Barren Grounds

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

FROM THE BEGINNING to the end of this project, my most grateful thanks go to my lovely wife, Molly. At the beginning, perhaps as an act of self-defense when faced with a grumpy, bored, post-op housemate, she suggested I take a look at my old Dubawnt journal. “Maybe start transcribing it.” From then until now, she has been by my side reading critically, fixing countless computer glitches, creatively making suggestions.

Creigh Moffatt and Daniel Johnson provided access to critical source materials and photographs from the Moffatt family collection, and we have become even closer friends as a result of this project, collaborators and comrades in the quest for historic accuracy.

Fay Franck, Peter’s widow, has similarly entrusted me with Peter’s journal, early Moffatt correspondence, and photos and news clippings from the family archives. Fay also warmly shared her thoughts and recollections in response to my questions about Peter’s interest in the Barrens and his speech patterns. It saddens me that Peter did not live to see this publication nor to appreciate the profound support I received from Fay and the Franck family.

Bruce LeFavour, bowman and tentmate on our Dubawnt journey, contributed importantly to my understanding of Grinnell’s United Bowman’s Association and its origin and purpose. I am grateful for his quotation.

Walter Bichler of Pfaffstatten, Austria, friend, sailing companion, and photographer extraordinary, reviewed the unedited Moffatt movie film and made single-frame prints from the 16 mm film.

Peter Carini, Dartmouth College archivist, and the Rauner Library staff provided valuable early support in making available Art Moffatt’s 1955 trip journal and other related Dubawnt documents.

Many family and friends were avid early readers, and their enthusiasm and curiosity were a sustaining force, most notably Pat Marshall, Andy Seaver, Harry and Amy Beal, Neil and Bonnie Roberts, Andy Gray, the Bay Area, Bozeman, and Seattle Pessls, Bruce Foxworthy, and Vladomir Radojevic.
Al Kesselheim, wilderness paddler, author, friend, and mentor, helped me immensely, not only with the nuts and bolts of writing but with his continuing interest in the Moffatt Dubawnt story, with sharing of his family’s wilderness experiences and his special 2012 story about the Moffatt adventure in Canoe & Kayak magazine.

Chic Scott, author, backcountry ski companion and Canadian mountaineering historian, read an early draft, and with the frankness of a true friend suggested that my Dubawnt experience was a great adventure story and that I take a narrative writing class. Both suggestions had merit.

Bill Truettner, dear friend and companion, author, and Smithsonian art historian, read an early draft with enthusiasm and helped translate the publisher’s contract for me.

More recently, my introduction to the leaders and members of the Wilderness Canoeing Association has opened my awareness of a remarkable subculture of energetic, courageous adventurers who collectively seem to have canoed almost all the navigable waters of North America, each with remarkable stories of excitement, accomplishment, and insight. And in spite of their own amazing experiences, they were so warmly hospitable and sincerely interested in my presentation at the 2013 Wilderness Canoeing Symposium that I am still coasting on the energy and support of that time together. Thank you Marilyn and David Friesen, John Lentz, Fred Gaskin, James Raffan, Mart Gross, David Freeman, Dick Irwin, Ross McIntyre, Al Stirt, and all those many others in that warm and attentive audience.

Of all the people in the wilderness canoeing community, I owe my most heartfelt gratitude to George Luste, wilderness paddler, author, publisher, founder and convener of the Wilderness Canoeing Symposium, and a warm and gracious personal friend. George published the first edition of Grinnell’s account of the ’55 Dubawnt journey and contributed an informed, thoughtful commentary to that publication. He invited me to the 2013 symposium and effectively countered my initial reluctance. While I was at the symposium in Toronto, he shared his home, his family and his lifelong northern experience with me. I am forever grateful.

And then, Aleks Gusev, paddler, editor, friend, and the driving force behind the Nastawgan magazine “Dubawnt Special” issue—which
reinforced my belief that Dubawnt adventures, beginning probably before Tyrrell and continuing to this day by modest wilderness travelers—was of interest to many people and worth the effort to tell my Dubawnt story. Thank you, Aleks!

Gloria Campbell has been my most local and immediate advocate. We began a “Dubawnt” relationship nearly a year ago when I was a student in her Nontraditional Publishing college course. Gloria instructed me about the practical world of publishing and offered encouragement, and when I lost most of the manuscript to a computer glitch, she stepped up to retype and format an acceptable product from previous documents that I was able to recover. She has been a partner and mentor from early on.

Richard Pult, my acquisition editor at University Press of New England, is still just a voice and a spirit in the complex process of moving from a draft manuscript to a product on the shelf, but he is a comfortable, supportive, and creative advocate for this Dubawnt project. I look forward to continuing collaboration and maybe even a face-to-face moment. And Richard’s UPNE colleagues, David Corey, Barbara Briggs, Katy Grabill, Sherri Strickland, and Lauren Seidman have all endured my innocence as a first-time book author and have helped make the book the best it can be. Copy editor Drew Bryan worked hard to improve clarity and consistency in the text. To all these professionals I appreciate your efforts and I have learned very much.

Certainly an acknowledgment is appropriate, perhaps even a “thank you,” to George Grinnell for his 1996 account of his Dubawnt experience. Without that provocation, even with Molly’s nudge, I might not have embarked on this Dubawnt project. It has been a very satisfying ride.

Thank you all!