

Harvey Bowman's Diary of a Central Saskatchewan Canoe Trip

May, June and July, 1915

Transcribed, indexed and introduced by Ellen Sangster, one of Harvey's granddaughters.

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Harvey Bowman's Diary of a Central Saskatchewan Canoe Trip May, June and July, 1915

Harvey McNally John Angus Bowman was born May 8, 1888 in Berlin (Kitchener), Ontario, Canada. He and 3 companions, Ed, Alex and Bill, travelled by canoe from May 6 to July 10, 1915. They began their trip in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan and reached Ile a La Cross, River La Plonge, the Haultain River, and many other locations.

Thursday, May 6, 1915

Weighed 155 1/2 pounds. Left Saskatoon. Arrived in P.A. [Prince Albert] Stayed the night. Had a great time but didn't make much use of our beds. Quite a shower of Rain at night.

Friday, May 7.

Left P.A. for Big River. Arrived OK. Lumber Co. took our outfit to the landing 8 miles out past the logs. We pitched our tent made Bannicks and Salt Pork. When we unpacked our syrup was all spilled and over books, Ed's sweater and shirt. Retired at half past nine. Ice froze over beans that were out soaking.

Saturday, May 8.

Had Breakfast. Alex made Bannicks and I burnt the Beans. Bannicks OK except doughy in the centre, no salt and too much grease. Bill and Alex walked to town and carried out 60 lbs potatoes, 6 loaves bread another can of syrup, candles condensed milk etc. Ed done his Laundry and I scoured the dish with sand that I burnt in the morning. We had Bread, Syrup and a good dinner.

We pulled out at 2.15 and made our first camping ground about 1/2 mile north of One tree Island. Camped in a bog and dug a well 4 feet from tent full of water in the morning. Retired at 9.15.

Sunday, May 9.

Got up at 3.30. Alex and I went hunting and Alex got a bird (?) for Brecky, good but is must have been an old bird. I saw lots of traces of Moose and Deer but couldn't get within Range. Pulled away from our One Tree Island camp and made past Big Island and stopped at the West shore and investigated a Hunter's shack then went downstream to a dug out. But as Water was too shallow, we struck straight across the lake and struck a dandy camping ground. Had dinner. Ed and Alex went Scouting. Shot a fish. Traces of Moose and Deer found. Bill not feeling well. I mended tent and pitched it. Bill mended paddles. Had a very good supper and packed our goods under canoe upside down and tied her well in case of storm. 10.30. Boys all rolled in. My turn for the middle. Expect rain. Goodnight.

Monday, May 10.

9.30 pm. Minutes of yesterday's diary read, moved by Alex, seconded by Ed that they be adopted as read by adding that Alex's scotch gruel fixed up Bill.

Up this morning at 5 am. Had Breakfast and on the water at 7.30. Water still and made very good speed.

Bill had troll out every day since we left but the first we caught going through the narrows. Pulled in at eleven. Had two fish for dinner on the left hand side in a beautiful spot. Pulled

out at 12.20. Hit shallow water at 2.20 and thinking we were right we bear across to the west and missed the source of the river and going about an hours paddling, we run up in the N.W. corner of the lake and got grounded. Having to lighten the canoe Ed and I were elected to walk in clothes that Nature provided. Ed beat me to it and I plunged getting nearly mired in mud. Ed and I took the 100 ft of rope being nearly all in till we got to shore. We pulled in the boat and Alex to a walk to see if there was an outlet but there was not. Going out through the mud our bare feet went down in mud two feet and hit ice. We shoved the boat upstream and after paddling back over an hour we hit the crooked River and made Rapid No. 1 and camped right below it at Camp No. 3. Harv nearly all in, had two drinks of ginger tea and then we took a big Supper of Salt Pork, Potatoes, Bannicks, Prunes, tea and felt fine after he had a rub down. It started to rain very heavy when we were eating supper. After supper we brought up the boat and packed everything in under it. As we all got wet we changed clothes and put on our light shoes to sleep. Our first portage was very strong but deep at places getting in to the waist. Guiding the canoe through Ed and Alex carried the 200 lbs of flour downstream to the camping ground. They were both ready to drop the bag but both said they were good for another mile.

Tuesday, May 11.

Up at 5 am. Raining and looked like an all day's rain. We had breakfast and being too wet to pull out Alex and Ed went hunting big game and came back with a small snipe. Bill and I stayed at camp. I washed the clothes. Bill mended a paddle and fixed canoe. Alex and Ed were a long way from camp and in order to get home gave three signals. Bill and Ed went hunting on the left side of the river but did not get anything. Alex and I trolled the river and got two dandy fish for supper.

The boys reported very fine level country but very heavy timbered. Clothes nearly all wet and dry clothes very scarce. Cooks had fine clinkers.

Wednesday, May 12.

Hereafter Alex and Ed will be known as the cooks and Bill and I as the tenthands. Up at 4 am had breakfast and launched out after Bill took a long search for his hunting he lost yesterday. We struck some small rapids and hit an Indian camp where we traded tea for fish. Camped on the NE side of river for dinner. Had a quick lunch and spread our clothes on the bank today. Pulled out at 12.30 and struck one rapid after another and every one deeper and swifter and we were all kept busy holding our boat and saving it from the rocks. Our bread is all out, syrup nearly all, potatoes half gone and if it wasn't for the fact that we hated to make the same water we past we would be about ready to turn around. Had a good supper. Met the Frenchman and the Indians and had some tea. All very tired and the Frenchman said he hardly knew us for our whiskers. We have all washed our faces at least once since we left.

Thursday, May 13.

Up at 2.30. Hit the water at 5.45 am. Our first adventure was hitting a rapid and the boat started sideways. Ed leaned heavy on the pole, the pole broke and pretty near all we could see was his boots following his head. He managed to grab the boat and after he was in the boat again about ten minutes he tripped over the pack bag and took another plunge head first this time. The water was too deep and we had to go back for him. Just as I am writing this, Alex was talking in this sleep and started to yell "Hold her boys. Look out." When he woke he was dreaming he was just hitting a roaring torrent.

At 6 o'clock we hit a young niagara and we pulled in to look her over. She was wild so we portaged and took the canoe through empty. We camped right below her and cleared a space in the woods on the hill for tent. Two Frenchmen hit our camp and stayed and smoked beside the campfire till twelve o'clock. We are 3 miles from the Beaver River, 75 miles from Big River, 60 miles from Ella La Cross. We had a long day, very tired. Lost troll, had dinner at 12 o'clock on the east shore. River full of fish. Alex speared one with the pole, had it for supper.

Friday, May 14.

Up at 3.40 am. Had a good breakfast, everybody ate hearty and launched out at 7 am. Water quite a bit deeper. Alex and Ed were the only ones that got wet today. Tonight we all sleep in dry clothes for the first time since we hit the river which was last Monday. We made the Beaver River at ten o'clock. Made a dugout in the sand for the tent. We had an early dinner and Bill and I went for game, got a duck. Alex made clinkers and a stew with the duck. We also had prunes and dried apples for supper.

I took a trip on the NE side of the river. There were ridges close together, we figured it was an old beaver dam. River very deep but no rapids so far.

Ed done the laundry – had fifty feet of washline nearly covered and there is still a pile of wet clothes on hand.

Saturday, May 15.

Bill up first this morning at ten to five. Had Breakfast and Bill and I hit the river south toward Green Lake. Wind very strong taking the canoe clean around. We hit sec 14, T. 62, Range 13. Had a two hours talk with Mrs. E. Beatty. Mr. Beatty is a first cousin of the Eng. Rear Admiral. She lived nine years at Lake Athabaska 800 miles north of here. We found a pearl on the way up but Alex lost it looking at it when we got back. She has a very nice homestead, grows sweet corn, Tomatoes and all common vegetables. We came back after twelve. Alex had shot a silver grey fox. We fished and got 16 fish. Had 4 for supper and expect to have the rest for Sunday. Ed still had his laundry out. It dried fine but he didn't do the ironing.

Sunday, May 16.

Up at 3 o'clock. Ed and I went out for deer. Came in at 7 o'clock had Breakfast. Alex and I went for moose, didn't see any. Bill and Ed fixed the boat, got dinner. We all had a sleep and packed up our stuff for an early start tomorrow morning. I am very tired and will cut off for tonight.

Monday, May 17.

Up at 3.30. Hit water at 4.15 without Breakfast. Went 6 miles to Mrs. Beatty's. Bill and Alex went out and got a duck. Ed and I had Breakfast at Beatty's, we stayed about an hour. Pulled out for several miles when we had Breakfast on the west shore. Made a mistake and took a creek south instead of Green River. Got away in the reserve and got stranded. Alex, Ed and I went to Indian Camp but they couldn't understand us so we pull out and hit Green River several miles farther up the river. We hit the Lake about 3.30. Had dinner on the west side of the river, then pulled south past the H.B. Co's about a mile and camped in the bush. Had a big boulder for a table. Had supper, pitched the tent and we all walked to town but Ed. Town consists of 3 stores, telegraph station, pool room, post office and R.C. church and several breeds camps. Hit back to camp about 12 o'clock.

Tuesday, May 18.

Went to town in the morning. Alex got some syrup and Campbell and Reynolds gave us a big chunk of Moose Meat, flour #8 a hundred cigs 25's. We had moose steak for Dinner. Went prospecting in the PM a conglomeration of rock contains mica, Iron, traces of Copper. Ed found a very nice agate. Found Petrified rocks of Bone and fish, some very nice garnets but cloudy. Lake 18' deep, 18x6 miles very rough and all green in the fall.

Alex and Ed went to town. Wolves making a very big noise and very close. Bill busy looking for his revolver just now, left the guns in a bluff near the river.

Wednesday, May 19.

Slept in till 5 am. Alex and Scotty went hunting, got two ducks. Ed, Bill and I pulled Stakes and went south on the Green Lake. Had breakfast on the east shore. Left Green Lake and tried to make our old camping ground near crooked river where we had dug out a camping site. Are very tired.

Thursday, May 20.

4.45. Had Breakfast and hit the water north on the Beaver past crooked River and hit the first rapid at 10 o'clock. We looked it over and decided to shoot them. We had dinner where we run the canoe up a creek where we could land. In the afternoon we were hitting one rapid after another. There seemed to be a big forest fire to the West looked pretty dangerous. Water looking a dark yellow very smoky. Hit some bad rapids gave the boat a bad bump heard a rib crack. One place we hit a bad spot Alex yelled to the right the front end missed the rock but we hit her going sideways. Bill trembled and shook the boat. We tried to make the Grand Rapids but it got too dark. Camped at a creek on Pleasant Hill camping ground. We made supper erected camp and had supper before we changed. Pretty cold. Retired when the candle burnt out at 10 PM. Ground full of long Bugs about 2 inches long with large wings. Had goldfield special for supper and saved enough for breakfast. Have only enough meat ahead for two meals.

Friday, May 21.

Up at 5.30. Went out prospecting up the creek at Pleasant Point, found traces of Mica. Ed thought it was gold. I followed the stream up to a marsh and lost all traces. Bill and Alex washed at the mouth and took a sample Pulled out about 2 o'clock a dark cloudy day hit the grand rapids soon after we pulled out.

We made the rapids without portaging but Bill and I got wet. Ed and Alex ran them and kept dry. We had the rope attached and Bill at the end. Grand Rapids has a drop of 25 feet and water very swift. Advise all greenhorns who follow us to take a chew and shoot her but make your will first. Struck for the right shore for supper but moved across for camping. Camped on hay marsh. The Jew with his scow caught us when we had supper. Sat and talked till eleven. Big Bugs very bad.

Saturday, May 22.

Up about 5 am. Pulled out at 6 before breakfast and paddled till 7.15. Had breakfast on the right hand shore. Alex shot a duck on the fly with a 22 past Dove River and between it and River La Plonge is a clear country river. On both sides is a 10 foot high hedge of willows just a fine as if it had been clipped. A very pretty scenery. A very high wind water very rough. Waves running good 3 feet with whitecaps. We made River La Plonge about 5.45. Seen the mission. A very fine building, very fine grounds. Farther up we met a bunch of cows. Ed took a pail and

went after milk but they were all dry. Farther up we met a big marsh river deep but appeared to be running in all directions. We took the right hand side about 8 o'clock very tired. Made over forty miles. We had goldfield special for supper. Have our tent back in the woods. Pretty windy but not too cold. We passed a lot of snow on the low banks but trees are well out in leaf.

Sunday, May 23.

Got up rather late being it was Sunday. This has been a very adventurous day. First we struck a place in the river full of islands and bays. The river must be miles wide. We got in a bay and had to turn back. The water was pretty rough and very deep. Just as we found our course the I C (?) Fish boat over took us and threw a line behind their scow and we followed behind their 18 horse power boat. She was travelling some. Waves were sure rolling. When we got near shore they dropped their tow line. We made the dock and camped behind the mill. Saw the foxes. Silver, black and red. Pretty tired as it is past eleven now. Foxes barking. Boat's name Gertie.

Monday, May 24.

Ill a La Crosse. Stayed in town all day. Wind strong. Lake too rough to attempt crossing. Ed and I walked South to the mission and cemetery. Saw a tent with a man. We went in and he could speak good English. Talked about the war and after a while his two daughters came and his Indian Wife. We went past the cemetery and around to the other bay and over to the Hudson Bay post. Saw the R.C.N.W.M.P. and his home. Huskies, Harness and sleds. Had a 2 hour visit with him and came back for dinner. Had moose. Were around all afternoon. Saw Mr. Munroe the miner and afterwards went and saw the races, jumping and fights. Jew Carded in a heavy sea.

Tuesday, May 25.

Very windy. White caps on the lake. Too rough to go out. Had to pull our tent down in order to save it. Met some Chipways in the store shook hands. Saw the skins, wolves, rats, Beaver, etc. Beaver \$9 a skin. In the evening Alex and I went across the bay to the H.B.Co. to see the Mounted Police Bob Handcock. He wasn't at Home. We were on the steamer Churchill and saw the Huskies. We crossed over Water pretty rough. Canoe riding on both ends with centre out at times. Met Bob in the pool room and he came and spent part of the evening in our tent leaving about 11.30.

Wednesday, May 26.

Ed up at 3 o'clock. Water was hardly fit to start so we hit the hay till 6.30. We stayed till 9 o'clock when we pulled out we hit the first Island straight north east of the post and were mighty glad to land. White caps rolling. Bill said he was going to walk back but he would have to wait till it froze up. We prospected a little. Found a big garnet stone. Waited for the wind to calm but darkness set in and we pitched our tent as it looked very much like rain. I took a swim in the lake but it was too cold to stay in long. Some Indian girls came down and brought us two fish when they saw us fix our net. They had supper with us but never helped to wash the dishes. We went to their camp at night. They had an accordion. Met the Mountie on our way home.

Thursday, May 27.

Up very early Ed and I slept in the boat to watch the goods. It was a very rough night raining and blowing very hard. We couldn't leave on account of storm till 3.30 PM. We set our net first

and got 3. One big jack fish that was from the ground to my hipbone. We ate it all for supper but 2 little pces. We made sandy point and went north east across the lake and had a dandy camping ground but had to clear a space in the wood for our tent. Bill and I fixed the net while Ed and Alex made supper. Bannicks OK. Mosquitos pretty thick. Feed pretty tired. Expect to make the Churchill tomorrow.

Friday, May 28.

Pulled stakes and hit the water at 5.15. Paddled 2 hours, had breakfast on a sand Beach bay on the east shore of Ill La a Crosse. Had white fish for Breakfast. A canoe with 4 Indians and a priest passed us. We pulled out and had dinner behind stoney point. Had sucker for dinner. We pulled out after dinner and hit the narrows towards dark. Followed a canoe through the narrow's rapids. Water very swift but very deep. We hit Patchenack and stopped where a band of Indians had camped on their way to Ill La A Cross to meet the treaty party. Got a sketch of the Churchill and camped about a mile farther away on an Island. Alex shot a loon this evening. All pretty tired and wondering what excitement tomorrow's rapids will bring forth.

Saturday, May 29.

Up at 5.30 looked like rain so we slept in a little longer. Ed and I went out and robbed an Indian's net got two dandy whitefish.

[Portion of page obscured by mud]

...gave his loon to an Indian to skin for the bird then he and Bill went around the island prospecting. Got very windy, waves putting out our campfire on the shore. Sea very rough. Alex and I went out in the canoe and the waves would take up the front end so that his paddle would not hit the water. In the afternoon the Indian came back with the loon and we played cards and had a touch and supper. I afterwards reset the net. Alex and Ed made bannicks while Bill fixed the Loon. Water in the evening was very calm. Alex and I went swimming in the afternoon while water was rough. Pretty cold dip. Expect Indians back in the morning with fish to pay their piker debts. We had their pipes, belts, Tobacco. Cigarette holder and all they had then sold them for fish.

Sunday, May 30.

Up at 5 o'clock. Bill and I had a little chewing match to pass away the time. We pulled stakes and went across Patchenac Bay and hit the source of the Churchill proper. Had breakfast in an Indian Teepee on the left Bank. Ed spilled the porridge while making breakfast. The lake was very rough and it was all we could do to get across the lake. After breakfast we pulled out, made a turn to the right then followed the left bank around for quite a distance then right to a rapid. Bill and Alex got out to look it over. Ed and I shot that rapid OK. Above this we saw a dog, a stray Indian dog nearly starved, howling. We called him and at the rapids he caught up and swam across the current taking him through the rapids. He came out below and we got him and named him Rapids or Rap. The second rapid was a fierce one with a fall of 4 feet of heavy water. Portaging was poor so Ed and I decided to shoot them with Bill and Alex on the rope. We poled out in the current and the first jerk swamped Bill but Alex stuck to it for grim death. The Boat was nearing the bad spot and turning more sideways all the time. We yelled for Alex to drop the rope as the boat nearly swamped but he couldn't hear for the roar of the waters. Alex held and every time it would nearly swamp he would let her out a little. Just as it went over he gave it another pull to straighten her up pulling both heels off his shoes and into the deep and threw the rope. Ed and I settled down to our work. She plunged over but didn't take any water then we grabbed a paddle and laced her to it for all we were worth shooting

her at an awful speed at the next corner. I could see another rapid and didn't think we could make the turn to shore so tried to hit the next one straight. Ed couldn't hear me and was trying for shore. Then we decided to try the shore and turned our boat around pointing against the current and paddled for land, arriving safely and waited for Alex and Bill. Then we shot the next one still swifter but not quite so wild but the next put the fear into us so portaged 17 chains on the east Bank past two Bad rapids. Had dinner at the far end and pitched camp as a bad storm was raging. We finished our pork and have had no fish for over a day. Potatoes nearly all gone. A dandy camping spot. Portage well tracked. At night Bill roused something in the bushes about three yards from the tent. We got our guns but it went out of sight. Don't know what it was for it was dark. Very tired. Set out net and went to bed at 11 P.M. "Rapids" feeling stronger.

Monday, May 31.

Up at 5.15 o'clock. Two fish in the net which we had for Breakfast. Very tired so we were not in a big rush to get away. Took in our net and packed up and hit the water. Passed a stream running to the right with sand bank at the mouth. Coming to the 65 C. Rapid covering [?] bad rapid on account of the scarcity of water as the river was very wide. We portaged our goods. Portage went over hill through a windfall through a muskeg around the side of a cliff over another hill and down to the drink. We went back for the boat and decided it was too heavy to carry so Bill and I were going to run them with Ed and Alex on the rope but just as we started Bill changed his mind. Ed and I took the boat through the others had the rope. Bill got a couple of Mouthfuls of water skinned his knee but we made it very nice never striking a single rock.

We had dinner at the landing then pulled out and travelled quite a distance in deep still water but at the turn to the right we saw a bad one ahead we looked it over and decided we had a chance to make the turn if we got in right as we had to pass a big rock on the turn with a fall beside it. We hit it at an awful speed and succeeding in turning but the boat was going sideways for the fall when I turned Ed's end in toward the bad part and straightened the boat just missing the drop. We got one big wave but she rode like in a cradle. We were travelling at some speed, hit shore about 1/2 mile downstream and waited for Alex and Bill. Camped on the left side of the river beside a hill or rock covered with Birch and pine. We had a thunderstorm but passed over and didn't hit us hard. Rained hard. I started making Bannicks and Ed the rest of the supper at 8 o'clock while Alex and Bill put out the net. When we were nearly through the rain came so we had to have supper in the tent which was about 10.30. Left the dishes till morning and had a song service there are pretty bad rapids about 200 yards downstream but we think we can shoot them.

Tuesday, June 1.

Mosquitos woke us early. Alex lit a fire in the tent to keep them quiet. No fish in our net. Had Oatmeal, Bannick for breakfast. Alex and I took a long walk finished the dog. I shot before Bill and Ed went down the same side of the river as the tent got a rabbit and a partridge. Alex got a snipe. Alex and I got back about twelve and I am nearly all in as I am catching up with my diary. But the boys have dinner nearly ready so I'll dig in and eat. Another storm coming up. Just as we were ready to pull out a band of Chippewan Indians came in to our camp. We waited to see them feed. They had fish and smoked Moose meat. Cooked their fish on a popular pot [poplar?]. Bill and Ed walked past the next rapid while Alex and I were going to shoot them. But two Indians jumped in and took the boat through. We camped on the left

hand side of the river in some Willow bushes beside a muskeg. Tried to put out our net but current was too fast.

We put the stove in the tent and built a smudge of greasy, popular [poplar] bark to drive away the Amoss but they got so thick Bill and I went out and sat beside the water where the wind blew. Went back to Bed at 12 o'clock. Very tired.

Wednesday, June 2.

I went for a stroll before breakfast with the rifle. Pulled out at 9.30 and hit the dipper (?) rapid at 11.30. Had good water all morning but some strong currents. We ran right into the bedrock beside the falls and made the short portage. Found some graphite across the river. We ran another rapid and camped at the lake on the left hand side at an old Indian camping ground. Here Alex and Bill fixed the net while Ed and I made Bannicks in an over made of our camp stove setting over the fire. Just as dinner was nearly ready a bank of 20 Crees pulled in on us. Met a Mr. Johnson, a Hudson Bay man who was with them going out. We had dinner and as they were staying overnight we pulled out and camped on an island at the mouth of the river running West Alex and I strung out net across the river while Ed and Bill put up the tent. We intended staying here until we get in a supply of meat as all we have left is about 165 lbs of flour, a few dried apples, some tea and a few Beans, salt and part of a tin of pepper and B. Powder. After supper we decided to go back to see Mr. Johnston's brother who was supposed to reach the others that night. Before the sun went down it looked like a Ball of dark gold for smoke and the reflection made the water look like Blood from forest fires which are raging in the vicinity. We rigged a sail and went over to the Indians. Saw Mr. Johnston, some of his samples and stayed pretty late and it got pretty dark with water pretty rough. Mrs. Johnson was there and we had a nice visit telling our experiences making Bannicks etc. Coming home we took three fish out of their nets which we had for Breakfast next morning. Found our Island and went to Bed tired.

Thursday, June 3.

Alex and Ed got up early took the canoe and went up the river for Moose. Bill and I got our Breakfast. Bill is fishing, got one big Jackfish and a pike already. I washed the dishes and am writing my diary on the lard pail. We are camping on Latitude 56 degrees N 3 miles east of the 108th Meridian West of Greenwich. In T80 range 10 West of 3rd M. W and have shot the worst part of the Churchill. Ran one rapid that was a portage but got through safely. If we had 2 Hwt more flour, we would go through to the Pass but now we intend to make the souris before we turn back. I am going to clean, salt and pack the fish now till the boys get back. Then a heavy thunderstorm came up and Bill and I were busy holding down the tent. We thought it would go up so I [went] out and grabbed the ax to hammer down the pegs. When a heavy crash of lightening hit close by. We soon saw a big fire start and the heavy wind was bringing it closer to us all the time. Ed and Alex were on the other side of the fire with the boat. We kept close watch and were ready to set fire to the Island we were on at any minute and move our goods back. But it rained again and the wind blew farther north and the fire didn't come more than 300 yards from us. We caught 14 fish today and packed them. Ed and Alex got back at night and it started to rain and rained the greater part of the night. Bill left his line in the water and got a fish 8 or 10 inches long and a big Jackfish 2.5 feet long likely made for it and got his gill caught in the lead sinker. We got them both with one pull in. We played (300 ?) until eleven.

Friday, June 4.

Intended to get up very early to hunt but it looked like rain. Alex and I went up the river. Robbed the net got a nice White fish then went up the river and got a duck and a partridge. Alex shot a fox in the head but as he only had the 22 he wasn't in range to kill. We came back for dinner and our dog Rapids was on the Island with the boys and feels quite content. He had left us 2 days before with the 4 chipewans. Bill and I went out in the afternoon with the boat but it was 2 rough to go far and too windy to hear any game in the woods so we came back using the sail and it sure went some. Ed and Alex washed the dishes and made Bannicks and goldfield special with the Duck and Partridge. We played 300 a while in the evening.

Saturday, June 5.

Very windy lake too strong to cross. Wind wrong for sail. Got 3 dandy fish in the net. Came back from net and cleaned them. Have about 12 or 14 fish on hand. Alex and I went for ducks and then put up our sail and went away across to the S.W. corner. Saw the H.B. Post and across the portage to another Lake. Had an awful time getting back across the lake. While we were gone 3 strange dogs ate all our supply of fish and we are nearly out of grub again. We found the dogs on the far side of our Island and we chased them off. I shot under the black dog as he crossed the stream and then he struck straight across the lake. Alex and I putting shots all around him. He certainly dug out and we don't expect to see him again. The two Huskies were too nice to shoot. In the evening we took our net up the lake and set it at the point. Came home and went to bed about 11 PM.

Sunday, June 6.

Went up to our net got only one fish then came back had it and porridge for Breakfast. Forgot to say that we had rice for supper last night. Alex got busy to mix his bread he set last night. Rained occasionally in the forenoon. Alex's Break turned out OK. Used 3rd grade flour. In the PM Alex, Ed and I went out for a bunch of Geese that we saw but after we crawled up we found out they were ducks. Bill, Ed and I went out to put out our other net and it rained (?) hard are getting soaked.

Monday, June 7.

Got our net in and pulled out of Carriboo Lake past the Indian House, struck across Pelican Lake to 2 Islands off the right but had to come back to the point where the Indians's Houses are to get the course. Had dinner around the point went S.E. past Bays till we hit the narrows where we turned towards the right and then into Princau (?) Lake. Camped at night between two Islands on the right hand side in front of some Indian shacks. Saw a porcupine. Slept out, didn't put up the tent. Ed and I slept between willows. Slept fine.

Tuesday, June 8.

Up at 5.30. Everybody slept fine. Had two fish in the net which we had for breakfast along with beans and tea. We turned up a bay below the Island across from which we camp and hit the river. Very good going. Quite a distance with a swift current till we hit the rapids. Alex went for a partridge but couldn't find it. Ed and I walked around passed the three rapids and decided that we could shoot them thinking that the knee rapid was farther on down the stream. Alex and Bill took the two big rifles and ammunition while Ed and I took the boat down. The first one was short but very swift and rough, the next was only swift water but the next was a little falls with an up shoot at the bottom. There was about 8 or 10 feet of a course to the left of the falls which we tried for but the inrush of the water here made it impossible.

When we saw we couldn't make the course we shot her straight and the boat plunged in then clean in the air coming down sideways. We straightened her, Ed getting covered with water in the front. A few more bad jumps and we were away down stream. We bailed out about 6 pails of water. We then all crossed the river and turned around the knee or Elbow and had dinner in the left hand side on Bare rock. I caught a Jackfish with my hands nearly 2 feet long in the creek. After dinner we came quite a distance against a heavy wind but with swift water and met a string of rough rapids. Very swift and rather shallow. We went down to look them over and when we had my nerve had left me and I simply couldn't shoot them today. We camped in a beautiful spot above the portage on the left side. I found a jasper, Bill an agate. Ed and I worked till eleven am to put out the net.

Wednesday, June 9.

Up at the usual early hour had no fish in the net. Had a little oatmeal for Breakfast, Alex made more Bannicks while Ed, Bill and I went across to the right hand side to look over the rapids. Ed and I saw a moose or deer in the distance. Bill saw a deer but couldn't get a shot through the trees. We got back to camp had dinner on Bannick and tea and decided to Portage some of our goods past the first bad spot. Alex taking the Boat through with the rest of us on the [?].

We loaded up again and Alex and I shot the rest in very swift and rough water, missing a bunch of ugly big sharp rocks. The last one was bad, Alex getting souced in front with a wave. We camped around to the left in the corner of the Bay. Bill and Ed caught 12 fish below the rapids with the line. We had 2 for supper. Then about eleven o'clock had another supper of fish we were pretty badly starved boys. At the end of the portage I shot a fat Porcupine and we intended to have pork for supper, but after we had the fish we decided not. Bill and Ed walked past the rapids. The dog jumped in on another porcupine then Ed shot it to save the dog as it was they had quite a time getting the quills out of his nose and head. When Alex and I were landing there was another porcupine at the landing. We (teaked ?) him with the paddles until he had the paddles pasted full of quills then we threw him in the drink and learned him to swim then we let her go. After our first supper Alex took the 22 and went after a partridge. He saw a lynx, it stopped and watched him. He yelled at me for the big gun. I ran and when I saw it it was popping his head up and down. I shot and missed through the trees and it Beat it for all it was worth. It had been after a partridge. I got properly bawled out for missing it. We retired at about midnight.

Thursday, June 10.

Alex got up about 3 heard something in the bush. Couldn't find anything so he took the canoe and crossed the lake to (?) stake, shot a duck but it sand. I have not been feeling very good so Alex and I stayed at camp to cook and get grub while Bill and Ed went prospecting. We took them across and found some quartz very heavily laden with graphite and Iron. We came back and washed the dishes, cleaned some fish Alex tending to his yeast he had set the night before. We had fish for Dinner. Ed and Bill just had a piece of Bannick and some tea but they didn't take time to make the tea. In the Afternoon Alex and I got two partridges and made goldfield special for supper. The bread was very slow as it rained every little while. About 6.15 I went across the lake for the prospectors and before we got back quite a squall had arose. I made flapjacks for supper in order to keep the Bread until it was cold. After supper Alex and I went around the point to fish but as it was almost too late we only got three. We expect a windy day tomorrow. Alex got a bad fall in the drink while fishing. Hurt his thumb pretty bad. I took

quite a tumble too. Bill and Ed were very tired and hungry when they came back, had some fine samples. Bill assayed at night.

Friday, June 11.

Up at 5 am. Had fish for Breakfast then we packed up and hit out. I forgot to state that while eating Breakfast I was cutting bread and cut my two middle fingers half off, at least it felt that way. We crossed the lake and turned around to the right when we crossed to the right toward an Island then passed through between two Islands towards Magnetic Island. The wind was pretty high and before we landed a squall came up and we took a little water in the Boat before we got across. We landed in a bay behind a rock and had dinner. Bill getting 3 fish. After dinner, bill and Ed went prospecting, Alex and I fishing. We got 4 fish, I hear caught the largest fish I ever got with a hook. I got an awful cramp and got Alex to come back with me. I had quite a sleep after he made me a cup of hot ginger then I got up and am feeling a little better but pretty drowsy. I think I have a slight touch of inflammation of the bladder but expect to be jake in the morning. Bill and Ed brought back almost clear Iron and intend to give the mountain a shot in the morning. Alex, after he brought me home, went out and got 5 dandy fish. For supper we had fish, bread, rice pudding and I made some greaseless gravy, tea etc. After tea we had intended pulling out but quite a rough storm came up and we cut a clearing in the woods and put up the tent. Alex cut the windbreak and we were pretty cosy in all the storm. Compass will not work in the Island as it ...

[several lines obscured with mud]

I stayed in canoe. Alex went out for Portages and got completely turned around. He found a marten's den but couldn't dig for rocks. I am feeling some better today Went out with Alex in the PM. We climbed the rocks to see if we could get a line on our course. It has been so rough ever since we hit this Island that we couldn't leave if we wanted to. Tomorrow is Sunday. We intend to rest, going across the Island today we should get up on a terrible high hill and the one side would be straight down for Hundreds of feet. We are very sorry we haven't a camera as we have passed some very pretty sights which would be nice to have.

Saturday, June 12.

We had supper of fish and Bannicks built a big camp fire, cut a big bunch of trees, built a wind break behind the camps fire and played 500. Bill and Alex us 2 out of 3 games. Went to bed. It was pretty cold.

Sunday, June 13.

Up about 5:30. We all went fishing. Caught 14 fish smallest about 2 feet long. Cleaned them and fixed them a la Indian and sank them in the drink. Had breakfast at 12 noon on fish and bannicks. Had one each. Pretty cold and very windy. Sea rolling pretty pad. We expect to get off this island early in the morning if it is calm. We stayed in the tent for a few hours in the PM to keep warm and dry as it is raining and very cold. I read about half of Revelations and we all sang a song and are wondering what is happening in the civilized world. Whether the Kaiser is still alive and if England still rules the waves. Our grub is pretty scarce but a big fish each for every meal seems to do. We do not wish to hit the flour too hard as long as we have luck with the hook and lines. We have lost a lot of hooks and have only a few left. Alex and I intended going across to mainland this afternoon for game but I guess its well we didn't as we wouldn't of got back tonight. The boys are preparing supper. I am alone in the tent. Feel fine again and believe I strained my insides crossing over here in the storm keeping the boat with the waves. We intend to turn back in another month and the way the time is

going it won't seem long. But when we think of the trip through the rapids, long portages and swift current we know we have hard work ahead of us. It has been too cold for moose to take to the water and as we have smashed our compass and the land is so rocky and thickly timbered that you can't go without making a noise it is almost useless of thinking of taking a five mile walk inland for them. Our boat leaked pretty badly but we kept bailing and it must of swelled up as it is OK again. I guess I'll go and get supper as there is a wet, cold sleep ahead and wet [?] to lie on. Our wishers are a disgrace but its fun to look at the rest.

Expect the weather to change as we have had two weeks of cold, wind and rain. We would like very warm weather going back to we will have to wade along the shore and drag our boat through the current through big boulders and loose stones over shallow places and then sudden deep spots. We expect to be wet for ten days straight anyway but have 100 miles clear sailing after we hit Patchenac Bay. All well and are enjoying ourselves best we can but do wish we had a camera.

Sunday is the worst day as there is nothing to do but cook and think of the pretty girls and friends we left behind.

Had supper. Cold and rainy then went to the tent. We heated a bunch of rocks then put them in the tent. Ed and I had a big one very warm at our feet and it seemed like home to sleep with warm feet.

Through the night the wind was so rough that the roots under us moved our bedding.

Monday, June 14.

Up at 3:30. Took a look at the weather. Quite daylight but very windy. Sea rough so rolled in again till 5 when we got up and we thought it was calming down but it stayed rough. We drilled a hole in the rock under some quartz. Put in the charge and packed it well with clay, birch bark and moss and then had dinner till it dried and hardened. We had 1 fish each, tea and Bannick with some beans as a treat. After dinner Ed and I went back to light the fuse. I touched the match then beat it behind the rocks and the explosion sounded as if the top of the mountain was torn off but it just blew the splash of quartz off the top. The quartz did not go deep. We caught 10 fish today. Have enough for supper and 1 breakfast.

Alex and Ed went around to the west side to drill but it rained too hard to work. Bill and I cleaned the fish and we do not believe we can leave this island today. We are wishing for mild weather as we want to hit Saskatoon by August 1st and want to make Snake Lake first. All well. Rapid our dog in the tent with us to keep out of the wet.

Had supper. Heated stones for the tent. Had an awful night, cold and damp and very windy.

Tuesday, June 15.

Up at 5:10. Very cold. I must not forget to mention that last night was the first time we saw the midnight sun. We only saw the reflection but at 12 o'clock it appeared as sunrise. Very pretty. I was up first and as it was cold I cut some trees and made a windbreak. We had breakfast on fish and as it was too rough Alex and I went fishing while Bill and Ed done some mending and fishing. We caught 13 dandies and got back at 12 o'clock.

It appeared calm so we pulled out without our dinner. After we got away from the island it was very rough we struck the waves at an angle with the wind and hit south and after we were pretty well across we thought we could go northeast and cut them again. Alex was in front, I behind and although we handled her fine, Alex was sure hitting the sky then plunging out of sight. We took some water. We had here our roughest sea so far and were all glad to land on a sand beach at the point of the lower arm of Knee Lake. Ed and I cleaned the fish while Alex made Bannicks. Bill went prospecting. Had dinner of fish and Bannicks then pulled

out determined to make the Haultain or bust, wind or no wind. We left in a fair wind but it soon rose when we put up the sail as the wind was coming right and we plowed right through. Hit across the lake toward the Indian Houses. Hit the Churchill again and went about 4 miles till we came to a stream running north. We hit this and went around in a circle till we came to an old Indian Pow Wow Place. Here we camped. Had supper on fish. Feeling fine that we are so much farther on our way. Alex and I are writing our diaries by the campfire while Ed and Bill are fixing up the tent. Then went in and played 3 games of 500. Bill and Alex getting 2 of them. We had a very comfortable night.

Wednesday, June 16.

Up in good time. Had one of our last meals of Oatmeal as it is almost all. Bill went hunting, Ed washed the dishes and fixed up things at camp. Alex and I took the canoe and tried to find the Haultain as we find we are in a slough full of rivers. We found it only a short distance away and came back to camp to pack up and pull out. When we got back Bill wasn't back yet so we made dinner and ate ours after we had everything loaded then took Bill's dinner and met him up the stream we pulled north up the Haultain. It so far has been very crooked and full of sand bars. We're having to keep to the shore opposite side of the points where the current has it worn deep. The current is very swift and with the strong head wind we were kept busy holding our own. We landed at several places for moose but we couldn't see anything but tracks. We pulled in for supper a little before seven. Had fish and tea. Then pulled out and never expected that before we slept we would have anything very interesting for the diary but things turned out very different. We hit a rapid and tried to shoot our canoe straight up the course over a big flat rock. We got the nose over and the boat stopped. I thought the water wasn't deep enough so I jumped on the rock and slid out the other side. In jumping I upset our beans which were cooked and spilled all we had for breakfast. This was nearly 9 o'clock. Just as soon as my bare feet hit the rock the current took my feet out from under me and I got all wet but my head going under the canoe. Alex yelled to Ed that his watch was getting wet so he beat it on top and laughed at me trying to get on top, Alex cussing at the spilt beans and Bill trying to get his poke pole fast on the slippery rock. I got on top and we drifted backwards a piece then went up the side. I lost my pole. Here we got out Alex and I and got a foothold then pulled the canoe up with the rope. A few hundred yards further we struck a sand beach with a big pine stump on it. We ran the canoe ashore and jumped for shore as it was cold as caesar but we soon had a roaring blaze. We stripped and put on dry clothes and put on fresh beans for Breakfast. Here we saw the prettiest northern lights we every saw, the sky straight above us turning from yellow to blue, green and all colors. A beaver was busy all night across from us fixing up his home. We spread our blankets beside the fire and prepared to put in the night. After Bill and Alex went to bed Ed and I thought, being it was pretty cold we would treat ourselves to a hot toddy in the shape of a cup of ginger tea. We put on water stirred the fire then went down to get a spoonful of ginger each. We got what we thought was it, but it was dark. Made our tea and was figuring on a nice drink but when we tasted it, we had made our tea of cayenne pepper so we had to retire without our drink at about 12 pm.

[The middle part of the diary is written in purple indelible pencil which has bled through the pages. Entries for June 17 through July 8th are illegible.]

Friday, July 9.

Alex & I up about 4 am. We have the fire going great. Alex is making Bannicks while I am putting in the diary the events of the last several days as I didn't have time to write before.

We pulled out at 7 am hit another bad stretch of rapids but by noon we hit a piece of very good sailing ... pulled in for dinner about 2 pm so we thought the wading was over but we hit a very shallow stretch right away and had to wade to our waists in mud with water about 3 inches deep. We were told to keep to the left and we ran out of our course a short distance about 3 miles. Bill & Ed hiked accross country to find the course and saw a canoe. They told us the course was the next river to the right and that they would walk as the water was low. We came back and hit the next turn and after we had gone up this one quite a way we saw we were wrong so we went away back and got another course by wading a hundred yards. We made camp No. 3 and poked and pulled up the rapids. Bill & Ed were asleep and we missed them but they came and we hit for the upper lake. This was very weedy and shallow and we got stranded very late at night in the middle of this. We got to shore by poking and wading and camped or rather slopped for supper and Sleep on the damp sand beach. We did not have our tent up since we left the last portage on the Churchill. Ed & I took a long walk down the lake to find a course through the weeds but could not tell the depth of water in the dark.

Saturday, July 10.

Up at 4 am, had something to eat and as water was low and we were told to keep left. Alex & I decided to portage both pack about 3 miles to the end of the first lake and Ed & Bill take the boat. Both packs were filled up full and walking through rushes, mud, over fallen trees and at places stones was some task. We went about 1 1/2 miles and decided we must be wrong so we dropped the packs and walked around the lake. We found a course and had to pack our packs back again and Ed & Bill had to wade the canoe back to our last nights camp. We waded up here and struck accross the lake had to wade the middle and after we got through here we had good going.

Harvey Bowman

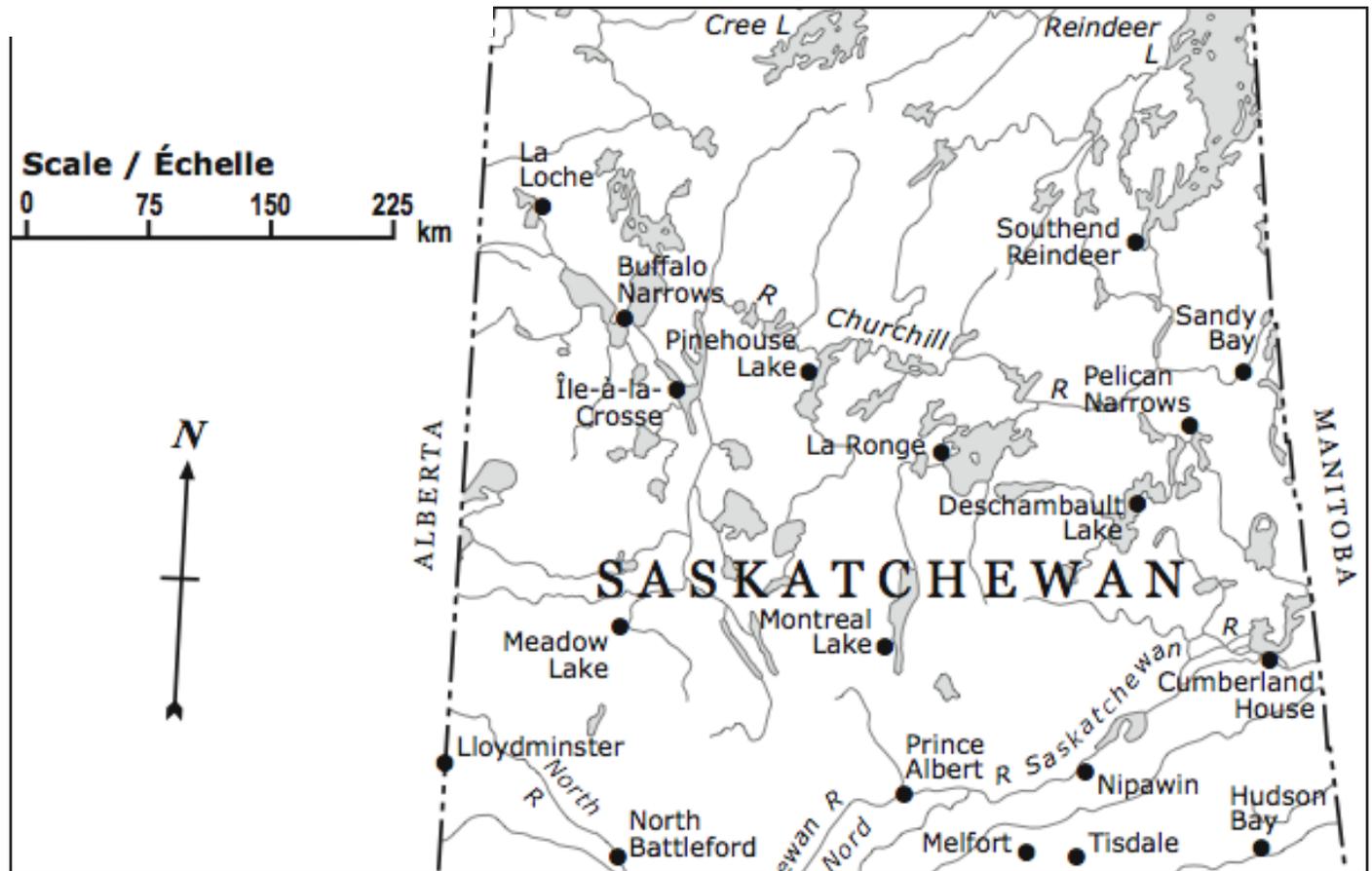
Harvey McNally John Angus Bowman was born May 8, 1888 in Berlin (Kitchener), Ontario, Canada. Harvey married Jessie Ross and had 4 children, son Ross and 3 daughters, Isabel, Betty and Pauline. Harvey Bowman served as a Councillor for the town of Didsbury, Alberta. He died in February 1951.



Pauline (youngest daughter), Jessie Bowman (wife), Harvey Bowman, Betty (middle daughter)
Photo taken about 1950

Location of the Canoe Trip

Harvey Bowman and his 3 companions began their trip in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan and reached Ile a La Crosse, River La Plonge, the Haultain River, and many other named locations. The general area of the trip is shown in the map below.



Map from <http://atlas.gc.ca>

© 2002. Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, Natural Resources Canada.

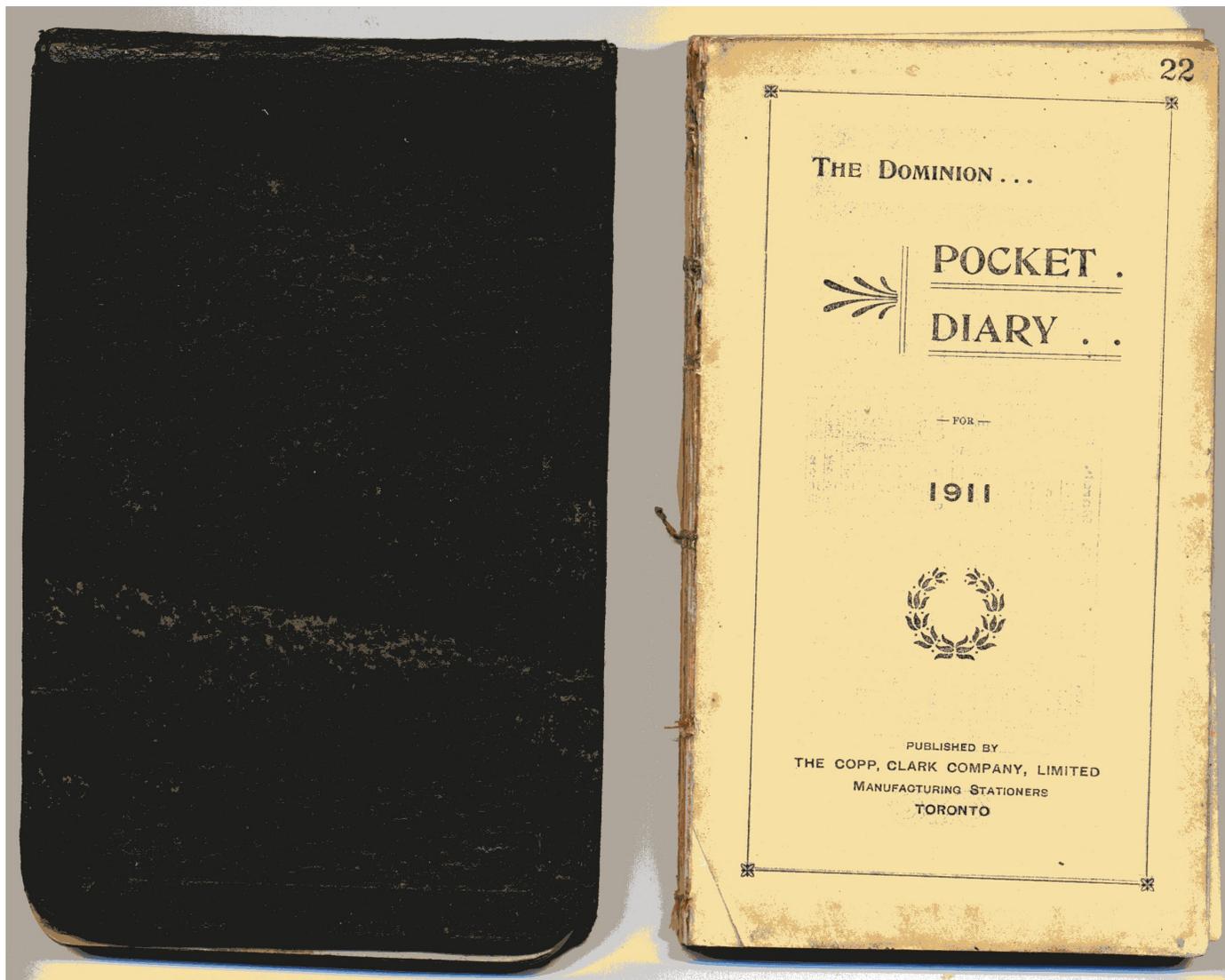
The Diary

The canoe trip recounted in Harvey Bowman's diary took place in central Saskatchewan from May 6 to July 10, 1915. The surnames of his 3 companions, Alex, Ed and Bill are not recorded.

Harvey wrote his diary in two small journals (see scan of covers below). The first was a black, leather-covered journal, about 15 x 9.5 cm. The second was a pre-printed Dominion Pocket Diary for 1911, about 15 x 8.5 cm.

The trip was often arduous with long days of paddling and portaging. Harvey's descriptions of the many rapids are exciting. Fishing and hunting provided most of their food. "Bannicks" or bannock, pan-fried bread, was a staple at many meals. Visits at Hudson Bay Company posts and with natives and settlers provided a change of pace and a welcome opportunity to stock up on other provisions.

After the May 29th entry, there were only 8 pages left in the first journal, so beginning with the May 30th entry Harvey squeezed two lines of handwriting between each ruled line of the page (see scan on page 21). Even this space-saving measure was not sufficient so part two of the diary was recorded in "The Dominion Pocket Diary for 1911", beginning with the June 12th entry.

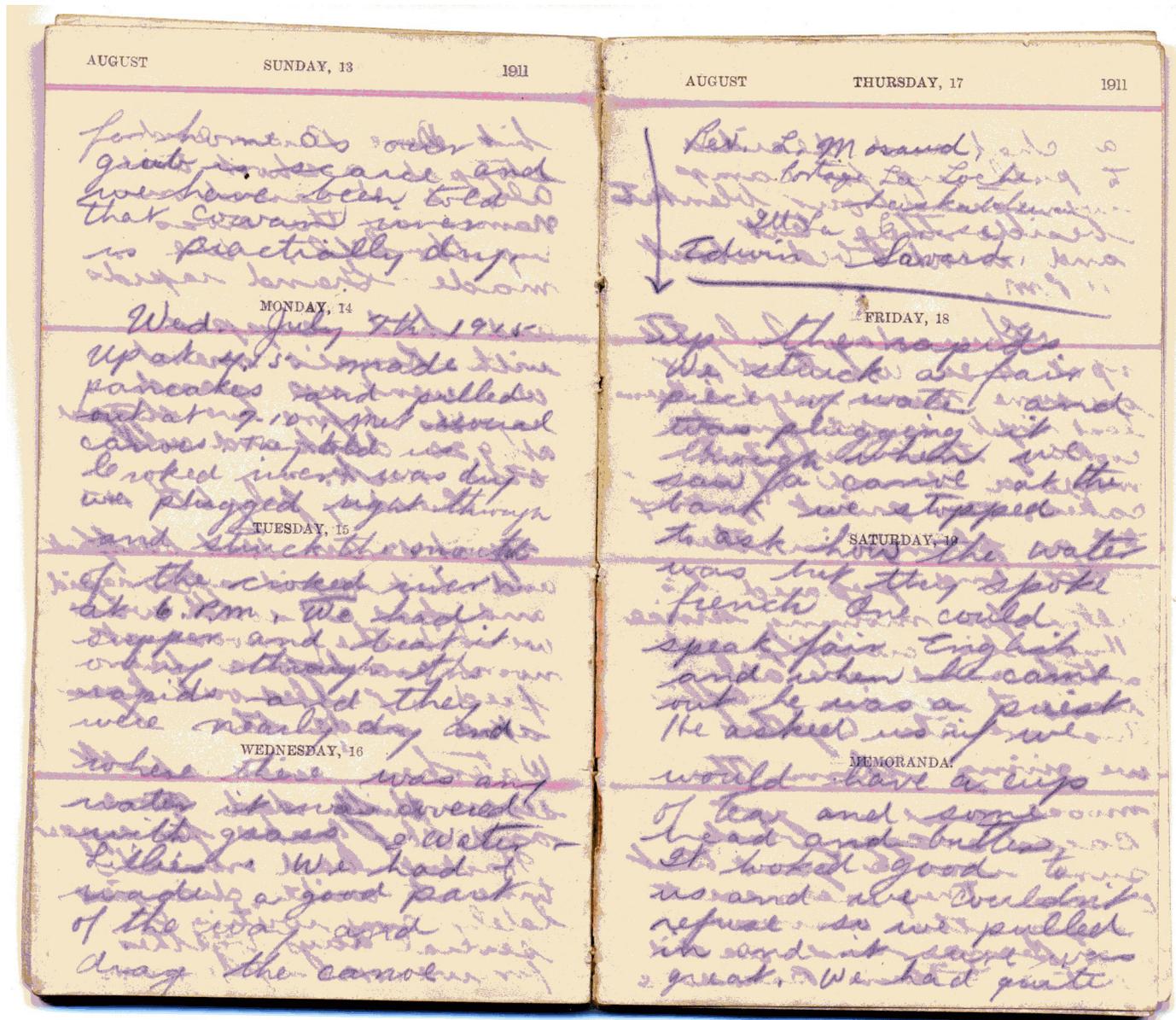


Most of the diary was written in pencil, with some in purple "indelible" pencil. Unfortunately, the paper in the Pocket Diary is thinner than the first journal, so the pages written in purple pencil have bled through from one side to the other, making them illegible (see scan below).

Pages 18-22 show scans or photographs of selected pages along with their diary entries.

For many years, the diary was in the possession of Marian Pauline Alberta Bowman Cooley, Harvey's youngest daughter (born June 20, 1930). Upon her death in 2005, the diary came to her daughter, Ellen (Cooley) Sangster of Okanagan Falls, B.C. Ellen transcribed, scanned, photographed, introduced and indexed the diary in 2007 and 2008.

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shirt. Retired at half past nine. Ice froze over beans that were out soaking.

Saturday, May 8.

Had Breakfast. Alex made Bannicks and I burnt the Beans. Bannicks OK except doughy in the centre, no salt and too much grease. Bill and Alex walked to town and carried out 60 lbs potatoes, 6 loaves bread another can of syrup, candles condensed milk etc. Ed done his Laundry and I scoured the dish with sand that I burnt in the morning. We had Bread, Syrup and a good dinner.

We pulled out at 2.15 and made our first camping ground about 1/2 mile north of One tree Island. Camped in a bog and dug a well 4 feet from tent full of water in the morning. Retired at 9.15.

Sunday, May 9.

Got up at 3.30. Alex and I went hunting and Alex got a bird (?) for Brecky

shirt. Retired at
Half past nine.
Ice froze over beans
that were out soaking
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river south toward Green Lake. Wind very strong taking the canoe clean around. We hit sec 14, T. 62, Range 13. Had a two hours talk with Mrs. E. Beatty. Mr. Beatty is a first cousin of the Eng. Rear Admiral. She lived nine years at Lake Athabaska 800 miles north of here. We found a pearl on the way up but Alex lost it looking at it when we got back. She has a very nice homestead, grows sweet corn, Tomatoes and all common vegetables. We came back after twelve. Alex had shot a silver grey fox. We fished and got 16 fish. Had 4 for supper and expect to have the rest for Sunday. Ed still had his laundry out. It dried fine but he didn't do the ironing.

Sunday, May 16.

Up at 3 o'clock. Ed and I went out for deer. Came in at 7 o'clock had Breakfast. Alex and I went for moose, didn't see any. Bill and Ed fixed the boat, got dinner. We all had a sleep and packed up our stuff for an early start tomorrow morning. I am very tired and will cut off for tonight.

Monday, May 17.

Up at 3.30. Hit water

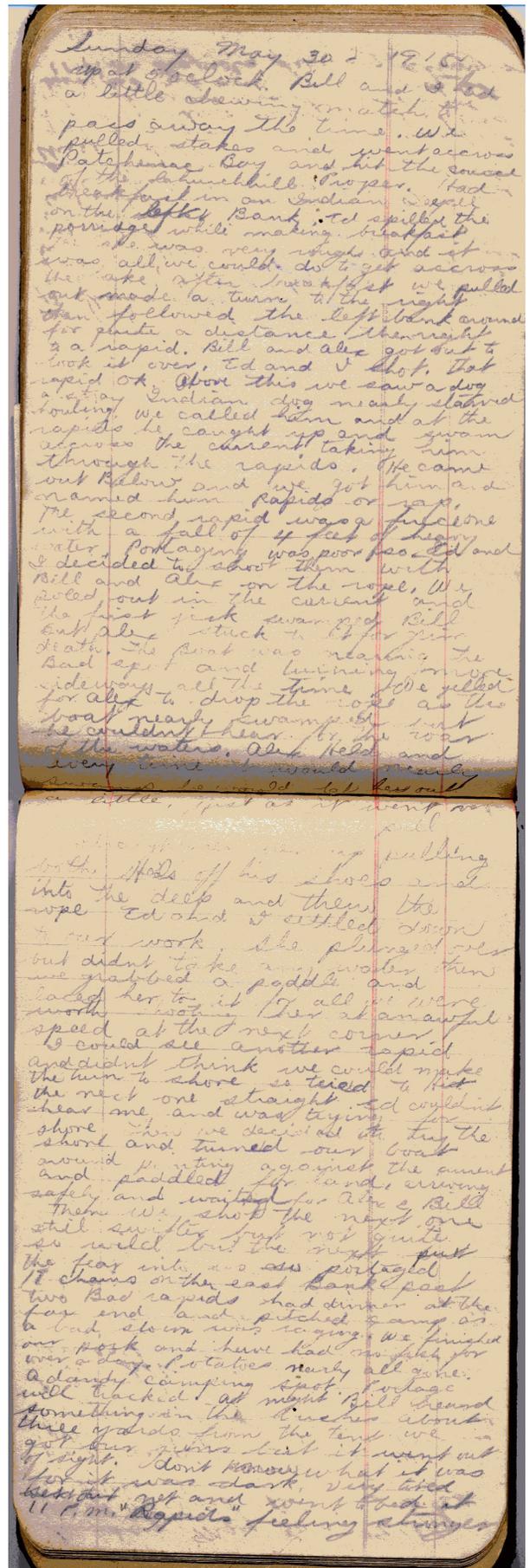
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May 17th Monday
up at 3.30 Hit water

Sunday, May 30.

Up at 5 o'clock. Bill and I had a little chewing match to pass away the time. We pulled stakes and went across Patchenac Bay and hit the source of the Churchill proper. Had breakfast in an Indian Teepee on the left Bank. Ed spilled the porridge while making breakfast. The lake was very rough and it was all we could do to get across the lake. After breakfast we pulled out, made a turn to the right then followed the left bank around for quite a distance then right to a rapid. Bill and Alex got out to look it over. Ed and I shot that rapid OK. Above this we saw a dog, a stray Indian dog nearly starved, howling. We called him and at the rapids he caught up and swam across the current taking him through the rapids. He came out below and we got him and named him Rapids or Rap. The second rapid was a fierce one with a fall of 4 feet of heavy water. Portaging was poor so Ed and I decided to shoot them with Bill and Alex on the rope. We poled out in the current and the first jerk swamped Bill but Alex stuck to it for grim death. The Boat was nearing the bad spot and turning more sideways all the time. We yelled for Alex to drop the rope as the boat nearly swamped but he couldn't hear for the roar of the waters. Alex held and every time it would nearly swamp he would let her out a little. Just as it went over he gave it another pull to straighten her up pulling both heels off his shoes and into the deep and threw the rope. Ed and I settled down to our work. She plunged over but didn't take any water then we grabbed a paddle and laced her to it for all we were worth shooting her at an awful speed at the next corner. I could see another rapid and didn't think we could make the turn to shore so tried to hit the next one straight. Ed couldn't hear me and was trying for shore. Then we decided to try the shore and turned our boat around pointing against the current and paddled for land, arriving safely and waited for Alex and Bill. Then we shot the next one still swifter but not quite so wild but the next put the fear into us so portaged 17 chains on the east Bank past two Bad rapids. Had dinner at the far end and pitched camp as a bad storm was raging. We finished our pork and have had no fish for over a day. Potatoes nearly all gone. A dandy camping spot. Portage well tracked. At night Bill roused something in the bushes about three yards from the tent. We got our guns but it went out of sight. Don't know what it was for it was dark. Very tired. Set out net and went to bed at 11 P.M. "Rapids" feeling stronger.



From Tuesday, June 15.

done some mending and fishing. We caught 13 dandies and got back at 12 o'clock. It appeared calm so we pulled out without our dinner. After we got away from the island it was very rough we struck the waves at an angle with the wind and hit south and after we were pretty well across we thought we could go northeast and cut them again. Alex was in front, I behind and although we handled her fine, Alex was sure hitting the sky then plunging out of sight. We took some water. We had here our roughest sea so far and were all glad to land on a sand beach at the point of the lower arm of Knee Lake. Ed and I cleaned the fish while Alex made Bannicks. Bill went prospecting. Had dinner of fish and Bannicks then pulled out determined to make the Haultain or bust, wind or no wind. We left in a fair wind but it soon rose when we put up the sail as the wind was coming right and we plowed right through. Hit across the lake toward the Indian Houses. Hit the Churchill again and went about 4 miles till we came to a stream running north. We hit this and went around in a circle till we came to an old Indian Pow Wow Place.

