

PLEASE SAVE
HMS

11.71

THE LIFE of TEN MEN

FOR TEN DAYS

IN THE WILDERNESS

ADVISOR.....Vernon R. Van Selow

GUIDE.....Denny Dvorak

and

1. Dave Van Selow
2. Don Bunting
3. Bob Elliott
4. Jim Lehman
5. Bill Langford
6. Ralph Podhradsky
7. Dick Capps
8. Ray Miller

(Capps and Miller from Post No. 1)
(All others from Post No. 8C)

On July 25, at 4:00 A.M., eight Explorer Scouts with their advisor left Downers Grove for Ely, Minnesota, there to embark on the Canadian Wilderness Canoe Trip. The group, including the narrator, arrived at Eagle River, Wisconsin at 1:00 P.M. of our first day, and stayed at the cabin of Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Elliott, on Pickerel Lake for the balance of that day and night. We enjoyed the hospitality of this house, and also the beauty of the woods and walks found near by. Having begun our day very early we hit the sack with the dusk. Before dawn on Sunday the 26th, we were up and ready to move on. At 4:30 we left the Elliott's, heading north and west for Ely, Minnesota. It seemed like an endless trip, that last 370 miles, for each one of us was anxious to begin the adventure proper. We arrived at the Charles L. Sommers Canoe Base shortly after two in the afternoon. We immediately registered in and were introduced to our Guide.

We all sized him up very thoroughly, for this young fellow was to be our law, for the entire trip, his judgment and decisions final and unquestionable. We were not too greatly impressed, at our first introduction. He was a Czech lad, 21 years old, stood five feet nine inches tall and weighed only 146 pounds. He spoke softly and gave his name as Denny Dvorak. His appearance was shabby and rather unkempt, his beard was bristly since he had not shaved since June 1, when he first arrived at the base. His appearance was further estranged by the bandana of bright red which he had folded to a width of two inches and tied about his head. It was some time later that we found out that each guide wears a similar bandana, varying in color. The blue one indicates a first year guide, red for those who are second year guides, and the white one for the third year. After that the white band is permanent and feathers or other ornaments are added to the bandana.

The first thing Denny did was to have us tote our packs to the tents which had been assigned to us. After showing us where to stow our gear, we went on a tour of the base. The Lodge is made of logs and contains a large dining room and the kitchen. The dining room holds about sixty people. This is also used as the council-fire room. The kitchen is well equipped and ruled over by the Chief Cook assisted by the Bull Cook. The Chief Cook is a permanent employee. The Bull Cook is a young fellow of eighteen or so, usually a new one for each season. His job is to be generally useful about meal preparation, and he is given his board and lodging and a small salary for the three month period.

Denny next led us through the lavatory, into the Swedish Sauna, through the Post Exchange and hence into the food and equipment rooms. Having completed our tour of the place, we began the job of assembling our supplies. We were to carry all our food for the ten day trek since once we were away from the Base we would have no further contact with supply sources. Most of our food was dehydrated and packaged for convenience on the trail, but after a day or night in the open it certainly tasted wonderful. When we had finally had our food pack okay'd, we were issued Duluth Packs for our personal gear. Each two boys were given a pack. The advisor and the guide were each given a personal pack. When we had been given ample time to pack our personal gear, we were told to report at the lake front in swimming trunks. We were each sent out and told to swamp our canoe and return it to shore. This took up the greater part of the afternoon that remained, for the water was wonderful, and we enjoyed the sport with the canoes.

We hurried back to our tents, to dress and had barely completed the task when the Chow Gong sounded. We enjoyed a good supper followed by a Council-Fire. Here we met the other crews who would be out at the same time we would be. In all there were five groups - the first from Superior, Wisconsin, one from Superior, Nebraska, one each from Princeton and La Salle, Illinois and of course our crew

from Downers Grove. During the evening we learned songs and chants to sing while canoeing and camping. We were given a brief history of the Quetico Forest and instructions as to fishing and hunting laws, as well as pointers on courtesy on the trail. We headed back to our tents, anxious for morning and the beginning of our Wilderness Adventure.

Monday morning we were up bright and early. After a good night sleep and a hearty breakfast we loaded our four canoes and started out at 9:00 A.M. The trail we had chosen was one that had not been travelled in two years and the camp asked us if we would set up campsites on two lakes which were listed as not having any. We gladly accepted the task. We left the base and paddled across Moose Lake and entered Newfound Lake by way of a shallow stream. From Newfound Lake into Sucker Lake which we knew would bring us to our first portage on the opposite shore. Having reached the point of portage we found it would be about a quarter of a mile long, skirting the falls between Sucker Lake and Birch Lake. To our surprise we found the portage up and down hill, over slippery rocks and under and over trees. Being our first portage, we were all glad to rest for awhile at its end. It was here that we cleared Canadian Customs. We had to declare our cameras, camping equipment, food and canoes. Our total value came to about one thousand dollars.

As we left Customs we paddled Birch Lake into Bayley Bay. This bay is part of Basswood Lake which is very large and deep. The bay itself, is approximately five miles across. The water is rough and deep and it was here that a leader of one of the groups last year drowned. Because of this tragedy all crews are required to carry life jackets for each member of the party. We successfully navigated the Bay and arrived at the Ranger Station. While we were getting fishing licenses purchased and signed for, the other members of the crew prepared our lunch.

Our next move was to Sunday Lake. In order to reach it we had a three-quarter mile portage to cover. All in good time we arrived and lowered our canoes into the waters of Sunday Lake, piled in and paddled to the famous Meadows Portage. The name must have been given it to encourage the tired spirit, for it certainly is anything but appropriate. The portage is one and a quarter miles long and is considered one of the toughest in the whole Hunters Island Area. It is not only long, but is extremely rough. It goes up and down steep hills slippery with moss covered rocks and well covered with fallen trees and low hanging branches of living ones. It goes through swampy land and heavy underbrush. I had been lucky enough to draw this as my turn to carry the canoe. I reached the first resting place in fair condition, and after a few minutes rest and flexing of muscles, I shouldered the canoe and took off. Strangely enough the canoe got heavier and heavier with every step. I had covered the first mile and began to wonder if I would make the water of the lake or whether I would be face down under the canoe, a fine sight for all my boys to witness. Just as I was beginning to give up hope, I heard a hearty whoop, and our guide had slipped behind me and relieved me of my burden. It is a good thing that he came back for I am certain I would never have finished that portage. Every one was tired out as we pushed on and then after a step-over portage we entered the famous Agnes Lake. Agnes Lake is twenty one miles long and at the north end is so wide that from the middle of the lake it is difficult to see either shore. We traveled a very short distance on Agnes Lake for we were gradually changing course of direction to Northeast. We set up camp at the foot of Louisa Falls on the lower tip of Agnes Lake, that is to say we beached our craft, but being weary we decided to take a swim before setting up camp. We climbed the fifty foot bluff and crossed the falls on a log. Following our guide we scrambled down about twenty feet of the bluff and came to the spot known as the Indian Bath Tub. The water of the Falls

cascades down on a ledge which is about fifteen feet wide, and over the centuries the constant spatter of the water has worn away the surface of the rock to form a depression shaped like a bath tub about four feet deep. It was here that we all went swimming. One can't imagine the wonderful feeling of a tired body with sore, taut muscles being massaged in that natural tub by the tremendous quantity of water rushing over the falls. It became apparent to even the most skeptical why the Indians had used the pool as a healing place. In fifteen or twenty minutes the aches and pains and sore muscles seemed to wash away, and we felt like human beings once again. Being refreshed, it took but a short time to set up camp and prepare our evening meal, which after the days labor, the soothing bath and the warmth of the campfire tasted better than many a full course dinner served in banquet style. With the clearing of supper and final policing of camp we were all ready to crawl into the tents and sleep - but the mosquitos thought differently.

Our tents must be made bug-proof. There is no soil in the Quetico, therefore tent stakes are useless. For each five-man wall tent it is necessary to cut four branches seven to eight feet long and a fifth one about twelve feet long. The four shorter ones are lashed together in pairs to form two triangles with a height of about six feet. The roof rope of the tent is tied between two trees and the long branch is lashed to it and the side ties are fastened to the rocks. In spite of how it may sound the tents are very comfortable, and when properly sprayed and closed, were find protection against the deer flies as well as mosquitos and black flies. Each tent housed five people and duffel for each of them. At times, especially during the night, it was not uncommon for us to roll upon one another but exhaustion and deep sleep made these little collisions of no consequence. We soon found that insect repellants such as 6-12 had little or no effect on the insects of the Wilderness. With the coming of darkness we sought the shelter of our tents and soon learned to be very thorough in our first spray job. We had bug-bombs which did a very thorough job. We sprayed the tent before entering, and after everyone was in his bag, one fellow sprayed the entire area inside, then pulled his bag over his head and we waited several minutes before emerging. Usually this period of isolation was just enough to have every one half asleep by the time the air was clear enough to breath again. However, on the first night, we climbed into the bugs, looking forward to the next day, our heads full of details learned. With twenty-five miles covered including five portages, we felt truly we were on our way.

During the night we had some showers, and Tuesday morning was cloudy. We delayed our departure for several hours waiting for the sky to clear. However, at about ten o'clock we shoved off, our goal Fauquier Lake. To reach this lake we had to make five portages, three of them ranging from one fourth to a half-mile in length. These portages carried us to pot-holes, which are really unnamed lakes on no particular chain. The name pot-hole in most cases is a misnomer for many of these lakes are really beautiful bodies of water varying in size from a mile to three miles long. Due to the great number of them, it is impossible to name them, hence they become pot-holes. One of them now has a name, however, we named it "Joe Lake". Our last two portages were over beaver dams. Beaver are wonderful little animals, but to navigate across one of their dams shouldering a canoe and a personal duffel bag is rather a difficult stunt. One must paddle up to the dam, and unload your canoe. With your packs on your back you lift your canoe over the dam, and put it into the water on the other side. It may sound simple, but to appreciate the fun one must take part in it. Upon reaching Fauquier we sent Dave and Ray on ahead to locate a Campsite, for this was one of the lakes that we had promised to establish a permanent Campsite upon. Our advance canoe signled that they had located a likely spot, and indeed it turned out to be a very good site. It was on a

large peninsula which narrowed down to about one hundred yards at one spot. It was here that we set up camp. After supper some of us went fishing although we didn't actually land anything. Bob and I hooked a Lake Trout, lying in about thirty feet of water but lacking the proper equipment for these big ones, we gave a sharp jerk and pulled the line free and paddled back to shore. The pace was beginning to tell. Two hard days of travel. We had covered forty-five miles and ten portages. We had had no time for swimming or fishing and felt rather pushed and abused. We complained to the guide. He said that he had pushed the first two days so that we might have more leisure as we entered the real deep country, and assured us that from that night on things would be different as the hardest part of the trail was behind us. In comparing our progress with other crews we found that we had done in two days what most of them do in five. Our spirits were improved by the feeling of being able to take it, and bed was very comfortable. We slept.

As we put off from shore the next morning we marked the campsite on our maps, and left a flag, a piece of cloth tied to a branch at the waters edge to mark the spot for future crews. We had two portages and one pot hole to cover before we reached Rod Lake, the next sizable one on our chain, so we went forward expectant. Things moved more smoothly now, a good rest and better organization of the party. We were nearing the end of our third portage on the shores of Edge Lake when the guide told me to assemble my fishing gear and we would troll for Northern Pike. In less than twenty minutes I had landed two, each about thirty inches long and weighing close to three pounds each. This catch encouraged us all and when we reached the end of Edge Lake we had lunch and though we hated to do it, decided to turn the fish loose, for we had a great distance to go before we made camp for the night at Glacier Lake, and the fish would certainly spoil. Many pictures were taken of the prizes, and then we slipped them off the stringer, and as they dived for the depths we took off on the portage to Turn Lake. The name comes from the fact that the moment you enter the lake, it makes a sharp right angle turn to the south east. We traveled for a short distance on this lake, and made two more portages to reach Glacier Lake. We sent our lead canoe, paddled by Dave and Ray on ahead to pick a campsite. Shortly the signal came and we followed them in. They had picked a campsite on an island facing the north. I believe Glacier Lake is one of the most beautiful lakes I have ever seen. It is completely surrounded by high bluffs which are covered with various shades of green. The water is emerald in color. We set up camp, and then took time for swimming and fishing. It was here that Dick and Don each made their first catch of game fish. Dick landed three and Don one. They were good sized northerns, weighing close to three pounds apiece. In the evening after supper we filleted one and ate it. You have never eaten fish, until you catch it, clean it and fry it in the beauty of the wild lake country. Nothing tastes as good.

By this time, we all had learned that our guide was a man of many varied abilities. However, we were in for a surprise that evening. Just at sunset, with the calm and majestic beauty of the lake and sky and hills at their best, Denny paddled his canoe to the middle of the lake, lay back and gave us a vocal concert with yodeling, which lasted for thirty odd minutes. As he yodeled he moved about the lake, and we sat entranced on the shore as we counted the echoes, getting as many as six at a time. The notes seemed to keep bouncing from cliff to cliff, each one lending a new sweetness to the original magnificence of Denny's voice. Nite settled down as he beached his canoe, and we all made for our tents with the glory of the lake and the melody of Denny and his echoes bringing to an end the third glorious day of ten men in the Wilderness.

As we sat at breakfast the next morning Dick was looking off and around the lake shore when suddenly he gasped and hollered. As we turned to find out what was happening we found ourselves looking straight at a big cow moose, not more than a

hundred feet from where we sat. She had come to the lake for a drink and was not aware of our camp. Bob decided to get his movie camera and shot some pictures, however, whether his sudden movement or a delayed danger warning signaled the Moose, she moved away and out of sight. Some minutes later with my still camera, the guide and I crept over to the other side of the island and into a swamp, and there was Mrs. Moose standing in the water up to her knees. She was about one hundred-fifty feet from us, but since we were down wind, and their sense of hearing and sight is very poor we had ample time to observe her at close range. I snapped two pictures and hope they will turn out alright. She stood about six feet high at her back, almost black in color except for her legs, tail and ears which were a light tan. She seemed nervous and was always on the alert, but her movements were very slow and deliberate. Having seen her at close range, we returned to camp and having finished our packing we were just shoving off when we spotted Mr. Moose again. The boys took pictures of her and the surrounding shores and with regret, we bade goodbye to Glacier Lake. Denny, who is an artist of no small ability has promised to paint me an oil of this lake during the winter, and I hope he fulfills the promise, for to my mind it was far and away the most beautiful spot of the entire trip. As we checked our maps we all groaned for we observed four portages on the route to McEwen Lake which was the next on our chain. We were happily surprised to find enough water in the creek to eliminate three portages. This was a day. Only one portage, and we were paddling on McEwen Lake. This huge lake is dotted with islands. We paddled for three hours, and pulled to a small island for lunch and to pick blueberries. In less than an hour we had picked half a gallon of berries, and pulled over to our campsite. We arrived there about 1:00 in the afternoon which gave us a full afternoon for fun. We set up camp, and then the boys donned their life jackets, jumped into the canoes, divided into two groups, and the war was on! They spent the better part of the afternoon swamping canoes, forming boarding parties and playing at being fish. We had spent part of the afternoon baking blueberry pies. We make three regular size pies and four in the mess kits for a total of seven pies for ten fellows. We all had our fill, though never have I had anything that tasted better. I had been given a whole pie, since I had voiced my great liking for blueberry pie, and though I ate to my utmost capacity, I couldn't finish it, so I put it on the chow table to finish off at breakfast time. In the morning I found two large birds, like big crows, enjoying my pie. I was unable to find out much about these birds except their names. They are called Camp Thieves. The end of a good Blueberry pie!

We broke camp, covered a small portage and were in Wet Lake. We paddled through Wet Lake and arrived at a place called Little Falls. The usual campsite used by the crews was occupied so we portaged around the lower falls and camped at the middle falls. The boys enjoyed another full afternoon of fun and swimming. We had a lovely supper. This was Don's seventeenth birthday and the fellows decided to bake him a cake. We had a little difficulty keeping him away from the cook area while we got it under way, but we managed to keep him on the run in various directions. We decorated it with "Happy Birthday Don", made with macaroni, and put one candle on it. As the boys were finishing their swim in the late afternoon, we spotted two canoes coming toward the portage. Being good scouts we went down to the landing to help them over the portage. Much to our surprise as the canoes pulled up we found they were manned by women. There were six in all, four in their forties and we judged two in their late teens. They were certainly real Amazons. They dumped their packs, and one woman actually picked her canoe out of the water, shouldered it and took off, without any assistance. Only one of our boys had been able to manage this stunt, and all of us were greatly in awe of this woman, who could do what we found impossible. I picked up one of the packs and almost dropped to my knees with its weight. We saw them off and watched until they started around a bend in the river about two blocks away. Very soon it became evident that they were having trouble getting around the point, so Dave and Denny took to a canoe to lend a hand. We found out when they returned that the ladies had gotten into fast water between two sets of falls. The

water rushes down between the cliffs through a canyon and is quite difficult to manage a canoe on the water. The women made it successfully. Dave and Denny returned. We had a good supper, and then presented Don with his cake. Amid the loud singing of Happy Birthday Don, he carved it and everybody got a good sized piece. By the time supper dishes were done, camp cleared up, the mosquitos were there to drive us into our tents and to sleep.

Next morning we broke camp early, and in very short order came to the fast water. The first canoe got through fine, the second one got caught in the current but managed to pull out into calmer water. The trick seemed to be to head the bow directly into the current and paddle for all your worth. I was paddling bow, and missed on getting it headed right into the current. Jim at the rudder did something - or nothing. At any rate things began to happen. The current caught us, we began to glide swiftly backward, the rocks began to approach with alarming speed. I visioned a crack-up, and what we would do stranded out there. As we got closer and closer to shore I stepped out. The water was deceptive, being several feet deeper than it looked. With one leg over and the other in the canoe, the canoe followed me, over she went. Luckily our packs were wedged in very tight. We lost nothing but our pride, and the only damage was our thorough soaking. We had a full day ahead of us, and we decided not to change clothes but to pull on. The day was over-cast and a stiff wind was blowing. We were not exactly enjoying ourselves. We arrived at Sanganagons Lake where we started a fire to dry out our clothes. I expect this is a real pretty lake, but due to the circumstances of our first encounter it didn't seem very pretty. The day was still overcast. The water had an ugly grey look. The wind was making it very choppy and white caps were rolling on it. It presented a very bleak picture, and to at least three of us, cold and certainly not pleasant. While we toasted ourselves at the fire, some of the boys went fishing. They caught several nice northernns which we had for our supper. Finally, being dry and warm, we turned in for the night.

In the morning the sun was shining and it was bright and fair. We covered ground rapidly portaging from Slate Lake to Fran Lake, to Bell Lake into Bit Lake and then into the Man Chain. This chain consists of four lakes, Otherman's Lake, Thismans Lake, No Mans Lake, and Thatmans Lake. They all look alike being about five miles long and nearly three quarters mile wide. We camped on Othermans Lake on What Mans Island. This was a beautiful spot, and afforded us some good walleye fishing. We caught quite a few and enjoyed them for our breakfast which would have been quite skimpy without them, as the breakfast detail two days before had doubled the recipe for pancakes and when we broke out the material for breakfast this morning we discovered there was no pancake mix left. However, the fish more than made up for the pancake shortage. The record fish for our crew was caught by Ray who landed a six and three-quarter pound Walleye.

Reluctantly we left our campsite this morning for we knew our adventure was too rapidly drawing to a close. This would be our last full day on the trail, and what a day. We covered nearly thirty miles through six lakes. Th this chain was discovered what is believed to be the richest copper vein in the world, but because they have no immediate need of the metal, they have decided not to start digging. Who knows, perhaps some day this part of the Quetico will be commercialized, and in my estimation, that will be a great crime against Nature.

While paddling on our last day we came to a portage where I noticed our guide did not carry his canoe as usual, but only picked up his pack and ran to the top of the hill. As I passed him he told me he was going to have some fun but didn't say when or where. I kept going and so missed all the excitement. After going down

hill from where the guide was, you come to a low marshy spot about thirty feet across which you traverse on birch logs. The first canoe got over okay, but Dick who was carrying the second canoe slipped off of the logs and immediately sank in the muck up to his knees. His partner Ray, who was right behind him, came to his rescue and he too sank to his knees. This is the place that Denny had been waiting for. It is a quicksand pit about six feet deep and is always good for a laugh - at the expense of the first fellow that tumbles off the logs. To make matters worse, the other end of the portage is also pretty bad. There isn't enough room for more than two canoes so it is necessary to load and leave as quickly as possible. In order to load your canoes you have to take it out about five feet to clear the rocks. When Dick finally got to the lake with the canoe he started out in the water and all of a sudden all we could see was the canoe resting on the surface with him underneath. He had slipped on a rock and lost his footing. On the very next portage he slipped again on a rock but before he had gained the water. It was necessary to lift the canoe off him so as to free his arms. We began to think that perhaps it was a good thing we were heading for the post. We paddled all that day and finally came to our last portage which is between Carp Lake and Sheridan Lake. We were back to civilized country now, and there was quite a large gathering of canoeists on Carp portage. We were all feeling pretty cocky and knew it all by this time. The boys had not shaved since leaving Downers, and what with grime and dirt on their clothes, and good coats of tan on face and arms, we were rather rough looking bunch. Thus it was that we entered the last portage determined to show up these beginners and make felt our thorough knowledge. Everything was going just fine when suddenly - Whoops! Dick again lost his footing on a stone. Suddenly, blubb, blubb, blubb and that was all there was of Dick and his ability to port the canoe safely. Very shortly he came out from under the canoe and we all had a good laugh. No damage was done, no one was hurt, and we had learned again, "Pride Goeth Before a Fall".

We made camp that night on Birch Lake right on the International Boundry. It was raining when we set up camp so things moved pretty fast. It was decided that Denny and I should paddle over to "Leo's" store about three miles away to buy pop, candy bars, beer and cigarettes. Leo is a half-blooded Chippewa Indian who has a few cabins and the little store on Bayley Bay. While we were there I checked out with the Canadian Customs. This saved us a six mile paddle in the morning. We bought six packs of cigarettes, six cans of beer, eight bottles of pop, innumerable candy bars, and paddled back to camp. Believe me we received a warm welcome for this was the first treat-type food we had had in ten days. Denny and I certainly enjoyed the beer.

About seven-thirty the rain stopped and we all enjoyed a very refreshing and sound nights sleep. Next morning after breakfast we were told that all the pots and pans had to be scrubbed until they shone. If you have ever cooked just one meal over an open fire, you know what it does to the kettle, but after thirty meals, believe me it looks like an impossible job. In two hours time we had polished them to Denny's satisfaction which was no simple requirement, and we were once more packed and on our way. Through Sucker Lake, into Newfound Lake, across this into Moose Lake. This was our home lake. Knowing we were nearing the base we placed our canoes in a single file position and paddled into shore. Mr. and Mrs. Podhradsky were on hand to greet us and to take pictures of our return. They should be some pictures, we are sure. None of us had shaved for the duration of the trip and we were as shabby and unkept, dirty and hot as we could be.

We unloaded the canoes and carried them part way up the hill where we had to sand and paint all the scratches and chips. In less than twenty minutes time we

were all finished as our canoes were in very good shape. Next we carried our packs to our tents where we unloaded them. The packs we had used were then taken back to the store room, where all the leather parts were oiled and the packs turned inside out for airing. Having completed this job we checked in our life vests, and since the boys had decided to purchase their paddles as mementoes of the trip, we merely paid for them and left them in our tents. We returned to our tents for a little well earned rest. We undressed and put on our swim trunks to be ready for the call to the Sauna. Finally, our turn came.

We entered the building and slipped out of our trunks, in a few minutes we entered the Sauna Room. This room is about fifteen feet square and at one end has bleachers of four tiers high. In one corner of the room is a space which is actually a rock pile. Under this a fire has been roaring all day. When every one is seated on the lower tier, the guide pours water on the white hot rocks and the steam rises in billows. The temperature in the room is about 140 degrees and breathing is almost impossible. Several minutes pass and soon the sweat begins to pour from your body pores. You become more and more relaxed, all the tired muscles seem to come back to life, every sore spot eases away and soon you feel like a new person. Gradually you may move up the tier of seats, for the higher you go the hotter it gets. Usually thirty minutes is plenty in the steam room and you then leave it for a nice cold shower, which you can not even feel. By this time you are beginning to feel life flow back, with renewed vigor. We shaved, washed and cleaned our teeth. Then the joy of clean, dry clothes. We had nothing to do now until supper time. However it had been longer than it seemed for very shortly the gong sounded and we lost no time getting to the tables. The cooks had prepared a feast royal. Seventeen turkeys for fifty-five people, with sweet potatoes, celery, olives, carrots and lettuce, and they were all very welcome for we had not had any fresh vegetables for ten days. Each person was allowed two and a half glasses of milk, and not a drop of it was left. We were urged to eat and believe me we did. But even appetites of growing boys reach an end, and we left the dining room loaded and content. We ambled back to our tents to wait for the Council Fire and the presentation of our awards. At Council Fire that night each Crew gave a little skit, and we had group singing. Each Crew chose a member to give a resume of their travels since last we had so journeyed together. Dave gave the resume for us and did himself proud in his presentation, as well as helping to recall to all of us the great days we had just completed. The awards were then given and we all retired very happy.

Next morning we left base camp and checked through American Customs at Winton, Minnesota. Now we were on our way home. We hated to leave our Canadian Adventure and with heavy hearts we headed the car south. However, as the miles rolled under us, the thoughts of home began to loom over bigger in our minds, and soon the desire to be back overshadowed our glorious vacation, and we almost wished we were flying toward Downers instead of driving. We had a perfectly marvelous time. Beautiful weather, a capable, interesting and congenial guide, excellent meals, no accidents to mar the pleasure of the entire trip. We could ask for nothing more. We all learned many useful and interesting things on the trip. Perhaps we may never need to put this knowledge to use, but if we should by the rule of Scouting, we will "Be Prepared".

The name Canadian Wilderness is no misnomer. At the farthest point north on our tour it would have taken us from six weeks to two months to walk out in the event we had smashed a canoe or been felled by accident. When you sit by a camp fire in the heart of a strange silent country, surrounded by tall silent trees, and know that the nearest civilized point is six weeks away by foot, you have a very infinitesimal feeling.

The trails and portages we travelled were the same ones that the Indians and the Voyagers travelled so many hundreds of years ago, still through the heart of Gods' Country, nature at her best untouched by human notions and desires.

To those of you who have an adventurous spirit, have no fear of hardship, and a willingness to co-operate and work beyond your normal amount, I highly recommend the trip. This is no trip for the timid or the softie. It requires a spirit of pioneering. My hat off to the boys of my Post and Post One who made this trip and I know that each one of them has gained something in personal, mental physical and spiritual stature from this trip. They took orders, hardships, good days as well as bad, without one of them flinching or being "chicken". They stood the close confines of camp life without having any undue quarreling or unpleasantness, and I feel that they can each one take his place in life, a good citizen and prepared to do a good job of whatever life may hold in store for him.

ESTABLISHED 1842

JOSEPH T. RYERSON & SON, Inc.

STEEL FOR IMMEDIATE SHIPMENT

OFFICE AND STEEL SERVICE PLANT
16TH AND ROCKWELL STS
CHICAGO, ILL.

POST OFFICE BOX 8000-A
CHICAGO 80, ILL.

TELEPHONE
ROCKWELL 2-2121

August 20, 1953

Mr. Orrin Felton - Deputy Commissioner
Boy Scouts of America
Charles L. Sommers Canoe Base
Ely, Minnesota

*Acc / 8/26 -
Sent dog tag*

Dear Orrin:

I have been meaning to write to you for the past two weeks to tell you how much the boys and myself of Crew 58 enjoyed the hospitality of your Canoe Landing. We were particularly impressed at the smoothness of your operations and the co-operative spirit of everyone concerned.

As I believe this to be one of the best vacations that I ever had, I decided to write a story concerning the trip and have enclosed two copies of the end product. I would appreciate it very much if you would give one of these copies to Denny, our guide, whom I feel sure will get a big kick out of reading it.

It may be that some incidents or items have been overlooked but as our memories play tricks on us occasionally, I hope Denny will forgive me for any of these oversights. As I mentioned to you on the day we left, the boys and myself are great boosters for region 10 and sincerely hope that we can persuade more boys from the West Suburban Counsel to sign up for your Wilderness Trails.

Yours very truly,

Jan

V. R. Van Selow

Downers Grove, Ill

my



CHICAGO • MILWAUKEE • ST. LOUIS • DETROIT • CINCINNATI • CLEVELAND • PITTSBURGH
STEEL SERVICE PLANTS— PHILADELPHIA • BUFFALO • NEW YORK • BOSTON • SAN FRANCISCO • LOS ANGELES • SPOKANE • SEATTLE