mellis Douglas, a mining engineer from Lakefield, Ontario, left on a canoe trip to explore the region around Great Bear Lake and the Coppermine River. When he returned home 18 months later, he had become friends with some of the most enigmatic and infamous characters in the Canadian North this century.

Travellers, such as John Hornby, the Oblate Fathers; Rouviere and LaRoux, the trappers; Radford and Street, Robert Service, and RNWMP Corporal Denny LaNauze, all played a part in Douglas' adventure. Douglas was also the last to write about the Canadian North before it lost its mystery and innocence to the airplane. By the time the book was published, the tide of technological change was beginning to sweep across the land-it would never be the same again.

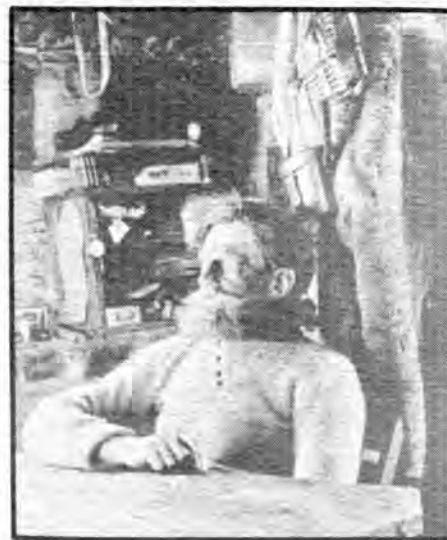
Lands Forlorn is the written account of Douglas' trip, and it remains the one of the finest narratives of northern travel written. It is unfortunate, however, that this book never received the recognition it deserved. Political events pushed Lands Forlorn into obscurity. It was published in 1914, when the world's attention focused away from the north towards the madness unravelling on the fields of France.

Douglas wrote Lands Forlorn with an easy style and a keen eye for detail. He decided to take this trip after reading the accounts of Simpson, Richardson, Rae, and Hanbury years before. His book takes us from a steamer on Lake Athabasca, on to the grisly discovery of two dead trappers, travel by canoe and snowshoe through the Dismal Lakes region between the Coppermine River and Great Bear Lake, to the joy of standing on the sea ice at the mouth of the Coppermine, then homeward bound.

It tells of the routine of camp life and how they survived the long winter on Great

Bear Lake. Witness this passage; "We also liked to play chess after a fashion. Hornby and I would have great contests, both playing and working out chess problems. By his own account there was no problem that he failed to solve at his own house, but on the journey up to ours he would somehow forget the moves."

Douglas also describes how the group struggled against the unpredictable arctic spring with their sleds and dogs to reach the Coppermine River and the ocean. But to me, the most overlooked aspect of Lands Forlorn is the superb quality of Douglas' photographs. We see glimpses of the Indians still living in traditional shelter, paddling bark canoes, and some of the remaining Hudson's Bay Posts - the death rattle of the fur trade.



George M. Douglas

His most haunting images are of the Copper Inuit. We see the faces of a people genuinely intrigued with modern men and their equipment, and a child-like fascination with the camera. The photos show a people and places not so long ago in years, but distant in time.

We also see the faces of a people on a collision course with the white man's world. Douglas and Hornby recognized the problems that were to come, and within two years, their worst fears would materialize. The trappers, Radford and Street, as well as the two Oblate Fathers, Rouviere and LaRoux, would be murdered by the Inuit. Both incidents the result of misunderstanding and demonstrating the failure of the white culture when imposed on that of the Inuit.

To the Barrenlands canoeist, the most famous character George Douglas met was John Hornby. Hornby ran into the Douglas party at Fort Norman in the dining room of the Mackenzie River, a Hudson's Bay Company Steamer that plied the Mackenzie River. While not initially impressed with Hornby's character - he had the annoying habit of sticking his filthy fingers into the sugar bowl before popping it in his mouth, and would fidget and chatter 'just like a monkey' - the relationship grew. Hornby, and his Oblate friend, Father Rouviere, managed to tag along with the Douglas party where he would eventually come in handy with his dog team experience. Over the years, Douglas would become the best friend of this elusive man.

It is the casual writing style and exquisite photographs of Lands Forlorn that make it my favorite northern travel book. I've read it many times, though it took me a long while to find a good copy. Lands Forlorn makes a major contribution to any Northern library, and is well worth the hefty investment.

A collector's view

Noted rare book authority George Luste takes a look at Lands Forlorn.

It seems that over the last 20 years I have somehow become a 'book collector'. I don't know why for sure and I never sat down and decided to do so. It just happened, evolving slowly from searching out obscure books on northern Canada at the library.

I'm not sure if one can accurately distinguish a collector of books, from say a mere reader of books. But speaking personally, I think an entrenched 'collector' is apt to buy more than he uses. Once this starts to happen, once one buys more than one reads - the collector virus has set in. A second criteria; if owning a signed, mint copy, complete with the dust jacket of the first edition becomes a compelling need, even if you already own a beat-up copy of the same book - then this only confirms the truth that one probably has crossed the threshold to becoming a genuine 'collector'.

An enjoyable and informative read on the topic of collecting is Jack Matthew's "Collecting Rare Books for Pleasure and Profit" (Putnam's, New York, 1977). Another such book with a more local focus is C.B. Theberge's "Canadiana on Your Bookshelf" (Dent, 1976, paperback). To quote from the latter: "A worthwhile collection is not haphazard, but a well-planned

group of books, 'bound together by a single idea'". My 'single idea' is northern Canadiana with a particular emphasis on early land explorers. This interest grew out of my canoe trips in the far north. A prerequisite to canoeing an area was to read the journals of the early explorers.

The editor asked me to briefly discuss George Mellis Douglas' *Lands Forlorn*, the story of an expedition to Hearne's Coppermine River. It was published in 1914 by G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London, Knickerbocker Press. *Lands Forlorn* stands out for a number of reasons: it is a high quality book in terms of paper, type and binding, it has 180 photographs by the author, many of them outstanding period illustrations of this remote corner of Canada, as well as maps.

George Douglas was a Canadian by birth and his book describes an 18 month private expedition to Great Bear Lake and the Coppermine Mountains in 1911-12. Douglas' book is a must for any collector dealing with the early travellers of the barren lands of northern Canada.

Lands Forlorn is rarely found in used book shops and only sometimes in catalogues from dealers specializing in the Arctic or Canadiana. My estimate of the current

price range is \$200 to \$300 (Canadian) from a knowledgeable dealer depending on the condition and perhaps the seller. It sells for more than Pike's or Hanbury's books. You can only smile when you see the original 1914 price of \$4 on the dust jacket.

The acquisition of my copy has an interesting story to it. In the early '70's while visiting New York City on other matters, and before I was really well into book collecting, I stopped in at the Arگوی bookshop in Manhattan and went upstairs to look at their section on Canada. There, lo and behold, on the shelf was a mint copy, in perfect dust jacket, of *Lands Forlorn* for \$15. I quickly and quietly purchased it and left, pleased as punch with myself at this fantastic find. A few years later I learned that a Toronto book dealer must have been there after me and on seeing a similar mint copy on the same shelf had the presence of mind to find out if there were any more. It turns out they had a whole box of such originals - found in an attic or warehouse I suppose. He quickly bought them all. And so, with my inexperience, I missed a great opportunity to 'corner the market' on a fine book. Such bargain opportunities are indeed rare.

Photo revealed



REVEALED . . . This photograph of John Hornby and George Douglas is being published for the first time. Along with our cover photo, these pictures have been loaned to Che-Mun by Mrs. George Douglas who still resides in Lakefield, Ontario, and is a very spry 92! In this photo, Hornby is pictured on a

rare trip out of the north. He was visiting his friend Douglas while on the way back from the First World War heading for the last time back to the N.W.T. where he would perish several years later. The handwriting is from Mrs. Douglas' father.

News & Notes

CANOESPORT IS HERE . . . There's a new kid on the block of canoeing publications. Canoesport Journal may be a new magazine but there's an old hand at the helm. The irrepressible Harry Roberts, formerly of Backpacker Magazine and Sawyer Canoe, is CJ's editor. The mag is an American counterpart to Canada's Paddler Magazine. CJ has a wide mix of canoeing articles and interests. The first issue rolled off the press late last fall and totalled a hefty 62 glossy pages. Articles included a Georgia river trip, an interview with canoe designer Bob Brown and a piece on seaworthiness of canoes. There are also a number of columns including one by Che-Mun! A much needed new voice on the canoeing scene. A one year subscription is \$10. Write to Canoesport Journal, P.O. Box 991, Odessa, FL, U.S.A. 33556-9987.

COMRADE LENTZ . . . Che-Mun readers might recall a News & Notes item last year about John Lentz' trip to a U.S.S.R. river. John and his party were the first western group to paddle the Katun River in southern Siberia. They used Soviet-style catamarans which are apparently customary over there. The trip was accompanied by a National Geographic Magazine photographer. Geographic is still holding the story and are sending a photog and writer back this summer to get more photos. Following the trip Lentz started talking with Sovintersport, the Soviet agency that runs trips on the Katun. They both agreed they had an exciting river with good guides and great scenery but couldn't get the message out to the rest of the world. So American Lentz prepared a brochure touting trips on the Katun and is distributing them through his North American canoeing contacts. Talk about glasnost. He has also asked for permission to take canoes over in hopes of running a northern Siberian river. This is still tied up in the interminable red-tape but John hopes to hear before the summer. Talk about long distance planning. Imagine those phone bills!

RALEIGH READY . . . June 30 is the official start date for the Operation Raleigh Canadian Arctic Expedition. By the way, the 'Canadian' in that title refers to one of the sponsors - Canadian AirLines International (formerly CP Air). They are but one of a truly impressive list of sponsors lining up to assist this - the largest canoe trip in the history of the Barrrens. Major sponsors include George Weston Ltd. (Loblaws Supermarkets), VIA Rail, Canadian Geographic and the World Wildlife Fund. Equipment sponsors include Patagonia, Eureka! Tents, Silva Compasses, Coleman, Grey Owl Paddles and Tilley Hats. The group will arrive by train at their jumping off point, Churchill, Manitoba, on June 30. It could take several days, depending on the weather, to fly the 32 paddlers and piles of supplies into Angikuni Lake on the Kazan River. Che-Mun will be there for the first week to cover the expedition. The trip culminates in Baker Lake on August 15.

RAFFAN IT IN THE BUSH . . . Che-Mun recently went to see Jim Raffan give an excellent talk at the Black Feather slide show series in Toronto. We were especially interested because Jim, a professional outdoor educator, paddled the L'eau Claire (Clearwater) River on the east coast of Hudson Bay. Che-Mun readers might remember that is the river the Hide-Away Canoe Club wanted to ascend as part of our Hudson to Ungava trip in 1986 (see Outfit 46). We were delayed by ice and had to fly-in to the headwater lake. Raffan was writing a piece for a National Geographic book called America's Hidden Wilderness . . . it's so well hidden that it's in Canada! Watching Jim's wonderful presentation made us not feel so bad at missing out our attempt to go up it. It was hard enough to go down. It is a short (50 miles) river with a lot of drop and a lot of small trees clogging the portage routes. But a beautifully wild place with no crowds. The book will be avail-

able in June as part of a four book series on adventurous trips available through the usual National Geographic source. You can't beat the price . . . only \$7.95.

BIG BUCKS FOR BIG MAC . . . A top-of-the-line canoeing book made the papers recently in a Canadian Press story from London, England. A first edition of Alexander Mackenzie's journal was sold at auction for \$3,400 (Canadian). The pre-auction estimate was less than half that figure. There are two interesting facets to this story. First, Mackenzie's journal, while not truly rare, has been getting high prices for many years among serious book collectors. It is considered one of the cornerstone books for any truly fine canoeing library. The others are Hearne, Franklin (both voyages) and possibly Back. Che-Mun recently saw a first edition of Hearne's book (properly titled: A journey from Prince of Wales Fort in Hudson bay to the Northern oceans in 1769, 1770, 1772 and 1773) on sale for \$6,000 . . . U.S.! The second point is that perhaps such a story signals the beginning of a new era of interest in Canadian canoeing literature. That is certainly good news to those who already have the corner, and many other, stones and bad news to we common folk who desire to get in on the act. Hearne walked across the N.W.T. from Churchill to Coppermine . . . and back! Mackenzie, of course, was the first white man to travel the river which now bears his name. He set out from Montreal in 1789 to chart the land for the North-West Company which was trying to break the fur trade monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company. We are still following in his footsteps.

RAPE AND PILLAGE II . . . He's at it again. North America's number one river killer, Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa, will announce a plan within the next year for a new hydro megaproject in northern Quebec. Bourassa is the man who brought us the James Bay Development Project that has dammed up several rivers on the east coast of James Bay including the Grande and Eastmain. The announcement comes on the heels of a major power deal between Quebec and the state of New York. Quebec will now account for 10 per cent of the state's power. It is difficult to know whether a new area will be opened up or work will commence on further development of the James Bay Project. Hydro Quebec has a detailed list of all potential rivers and their possible power outputs. They have a scheme for every major watercourse in the north. The biggest megaplan already under consideration is the Rupert/Nottaway/Broadback project. This will see the destruction of all three rivers as the latter two are channelled though the Rupert. Those of you thinking of running the challenging Rupert had better get at it before it's a hiking trip.

CANOETALK TIME . . . The third annual L.L. Bean Maine Canoe Symposium will again be held at Camp Winona in Bridgton, Maine this June 10-12. This is one fun weekend! The folks at Bean's do a first rate job of organizing an excellent canoeing weekend with great talks, hands-on displays and good food. Again this year, speakers will include Mike Galt, Harry Roberts, the Che-Mun staff, Garrett and Alexandra Conover (Maine Guides extraordinaire) and many other. The registration fee is \$60. You can get additional info through L.L. Bean c/o MCS, Freeport, Maine 04033. And coming up soon . . . it's not a mall show, it's not a sales fair . . . it's Conclave 88 - proclaimed as the gathering of North American paddlers and the largest demo weekend of canoeing. Conclave 88 will be held April 9-10 at Lake of the Woods Park in Mahomet, Illinois. Last year they had participants from Ontario, Quebec, Colorado, New York, South Carolina and 15 other states. Topics and speakers include; David Yost on the Seaworthy Hull; Harry Roberts, Power Paddling Clinic; Ned Sharples, the Paddle, Fit and Use. Write to Box 8, Urbana, IL 61801.

Canoelit

In Review

The Historical Atlas of Canada: From the beginning to 1800.

University of Toronto Press.
R. Cole Harris Editor.
Geoffrey J. Matthews
Cartographer/Designer.
Toronto, 1987. \$95.

To be fair, I should state right off the top that I love maps. New maps, old maps, topographic maps, or even road maps, I can look at them for hours.

When I first heard of the Historical Atlas of Canada, visions of lovely old charts came to mind. Imagine, a whole huge volume filled with maps. Well, I was dismayed to learn upon opening this book that this wasn't the case. The feeling vanished, however, after a few short minutes. When I had a chance to flip through it, I noticed that there was a lot more to this atlas than a scholarly work.

It is a masterpiece.

After reading the first couple of chapters, I realized that this book is a labour of love. It covers the time from when the ice sheets dominated the landscape, between 18,000 and 10,000 years ago, up to the year 1800. But it's not light reading. If you concentrate on one plate every day, you will finish the book in just over two months. While this may sound like a ridiculous idea, believe me, once you start getting into this book, you'll want to spend time studying each page.

Some plates show the movements of the native population and how they spread across the continent. Evidence of stone tool evolution and distribution, as well as the impact of environmental changes during the glacier's retreat, provide graphic support to the theories on the spread of aboriginal peoples across North America. It also shows the impact of European culture, and how it shaped native populations. Areas in history, such as the development of the fur trading companies, the colonization of Quebec and the St. Lawrence lowlands, even the evolution of the wooden house fall within the scope of this book.

To say the Historical Atlas of Canada is just an atlas is gross understatement. It is the most unique history book on Canada available. The large format may give it an appearance of belonging on a coffee table, but it should live on the top of a desk beside a comfortable chair. To fully grasp its scope, you'll need quiet and several hours alone—it was a great excuse for not shovelling the walk this winter.

And the best part is that it's only volume one - there are two more to follow.

Sean Peake

Paddle to the Amazon

by Don Starkell. Edited by Charles Wilkins. Published by McClelland and Stewart, Toronto. 1987, 316 pages \$24.95.

I must confess. Even though I had heard favourable things about this book from non-canoeists I had no plans to read it.

Perhaps it was the sub-title - The Ultimate 12,000-mile Canoe Adventure - that scared me off. I think many of us have been 'ultimized' to death by various megacanoes whose aquatic adventures did not transfer well to the printed page.

Therefore when I obtained a review copy of Paddle to the Amazon and read it I was shocked. Other long canoe trips I have read about were dull books loaded with wooden dialogue. Paddle to the Amazon, however, is a riveting read. Like the cliché says; I couldn't put it down.

Paddle to the Amazon is exactly that - the tale of a Winnipeg man and his two sons who leave that mid-Canadian city and paddle to the mouth of the Amazon River half a world and two years away. In the end, one son dropped out and after reading this book you certainly can't blame him.

Paddling a 21-foot fiberglass canoe the Starkell's undergo just about every trial, tribulation and kindness that can befall a canoeist. This, of course, is not a story of a wilderness canoe trip. But it is a truly absorbing canoeing adventure tale.

The trip was started with little fanfare in 1980. Three years later Don Starkell approached editor Charles Wilkins with a million words from his daily logs kept throughout the trip. Wilkins did an admirable job of distilling it considerably. The book is straightforward and presented in chronological form with selected dates from the two-year trek.

The threesome went up the Red River, down the Mississippi, around the Gulf of Mexico, up the Orinoco in Venezuela and then down the mighty Amazon crossing it just before the mouth to arrive in Belem, Brazil.

It is a remarkable story of physical adversity, emotional strain and immense hardship inflicted by both man and nature. It takes someone of special desire and drive to complete such a trip. It is really more of a quest.

Don and son Dana took two three-month breaks along the way - in Mexico and Trinidad. They needed it.

The battle against the turbulent Gulf of Mexico is truly amazing. Capsized several times by the mountainous surf, they also confronted razor-sharp reefs, beligerent soldiers, suspicious officials. They were helped by both friendly peasants and wealthy vacationers.

The book does contain some photos. However, most of Starkell's photographs and cameras were destroyed by either the ocean or the soldiers. There are some frightening pictures of a sunburnt Don Starkell, covered in salt sores and looking

emaciated trapped on a stormbound island while running out of fresh water. The two-some were taken as drug smugglers by the police, spies by the army and crazies by almost everyone else. The book is a non-stop run of adventure most of which would have driven any normal person to the nearest airport.

It certainly gave me an even greater appreciation of the fresh cold water and unpopulated spaces of Canada's north. Paddle to the Amazon is a first-rate adventure story that happens to be about canoeing. A remarkable achievement - both the trip and the book.

Michael Peake

Overland To Starvation Cove/With the Inuit in search of Franklin 1878-1880.

by Heinrich Klutschak. Edited and translated by William Barr. The University of Toronto Press, 1987. Toronto. \$24.95 cloth.

Sir John Franklin formed the cornerstone for Canadian Arctic exploration both during his life and after his death. When Franklin disappeared on his third Arctic voyage in 1848, the search was on to discover his fate, thus spawning one of the most intense and rewarding eras of northern exploration.

The tale is now familiar to many. Franklin's ships, the Erebus and Terror, were hopelessly gripped by the ice for over a year near the central Arctic island of King William. From there the surviving crew's waged a desperate race from death over the ice dragging a boat and many useless items that were ultimately scattered across the north as they passed through the hands of various Inuit families.

Of the many search parties dispatched by the British Admiralty and, later, Lady Jane Franklin and other interested groups perhaps the most interesting and fruitful was the Schwatka Expedition of 1878-1880. This small group travelled over 3,000 miles by dogsled and live with, and as, Inuit for that two year period. Travelling from Hudson Bay with several Inuit families, they spent an entire summer in the King William Island area and Starvation Cove where the remains of dozens of Franklin's ill-fated crew were found.

The expedition was commanded by Lieutenant Frederick Schwatka, a third generation American of German descent. Sponsored by the American Geographical Society and the New York Herald, it was a group of only five which included Heinrich Klutschak, an artist and surveyor.

Klutschak published his story of the trip in 1881 in Germany and this is the first translation of the work. Schwatka never published an account of the trip though W.H. Gilder, the accompanying newspaperman, did in 1881. Klutschak's book is a fascinating account of Inuit life 100 years

Continued on Page 11.

Page 9

An idea that bombed

Atomizing the Arctic

HEADLINE, 1946 - Will the atomic bomb and the United Nation's combine to make a world of beauty and industry out of what is now but frozen waste?

by Wallace W. Ashley
and Elmer V. Swan.

Everybody talks about the weather but nobody does anything about it. So quipped Mark Twain, with perfect truth, in the years just before the dawn of the atomic era.

Now something *can* be done about the weather, however - by using atomic energy to perform a gigantic 'defrosting' operation on old Mother earth's northern refrigerator. Professor Julian Huxley has mentioned this possibility, and touched off a discussion on the feasibility of such a project and its benefits to mankind.

Most of our weather comes directly out of the North. Eliminate or modify the influences that make that weather, and the climate of our entire northern hemisphere would undergo radical changes. Rid the polar region of the vast ice-sheet and you would remove the occasional cold snaps that freeze water pipes as far south as St. Louis and Washington.

The vast wastelands north of the Arctic Circle would be opened up to mining and agriculture. Intercontinental airlines using intermediate refueling bases could fly the Great Circle route regularly. Warm-water ports, open the year round, could become a reality along Hudson Bay, Siberia's Arctic shores and the White Sea.

Can the Arctic ice be eliminated? Huxley believes this age-old dream of scientists and economists has come much closer to realization with the arrival of atomic energy. The terrific heat generated by nuclear fission would melt large areas of ice. A series of well-placed atomic blasts would cover an area great enough to make the results effective. Whether the 'bombs' should be dropped from planes, as in the case of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, or whether towers should be constructed for remote control operation, as was done in the original test in the New Mexico desert, would be determined by a commission of scientists and economists.

The area concerned is extensive. The greatest single expanse of ice-covered land north of the Arctic Circle is Greenland, the source of the icebergs that harass North Atlantic shipping during the winter and summer months. West of Greenland are numerous islands held fast in the grip of year-round ice. Northern Alaska is ice-bound months at a time. Upper Siberia is bitterly cold, as American seamen on the Murmansk run can attest.

Cartographers believe destruction of the ice-sheet would enable them to get full data for the great uncharted areas now appearing only as white space on the Arctic map.



TITLE PAGE from the May 1946 *Mechanix Illustrated* article that promised a better - and ice-cap free - future.

It is an interesting fact that the center of the floating ice-pack is not at the North Pole but at 83 degrees 50' North Latitude and 160 degrees West Longitude, about 430 miles below. This center is well named the Pole of Inaccessibility.

A simple computation will demonstrate that sufficient uranium is available for an Arctic de-icing project. Available also is the agency that could initiate and supervise it - the United Nations Organization. The burden of financing would be the obligation of all nations, since climatic benefits would be worldwide. The resultant change in the ocean's level would be felt slightly on every coastline around the globe, another reason for cooperation on an international basis. No accurate estimate can be made as to the cost involved, but many meteorologists agree the project would pay for itself many times over.

Once destroyed, the polar ice is not likely to accumulate again, since oceanographers assert that ice-sheets form only when each winter's accumulation of ice fails to melt. The salinity of sea water keep ice from forming until the temperature of the water falls to 29 degrees; below that point pancake ice forms, but it does not increase excessively in one winter - never more than

10 feet - and it usually melts the next summer. The concern is with the ice-sheet that accumulated during past ages.

Supporting the theory that the ice-sheet would not re-form, Dr. Walter H. Bucher, professor of geology at Columbia University, likens the polar ice to a 'common cold' affecting the earth in its 'head' and 'feet', producing what he considers an unnatural condition. Dr. Bucher is cautious about the feasibility of an ice-blasting project, but believes that removal of all the polar ice would result in a temperate climate north of the Arctic Circle, and that removal of a major part would modify the extreme cold of the winter there and restore vegetation in the cleared areas.

Geologists believe blasting the Arctic ice might pay for itself in the possible discovery of new deposits of uranium, the mineral now required for nuclear fission. Signs point to the existence of coal, natural gas, cryolite, pitchblende and marble. Cryolite is now mined in Greenland and shipped to the United States for the production of aluminum. Marble is quarried in Greenland. New oil deposits may be unearthed. Radium-bearing ore is mined on Great Bear Lake in Canada. Gold very likely exists in the Arctic, as it does in Alaska and northern Siberia.

Alaska proved popular with servicemen and many plan to return and make their homes there. Transferring Alaska's climate to the far north would leave a large region to settlement and agricultural development. Construction of highways, railroads, airports and the building of towns and cities would provide a new frontier, a new market for the world's industrial goods and a new source of food and raw materials.

The danger of inundating major ports or extensive areas of shoreline is considered remote. The mean sea level is believed to have risen about 300 feet as the Great Glacier retreated from northwest Europe and the Ohio and Missouri river valleys to its present Arctic lair.

Working out the mechanical details of an Arctic de-icing project will require tact as well as time. More than one nation can be expected to object, fearing encroachment by the ocean on their marginal lands. Others may demand a share of the Arctic territory if it becomes productive and profitable. Some might even question the possible ill effects that atomic blasts concentrated in one area might have upon the earth and its orbit.

But the two great developments of World War II - the control over nuclear energy and the creation of the United Nations Organization - may yet be linked in the spectacular job of melting the Arctic ice.

The Canadian Canoeing Companion

An Illustrated Guide to Paddling Canada's Wilderness by Alex Narvey. Thunder Enlightenment Press, Winnipeg. 144 pages \$19.85 (\$14.95 U.S.) Publication date: April 26.

So what do you do if your 27 years old and want to publish books. Start your own company. That's what Winnipeg's Alex Narvey did when he founded, the wonderfully named, Thunder Enlightenment Press.

With the advent of marvels like the Macintosh computer and small laser printers it is possible for a knowledgeable young writer like Narvey to prepare a manuscript that is both good-looking and ready to go to a commercial printer. This book is a personal and independent affair.

It is a classic Canadian approach - common sense, caution and respect for the wilderness - a philosophy promoted by Eric Morse. Narvey cut his teeth while tripping and working at a summer camp on Lake of the Woods in north-western Ontario. His book is designed for that market as it covers the basics of paddling, packing and portaging. In

fact it grew out of a tripping manual written for the camp.

Perhaps indicative of the new wave the first chapter of the book - not the last - is about the environment and our impact on it. Narvey has some good common sense ideas about such matters. The section includes a wonderful passage about the land and its meaning from an 1861 speech by Chief Seattle upon surrendering two million acres of land to the government. He speaks of selling off the land to the white man as "the end of living and the beginning of survival."

The book is well thought-out with many good diagrams. The version that Che-Mun reviewed was an uncorrected proof with most of the photos missing. So it is difficult to tell exactly how the finished product will look. Many of the areas Narvey covers have already been done to perfection by Bill Mason in *Path of the Paddle*.

The crowning achievement is the Resources section; the references and bibliographies are the best I have ever seen. Narvey lists every important canoeing association, conservation group, school, route book, equipment source and access to many canoe related subjects from birds to knots. He also has the address on where to write for canoe info anywhere in Canada. In this respect alone the Canadian Canoeing Companion is a valuable work.

FRESHWATER SAGA

MEMOIRS OF A LIFETIME OF WILDERNESS CANOEING
ERIC W. MORSE

In his lifetime Morse paddled Canada's rivers and lakes from Hudson Bay to the Yukon, from Winnipeg to the Arctic Ocean. This vivid account of his travels reflects the spirit of adventure with which he undertook them.

'On one level the book is a fascinating essay on the art of canoeing. On another, it tells how to organize a canoeing expedition and the perils that await the unprepared. On a third level it's a first-rate study of the geography of some of the country's most historic rivers - Churchill, Hayes, Mackenzie, Taltson ... (Morse's) joy in re-exploring historic waterways shines through.'

Jim Robb, *Ottawa Citizen*

\$9.95



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PRESS
63A ST GEORGE STREET, TORONTO, ONTARIO M5S 1A6

Continued

ago. The party realized they had to adopt the native style of living to exist in the Arctic winter. In this regard they were much like Samuel Hearne who also travelled with a group of natives (Indians).

They were lead by Tulugac, a magnificent hunter and provider. There were no deaths or injuries incurred during the entire trip. The party travelled by dog sled in winter until the snow disappeared. It was a tough life, however, with many periods of cold and privation. The whites had to learn to eat raw caribou and salmon, consume blubber and live in caribou robes in igloo's lightby oil lamps. They lived and ate as Inuit which meant according to the amount of game they could kill.

Their contribution to the Franklin puzzle rates behind only Rae and McClintock. The Schwatka Expedition was able to establish that Franklin's journals were found by the Inuit and given to their children to play with since to them they were obviously quite indecipherable. Klutschak and company discovered many skeletal remains of the crew as well as clothing, remains of the boat, numerous spoons, buttons, even stoves. They also found the grave of Lt. John Irving which included his Royal Naval College mathematics medal.

They speculated that the group was suffering from scruvy and could explain why they would have taken so many unnecessary items with them on a starvation march. (We now know they were suffering from lead poisoning which impaired their thinking while slowly killing them.) It was also determined by Klutschak that the Inuit were in a habit of tearing down cairns. This undoubtedly arose, said Klutschak, after they found some of them filled with valuable items and assumed they all were similarly endowed.

The route went from the west coast of Hudson Bay near Chesterfield Inlet, north to the Hayes River (which they named after the then U.S. President). They followed the Hayes down to where it joins the Back River at its mouth. Following the summer of exploration in and around King William Island the return route was up the Back to near the Meadowbank where they crossed over westward to Chesterfield.

Klutschak rendered several drawings, some striking, which are reproduced. The translation by University of Saskatchewan's Willam Barris excellent. The book is very readable and flows well. Included are a thorough introduction with a full Franklin search summary, a postscript by northern researcher Owen Beattie, copious footnotes and illustrations. This book is a firstrate job in every sense with the only exception being the surprising number of typos - five by my count.

While written at the time to try and supply information on Franklin, the very means of their doing so is of equal interest to today's reader. This is a story of coping with the Arctic on Inuit terms combined with the ultimate Arctic historical mystery. The best of both worlds.

Michael Peake

Equipping Youth of the World for Life



Operation Raleigh

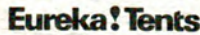
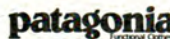
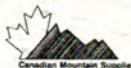


Canadian ARCTIC EXPEDITION '88

Patron HRH The Prince of Wales KG, KT, GCB



CANADIAN EQUIPMENT SPONSORS



DISCOVER
the pleasures of a great wilderness meal

- Full line of Canadian made lightweight meals & snacks
- Wholesome, natural ingredients
- Large portions
- Quick & easy to prepare
- Available at quality outdoor stores across Canada

HARVEST FOODWORKS

40 Hillcrest Drive, Toronto, Ontario, M6G 2E3
(416) 533-7479

CHE-MUN

Founded by Nick Nickels

The International Newsletter for
Canadian Wilderness Canoeists

CHE-MUN is published quarterly.

**Box 548, Station "O"
Toronto, Ontario
Canada, M4A 2P1.**

Subscription rates:
One Year \$10
Two years \$18

**CHE-MUN is owned and published
by The Hide-Away Canoe Club.**

Michael Peake, Publisher.