

the artist has a sketch on a page following 146. However, the illustrator Treany, a Canadian, also shows birch-bark canoes in use. Note the frontispiece in the same book. Also, see frontispiece in Nute, The Voyageur.

It seems that the fur traders tried out several kinds of river craft of which were known to the Frenchmen as bateaux. The North West company brought birch-bark from Canada by sea, but soon learned that this kind of canoe was not practical for use on the Columbia. We read of Chinook canoes being used, and heavy Hudson's Bay barges...."

From the Beaver, the historical quarterly published by the Hudson's Bay Company. Oregon Historical ~~Quarterly~~ Society would have file of this authoritative magazine. Citations will be given where it is possible Quigg may wish to see the illustrations. Narrative account of some interest now, and of general historical interest in over-all pictures of projected development.

December, 1953 issue:

(Journey for Frances) Governor Simpson's 18-year-old bride was the first woman to travel by canoe from Montreal to York Factory via the Great Lakes.. She kept a detailed diary.

May 2nd (1830) Left La Chine at 4 a.m. in two Canoes manned by 15 hands each, all strong, active, fine looking Canadians. The passengers consisting of Mr. and Mrs. (J G) McLavis and Maid Servant in the one & Mr. Simpson, Myself & Servant in the other accompanied by Messrs (James) Keith & (Samuel) Gale who kindly volunteered to favor us with their company for a day or two.

Our Canoe, a most beautiful craft, airy and elegant beyond description, was 35 feet in length, the lading consisting of 2 water proof trunks (known by the name of Cassetts) containing our clothes; 1 basket for holding Cold Meat, Knives & Forks, Towels etc. 1 Egg Basket, a travelling Case (or canteen) containing 6 wine bottles, Cups & Saucers, Tea Pot,

Sugar Basin, Spoons, Cruets, Glasses & Tumblers, Fishing Apparatus, Tea, Sugar, Salt & &c, also a bag of Biscuits, a bale of Hams, a Keg of Butter & &c.

The provisions for the crew were Pork & Biscuits; from which circumstances the young recruits are called "Pork Eaters" to distinguish them~~xxx~~ from the old Winterers, who feed chiefly on Pemican, a mixture of Buffalo Meat, Tallow and a due proportion of hairs (but whether the last ingredient is intended to keep the composition together or not I cannot say) this ^{not} is the most delicate, but it is a very substantial food and more portable than any other, as it is closely packed in a bag made of Buffalo hide. There is also a keg of liquor (called the Dutchman) from which the people are ~~drugged~~ ^{drugged} three or four times a day according to the state of the Weather.

At this order we started, the voyageurs singing and the Canoe almost flying thro' the water--the motion is perfectly easy & in fine weather...

At 9 o'clock we put ashore for Breakfast, above the Rapids of St. Ann, the water being too shallow for the Canoes to touch the bank Mrs. Mc Tavish and myself were carried in the arms, and the Gentlemen on the backs of our sturdy Canadians for which, as may be supposed, caused a hearty laugh both at and to such of the company as were notices.

Immediately upon landing the Guide, Bernard (an Indian) kindled a fire with his Flint & Steel and a small piece of bark & touchwood with which the fire bag is furnished; two or three men with hatches provided wood--3 poles tied together were placed over the fire, with a large kettle suspended from them by a chain--the cloth was laid on the grass and spread with cold meat, fowls, ham, eggs, bread & butter everyone sat down in the position found most convenient and each made the most of the time afforded.

Mr. Simpson, after looking at his watch, gave the call of "Take Away" the breakfast party were on their feet in a moment, the things washed, packed

and the Canoe off again, within 45 minutes usually allowed for the meal...

....

3rd Arose at 2 a.m. with aching bones occasioned by the dampness and hardness of my couch; the people were roused by Mr. Simpson's well known call of "Leve leve leve" when they all started up covered with their blankets in which they wrap themselves sleeping all weathers in the open air on the ground. The Canoes were then laden and we embarked at 3 o'clock..."

And so on, up at 2 and 3, travelling until 9 or 10, and once up at midnight and travelling until the next midnight to make 100 miles... travelling in rain, snow. And these were called "light canoes" as they carried no trade goods, furs etc.

Summer, 1954 edition

p 16...We arrived....we remained at this post till the 22nd inst. during which time, there were arrivals of gentlemen with their Brigades from all parts of the country, who were afterwards to proceed to York Factory, the grand Depot of the business. The largest Brigade was that of Mr. (John) Rowand from the Saskatchewan, which consisted of 21 large boats deeply laden with furs and other valuables...

"...26th Travelled today with great rapidity; the people being told they must reach York Factory before they slept. They accordingly lost no time and by applying frequently to the Liquor Keg contrived to keep up both their strength and spirits...

"..fond as I am of travelling I own I felt pleased at the idea of remainin two months; having traversed in various ways since the 8th of March, a distance of 8,000 miles, which for a novice is no small undertaking.

Page 34 same issue

Viewing the Eclipse ,1860. (includes two drawings from aboard canoe, showing seats and paddlers.(small canoe)

p. 35 another article

".... the height of the men varied from five feet four to five feet nine and a half inches; the average measurement of the chest was a little more than forty-one-inches, of the humerus nearly thirteen inches, and the forearm a little more than 11 inches. A shirt and trousers fastened by a belt, with a place in it for tobacco pouch and knife, with a pair of moccasins appeared to be their only garment. All wore long hair; Narcisse parted his at the side and left it free; the others in the middle and fastened by a handkerchief bound around the forehead. Their trousers were fastened just below the knee by a sort of garter made of twisted grasses, and to which the lower leg was usually rolled...

The Governor, William Mactavish send them to the Lower Fort to make the outfit for the canoe, Sir George's old north canoe...was brought out, it measured thirty-five feet in length and across the middle five feet three inches.

The next thing was to choose six voyageurs. George Kippling, a part Chippeway was recommended as the best guide in the country. He was a fine, straight honest looking wiry, sharp featured fellow of about fifty five years with a short grizzly beard and long black locks tinted with grey. Good natured and full of merriment he wore a flat pan-cake like Scotch cap set jauntly on one side of his head, a red flannel shirt and a pair of trousers shaped like a long bag with very short legs...

W..With their advanced pay the voyageurs added tea and sugar to the 336 lbs of flour and the same of pemmican supplied to them. The food supplies for the eclipse party were more varied, 60 lbs of pemmican, 36 lbs of ham, 50 lbs of salt feet, 45 lbs salt pork, 37lbs dried buffalo meat; 75 lbs flour, 75 lbs biscuits; 1 bu. of potatoes, 1 lb of tea, 12 lbs of sugar, 10 lbs of butter, plus salt, pepper and mustard

Gunny sacks and oil cloth helped to keep their provisions and equipment from getting wet, as Sir George Simpson's canoe set off with

the half ton of provisions, nine men with personal luggage and several boxes of astronomers instruments and boxes of alcohol for the naturalist 's collection...

"...On the lake, sometimes paddling, sometimes helped by a crude sail, they met several brigades of barges and the American flag, the Stars and Stripes , flying from Sir George 's Canoe was saluted; once by a small canon; once by the rusty flint-locks of an Indian trader in a barge crowded with Indians, dogs and miscellaneous cargo of merchandise and accompanied by a dozen canoes filled with women and children. We returned the honor with our fowling pieces...

From the naturalist 's description of the barges it is easy to recognize the York boats// "The looked like the vessels of antiquity familiar in illustrated school histories, low amidship, high and peaked at bow and stern with a central mast held in place by ropes passing from the peak to both ends and gunwales; they were about thirty-five feet long and eight to 10 wide, carried a single square sail, or were propelled by six or eight oars--a clumsy headlong craft which a long sweep oar at the stern managed with difficulty.

(Trip was equipped for a 3,000 mile journey)

Same issue: Page 50

York boats (important detail)

The rowers sat on the opposite side of the boat to that on which their blade dipped into the water, and they were seated alternately on left and right sides of the boat facing the stern, one man to each oar. They rose to their feet as they leaned on the huge sweep, pushing it forward and down to lift the blade out of the water, then sank to a sitting position on the thwart as it bit deeply into the water. Then as they pulled they strained mightily, the muscles of their arms, shoulders and backs stood out like bands of iron. Most of them wore around their foreheads a jet black hair a strip of crimson calico to keep the perspiration from rolling down

into their eyes. The hand grip of the oars was bound with cloth or a strip of deer skin to prevent their hands from blistering. With their swarthy complexions, their flashing white teeth and bright, black eyes, they brought to mind vividly stories of pirates and galley slaves--except that these were laughing, kindly ones.

The York boat following kept a good distance behind us with its eight oars lifting and lowering in unison gave the impression of a giant bug walking across the water, and the noise we made as we travelled woke the echoes along the shore and sent them rumbling from bank to bank. The oars left the water with a hollow, booming explosive sound like a clap of thunder which could be heard on land before the boats could be seen. (For years I thought that the sharp report and echoing rumble were made, not by the oars but by the men as they came thumping down on the thwarts) This, combined with the screech and squeal of the heavy oars grinding against the thole pins and the chant of the rowers as they toiled composed the melody which always announced "~~The~~ York "York boat coming."

Riding there in the boat we did not seem to hear the rolling of the hollow boom but instead a shorter, sharper explosion of sound. But often on land we could hear their thunder rolling across Little Playgreen Lake...

The boat in which we rode was one the Indians called a "hundred and twenty piece boat." They counted the freight carried by "pieces" each piece weighing eighty pounds. The usual standard weight was an 80 lb chest of tea. Add to this the weight of the boats and crews and one may conceive vaguely the strength and endurance of the eight men who forced the boats against swiftly running water and seething boiling strewn rapids.... Little wonder our men sailed when the wind whipped away the mists...the great square sail was unfurled to the wind, and the grateful men stretched themselves out on the bales or along the thwarts, lit their pipes and relaxed.

(This, was undoubtedly, much the same as while descending Priest Rapids from below Vantage, 11 miles to their end at present Priest Rapids Dam, and especially along the "Whale Chute".)

"...Always before when travelling in our canoes we had had to portage these rapids, but because of their size and bulk the York boats could shoot many of the rapids which normal yhad to be portaged by smaller craft; yet how small our huge craft seemed when caught and drawn deeply in the grip of the swirling, boiling water of the rapids. It churned against us, dragging greedily at the boat. We watched Mokhoman (the steersman) His eagle eyes were fixed steadily ahead. They missed nothing. Even before the lookout in the bow called the warning he seemed to sense each hidden danger. His whole body was tense as wet sinew and the spray glistened on his bronzed arms and shoulders. With infinite skill he steered his course through the apparently invisible channel between the fanged rocks and whirling eddies, and guided us safely through the hungry breakers out into the peace and quite of still waters again..."

Spring, 1956 issue contains article on boatmen's songs, Prairie bards, in French and with English translation and some ~~English~~ music notes.