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DIARY OF A CANOE TRIP (a relatively true personal account) 81

By [Debra Borys](#)

Disclaimer

Though the following events actually occurred, the names have been changed to protect the not so innocent. In some cases composite characters have been created. As you read further, you will understand why. Poetic license has been exercised throughout and an occasional white lie was tossed in for good measure.



Thursday, Day 1--Meeting at Camp Beaver Haven

It rained. I took a twenty minute swim test and met the five other people who would be on the trip. I decided to go through with it anyway.

Jethro and Ralph are the leaders. Jethro is a farmer and Ralph works on cars. I haven't figured out yet how that qualifies them to teach survival in the wilderness, but I'm working on it.

Dudley, we call him Dud for short, is a teacher for slow learners. I think that's great. When I was in school, they just put the slow teachers in with the regular kids.

Teddie is going to be the comedian of the trip. The funniest part about him is, I don't think he knows it, yet.

The only other female on the trip is Anastasia Philemena Przkewsjyska. She said we could call her Anastasia. I told her thanks.

The only major problem is I can't seem to get my towel dry, even though it spent all night in the camp's electric dryer. Hope this isn't a bad omen.

Fri. Day 2--On the road

It rained. But who needs sunshine anyway when you spend eighteen hours in a van with six completely different personalities competing for the window seats.

Teddie made a joke about launching the canoes in the flooded fields we passed up near Chicago. At least, I think he was just joking.

Sat. Day 3--Arrival in Canada

It rained. We reached Quetico Park right before lunch. I voted to eat in the van, but apparently everyone else thought it would be more fun to canoe to a little island and eat our hardtack in the rain. Of course, the wet weather did make the hardtack easier to chew.

The sun came out a couple of times. Once, when we took a break, Anastasia took a long swim over to another campsite. She didn't seem to mind at all that the water was only five degrees above freezing.

We had our first portage right before we camped for the night. From the way my back hurts now, it's obvious we packed more than enough food to last the trip. But I think maybe I read the clothing list wrong. I brought hiking boots instead of hip boots.

Sun. Day 4--A day of rest?

It rained. Ralph caught the first Northern of the trip. I'm not sure how much the fish weighed, but I am sure it was at least partially responsible for the overturned canoe.

I found out today that Canada has quicksand, too. It wasn't so bad, really. Ralph pulled me out before the mud got too far above my waist and Jethro made up a ballad about it around the campfire tonight.

Mon. Day 5--My turn to cook

It rained. It's a good thing I like instant oatmeal for breakfast, although I think maybe I won't buy any more for awhile

after I get home.

Most of us portaged around some rapids today. Ralph and Jethro took the short way--upside down. I think I'll stick to the water slides back in the States.

Jethro's favorite line seems to be "I'm getting too old for this." I don't think he was when we started.

Tues. Day 6--Halfway there!

It rained. We did manage to get our clothes a little dryer between cloudbursts. We portaged over a mountain today and I learned to steer in Dudley's canoe. Poor Dud.

Teddie and Ralph caught some fish in the evening and we grilled them over the fire. They tasted delicious, but I burned my finger pretty badly trying to scrape my portion off the grill.

We took turns singing around the fire. When my turn came, the only song I could think of was "How dry I am." Somehow, it didn't seem appropriate.



Wed. Day 7--Really getting rugged now

It hailed! Finally, a break in the weather. I found out my rain gear *is* extra durable. No one seemed to have enough sense to go inside their tents so we stood around laughing instead. I never noticed before how 'hilarious' and 'hysteria' sound an awful lot alike.

Dudley had tears running down his face. When I asked him if he was okay, he said he felt so good it scared him half to death.

Thurs. Day 8--The great outdoors

I got sunburned! The sunshine put us in a party mood. We played musical canoes and "Who's got my pack, I got yours."

I pretended to be Cleopatra for a while, stretched out in the bottom of a canoe, but Antony--I mean Teddie--put an end to that when he splashed me. Accidentally. Four times.

Anastasia spotted a black bear on shore less than a quarter of a mile from where we planned to camp for the night. After we watched him from our canoes for quite a while, we decided to camp somewhere else.

Fri. Day 9--Last day on the lakes

It rained. I'd heard summer doesn't last very long in Canada. A wind storm kicked up as we crossed the last lake on our way to the parking lot. Ralph and I were in a canoe together and I was glad to find out roller coasters don't affect me like they used to.

The park facilities had a hot shower! At least, it was still kind of warm by the time my turn came. It's nice to know the smell in the van comes from our damp, moldy clothes and not from me.

We also found out why Teddie never wore his hiking boots. He was using them to store moose "berries" to make a paperweight. I thought the boots seemed extra heavy during that last, mile-long portage.

Sat. Day 10--Homeward bound!

It rained. The van didn't smell too bad after the first couple of hours. My survival instincts must be fine tuned for my senses to defend themselves like that.

The leaders had evaluation sheets for us to fill out on the ride back. I tried to be helpful.

When asked about how well the leaders led, I suggested name tags to help distinguish them from the rest of the group.

Concerning food, I thought they should find out if someone made dehydrated ice cream and powdered Coca-Cola. Those were the only two items we seemed to have missed.

My only serious suggestion went under the section labeled "Other Remarks." I wrote, "If you plan to continue offering this exotic vacation experience to your campers, there's one thing you should tell them. 'Bring your own sunshine!'"

Things I Will Take On My Next Trip



[Quetico Provincial Park Adventure Map - Waterproof](#)

Amazon Price: \$15.99



[SAS Survival Handbook, Revised Edition: For Any Climate, in Any Situation](#)

Amazon Price: \$10.37
List Price: \$19.99



[Paddle Beat](#)

Amazon Price: \$0.99