

KANAWA

CANADA'S CANOEING AND KAYAKING MAGAZINE

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The Athabasca Sand Dunes are like nowhere else on Earth... a desert-like environment seemingly misplaced in the midst of a northern forest.

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Located on the northeastern coast of the province of Newfoundland, Notre Dame Bay is one of Canada's best-kept paddling secrets. Picture yourself in the midst of breaching humpback whales... or icebergs forty stories high...

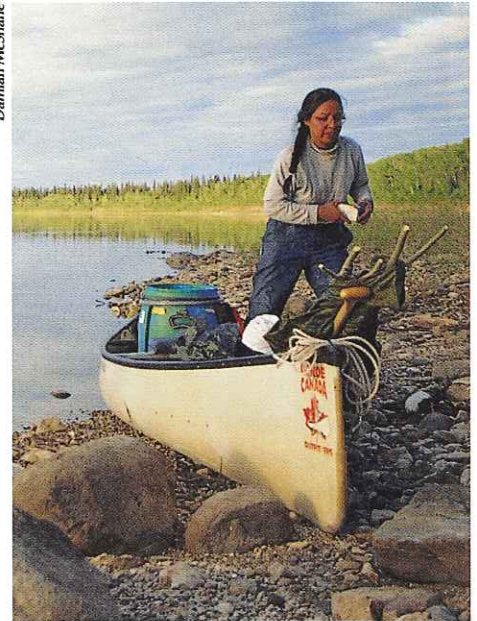
Within the bay there are more than 350 islands to explore...

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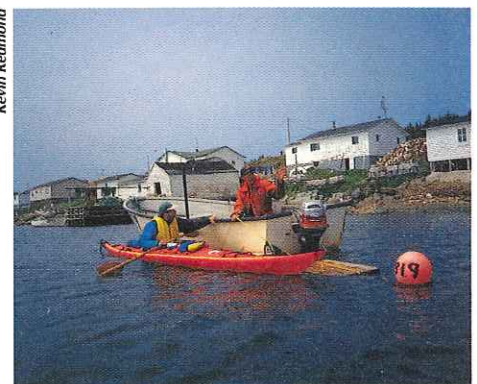
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PADDLE TO THE I

Descent to Fort Albany, A Voyage Thro



Damian McShane - Albany River, Ontario

For every stroke of the pen in the historical record of North America, there are countless strokes of the paddle from the arms, hearts and minds of the people who have moved through this land. The very act of paddling today harkens back to yesteryear. Who can ply a stroke without recalling the marvel of engineering that is the indigenous birch bark canoe? Who, while portaging their burden, has not fancied themselves a voyageur?

Every paddler has their reasons for choosing a particular route, for making a particular voyage. Living among James Bay's Mushkegowuk Cree in Fort Albany while working as a school teacher has afforded me a rich and rare bicultural glimpse into a critical chapter in the living history of Canada: a history recorded in the spoken and written words of several languages, telling the stories of people and the rivers, and the land they have travelled on.

Established by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in 1679, Fort Albany has always been a "way station" for people. The stories of today, like the archives of old, don't exist without mention of other places connected by the waters of the Albany River: James Bay,

Kashechewan, Ghost River, Mammattawa, Henley... I wanted to visit these places where so much has transpired, to understand who has gone before us. "If knowing is doing," I thought, "only by paddling can you hope to know this country."

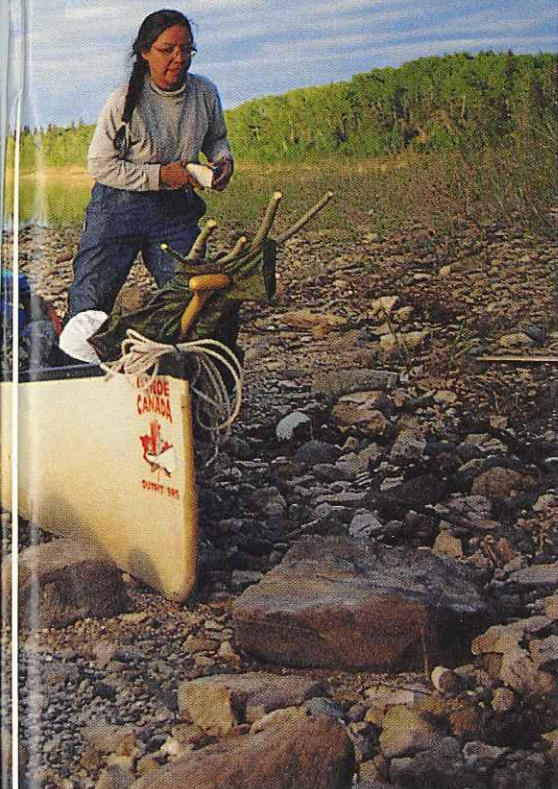
It is no coincidence that the most direct waterway to Fort Albany First Nation has also seen the most traffic throughout history. The route and place names now are still the same as those on the HBC archive maps of three hundred years ago. The journey today falls within the Nishnawbe-Aski Treaty (No. 9) Area, and is what I call "Ontario's nearest remoteness." It is thanks to the traditional lifestyle of the Cree inhabitants of this area that the rivers appear unchanged from thousands of years ago, without bridge or dam to spoil the natural environment.

This is not a trip for "thrill-seekers" or "adrenaline freaks"; the Albany River does have a lot of white water, but that trip starts on the northern branch of the Albany at Osnagburgh. This route, from

by Damian McShane

BAY

ough Time



Constance Lake First Nation (N49n 50', W84n 07') to Fort Albany (N52n 13', W81n 38') offers a diversity of environments as the water descends 140 metres in elevation from the boreal forest to the James Bay Lowlands. The wide range of flora and fauna found here, the rich fossil deposits, the sandy beaches, the historical ruins and the remote, expansive beauty invite a different breed of adventurer.

Of the four members in our paddling expedition, there is one who is native to Fort Albany, two who currently reside and work there, and I, who formerly did so. Unlike in days of old when travellers paddled, poled and lined their way upriver as well as down, most recreational river trips today are a one-way affair downstream, and that's how we covered the 385 kilometres between Constance Lake and Fort Albany. Steve,

Michelle, and both of their kayaks actually travelled south from Fort Albany by plane, and then by train from Moosonee to Cochrane on the Ontario Northland Railway's Polarbear Express. Pauline and I, meanwhile, drove with our Pontiac and 18 foot canoe from Thunder Bay to Constance Lake.

Our journey would last throughout mid-June, allowing us to catch the end of the spring freshet's high water – a desirable time to travel on the Albany. By August, this same journey becomes arduous as

water levels quickly drop. This route's access river is the Kabinakigami, the average width of which is 75 metres. The road leading to the access point skirts the most northerly stand of white pine in northeastern Ontario.

No sooner had we started paddling on the Kabinakigami River than we were dwarfed by one of the many sedimentary cliff banks towering 45 metres above the water's surface. As we started our trip, the weather was warm and sunny, lighting up the lush greenery all around us. The bush was a concert hall for a wonderful diversity of sounds: the echoing percussion of industrious woodpeckers, a harsh rattle from a passing kingfisher, low-pitched boomings of breeding male grouse and the ethereal song of the white-throated sparrow...all of them musical improvisations over the constant rhythm of leaves on the breeze and brooks joining currents. While just under way, we saw an eagle's nest high atop a spruce tree, with one eaglet audible and visible through the field glasses. We gratefully accepted this as a good omen and continued paddling on the murky, sediment-rich waters of the "Kabinakigami." (This river's name comes from the Cree language: *Kabinakigami* appropriately describes the murky colour of the water).

Along the entire length of this route one will encounter "local" people using the river, as they always have, in a variety of ways. These rivers are "highways of the north" and the travellers on them have as many divergent purposes for being there as do the motorists on any highway. Closer to the communities, you might encounter men harvesting wood with which to stoke their stoves come wintertime, or perhaps they'll be towing large rafts of good dry wood

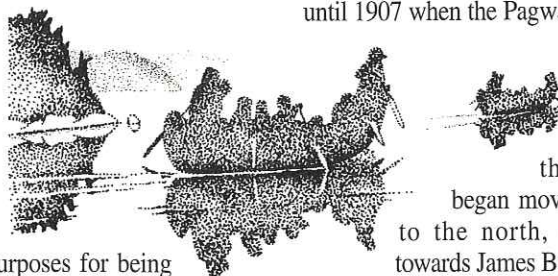
The bush was a concert hall for a wonderful diversity of sounds

on the river. Families can be seen on fishing trips, or farther afield on longer hunting trips. For some communities, inaccessible by road, the rivers provide the most economical way of moving freight, as we witnessed on our first day.

We had camped at a beautiful site at the junction of the Kabinakigami and Fox Rivers and were swimming there when we heard, and then saw, a "barge" coming around the bend. Powered by several outboard motors, it was made from four

large freighter canoes lashed together under a wooden raft, atop of which was a shack. Three men relaxed on lawn chairs as they cruised by and casually waved to us. They were headed downriver, presumably towards Constance Lake. The very next day we were passed by the same barge, now heading back upstream with some heavy industrial machinery on board – a cargo. We again returned their friendly wave with a hint of recognition. It was only later that we learned they were making a 600 kilometre round trip from Ogoki Post to pick up this freight. As I said, this route is a highway. Having said that, it was another four days before we saw another human being.

The passing barge caused me to contemplate its place in a long history of relationship between the river, people and their cargo vessels. Long before the arrival of Europeans, these rivers were used as trade routes between the indigenous nations. The Cree and Nipissings travelled up and down this corridor trading prime furs for smoked fish, and dried meat for southern corn or birch bark canoes. With the arrival of the Hudson Bay Company, annual supply ships from England delivered a cargo of wares that would be traded and carried upstream on these rivers from James Bay by the many Native traders living inland. So continued the flow of goods until 1907 when the Pagwa barge system connected with the



Transcontinental Railway. From that moment on, the flow of goods began moving from the south to the north, downstream and towards James Bay.

All the next day saw us paddle and drift down the remaining 27 kilometres of "the Kab." Along the way we enjoyed numerous sightings of wildlife including loons, mergansers, sandhill cranes, goldeneye ducks,

ALBANY RIVER LOGISTICS

Books/Videos/ Articles: *The Albany River* (25 min - VHS), available from Ojibway Cree Cultural Centre, Timmins, Ontario, 705-267-7911, (<http://www.schoolnet.ca:80/FNPN/occc/index.html>). *The History of James Bay 1610-1686* (153pp) and *Subarctic Saga: The deTroyes Expeditions 1686* (31 pp), by W.A. Kenyon, available from the publisher The Royal Ontario Museum. *The Uncelebrated Boats of the Albany*, by John A. Alwin, *The Beaver: Spring 1975. Albany - Pawn in Anglo-French conflict*, by Richard K. Mathews, *The Beaver. Albany River Adventure*, by Martin K. Bovey, *The Beaver: March 1936. The Henley House Massacres*, by Charles A. Bishop, *The Beaver: Autumn 1976*.

Access: Ontario's Highway 11 to Highway 663 (34 kilometres west of Hearst). Hwy 663 north for six kilometres to Constance Lake First Nation, then Rogers Road extension for 40 gravel kilometres to Kabinakigami River access point. Though not recommended vehicles can be left at access point. Alternative parking arrangements can be made in advance with community residents through the Constance Lake First Nation Band Office (705-463-4511).

Length of Trip: 385 kilometres (Limestone Rapids to Fort Albany 10-12 days).

Classification: Intermediate tripping experience required, preparation for remoteness.

End-Trip and Return Information: From Fort Albany landing site to community's "business centre" is a ten minute walk. Beaver taxi service (705-278-1122) operates over the summer months for the shuttling of persons and gear.

Accommodation: rooms, showers, laundry from Paul Koostachin (705-278-3018); James Bay General Hospital (705-278-3330) rents rooms when available and has a daily cafeteria. Alternatively, one can camp in the fields around the school or airport.

Two Restaurants In Town: The Ashtum-Netay (Let's go there) Restaurant, & The Coffee Cup

Four Convenience Stores: Kenny's Gas Bar & Confectionery offers home-made submarines; Koostachin's General Store in Sinclair Island's village; Norm's Snack Out; Northern Store.

Native artists and artisans selling crafts, sculptures, jewellery, paintings and drawings can be located through First Nation Band Office (705-278-1044). (Cree is the first language of the community, however, most residents are at least bilingual and fluent in English). Arrangements can be made through the Band Office for the hiring of a guide and motor boat - highly recommended for seeing James Bay or visiting the neighbouring community of Kashechewan.

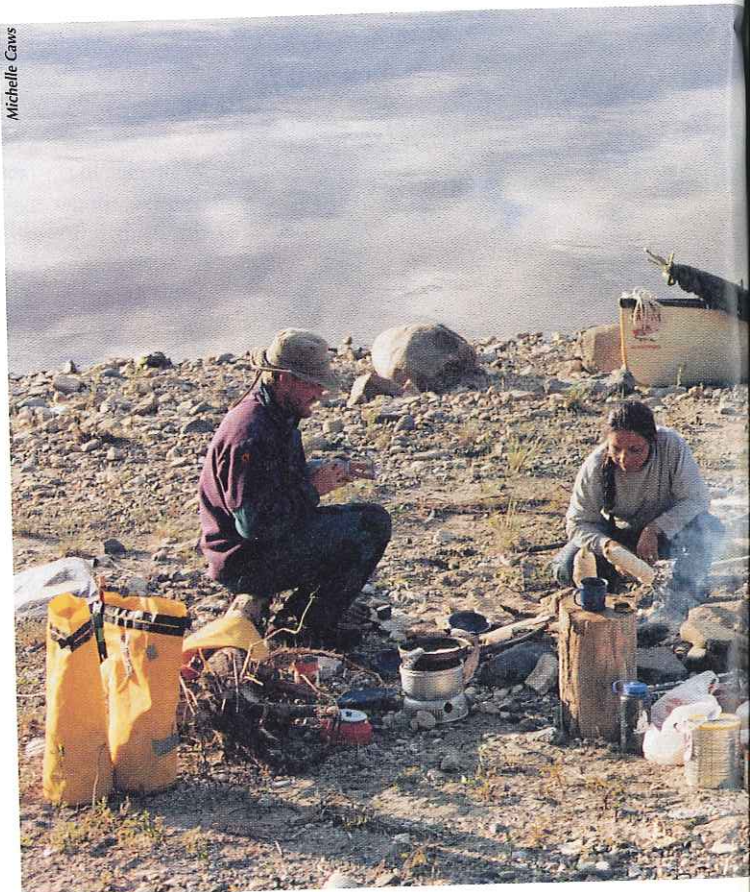
Daily Flights out of Fort Albany with Air Creebec. Fare and schedule inquiries toll free at: 1 800 567 6567. Reduce expenses by flying from Fort Albany to Moosonee, Ontario and then taking the Ontario Northland Railway's train to Cochrane (705-336-2931). Moosonee and Moose Factory are interesting stopovers with museums, shops and summer activities, a good way to conclude a James Bay tour.

Topographic and Route Maps: 1:250,000 Scale maps of: Kenogami River 42K, Ogoki River 42N, Ghost River 42O, Kapiskau River 43B, Fort Albany 43A. All are available from your local outfitter or the Public Information Office, Ministry of Natural Resources, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1W3. Ministry of Natural Resources map/brochure Limestone Rapids to Fort Albany should be acquired from Hearst's Nordaski Tourist Office (1-800-655-5769). Many place names are located and identified with the aid of this map. Distances in kilometres as well as elevation are also provided.

a groundhog and two black bear cubs descending a tall poplar tree. At our rest stops along the way we saw countless animal tracks in the soft mud or sand; bear tracks were seen as well as those of the elusive lynx.

The winding Kabinakigami empties into the much larger and straighter Kenogami River. On the north-east bank of this junction is the most interesting Mammattawa (or English River) Post, and the intrigue starts right at river's edge. Fossil seekers will not find a greater resource than this watershed, and here the clay bank nicely demonstrates the fossilization process, ranging in texture from a thick grey mud at the shore, to rock-hard surfaces a few feet farther up the bank. A wide variety of fossils are to be found here *en masse*: brachiopods, trilobites and various corals can scarcely not be stepped upon. There are a few places along this route that have been recognized by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) as

Michelle Caws



A bannock lunch stop at Ghost River

Environmentally Significant Areas due to their unique fossil deposits.

Pauline was the first to draw our attention to the other attraction that we knew lay some thirty metres higher on the upper embankment. Climbing to the top, we waded through the waist-high grasses to where we stood in the cool shade of the collapsed Hudson's Bay Company's Mammattawa Post. Between the years 1796-1946, and almost without interruption, fur trading was conducted here. During the early nineteenth century, tumultuous rivalries and spurious company dealings saw the Native traders destroy this post twice with the loss of lives. A number of factors, including considerable financial losses due to a depleted beaver population, ultimately led to the HBC's closure of the post in 1946. Today, its once sturdy structure sags toward the ground, now but a reminder of a way of life that once flourished in this area.

As we joined the Kenogami River, paddling due north, we entered the actual area known as *Mammattawa*, which translates from the

Cree to mean: "the mouths of many rivers meeting." Indeed, at this section of the river, the Kenogami is joined by many smaller rivers and creeks. We paddled and drifted perhaps one hour further north, enjoying the open vistas that the Kenogami's vastness provides with its 250 metre average width. On the eastern bank, beginning at kilometre (km) 50, a long stretch of younger deciduous trees is bracketed by older coniferous growth. This helps identify "Indian Reserve 66" established in 1905 as a part of Treaty 9. The Treaty Commissioner, Duncan Campbell Scott, described it thus: *In the province of Ontario, beginning at a point on the Kenogami or English River, three miles below the Hudson's Bay Company's post, known as the English River post, on the east side of the river, thence down stream two miles and with sufficient depth to give an area of twelve square miles.* This reserve is no longer inhabited since the decline of the fur trade in the region.

Immediately north, at km 55, one finds the Mammamattawa tourist camp. This camp is operated for anglers and hunters by the Constance Lake First Nation, and it was at this site that we made camp at the end of the second day after having travelled 36 kilometres. While we were there, Pauline recounted one story from the vast oral lexicon of Cree legends, doing so first in Cree, and then in English. This legend featured the trickster: *Weesay-keejak*. The purpose, as always, is to entertain, explain and instruct. Every event, character and creature woven into the story has a specific

role in bringing a lesson, a message, or deeper understanding to the listener. These legends come from this place and belong here. After listening to this particular legend, and laughing, we understood both vanity's jeopardy, and why Canada geese fly in V-formation.

This river's name *keno-gami* translates from the Cree to mean "nice water." Except for when the north wind blows, the Kenogami runs wide and quiet through its length. We experienced the force of the north wind on day four and heeded the advice of the Constance Lake elders who were referring specifically to this northern end of the Kenogami. The reaction of these long, wide rivers to wind is similar to that of a lake. We chose not to travel at all that day, but rather stayed put at our camp on a gravel island surrounded by white caps where we passed the time resting

Archives of Ontario - 1906, Albany River



Paddling was a way of life on the Albany

and recreating. At one point we played a version of horse shoe pitch using large stones and a point system that seemed to grow increasingly complex as the game went on.

By day five the winds had calmed and we were back under way. We passed several very nice locations for camping at Little Drowning and Drowning Rivers. These sizeable tributaries added considerably to the current's velocity, as more and more water joined the route to the bay. The last major river to join the Kenogami before it joins the Albany is Little Current River. Presumably this river gets its name from the surprisingly strong current it generates for its size. Reaching the north-west gravel bank for camping necessitates crossing its powerful current flowing into the Kenogami. We all attacked it differently. Aided by his kayak's rudder, Steve power-paddled straight across the current. Michelle's smaller kayak had no rudder, so she paddled up the Little Current a short distance before turning around and shooting down and across-stream like a missile. We, in our kevlar canoe, decided to point our bow upstream on the Little Current and ferry across to the north-west bank. The force of the current was incredible and we paddled hard while focussing on the distant shore so as not to experience the confusing vertigo that comes with the perceived incongruity between water rushing nearby and the distant, unmoving shore.

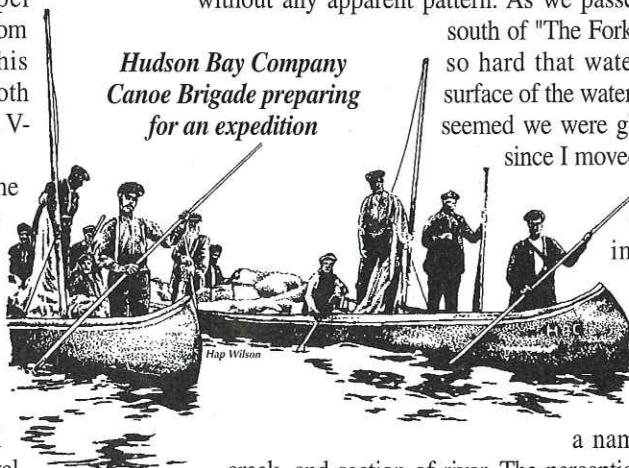
A wide variety of weather characterized the middle leg of our tour above and below the Forks of the Albany and Kenogami Rivers. Rain, mist, wind, sunshine, thundershowers... they all visited us repeatedly without any apparent pattern. As we passed the "un-named" island

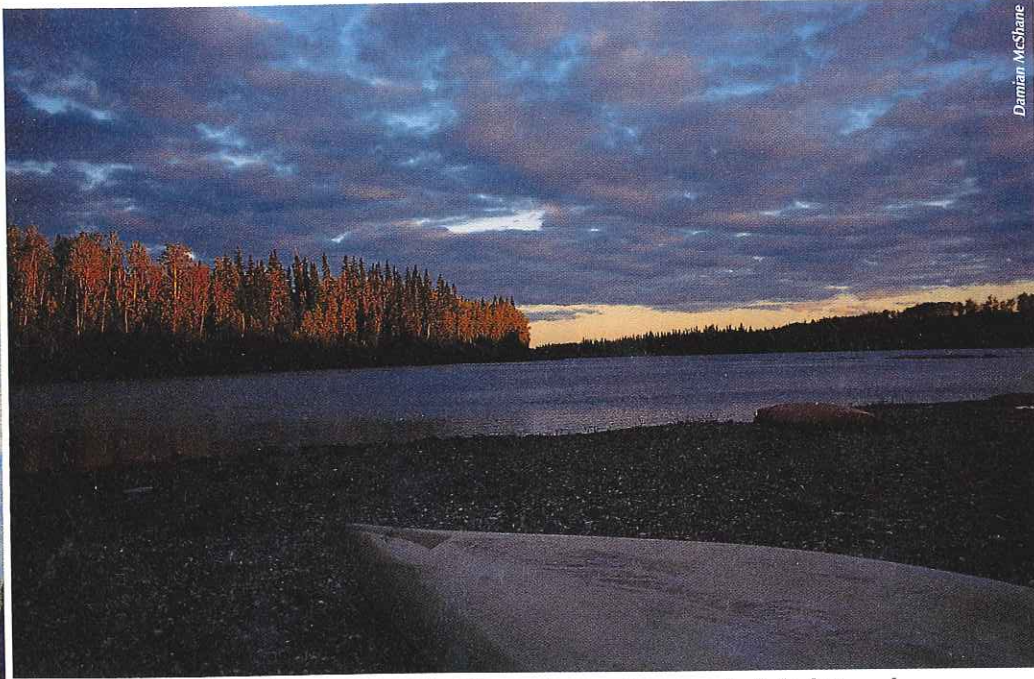
south of "The Forks" the rain pounded down so hard that water droplets rolled on the surface of the water like so many pearls and it seemed we were gliding over bearings. (Not

since I moved through endless fields of sunflowers in the south of France have I felt so immersed in an environment). I refer to the island above as "un-named" because the maps provide none. However, I'm sure it has

a name, as does every island, creek, and section of river. The perception that the north is a vast, anonymous wilderness is an erroneous one. The indigenous people

*Hudson Bay Company
Canoe Brigade preparing
for an expedition*





Damian McShane

Passing cloud cover provided for a dramatic, pre-dusk lighting show

know the area intimately. Indeed many communities are working through cultural preservation projects to record the elders' encyclopedic knowledge in the form of maps, books and videos.

At the final bend before The Forks we

met an entire family with four boats who were from Ogoki on a hunting trip. There were children, men, women, and elders there. Like us, they too were soaked, having just arrived at their camp themselves. We continued north and joined the Albany River as we rounded

the bend towards the east. Like the history of the place itself, everything was shrouded in fog and mist, as these two super-rivers met, making the current terrifically strong.



Another Cree legend tells us that the riverside rocks were once people and explains why there are so many.

A great deal of "Canadian" history transpired right at these Forks (N51n 06, W84n 28'), known in the Cree language as *keeshamattawa*, or: great mouth of rivers. Here is where French encroachment forced the HBC to build its first inland post, Henley House, a post that was eventually attacked and five of its servants killed by an estranged Homeguard family who had perceived mistreatment by the HBC Factors. In 1755, three of these Cree men, a father and two sons, were seized and hanged at Fort Albany, an action that resulted in the HBC recalling the Factor to London. Volumes are written about events on this river and even more is recorded in the unwritten accounts of the local Cree people.

An electrical storm blew up on the night of Sunday, June 15, while we slept near

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Oldman Island (km 144). We got up after midnight to descend the levee's 30 foot bank and ensure our boats and gear were well secured, lest they be carried off by the high winds in the river corridor.

Continuing downstream, one passes (at km 150) a rather unassuming stretch of flat gravel shoreline known as "Treaty Beach," where annual payments were made by the Canadian Federal Government to treaty members living in the area. (Several days after we arrived in Fort Albany, the R.C.M.P. arrived by airplane in full regalia to pay the \$4.00 annuity to individual members of the Fort Albany Band). We saw several bald eagles at close proximity as we passed Treaty Beach, and soon thereafter, near Henley River, we saw a black bear mama and cub strolling along the grassy, northern bank. We carefully approached and took some photos before they sauntered off into the bush. Henley River was the second location for the HBC Post of the same name, where a good many metal artifacts can still be found.

Between km 178-195 is a long, straight stretch of water – a most refreshing vista. As we entered this straightaway, the clouds cleared and the sun illuminated the world. The expanse of still water reflected all that was around and by mirroring the sky, clouds and



Canoeists and sea kayakers can easily paddle the Albany's entire length

trees, a visual circle was completed; it was as though we were travelling through a living, kaleidoscopic tube. This stretch of the river, all paddlers should know, provides precious few campsites. The banks on both sides are steep and when they do flatten out at all, they are very rocky. (Another Cree legend tells us

that the riverside rocks were once people and explains why there are so many of them). So it was that we spent long hours into the twilight searching for a decent camp site. We eventually settled for a rocky incline at km 185 where we "terraced" our sleeping bags with excess gear.

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Just before finding this spot we paddled through a flock of fifty or more bug-hunting Arctic terns, careening all about as they skimmed the water's surface for food. There were swallows too, up higher, hunting as they would fancy-fly loop-the-loops. Yet another immersive environmental moment, and a welcome reprieve from the job that finding a campsite had become.

Our descent to Fort Albany had been a fulfilling voyage that exceeded expectations

We covered 39 kilometres on the eighth day, abetted by favourable winds and the sails we rigged up. Pauline and I stretched my 'army surplus' poncho between two saplings, while Steve and Michelle lashed their kayaks together catamaran-style and fashioned a smaller sail from a jacket, which resembled a scarecrow. Our larger sail and vessel was quicker and for the rest of the day we took off ahead, waiting for our partners at intervals. It was nice for once not to be the sluggish canoe coming up the rear – sailing on the Albany River, like the "Henley Barges" of old.

We asked an elder at Fort Albany about the meaning of this river's indigenous name and he told us that a long time ago the Albany River was called *Kish-tadg-awan*, meaning "major," and "long distance," or "far



Barges on the Albany River supply local villages with goods

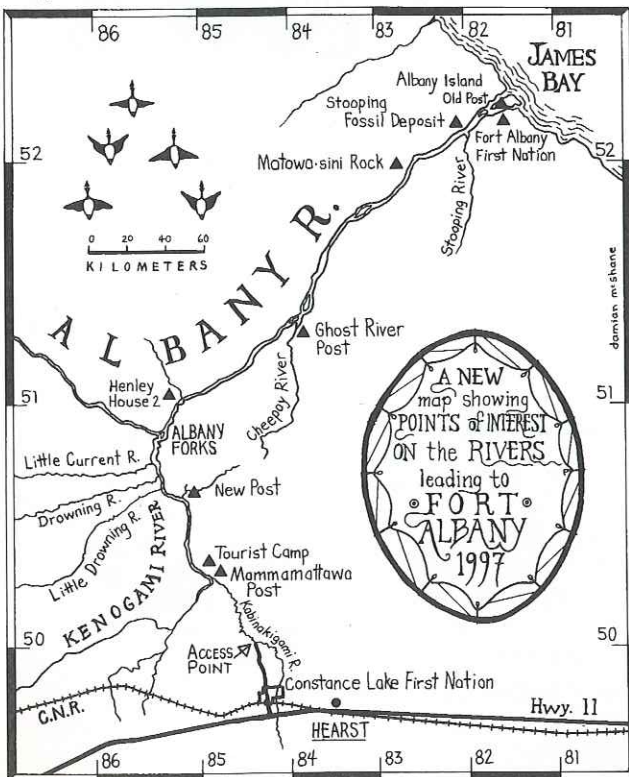
travelling." Eventually the name of this river came to be known as "Kiseech-awan", meaning "fast"; this is the pronunciation and meaning that is used today, he said. The first HBC fort on this river was the "house at Ke'si'che'wan." But as was so commonly the

case, the English eventually decided to give it a name in their own language. In 1683, the post and river were given the name "Albany" in honour of his Royal Highness, Governor of the HBC, James Duke of York and Albany. The location of the present day Fort Albany community is found beside a series of finger lakes and has always been known in the Cree language as *Peetabeck*, signifying "lakes beside the river" or "gutways".

We sailed into Ghost River (*Cheepay Seepee*) where we feasted on Michelle's two wall-eye pickerel, caught while trolling en route. The fish were complemented with baked onions, raisin bannock on a stick, and instant scalloped potatoes. Yummm! That evening was very still and it was all we could do not to breathe insects. It's at such times that one really appreciates a good tent which provides such wonderful sanctuary from the "harassment" of insect predators. Once zipped inside, the infernal buzz of trillions of bugs outside is almost comforting: a hypnotic drone that invites sleep.

The next morning (day nine) we paddled across the Cheepay River, where we climbed the bank looking for the "abandoned" Ghost River settlement. The HBC closed this fur trading post in 1963. In the surrounding bush we saw remains of buildings, antique camping remnants, and a small, well-maintained cemetery. At this latitude the coniferous forest dominates; ash has entirely disappeared, while birch can still be seen here and there, but not in big stands like on the Kabinakigami River. Before leaving the site, we saw large, fresh wolf tracks along the shore.

Downstream from Ghost River, we stopped at a spot where we explored the first large pieces of stranded, post-break-up ice. We climbed atop of one that was about the size of a Greyhound bus. Beside these ice chunks were several pools surrounded by rocks and resembling Roman baths. Pockets of meltwater were trapped in



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gouged depressions by tons of moving ice that had recently departed. We rested around one such pool before carrying on.

It was at this point that our group temporarily split up. Our kayaking companions had decided to try the southern channel around Fishing Creek Island. While we were on the northern channel an otter came close to our canoe several times before diving and disappearing for good. At our rendezvous point they told us they'd seen the oddest animal – a wolverine, as it turned out. We swam and lunched under a hot mid-day sun at an amazing little beach, which Steve named "the mini-Riviera".

By day ten we were at Byrd Island (km 315) where we encountered some shallow riffles as indicated on the topographic maps. The islands at this point of the river are ominous at their upstream ends - steep sedimentary faces, worn by ice, wind and water and often towering to heights of seventy feet or more. Our excitement increased with the river's traffic as we drew ever closer to Fort Albany, and familiar territory.

Our plan for day eleven was to make it as far as Stooeping River, but the weather wouldn't allow it and we ended up getting separated and camping at two different locations. This happened as a result of Pauline and I stopping to make an offering at the sacred midstream rock known to the Cree people as *Mah ta wa Sin nee* meaning wondrous rock. Indeed, this rock is unique, as though it were still molten, and with significant impressions that have their own stories.

It was the next and final day of our voyage when we met up with Michelle and Steve again. They were camped on the first of a complex network of islands in the Albany River estuary. Along the way we saw osprey fishing the river. Approaching our friends' island campsite, we saw fast shallow rapids ahead, so we headed for shore and lined the canoe along for some distance before jumping back in to ride easily down the latter half.

As a group we decided to deviate from the recommended route on the Ministry of Natural Resources tourist map, doing so because of the stronger headwinds on the main channel. We only did this because we knew the various routes through the islands. For paddlers unacquainted with the island network, it is recommended to follow the suggested route since there are over fifty islands and even

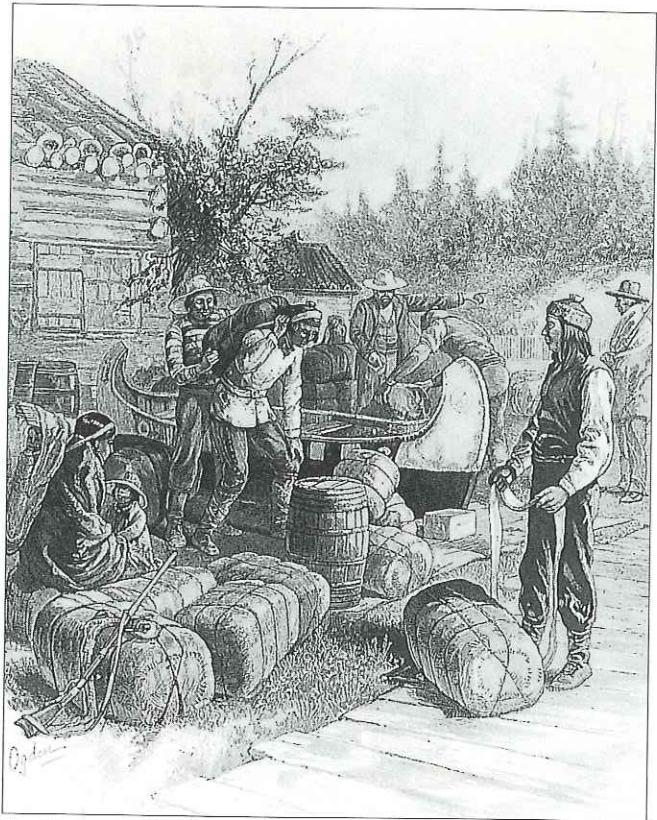
more gravel bars which change from year to year with the spring break up. Deviation from the "Recommended Route" could leave one disoriented, paddling and lining around for a way out.

We passed the fossil-rich Stooeping River area and entered the southerly channels that run between the mainland and several long, narrow islands. To the Cree these narrow channels are known as *Aw saw mwa naw kow* meaning islands tightly squeezed. (The elder explaining this over a map in Fort Albany took off his cap and squeezed it between his fists as though wringing it out.) It was here that we unexpectedly found some of the most fun and skill-challenging canoeing of the entire trip. Very shallow water with a quick current, big rocks and only narrow channels of passage: a fitting end to our adventure. During the final few kilometres we were passed by outgoing freighter canoes heading upriver to fish.

We paddled into the Fort Albany "docking" channel on the longest day of the solar year, where we heard the sounds of bulldozers high above the bank – the community water and sewage project, bringing running water to the whole village for the first time. Shortly after landing, family and friends got word that we'd arrived from passers-by. Trucks arrived to pick us up.

This trip from Constance Lake to Fort Albany, of which we'd spoken for a few years and planned for several months, was now complete.

It was unanimous: our descent to Fort Albany had been a fulfilling voyage that exceeded all our expectations. For myself, the journey was nothing short of a pilgrimage, one that has given dimension to my understanding of the symbiotic relationship between a people and their land; one that I wish to share with other paddlers.



Trading at a Hudson Bay Company outpost on the Albany

We are thankful for a safe journey and the beauty and experiences along the way.

Note to Paddlers:

Visiting paddlers should consider making another stop before arriving in the village. Continue downstream to Albany Island's southern shore, to that place on the Ministry of Natural Resources map indicated as "Former village and HBC/Revillon Freres posts". It can be recognized as a clearing from the water, since the community still uses the site for annual summer pow-wows. Here at this site, one can find a two hundred year old cemetery with Orcadian gravestones and remnants from the former Fort Albany community.

From Albany Island one can see James Bay in the distance. Be forewarned that the tide on James Bay has a strong effect, as does the wind, and paddlers should exercise extreme caution when travelling. It is not recommended that paddlers approach the Bay or consider canoeing to Moosonee. There is a commemorative marker across from the Fort Albany hospital erected after several touring canoeists perished in the bay. It warns of "offshore winds with an outgoing tide." Having said all this, the Albany Island site is easily reached when one exercises common sense.

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