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# The Canoe Diaries

## Friday, June 30, 2017 (/thecanoediaries/expo67)

### **Paddling to Canada's Centennial**

As the country prepares to celebrate 150 years since Confederation, staff at the Archives at Whitby Public Library have been busy preparing three fragile scrapbooks to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of an extraordinary journey.

In 1967, the 5<sup>th</sup> Whitby Venturer Scouts canoed from Whitby to Montreal for Canada's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. They paddled the routes of Canada's Indigenous people and early fur traders and camped beneath the stars all while keeping a very detailed diary of the trip.

We scanned 137 pages, transcribed 17,842 words, and rehoused 111 photographs and postcards into archival envelopes so that we can share the story of the 5<sup>th</sup> Whitby Venturer Scouts with you.

### **Why Montreal?**

The highlight of Canada's Centennial celebrations was Expo 67 in Montreal. Known officially as the 1967 Universal and International Exposition, Expo 67 was held on Île Sainte-Hélène and Île Notre-Dame, two artificial islands set amid the St. Lawrence River. The theme of Expo 67 was Man and his World and countries and exhibitors from around the world built pavilions to promote culture, innovation, and architecture.



Expo 67 is considered by many to be the most successful Exposition of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. From April 28 to October 27, there were over 50 million paid admissions to Expo 67 and over 5 million admissions by performers, the press, official visitors, and employees.

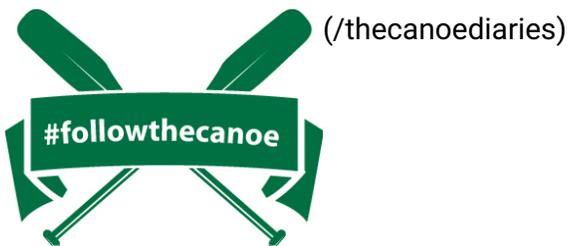
### **Trip of a lifetime**

By visiting Expo 67, the Whitby Scouts were part of a cultural phenomenon. They were one of many groups to travel to Montreal by water from various parts of the country. Both of these actions must have created significant memories for all involved. It's no wonder they wanted to record it for posterity.

Throughout the month of July, we'll be revealing the contents of the diary written by Scout leader, Gerry Hicks. He wrote about the ups and downs of the trip. He shared his frustrations, fatigue, and excitement. Plans changed and short-cuts were taken. His scrapbooks provide a very earnest account of the trip of a lifetime.

Catch all the updates at

[www.whitbylibrary.ca/thecanoediaries](http://www.whitbylibrary.ca/thecanoediaries) (<http://www.whitbylibrary.ca/thecanoediaries>) and on social media using the hashtag #followthecanoe



# Tuesday, July 4, 2017 (/thecanoediaries/prelude)

We're just a couple days away from the launch of The Canoe Diaries. The 5th Whitby Venturer Scouts set out for Montreal on Saturday, July 8 so you can expect to see more updates this week. As a prelude, let's introduce you to the people who made this momentous journey.



The troop consisted of 15 boys ages 15-18, six Rover Scouts ranging in age from 19 to 23, and Benny LaHaye, the group's advisor and adult. LaHaye was known in Whitby for his dedication to minor sports and the Scouting movement. He was awarded the Whitby Chamber of Commerce Peter Perry Award for his commitment to the community in 1981. During the trip, LaHaye made nightly phone calls to his wife Evelyn so she could record the events of the day. Their son Guy, who was also on the trip, still has his parents' diary.

The six Rover Scouts were tasked with leading the younger Venturer Scouts. Gerry Hicks, author of the scrapbooks was one of these young men. Hicks was a 21-year-old Assistant Scoutmaster and produce manager at the Dominion grocery store. On reading the diary, it becomes quite apparent that Hicks took his role as leader very seriously. His steadfast dedication to journaling and photographing the trip is evidence of this. In addition to Hicks, there were five other young men committed to the success of the journey.

John Brady was a 23 year old with 16 years of Scouting experience. He kindly allowed the use of his 1967 Mercury Meteor station wagon for transporting gear to the daily campsites. Of the same age, John Bedard worked as a police dispatcher in Toronto. John Gauthier, aged 21, served in the Royal Canadian Air Force for three years and as an Assistant Scoutmaster in Cold Lake, Alberta. Gerry Lynch was 20 years old and a winner of the Queen's Scout Award, the highest achievement for youth in Commonwealth Scouting. Finally, there was Peter Bedard. At just 19 years of age, he was the youngest leader and the top ranking athlete in high school wrestling in Ontario.

*Image: The whole group with Father Leo Austin, Mayor Desmond Newman (far right), and Councillor Vernon MacCarl (crouching at left).*



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## Friday, July 7, 1967 (/thecanoediaries/july7)

*The following passages were reproduced from the scrapbooks of Gerry Hicks. They have been transcribed without correction.*

### **Prelude to Expo 67 via Canoe**

To-day is Friday July 7, 1967; one day before our departure for Expo. It has been a very busy year preparing for this trip. Most of the preparation has of course been done by our skipper Ben LaHaye assisted by his 6 leaders. We know our responsibilities are many but we are prepared for them both mentally and physically. One Hundred letters have been sent and written to different people seeking advice from professionals and many books have been read to further better ourselves as leaders.



Also on this trip are Mr. Baxter and Mr. Norris. They are staying for a few days to assist in cooking. We have been very fortunate to have B. & R. transport our canoes to Port Perry. Benny will be loading the canoes this afternoon. We are happy to have John Brady to donate his new 1967 Meteor Stationwagon to transport our gear to our daily stops. Mr. K. Brown owner of Brown Electric Whitby has also loaned us his small box trailer to help relieve the load from the wagon.

#### **NOON**

Mrs. Carter of the Centennial Committee Whitby, phoned to advise that all is ready at the Marina on Lake Scugog for our departure on Sat. morning.

#### **5 P.M. FRI.**

All canoes and gear have been loaded in trailer and wagon.

#### **7:00 P.M. FRI.**

We've just received word which was the shock of our lives, with only hours left before our departure. Glen FitzGerald, Gerry Gravelle, Father Austin, all representatives of our Group Committee have just decided that we should not go on the canal system but start from Trenton. We, the leaders cannot understand why they should change their minds at the last minute. We know, the canal is okay, and that the water is faster than usual, only at the locks.

For the past 2 weeks this water situation has been closely checked: daily. The water is slowly getting lower every day and the lockmaster at Peterboro, Ontario informed Benny that by Thursday, July13, the Canal System would be back to normal.

#### **FRI. 9:00 P.M.**

Ben has just received a call from Mrs. Carter who informs him everything is ready but Ben then informed her that we wouldn't be leaving from her planned send-off point. She was quite shocked as were the people at the Marina.

**FRI. 10:00 P.M.**

All leaders hold a conference and reach a decision that positively we are leaving from our proposed send-off and starting point. We are leaving from Port Perry as scheduled irregardless. Nothing is going to hold us back.

**FRI. 11:30 P.M.**

We, the leaders have just arrived at Ben's house to let him know that everything is again O.K. and our trip will commence Saturday morning as scheduled.

**Sat. 12:30 A.M.**

Ben phoned Ms. Carter and got her out of bed to make known to her everything is "A O.K." again. She is quite mad as she had to phone the Marina and get in touch with all the boat-owners so that we can still have ours end-off and our guard of honour.

*Image: Painting the finishing touches on one of the canoes before trip.*



(/thecanoediaries)

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## **Saturday, July 8, 1967 (/thecanoediaries/july8)**

*The following passages were reproduced from the scrapbooks of Gerry Hicks. They have been transcribed without correction.*

**7:45 A.M.**

Woke up, ate and said my good-byes. I am off now for the R.C. Church [St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church] in Whitby.

Mayor Newman & Councillor Vernon McCarl [MacCarl] are both attending mass, which was said by Father Austin and he still seemed disturbed that we were leaving against all of their wish's so to speak.

His Honor Mayor Desmond Newman gave us all a very encouraging speech which made us all feel at ease and helped boost our spirits. He then presented us with letters from himself to be presented to the mayors en-route. Councillor Vernon McCarl [MacCarl] presented Benny with free passes to Expo 67 for all of us. After pictures were taken. We then proceeded in a large caravan of vehicles to Port Perry.

[Editor's note: A small group of Scouts actually portaged to Port Perry by foot on July 7.]



### **9:30 A.M.**

We were all waiting patiently for His Worship the Mayor, so we can get underway.

Refreshments were served to everyone present before leaving.

Magistrate Jermyn is also quite enthused about our trip. He has a large cabin cruiser here and will also escort us out across Lake Scugog. He further encouraged us by telling us of his many canoe trips and assured us that we would have no major difficulties with the canal as he knows the system very well.

### **10:15 A.M.**

The Mayor has finally arrived. We found out later that he got lost.

Things are now beginning to roll. The canoes are all lined up and the boys are getting very impatient.

The boys are receiving final briefings from the leaders.

After good-byes are said; Mr. McCarl [MacCarl] is seen standing on the dock getting ready to give the sign to shove-off.



We all keep looking across the lake and thinking how far we have to paddle, only 500 miles. In a matter of minutes we will be off. John and Ben are the last 2 leaders to leave. The rest of us leaders are spread throughout the boys. Our formation is fairly close so as to rescue a capsized canoe more quickly. We finally are off and all to be heard now is the whistles and cheers from people on shore and the whistles from all of the big boats.

We are now leaving the docks and going past the guard of honor.

Mayor Newman is following us in a cabin cruiser as is Magistrate Jermyn, and others I don't recognize. We now are about a mile and a half from shore and have lost sight of the people, but we can still see the shore-line. The water is getting fairly rough so we stick close to shore.

Mayor Newman's cruiser is now the only one left going with us, but we imagine he will leave us soon, as we are rapidly approaching the entrance of the Scugog River. We are now passing Ball Point. Here the water is dirty but there is no fast current as we were led to believe. The mayor has left us now.

Our only misfortune up to date has been the loss of Peter's wallet. He has been unable to find it due to the dirty, muddy water. His loss was \$30.00, but we all chipped in and made up his loss for him. He feels very bad about losing it and feels as though he shouldn't accept our donations.

In the distance we can see the Lindsay water tower and now the boys are all paddling rapidly down the river.

**5:30 P.M.**

We arrived at our proposed camp-site and carried our canoes approximately 600 yds. across the motel grounds to Lindsay Auto Camp, one mile from the business section on the highway.

The camp is set up and the boys pitch in giving a hand peeling potatoes while John and Peter Bedard cook the steaks. Brady and Ben went into town to get Mayor Eakins. He is going to arrive at 8 p.m. Dinner is not quite finished as the mayor arrives with news reporters from both the Lindsay and Peterboro Papers.

The mayor presented us all with an embroidered crest of Lindsay and read our mayor's letter. After a brief speech, he mixed with the boys and acted like one of us.

During the early part of the evening some of the boys went to town, while others read, went to bed early or indulged in the restaurant across from the Auto Camp. Curfew for the boys is 10:30 as we get up very early in the morning.

The mayor left us for a while to return with his wife. We had a camp-fire going with a pot of coffee. Both the mayor and his wife are very friendly.

During the course of the evening, many people have visited our camp-site through curiosity, and find it hard to believe that our destination is Expo 67, Montreal. They all say it's too far, especially inland.

The boys are rolling in one or two at a time and as the tents are checked most everyone is sleeping by 11:00

I find it a particularly good feeling to know that our first day went off really good without any real major incident, just the thought of 14 more days of paddling.

*Images: Portaging canoes to Port Perry (top two); the group at the dock in Port Perry.*



(/thecanoediaries)

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## **Sunday, July 9, 1967 (/thecanoediaries/july9)**

*The following passages were reproduced from the scrapbooks of Gerry Hicks. They have been transcribed without correction.*

The camp is now awoken. Everyone is buzzing around.

The sky looks rather heavy but we are not too worried.

Everyone is now washed and ready to sit down to breakfast consisting of fried tomatoes, fried potatoes and onions, with ½ grapefruit and tea. With breakfast over everyone proceeds to wash his own meal tins and prepare for mass.

To get everyone to mass, we made 3 trips to the church by the car. While we were doing this the other boys were sitting on a brick fence near the church and someone figured we were a motorcycle gang, without motorcycles, and called the “cops.” By the time the police arrived there were 20 of us attired in buckskins. I imagine we all looked rather rough and tough as the police looked at us and sped away. When they arrived minutes later with other help, we were entering the church and I guess they must have figured that we were O.K..



### **9:15 A.M.**

We departed, the press again were on hand, and it was raining slightly. While getting into our canoes, Gerry Lynch fell into his, causing a big laugh and a sore leg.

Benny took the lead about 500 ft. ahead as he didn't want to take any chances on the dams. The water though, was not turbulent and the locks were operating. The mayor and local V.I.P's allowed us through the locks without a permit, and once again we were on our way.

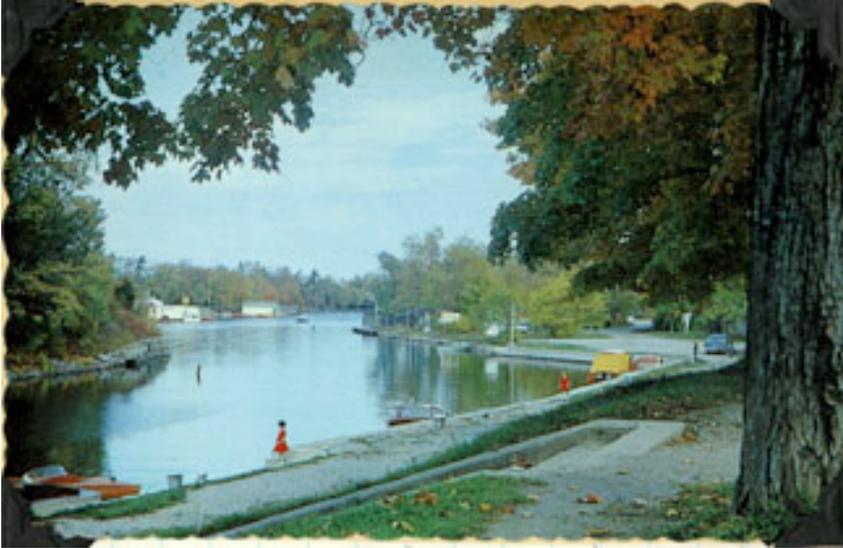
Rain started heavily around 5 miles north on the Sturgeon River but seemed to stop as fast as it started. Now it is hot and sticky.

Benny had arrangements made with friends of his to meet us all along the canal system.

Heading across Sturgeon Lake, John Brady and the rest of the leaders except Benny are paddling with the boys like mad to try and lose him as he was stopped, talking to a friend of his in a large motor launch.

Ben finally caught up to us after a while and found us all taking a reset at MacDonnell Isle about 8 miles from Bobcaygeon. Some of us went for a refreshing swim while the majority were getting 40 winks.

It is now nearly 2:00 P.M. and we are all ready to push for "Caygeon" where a light lunch awaits us. The water is choppy, but it is fun riding the waves. The wind is blowing across our bows at the proper angle to allow us to make good time.



### **3:20 P.M.**

Now coming into Bobcaygeon and we can see clearly the wagon and trailer. As our cook is flagging us all in, we pulled into a small pond one at a time and started on our lunch. Boy, what a lunch: 1 orange, 1 sm. miniature box of raisins, and a ½ cup of turkey soup. John Brady and myself made a getaway and went to restaurant where we got a real lunch that was filling. After lunch we headed back to the canoes to rest awhile before proceeding onward again. It was a hot afternoon around the 90 degree-mark. The water is still fast but all the locks are operating.

We portage around the locks as not all of our canoes are registered and also we can make faster time by portaging.

We were again cheered by Sunday visitors and the townspeople. On the other side of the dam the water is fast but everyone likes this, as you can go with the current and paddling becomes easier; plus the fact it breaks the monotony.

Benny stopped in "Caygeon" for a few minutes to get info on the waters to Buckhorn from some friends of his. We waited for our skipper at the entrance to Pigeon Lake. Paddling here isn't very hard as the water isn't moving.

Our objective, is the causeway at the entrance of Buckhorn, about 3 more hrs. of paddling. Everyone already is becoming very dark and well tanned due to the excessive hot weather.

A boat just pulled up and informed us that he had a complaint from our group committee that were 5 hrs. overdue and lost. It is obvious that they don't know too much about canoes, if they think we can travel 10 miles per hr. across a lake when there is hardly any movement in the water.

We decided we will camp at Oak Orchards for the night. Waiting on the dock for us, of all people to see is Mr. Fitzgerald.

As soon as we docked the boys were called on to peel spuds and get the stoves ready without even having 5 minutes to rest.

It was realized that Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Gravelle both on the Group Committee did not come here to welcome us but to discourage us from going on. We, the leaders do not understand their motive.

However tents were pitched at the Oak Orchards Marina on about 3 ft. of grass at a ridiculous cost of \$6.00 per day. It was not our idea to camp here or our idea of a camp-site but was chosen by our now infamous Group Committee.

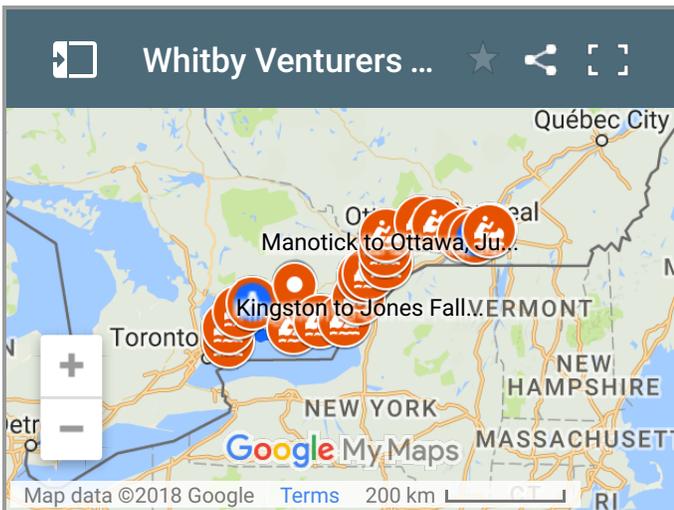
The boys and leaders all feel that permission was granted by the boys' parents to go on this trip and that the Group Committee has no right interfering.

Mr. Inkpen is here also and he informs us that our Group Committee was raising such a stink over the supposedly rough water and that the parents are beginning to worry and that we had better cancel the rest of the trip here. Mr. Fitzgerald gets a brainwave and decides to portage via truck to Trenton.

Ben arrived back in Whitby at 7:00 A.M. Monday to pick up a truck loaned to us by B & R Transport to head back to Buckhorn. He arrives around 10:00 a.m.

Now, everyone is thoroughly disappointed and still want to continue by way of canoes.

*Images: Leaving the docks at Port Perry; Canal entrance at Bobcaygeon.*



# Monday, July 10, 1967 (/thecanoediaries/july10)

The following passages were reproduced from the scrapbooks of Gerry Hicks. They have been transcribed without correction.

11:00 A.M.

Another meeting is held to decide what we are going to do. It is decided that we portage to Trenton as advised.

We have formed the opinion that we are at this point, being pulled out of the water just to meet someone's demand that don't know a damn thing about canoeing, the Trent System, Scouting or boys.

The feelings of the boys towards the Group Committee are just terrible.

## Canoes Need Water But Not So Much Trent Frustrates Scout Paddlers



**FIBREGLOSS CANOE IS UP FOR GRABS**

This canoe is being offered as first prize in the Peterborough-to-Trenton canoe race which has been scheduled for the August

civic holiday weekend. Holding it are (from left) Ian Darling, president of the Trenton Chamber of Commerce; Robert Carles-

ton, chairman of the Centennial committee; Ben LaHays, head of a Whitby Scout group passing through Trenton on the way

to Expo; and Ronald Yarow, a member of the race committee.

Photo by Eldon Kemp

The experience of a group of Scouts from Whitby who tried to paddle down the Trent system from Port Perry has raised doubts about whether it will be possible to run the planned Peterborough-to-Trenton canoe race early next month.

Seventeen boys and two leaders set out in nine canoes from Port Perry on July 8, intending to paddle to Expo 67 in Montreal. At Buckhorn, however, the canoeists were advised to discontinue the voyage because of the high water hazards along the system.

Ben LaHays, leader of the group, had to go back to Whitby and get a truck which he used to transport the canoes to Trenton where they were relaunched this morning.

When they arrive at Expo, the boys will take part in a Scout World Canoe Race.

Dressed in buckskin jackets which they made themselves, the Scouts stay in four tents which are hauled by a father of one of the boys who is accompanying the group in a station wagon hauling a trailer.

The canoeists have letters of introduction which they present to the mayor of each community where they stop. They make from 30 to 40 miles a day.

In Ottawa, the group will be greeted by their local member of parliament, Michael Starr. A big celebration is planned in connection with their arrival.

Meanwhile, Bruce Gould of Toronto, son of former Councilor J. W. Gould, has donated a 16-foot fibreglass for first prize in the Peterborough-to-Trenton canoe race. A similar canoe will be contributed by the Chamber of Commerce and the Centennial committee, for the second person in the winning paddling

We departed from Oak Orchards some in Brady's wagon, others in the truck and the remainder in Mr. Lynch's vehicle. We headed out around 11:30 along the highway running beside the water system. The water was only turbulent around the dams.

We observed young boys out on the water system, floating on air mattresses.

It is quite hot to-day and humid and looks like rain.

We stopped to talk to an official at the lift locks in Peterboro and were informed by him that the Canal System should be back to normal by Thursday.

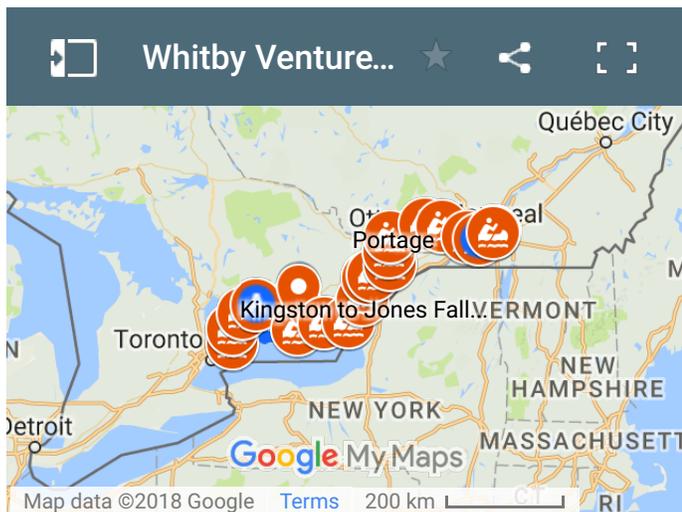
We arrived in Trenton at the Dominion Store Parking Lot at Highway #2. Ben left to make arrangements for our camp-site. We got in touch with the President of the Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Jack Wilson. He is a real fine gentleman, a real helpful organizer with thought only for the boys. He arranged for us to stay in the Town Park free and had our canoes stored in his apartment to prevent damage. Ice-cream was given away to all the crew compliments again of Mr. Wilson.

This, we were told was the first time an expedition of this type had stopped in Trenton.

This was probably why we were given the red carpet treatment.

Benny departed for Whitby to return the truck and by the time he returned back to Trenton he found Mr. Morris and Mr. Baxter disappointed with the whole trip. The boys also didn't enjoy the meals as much because we were served fancy meals of the kind, that when you are camping you do not enjoy. Also none of us appreciated sitting down and getting up to the sound of a bugle as this was what was going on.

The boys were taken on a tour of the big town of Trenton, and the Rovers within our crew; namely 2 of us were invited to the den of the Trenton Rover Crew. To-day we had a lot of visitors and we find everyone really nice. At 12:30 in the evening we were invited to Mr. and Mrs. Wilson's apartment located right across from the town park.





(/thecanoediaries)

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## Tuesday, July 11, 1967 (/thecanoediaries/july11)

*The following passages were reproduced from the scrapbooks of Gerry Hicks. They have been transcribed without correction.*

Rise and shine at 7:30 A.M. with rain pelting down so hard that canoeing was virtually impossible. We had a wet breakfast. This type of weather makes everyone lazy. Nevertheless our camp was a comfortable one as the equipment we are using is the best that money can buy.

At this time the moral of the boys is rather low from the previous day's incidents.



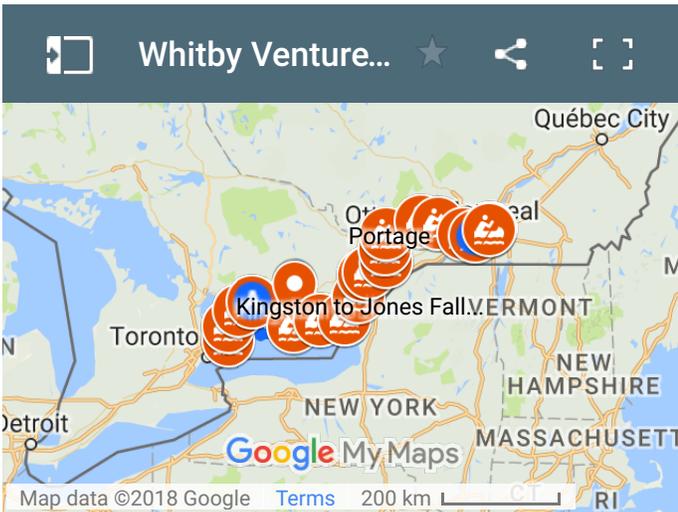
We were interviewed at 10:30 by the local Trenton-Belleville radio station CJBQ and the Trenton newspapers.

Irregardless of the rainy weather, we all still wanted to continue, but we were advised by the R.C.A.F. Stn. Trenton Weather Bureau to stay off the lake as conditions were very rough. As a result of this, we stayed and left on Wednesday morning.

Later in the day, Mr. Wilson presented all of us with souvenirs of their town. At night, we held a huge open camp-fire where Mr. Bernard Fox who is the District Commissioner of the area presented us with a district badge.



Various skits were performed; hot chocolate served and then everyone department. Most of us go to bed around 12:30-1:00 A.M.



*Images: Partial view of our campsite in Trenton. The boys were always kept well occupied with various camp activities, swings, teeter-totters, etc.; Trenton regional Scout badge given to the paddlers by the District Commissioner.*



# Wednesday, July 12, 1967 (/thecanoediaries/july12)

*Missed an entry? Wondering what this is all about?*

*Start at the beginning (<http://www.whitbylibrary.ca/thecanoediaries/expo67>) and follow along as the 5th Whitby Venturer Scouts canoe to Montreal.*

*The following passages were reproduced from the scrapbooks of Gerry Hicks. They have been transcribed without correction.*

Again we arose at 7:00 A.M. very tired but also very eager to get on our way.

After a hearty breakfast of porridge and tea we hiked about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile to pick up our canoes which were stored for us. We were then escorted through the main streets of Trenton to the town docks by the president of the Chamber of Commerce, news reporters and the police.

At the docks many pictures were taken, good-byes were said, then we shoved off at 9:30 A.M. We are now heading for Deseronto. It is again very hot but the lake is quiet.



We headed about 1 mile out into the bay, then swinging left with a good breeze on our backs headed due east. Upon passing the Trenton Air Base, the wind seems to be getting stronger and we are really moving, in the rough waves. In the past hour we have covered more rough water than the 2 days on the

Trent. We can now see Belleville in the distance as it is only 13 miles from Trenton by road but a little more by water.

We are making excellent time as the wind is with us. We arrived in Belleville, sharply at 12:00 NOON and put into a cove known as SWICK [Zwick's] PARK. Fortunately the Centennial Caravan was stopped here also, so we ate a fast lunch, then toured the Caravan. There was also a huge crowd waiting to greet us as this was our destination for lunch.

The area in the "Quinte Region" namely Trenton and Belleville was our best covered area as far as radio interviews were concerned.

To-day for lunch we had a special treat: Scotch broth soup and meat sandwich's.

I feel rough water has brought our group closer together again as long as the Group Committee continues to leave us alone.

At 1:15 P.M., we are off again, leaving SWICK [Zwick's] PARK with still a fairly strong wind on our backs. Crossing under the bridge at Highway 29 we will soon be entering Big Bay. We have been warned by the people in Belleville to be very cautious as the Bay gets very rough at times. We group closer together, generally 10 ft. apart.

Big Bay is sheltered at the west end and therefore the water seems very calm. We pause for a quick smoke and discuss the situation. It is decided that party maintains a strict close formation with the strongest paddlers bringing up the rear. This so called bay is 10 miles across and we know that we may encounter our roughest waters yet. Approximately 1 half an hour out, the wind is really blowing and the waves getting higher. It is a lot of fun riding these high waves but the poor bow paddler gets the wettest. The stern paddler has the hard pleasure of keeping the canoe on a straight course. We estimated the waves to be 3 or 4 feet high as our canoes were rising almost half-way out of the water. At times it gives a person one hell of a feeling.



We keep heading into the wind so as not to tip over our craft. After passing Bobby Hull's Farm and the Cement Plant, outside Belleville we can observe in the distance at the bridge at Deseronto and the more we paddle the further away it seems to get. Due to rough water conditions, the leaders motion the boys to shore. This is more fun as you can surf all the way to shore. This way, no paddling is required. All that

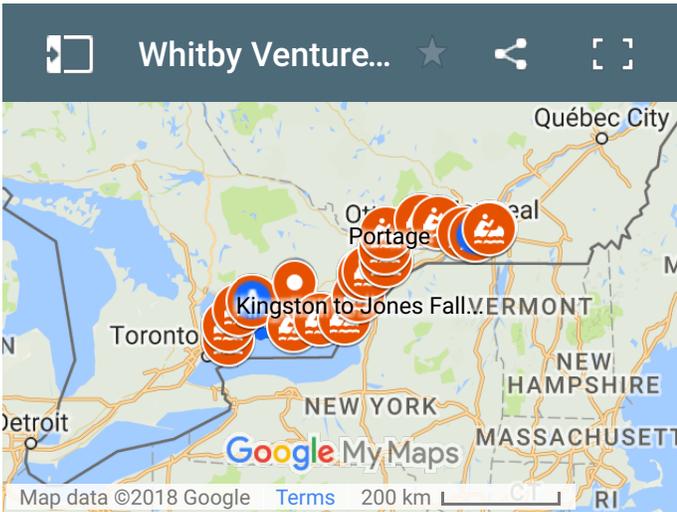
is needed is for the stern paddler to keep the canoe heading on a slight angle towards shore. We stop at Tridden [Trident] Point and portage through muskeg like ground around ½ mile to the north shore. Then, hopping back into our canoes and in formation we use the point to break the wind. The water is calmer and we are averaging better than 5 miles per hour which is very good for a canoe.

Passing under the new bridge at Deseronto finally, we follow the shore-line for approx. 3 miles.

We camped at the town park in Deseronto, on Mohawk Bay. This is the first park we have run into with no wash-room facilities or running water but it was a place to stay.

Supper is eaten, camp set-up, dishes washed then we toured the town. The leaders gathered all laundry and went to the laundry mat in town to do the washing. We were interviewed here also by a news reporter.

Tonight we hit the sack early as our next day is a real hard one.



Images: Leaving Trenton, Wednesday, July 12, 1967; two Scouts paddling in Lake Ontario near Belleville.



(thecanoediaries)

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## Thursday, July 13, 1967 (/thecanoediaries/july13)

*Missed an entry? Wondering what this is all about?*

*Start at the beginning (<http://www.whitbylibrary.ca/thecanoediaries/expo67>) and follow along as the 5th Whitby Venturer Scouts canoe to Montreal.*

*The following passages were reproduced from the scrapbooks of Gerry Hicks. They have been transcribed without correction.*

To-day is another bright, sunny day but just a little windy.

By 8:00 A.M. breakfast of bacon and eggs, toast, jam and tea is finished.

While the boys break camp the leaders get together and plan the day's trip.

There are lots of decisions to make whether we take the long route via Hayward Long Reach and along Adolphus Reach against the wind to L. [Lake] Ontario, a distance of 24 miles to cut straight across Mohawk Bay and follow the Empire Loyalist Route across country for 17 miles. For this area we do not have a topographical map, just a road map of this area and it makes it difficult to define a proper route.

We finally decide on the inland route for safety sake as well as the time element. Directly across on the other side of Mohawk Bay from our camp is a farmhouse. Everyone makes a bee line for this farmhouse.

Again we are off against white caps & strong winds. We have to back-track west a little bit against the wind for approx. 3 miles towards Forrester Island in order to hit our target. Had we not done this, the wind would have been directly on our right side and blown us 10 miles off course, up the Napanee River. We landed exactly on our pre-picked target.



All our goods carried in the canoes were securely bound to either the middle thwart or shoved up inside stern or bow so as we would not lose them in the event of a capsized.

We proceeded up a small knoll to a side road known as road #9.

We decide to portage to Hare Island on Hay Bay. It is now quite hot and we head East to a cross-road that leads to Hare Is.

At the cross-road some 4 miles away we run into JOHN BRADY who is driving the car to-day.

We inform him to go back and pick up stragglers and we will continue on. We have just stopped to talk to a farmer who is repairing a shed and he informs us that we are still 20 miles from the shore of Lake Ontario. After a little fast talk we convinced him that he should carry our canoes on his truck and transport us straight across the island to Sandhurst.

We arrived at Sandhurst at a point on the junction of Highway 33 and a side road.

For the bother we had put the farmer to, we reimbursed him with some gas money.

The water on the lake was hitting the shore-line very heavily and was a beautiful greenish-blue in color and quite cool.

To date, we have only received a single case of sea sickness, namely Corny Dirks.

While getting ready to launch our canoes most of us got a little wet as it was hard to hold the canoes steady due to the large waves. Paddling along the lake we stuck closer to the shore than usual but trying at the same time to maintain a straight course.

Part of the shore-line was very shallow so while paddling in these spots we had to move further out.

Most of us have been canoeing for many years but to-day I myself, and some of the other boys as well as all the rest of the leaders found out that to-day is the best yet, the waves are enormous and we use the canoes like surf boards and making excellent time.

The canoes are spread out a little more now and sometimes you see just 2 boys sitting on top of the water with no canoe and then you look up and they are up in the air. They really enjoy this, but I wonder how many cases of sea sickness we are going to have on our hands since the rolls are continuous.

Now were are approaching Amherst Island which offers a slight shelter due to its large size. As we pass by Bath, Ontario, a small town located on shores of L. [Lake] Ontario, people are waving and cheering. They are also stopping their cars and observing and blowing their horns. To the right side of Amherst Island is Wolfe Island and we are nearing Kingston now.

It is a real effort to keep the canoes on course. We can now see Collins Bay Penitentiary on our left side and the sky line of Kingston. We are making fairly good time and everything is going by very fast. The rest of the scenery is lovely and the water is now much warmer as is the weather.

Our destination tonight is Kingston. It is doubtful as to whether we will make it.

The last stretch by water from Collins Bay Pen. To the park in Kingston is a rough one. We are, at this time approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  hr. away from our designated camp.

There are numerous boulders protruding out of the water so this makes travelling closer to shore a little difficult. As well as this, the wind is coming straight across the lake. Two canoes have just been observed headed for a small bay and Peter Bedard and Gerald Lynch are heading to find out the trouble. As they are attempting to turn their canoe, a huge wave took hold of them and all that could be seen was arms and legs. Their canoe was being thrown up onto shore and they were swimming after it.

Peter suffered a cut on his knee. The first to be swamped was Tim Van Gils & Corny Dirks followed by John Gauthier and Errol Keoghan. Then Vidas Viacunas and old faithful (myself) ranked third. Next came John Bedard and Gord Woodcock; Hank WYST and Steve Baxter and Guy LeHaye and Benny; - in that order.

This was the first time any or all of us got swamped. But, this is part of the trip. Within 5 minutes of the overturns we were all regrouped on shore. Then we pursued our paddles etc. which were close to shore.



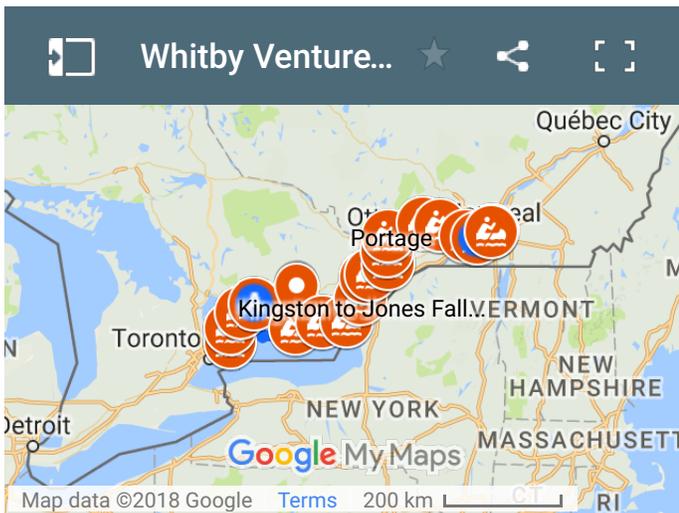
We were all wet and cold but happy. By the time we got everything together approx.. 1 ½ hrs. had elapsed.

A gentleman, by the name of Mr. Walker who has a house located on the lake front not too far from our capsizes, came to our aid and invited us to his house to dry off. He even outfitted all of us with temporary clothing while his wife was kept busy drying our clothing. He served us hot coffee and cake and we watched T.V. He later drove us through Kingston, showing us various highlights of the city, then took us tour camp, which was Lake Ontario Provincial Park located across from the grain elevators and about 2 miles from where we went aground. This was the best camp site so far as it was equipped with all available facilities. There was even a dance floor. Most everyone else attended the dance except Danny Gravelle who was sea sick. We tried him on dry toast but ended up getting him medicine.

There was no real supper tonight as everyone had been filling up at the snack bar.

Conclusion: Today has been a real trying day. In fact it was our most trying day thus far. The boys are growing up fast and their behavior is excellent. We, the leaders have nothing but praise for them and this makes us all very proud leaders.

Images: Paddling somewhere in Lake Ontario; "Susie" in Lake Ontario near Kingston.





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## Friday, July 14, 1967 (/thecanoediaries/july14)

*Missed an entry? Wondering what this is all about?*

*Start at the beginning (<http://www.whitbylibrary.ca/thecanoediaries/expo67>) and follow along as the 5th Whitby Venturer Scouts canoe to Montreal.*

*The following passages were reproduced from the scrapbooks of Gerry Hicks. They have been transcribed without correction.*

Got up at 8:15 A.M. and ate a hearty breakfast of porridge, bread and jam and tea. After all camp duties are performed we again prepare for our day's paddling. With all the paddles and life-jackets sorted out and our small kits are stowed away in the canoes, we are eager to get the show on the road again. Our objective to-day is Jones Falls some 30 miles up the Cataraqui River.

The boys are very anxious as for them and most of us leaders the waters we will be travelling to-day and from here on are unknown to us. Most of us didn't know that the Rideau Canal system went all the way from Kingston to Ottawa.

Everybody is well prepared as we all went to bed relatively early Thursday evening and we all got a good sound sleep.

So we headed out a fairly fast clip. Then minutes after launching, we have rounded the bend and are losing sight of the Lake Ontario Park. We are still heading due east towards the mouth of the Cataraqui River. Pulling up to Kingston Penitentiary or the "Big House" as it is known, we deliberately slow our pace down so as to give the guards in the watch towers something to use their binoculars for. Passing the "Penn" we approach the Kingston Yacht Club, dodging in and around all sorts of sail boats. At this point we make a sharp left turn and are now heading north and on our right is old Fort Henry. About 200 ft. this side of the Highway #2 bridge, there is an old Martello Tower used years ago as a tower for observation and firing in case of an attack. We stop and observe for a few minutes.



Then, we paddled under the Highway #2 bridge in amongst 6 or 7 large pleasure craft and past a fairly large navy boat. The water here is scummy and very polluted and there is a huge area covered with ½" of oil and gas on top. So far this is the worst condition we have seen any water in. We head to the far right hand corner of this bay to enter the canal. We think we are on the wrong route but this is where the buoys go, so we must be heading in the right direction. At the entrance of the Canal System; it is teeming with bull rushes & water lilies & weeds. The water here is very calm & warm and is crystal clear. Fish can be seen swimming around. This reminds us for a minute of the start of the Scugog River.

Approximately 1 mile up the Canal, we can hear trucks and cars so we know we are coming to the 401 Highway Bridge. We travel in close formation enjoying the scenery and paddling like hell so as to arrive at our destination.

Arrived at Kingston Mills and portaged the locks here and find it cumbersome as we have to carry the canoes up a fairly steep hill plus the fact that we are travelling in a river. After 10 minutes or so we are rolling once again and pass Joyceville Penitentiary on our right hand side. The building here is a long white one and since there are no guard towers or fences I assume it must be minimum security. It appears to be a really lonely place. On we paddle to Brewer Falls, also another lock. This is our lunch stop. The wind is really blowing straight at our backs and we are ever moving. The Cataraqui Lake is really churning. We are trying to keep the boys together but as we have quite a time controlling the canoes, it is pretty well every man for himself. The leaders are keeping a sharp eye on the boys though. This lake is fairly shallow but relatively long and wide. We have to stay between the buoys 100% as this lake is teeming with deadheads. These are logs just coming to the top of the water and are clearly visible on a calm day. But to-day as the water is fairly choppy you cannot observe these deadheads.

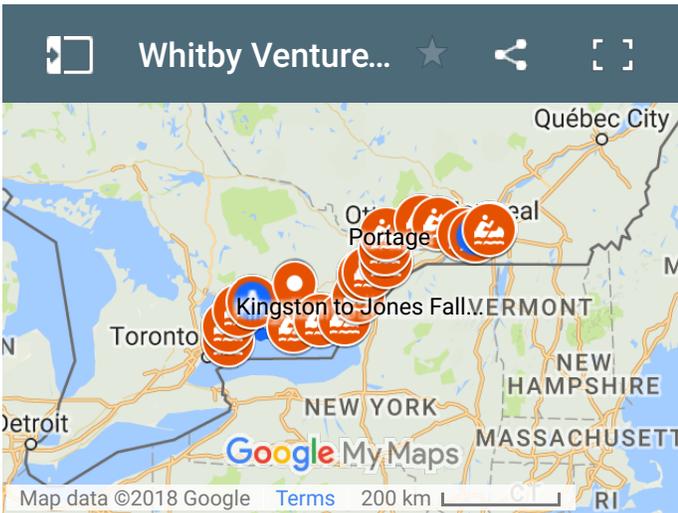
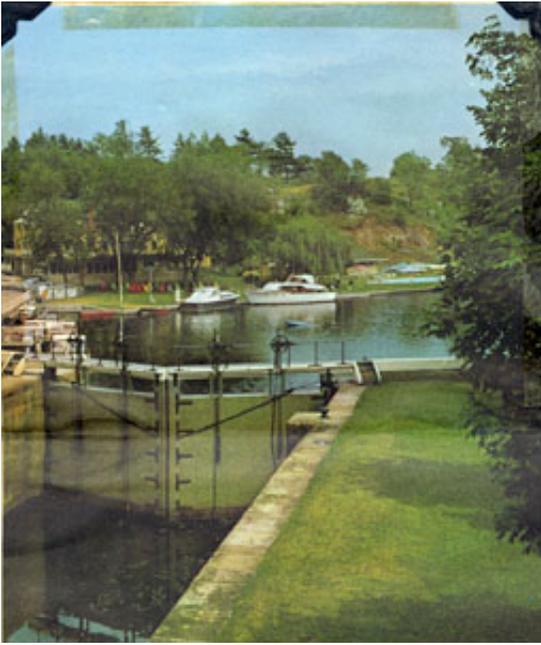


We have just run into 5 canoes loaded with Rangers. Each canoe is bright red containing 3 girls in each and is pretty well riding the waterline. We give them a big hand and a cheer but they are too busy paddling against the wind that they only give us a scary smile and keep going. Dad Woods and John Gauthier have straddled their last canoe and have stopped to chat for a minute or two. Also included are Corny Dirks and Dan Gravelle. We found out the girls were from Perth, Ontario and are heading for Kingston. Benny has warned them not to go past the Isle of Man as the wind is very strong in the Lower Cataraqui Lake. Approximately 10-15 minutes after the girls have disappeared from sight, Vidas and myself decide to go swimming and what a beautiful spot to swim; right in the middle of Greater Cataraqui Lake. As soon as our canoe flipped over, there were some of our canoes right there to help us, as well as 3 power boats. This is our first major swamp of the trip. This unfortunately was an expensive swamp as altogether I lost my Buckskin Jacket (all laced together with leather lace) cigarettes, 1 sun hat, my army summer issue bush jacket, some change and a brand new pair of moccasins. We are retrieved in about 4-5 minutes after capsizing by a large yacht from Long Island, New York, U.S.A.

The captain of the yacht is a high school principal there.

They towed our canoe to the shore, where we emptied out the water and started on our way again. While pulling us out of the water, the yacht had a hard time maneuvering in around the dead heads and got beached on one. So Benny borrowed his pole hook and helped push him off. We think it might have been a dead head which capsized us or it was a wake from a large pleasure craft which passed us prior to our capsizing. While on shore, wringing out our clothes, we got word from another water craft that the Rangers' canoes all were capsized and 15 girls were swimming around. Since all their gear was carried with them, it was lost. And we thought we had it bad!

We arrived in Jones Falls finally, later than scheduled. It was 9:00 P.M. before Benny phoned home. This phoning was done every evening, after the day's paddling. Everyone hit the sack quite early tonight as we all figured we deserved it.



*Images: Martello Tower at Fort Henry, Kingston; Aerial view of the Rideau Route extending from Kingston to Ottawa; Rideau locks at Jones Falls.*



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