**TRANSITION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSITION</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>MOFFATT, 1955</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TYRRELL, 1893</strong></td>
<td><strong>LOCATION</strong></td>
<td><strong>MOFFATT, 1955</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 20</td>
<td>Wholdaia Lake (height-of-land)</td>
<td>July 17–25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL: 14 days</strong></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL: 23 days</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 22–26</td>
<td>Hinde Lake</td>
<td>July 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 27</td>
<td>Boyd Lake</td>
<td>August 1–3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Skip | JULY 16, SELWYN LAKE**

Arrived at the southern end of this “height-of-land” portage today after a short paddle of about 8 miles and a 3-hr picture-taking session . . . sequences of examining Indian graves and finding artifacts.

When we got to the portage it was close to 6 PM and after unloading the canoes and carrying our supplies about 300 yds. along the portage, I decided to walk over to the other lake. We had not done much walking for a few days and as I started out my legs felt rather rubbery. Trip over was uneventful, over a good, dry, generally downhill trail. Wholdaia Lake has high rock cliffs on its e shore; low wooded hills to the w; many islands. The sky is filled with smoke. On my return to camp, my legs gave out frequently. I felt woozy and aching, head spinning. Wonder what that is all about? The usual meal of glop fixed things up pretty well, but the prospect of future, possibly more intense, physical problems is not pleasant.

---

**Tyrrell**

While within the forest we had been tormented both day and night by immense swarms of mosquitos, but now in the more open country, the black flies made it almost impossible to move about with any portions of our hands or faces uncovered.
Bruce LeFavour with a pink quartzite arrow head, northern shore of Selwyn Lake just south of the height-of-land. Courtesy Creigh Moffatt.

Wildfire smoke along the northeastern shore of Wholdaia Lake. Courtesy Creigh Moffatt.
Skip | July 17, Wholdaia Lake

We started out this morning traveling in smoke-free air for the first time in many days. At last we thought we were beyond the fire line. And then as we approached the portage, more fires appeared very close to the portage itself and we again entered the acrid gloom of burning country. Art characterized our feelings pretty well when he ended the day with, “Ain’t it the shits!”

Started the portage about 10:30 AM and finally completed the 1½-mi jaunt around 9 PM. Most of the day was spent photographing the nearby forest fire. Four of us took a canoe and paddled ½ mi across a bay to the very foot of the fire. We hiked along a series of eskers on the edge of the fire and were right on the spot as the spruce and birch rose in flames like gigantic ceremonial torches. As we watched, the fire seemed to take on almost anthropomorphic characteristics; its movements seemed to follow a battle plan as it crept along the forest floor, extending its flanks and then engulfing the isolated tree as the enemy in a rush of sound and flame.

Skip | July 18, Wholdaia Lake

This morning the fires were pretty well subdued. Small, smoldering areas could be distinguished through the drifting smoke and nude, charred, standing trunks. After breakfast, Art and I set out some rotten bully beef and decoyed Canada Jays for the movies. The birds were quite tame, grabbing the meat within a few feet of us. Good sequence to work into breakfast shots.

Stopped for lunch during a rain squall . . . cold, windy, short-lived, clearing in the afternoon. Paddled until the N wind freshened and forced us ashore in the lea of a swampy island . . . camp is on a small rise midst muskeg and stunted spruce; flies are bad. Poplar has died out since Selwyn and the spruce are scrawny.

As we sit around the fire this evening, the entire southern sky is black and rumbling, foretelling coming storm; tents double secure; canoes well sheltered.
Peter | JULY 18, WHOLDAIA LAKE

The Canada Jays were thick around the meat that we had thrown away, so Art got some great pictures of these. We didn’t get started until about noon. I made a deal with Joe, giving him four packs of cigarettes for the privilege of using his maps as I go along in the canoe, so now I can follow our route as we move and get used to orienting the country with the map. Even if I never make this trip again, this will be good practice.

Using these 8 mi. to the inch maps, all the small islands and all but the largest features in the landscape are eliminated, but some small, medium-sized islands are left out while others the same size are included, seemingly at random. This is the most confusing part of the maps.

Today, we have been seeing tundra for the first time; broad fields of moss going down to the water’s edge. No trees on them. They are frozen under the first foot or so of moss. They occur here and there, widely separated now. Tyrrell mentions them in his journals and says that they stop at tree line where the sphagnum moss cannot grow for lack of shade.

We had made about 4 mi. when it started to rain. George and I covered the load and we pulled up to eat lunch. There was some debate as to whether or not we should camp, but the only place was on top of one of those bogs, so we sat in the canoes and pretty soon the rain stopped. George looked on top of the tundra and said it was wet, no firewood, so on we went.

The sun finally came out for a brief space, but went back in again. It was calm for a while in the afternoon and Art seemed determined to go on to the near side of the portage over a little neck of land that would save us two days’ paddle, but the wind came up strong dead against us . . . It looked like rain and we were all shipping water, so we decided to camp on a little hill. It was not a bad spot and we battened everything down to prepare for the rain. It started to come after dinner, but didn’t really start until we went to bed. There were several violent thunderstorms all night and the tent was almost blown away. The rain came in almost a solid torrent. I lay awake and thought about what a savage display of power this was, yet it is as if the country let its guard down for an instant and showed its hard, dangerous side.
Skip | July 19, Wholdaia Lake

Experienced one of the most terrifying thunderstorms of my life last night. All night the sky was lighted with startling flashes of lightning, closely followed by shaking crashes of thunder. The rain merged into a steady sheet of water, disguising any individual raindrops in the pulsing roar of a north wind. Tents seemed ready to be torn from their stakes at any moment.

Breakfast was a rather soggy chore, helped somewhat by semi-dry wood found beneath a spruce fall, and by gradually clearing skies; winds are finally easing.

Left camp in a sticky, calm gloom of another threatening storm and paddled to a swampy bog where we found the short portage across a neck of land leading into the northern portion of Wholdaia Lake. We are camped on a beautiful lichen-covered rocky rise on the western shore of a small island. Sunset and calm create a mirrored spectacle of northern pastel splendor.

Skip | July 20, Wholdaia Lake

The beauty of last evening continued today; clear morning, sparkling and warm. As we pushed off from this gem of a camp, after taking two short film sequences, we continued westward with the sun on our stern; hot, with a slight breeze, and then as we turned northeast, the wind shifted easterly and freshened. Clouds threatened rain but none fell. We spent a few hours examining one of the numerous peat bogs along these shores. The brown peat is overlain by small green cover and low bushes. About a foot beneath the surface permanent ice is imbedded in hard packed peat. The entire bog resembles a glacier in its layered structure and probably moves in a similar manner down the surface of a slope.

Camped on a very small, exposed island with rain threatening.

Peter | July 20, Wholdaia Lake

A clear, calm, beautiful day. For once, everyone mobilized right after breakfast. Only George was nowhere to be found. After I took down
the tent and got everything packed away, I had a good wash and even washed my blue jeans. Then George showed up and we got the canoe in the water. I paddled all morning with no shirt and got a sunburn. It was still clear at lunch. Later, long, wispy clouds began to trail across the sky and black clouds were approaching.

About 3:30, we stopped at a tundra with a very steep bank and a sandy beach. When we got on top, we found that it was very open and relatively dry, dry enough to sit on. I got some pictures of everyone walking around here and digging through the moss; finding ice which we found everywhere at a depth of about one foot. The moss was springy and soft and covered with lichens. The whole place was delightful. It was wind-blown enough so that there were no black flies or mosquitoes. In fact, flies have been very scarce for the last two weeks. Evenings around the campfire have been relatively untroubled until quite late.

The sand beach in front of this little tundra is beautiful, fine-grained with a very gradual slope. Everyone, including Art, went for a swim here. On our way to this tundra, the wind was strong against us, from the north, while the clouds came up from the south, as they usually do. Still bucking this headwind, we made it 6 mi. further to a small, bare hill on the point in the narrow channel between the large island and the shore. The clouds haven’t gotten any worse, but there is a constant muttering of thunder and a new bank of clouds that look like rain coming from the east. Art thought he heard sandhill cranes here.

**Skip | July 21, Wholdaia Lake**

The rain of last night stopped by the time I crawled out of the tent to begin breakfast, but the gloom and oppressive overcast continued throughout the day. After bucking a considerable headwind all afternoon, we were forced ashore on an open tundra plain by the return of the rain. These patches of open tundra are intermittent reminders of the rapidly changing vegetation. Ever since Selwyn Lake, the poplar/birch trees were dying out until now even the scrawniest specimen is cause for comment. Scraggly spruce trees growing in fringes and clusters are the main tree cover now. Numerous ridges of lichen-covered, rounded bedrock can be
seen separated at intervals by low, open plains underlain by peat bogs, some of which resemble huge football fields completely bare of trees and forming a small cliff at the shoreline.

The important problem of when and where to camp is creating somewhat of an issue for our party, and the serious threat of disunity and grumbling seems to be primarily caused by Art’s method of handling such affairs. Two alternatives seem open to him. Either assume complete leadership, making all decisions; or submit to the will of the group. Art’s tendency is to try and make each move a group decision and still maintain leadership. This leads to asking opinions, then trying to sway differing views and finally following his own opinion anyway; usually the cause for some grumbling no matter what the outcome.

Peter | July 21, Wholdaia Lake

The wind almost blew our tent down last night, far too rough to travel. We are holed up here for the day. I took a walk inland down the point about 2 mi. and came upon a big tundra where the point joins the mainland and a high hill behind this tundra. I got an eerie feeling of loneliness and smallness crossing this with the wind blowing hard. I climbed a hill and got a splendid view of the surrounding country. The tundra is becoming more and more extensive behind the fringe of trees along the water.

Directly to the east, I could see a large, rocky mountain far away. For some reason, it fascinated me and I would sure like to climb it some day.

I got back in time for lunch and spent the afternoon hunting for spruce grouse without success. I flushed one male, but it got out of there so fast that I couldn’t get a shot. I think the hens with broods are the only ones that offer easy targets.

The sky is still overcast with high clouds and the wind still strong.

Skip | July 22, Wholdaia Lake

Wind-bound on Wholdaia! The force and frequency of these storms, combined with the rolling tundra and the scrubby spruce, emphasizes that we are finally, truly in the North country.
Art is taking a shot of the interior of our tent while this is being written . . . Bruce reads Steinbeck on my left. Spent the morning photographing the storm-bound camp and the breaking seas; also developed a lead-in sequence for some of the bird shots (Art & binoculars). Spent the entire day here. The wind blew continually and although the overcast broke for the sun to shine for a few hours, as evening approaches, the sky is again heavy and dark, foreboding another windy night.

Made a detailed inventory of our food supply and we seem to be in good shape for about 50 more days. This brings us into the first part of September when we should likely reach the post at Baker Lake. Sugar and other sweets pose somewhat of a problem in as much as the longer we are away the more intense the sweet tooth becomes. However, minor rationing should take care of this.

While repacking my personal belongings this afternoon, I mused over the pictures of Dana and our Mt. Washington trip. An hour passed in memory with the dominant theme of hope that we can pick up somewhere after we left off so abruptly at the airport. I read through her letter and wonder about that question mark. All this contributes to the loneliness of my barrens.

The weather, the relative barrenness and the immobility of the day intensify the loneliness of this country. The isolation of man in time, and in nature is unmistakable here. Picture of a young man sitting in the lee of a big rock on the barren shore of a white-capped, grey-tossed expanse, reading Shaw (Man & Superman).

Skip | July 23, Wholdaia Lake

Woke up this morning to a strong southerly wind, making it impossible to travel again today. The wind, however, was warm and occasional breaks in the overcast made a pleasant day for wind-bound projects. After breakfast, Art and I packed a lunch and the cameras for a day of hiking and filming. Birds were our primary objective. We concentrated on a high, open ridge about five miles from camp and got some good close-ups of Yellowlegs and Harris Sparrow; also some shots of the tundra. Had lunch in brilliant, windy sunshine and then continued with the camera. About 5 PM a large dark cloud bank appeared in the north and within
20 minutes the temperature had dropped at least 20 degrees and a hard, driving rain replaced the lazy sunshine. The walk back to camp was cold and wet. We arrived soaked to the skin and decided to cook dinner right away. Cold, wet and the pot refusing to boil! At last the tell-tale bubbles and a hot meal of glop, pudding and tea. Pete had not returned from his hike by the time dinner was over and I hope he will turn up before dark; certainly don’t envy the poor guy. Am now dry and relatively warm in the tent with pajamas and wool socks. Rain seems to be easing.

The unpleasantness of this late afternoon, although brief, makes me think of what it will be like during 3 or 4 days of continual rain. Grim times may be ahead.

Peter | July 23, Wholdaia Lake

The wind is far too strong to paddle today; still cloudy. It looks somewhat like rain. Last night and this morning are warm, sixty degrees. After breakfast, we all went our ways; George to hunt grouse, Art and Skip trying to take pictures of birds, and I to take a long walk.

I took my lunch and set out climbing the first hill that I had climbed the day before. I headed from there directly south-southeast to another bare hill about 1.5 mi. from the first. From this hill, I could see that large rocky mountain to the east very clearly and it really fascinated me. So, against my better judgment, I started toward it, cutting down to Lone Lake and following along its shore. The country changes a lot. Here it happens to be high, so there is dry ground with tall trees and little undergrowth, but a little further on, you go down into a hollow and are walking in swamp, plowing through a thick tangle of stunted spruce.

I followed Lone Lake until I got to an esker going off to the east. I found a fine Indian campsite there, where the esker joined the lake, but found no arrow heads. I didn’t look thoroughly though. I found the esker excellent walking and quite striking in appearance. It is a mound of sand like a mole tunnel, running along fairly straight. On top, it is open and sandy, while there is swamp and lakes on both sides. I walked on this esker for 3 mi. and then went around a big lake and climbed a bare hill. From there, I could see the rock mountain and it didn’t look a bit bigger than it had from the hill near camp. At this point the sky cleared and bright
sun came out warm. The day was about half way through, so I decided to turn back. I had lunch on the esker.

I was a little scared I wouldn't be able to find my way back and was feeling pretty lonely by this time. This country really makes a person feel small and lost, wandering in a great immensity, much more so than the mountains. I went back to Lone Lake along the esker and walked down along it until I felt it was time to turn off to get to the second high, bare hill from which I could see the first one near camp. At this time the sun went under a solid bank of black clouds. Walking in the trees, I couldn't see any of the landmarks. I came out on a big tundra, but could see nothing familiar and was heading in the wrong direction until I saw a sand bank way over on one side. I thought this looked familiar, so I walked over and took a look. Sure enough, there were my footprints from the morning. Without the sun, I had missed my orientation badly and continued to do so.

By this time it was getting late. I didn't know where I was and I was in the beginning of a panic. I came out on another big tundra that looked totally unfamiliar, but I walked all the way across it and saw that it was the one facing the second hill. I could see the first hill and started toward it. At this point it started to rain. I got stuck in some pretty deep swamps and thought I was lost again, but I finally came out on the first hill. Here I thought my troubles were over, but they were just beginning. I came out too far down the shore and headed in the wrong direction; really panicked by this time. I finally retraced my steps and came out on the tundra again, but I still had a few bad moments before I got back to camp, thoroughly soaked. I had been walking for ten hours. The others had given me up for lost and were going to look for me tomorrow. Art and I sat up drying clothes for a long time after the others had gone to bed. He plans to spend a month in the Sierra making a family movie the summer after next. It was wonderful to be back at camp and to be able to talk to somebody after wandering in this desolate country, lost for half the time.

.Skip | JULY 24, WHOLDAIA LAKE

Climbed into wet socks and Levis this morning at 6 AM and found a pastel green sky with dark, windblown clouds and 40F. Wind made it
very cold and rain of the night before made the cook fire a problem, but finally got things going and got the gang up about 8:15. Peter had returned to camp early last night and seems fine; perhaps a little hungrier than other mornings.

Long underwear and wool hat are the order of the day. Yellow slicker has been the outer layer for past 3 days. With the wind again heading us, but easing, we hope to be off this afternoon for a cold, tough paddle to the mouth of the Dubawnt R.

PM: instead of continuing to lessen, the wind shifted to the w and freshened at noon and so for the third day in a row, the waves and penetrating cold of the wind bound us to our Wholdaia camp. With annoying regularity, each passing cloud dumps a small shower of rain in its shadow and makes the cold even more noticeable. Campfire blazed all day and much of the chatter concerned the prospects of a similar day on the windswept, woodless barrens. Dubawnt Lake looms in the distance, with anticipation and apprehension, we wonder, will it be ice-bound? And, if so, how will we manage?

Skip | July 25, Wholdaia Lake

Another day of wind, dulling cold and pounding waves. We all are hoping that stories of “five day blows” will live up to expectations and end the foul weather tomorrow. The realization that prolonged periods of immobility eat into our supplies with no increase in mileage to balance the scale creeps into the minds of everyone. The leaden sky seems to form an infinite lid over us, enclosing the wind and cold in this huge pot of tossing water, permitting only occasional glimpses of blue sky and sunshine. With the necessity of traveling about 600 miles before reaching Baker Lake and new supplies, our party has adopted a versatile schedule primarily dependent on the weather. Whenever it is possible to travel, we will move, day or night, and will set our sleep accordingly. The twilight makes night travel possible and approaching winter seems to insist upon movement.

10 PM. True to my previous words, just after I had crawled into my sleeping bag for what seemed to be another windy night, Art called to me that the wind was easing and to come out and take a look. Within 45
minutes camp was struck, the canoes loaded and the six of us paid our own personal farewells to this Wholdaia prison. We paddled until 1:30 AM, when the increased overcast cancelled out the arctic twilight and it became impossible to read the map or the shoreline. We pulled into what appeared to be a beach through the darkness, erected a canvas shelter against the wind, built a large fire and waited with numerous cups of tea for dawn.

*Peter | July 25, Wholdaia Lake*

Overcast and very windy, so we are stuck here a fourth day. It is beginning to get on my nerves. I read Thomas Wolfe and did a little hunting. It is cold again, about forty-five degrees. All I have in reserve now is one light sweater. This down vest is not as good as I expected it to be. I hope it never gets much colder than this. After dinner the waves began to calm down and around 10:00 Art suddenly decided to move out. It was cold and a little windy but everyone was so glad to get out that no one minded.

It was quite dark but we managed to find our way 7 mi. to where we thought the channel to the Dubawnt was. There we camped, leaving the stuff in the canoes and only boiling water to make tea.

*Skip | July 26, Dubawnt River*

About 4 AM the overcast lifted in the east and a beautiful red-orange dawn aroused us. We shot our first rapid of the trip shortly before leaving Wholdaia Lake and then, after a few small bays and a connecting outlet, we entered the Dubawnt, a wide, shallow, swift river at this head. We are camped at the first shallow rapid on the river and have enjoyed excellent fishing . . . 13 grayling within ½ hr.! After no real sleep for 36 hr., the prospect of a good meal and then the sack looms pleasantly.

*Peter | July 26, Dubawnt River*

We sat around drinking tea until 3:00 when it was light enough to travel. We found the narrows with no trouble and followed along until we came to the first big rapid. The river narrows down a lot and runs swift and
deep for about seventy-five or one hundred yards. There was a large rock in the middle on the right side, leaving a narrow channel on the left. Out in the tail of the rapids, there are quite a few rocks just below the surface. Art ran it first and came through all right. Then I came down; I went all right until just before that big rock in the middle. I tried to turn in a little to get into the channel on the left, and when I did so, the current caught the stern and swung it around so that by the time that I got straightened out, I was too close to the left shore and the bow grazed against the large rock on the side. After this, I was so rattled that I couldn’t see where I was going out in the tail, and so ran over a rounded boulder that was just awash. After that all went well and I pulled over to the side to empty the load and look at the canoe. There was a small dent in the bow where I had grazed against the shore, but the real damage was from the rock in the tail. The inner planking had a cracked place and the canvas was scraped. Fortunately, there was no real damage. If the rock had been sharp, it would have been a different story. Everyone is very nice about this and tells me to forget it, but George will use it as a weapon to disregard my commands and do as he damn well pleases, I feel sure. This certainly cannot happen again, or I will be a greater liability than an asset to everyone on the trip.

We went on from this rapid to the next lake, where we had breakfast. As soon as breakfast was over, we pushed on and made it to the first rapid in the Dubawnt by lunch. This was a very broad and shallow rapid and not deep enough to run in the canoes. We camped on the left bank, and I and Bruce got out fishing. The Arctic grayling were very abundant here and we had a tremendous meal. They must be scaled, but they make excellent eating. I went to bed early to make up for the night before.

*Skip* | July 27, Dubawnt River

The precious few hours of sunshine which we experienced yesterday gave way to heavy overcast this morning, finally turning into a steady drizzle about 4 PM. We made camp after lunch and a pot of “cold-weather” tea. The steady, gentle patter of rain on the tent reminds me of those lazy, annoying rains of the Albany country.
Although we only traveled about 2 hrs today, we made 8 miles or so and are now within an easy day travel of Hinde Lake. Each of the lakes to come seems spaced as a stepping-stone to one of the big challenges of the trip, Dubawnt Lake. We watch the lakes go by on the map with an eager eye, remembering Tyrrell’s description of the ice-bound lake and discontinuous leads along the shoreline. Is that what we are approaching?

The end of firewood has not really touched us yet and we enjoy the fuel of the bush in the form of driftwood as well as the spacious vistas and distant horizons of the Barrens. From a distance, some of the hills and meadows resemble very well-kept fairways; clipped, rockless, and gently rolling in well-disciplined curves. On closer examination, the ground is composed of dried peat resembling stringy, compact sawdust and sandy soil imbedded with small stones. The damper portions are very similar to the muskeg farther south.

When the sun does shine, as it did last evening, the sunsets and evening hours are magnificent. The sun becomes a hub of shimmering light, centering in orange and then flowing outward into soft reds and yellows against the pastel blue-green background of the Arctic sky. Distances lose perspective in this shimmering vastness and the entire plains seem to be engulfed in an unrealistic bluish haze. But when it rains and blows, it’s a bitch.

Peter | JULY 27, DUBAWNT RIVER

We made a short portage around the rapids and then went on downstream, getting into a long, fairly easy rapid that went down into a small lake.

The current was very swift, but the only danger was from big rocks just below the surface. I got through this all right and felt somewhat better about being in the stern.

There was a strong wind against us in the lake and black clouds were coming up fast behind. We made it into the outlet and went down stream through very easy rapids into a wide place in the river. Here we stopped to have lunch. Before we were finished, the rain came and we decided to stay put for the night. We put up the tarp and the rain set in slow and steady. It kept up most of the night.
Before we went to bed, we started talking about how we could avoid paying $200 extra for a private plane from Baker Lake to Churchill. Art suggested we might buy a thirty-foot whale boat from the Eskimo and sail it to Churchill or even on down to Moosanee. Skip went wild at this idea, as he loves to sail, and we talked and made plans for the next hour. Of course, it seems completely crazy from a practical point of view, but it was fun to talk about and would be a great adventure, as well as a good finish to the film. In any case, it looks like I am going to be a bit late for registration as the train from Churchill takes almost a week to get to Winnipeg.

**Skip | July 28, Hinde Lake**

The day was dominated by beautiful, swirling, blowing, puffing, multi-colored clouds which were continually changing position and texture against the background of light blue sky and the exciting tension of running a long succession of rapids. Three of the rapids required long consultation and finally, after much hemming and hawing and mentally diagramming various options, I led the way down. Art seems somewhat overly cautious, probably due to the risk of the camera equipment. On the second run, Bruce and I led again, and as we waited in the quiet pool below, Pete came down with word that Art had swamped. After considerable wait, the gray canoe appeared with two very bedraggled men paddling slowly toward us, one with a rather sheepish grin, the other with fear and relief mixing his features. A later check of supplies showed very little damage...½ bag oatmeal, some wet hardtack and considerable quantities of dampened pride. The last rapid of the day was so exciting that the tension throughout the run and the release at the bottom were almost identical to those of a tight ski slalom run. A brief paddle below the rapids brought us to a campsite on a high esker overlooking Hinde Lake.

**Skip | July 29, Ptarmigan Rapid**

We continued drying our wet supplies this morning, only to be soaked by another passing shower; but we are on the move again.
After checking our position against the remaining supplies and the approaching winter, we have adopted a new plan of action. Instead of eating around 9 AM and not leaving until nearly noon, I am now getting up at 7 AM, waking the rest who strike camp while I cook breakfast. Thus we are generally traveling by 9 AM; always barring rain or photography, or some other diversion.

Had a grumpy outbreak over the sugar situation. We are now ½ through the supply and only about ⅓ of the distance to Baker Lake. After much discussion, we decided to give each man a 5-day ration from each 5-lb bag, thus allowing about ⅙ lb/day. Each will carry his own supply and use it according to his taste. Hope it works.

Spent a good portion of the afternoon on a high, sandy esker on the northwest shore of Hinde Lake. This area is abundant with eskers, timbered by huge white spruce, 40–50 ft. high, spaced evenly along a clear, gravelly floor. The esker generally extends along the shore for considerable distance until the water breaks through at some point, forming a large rapid. The view from these eskers is wonderful . . . the horizon is visible for 360 degrees and the alternating tundra, scattered lakes and spruce groves present a vast panorama of endless wilderness.

**Tyrell**

The next morning, as we were . . . making for a high point with a huge boulder lying on its summit, one of the men drew my attention to an immense herd of caribou on the eastern shore. . . . The continuance of the exploration depended on our obtaining an abundant supply of meat, and the knowledge of this fact added to our excitement, as we stood in the midst of the tens of thousands of deer.

After checking our position against the remaining supplies and the approaching winter, we have adopted a new plan of action. Instead of eating around 9 AM and not leaving until nearly noon, I am now getting up at 7 AM, waking the rest who strike camp while I cook breakfast. Thus we are generally traveling by 9 AM; always barring rain or photography, or some other diversion.

Had a grumpy outbreak over the sugar situation. We are now ½ through the supply and only about ⅓ of the distance to Baker Lake. After much discussion, we decided to give each man a 5-day ration from each 5-lb bag, thus allowing about ⅙ lb/day. Each will carry his own supply and use it according to his taste. Hope it works.

Spent a good portion of the afternoon on a high, sandy esker on the northwest shore of Hinde Lake. This area is abundant with eskers, timbered by huge white spruce, 40–50 ft. high, spaced evenly along a clear, gravelly floor. The esker generally extends along the shore for considerable distance until the water breaks through at some point, forming a large rapid. The view from these eskers is wonderful . . . the horizon is visible for 360 degrees and the alternating tundra, scattered lakes and spruce groves present a vast panorama of endless wilderness.

**Skip | July 30, Dubawnt River**

Doled out the sugar ration into six small cans. The four guys seem somewhat in love with the notion of individual rations which they can play
with . . . great concern whether it should go over the oatmeal or into the tea. Not sure how Art feels about all this.

After portaging Ptarmigan Rapids, we continued traveling along the river through more eskers and moraines which seem to run on separate banks (moraines to the NE, eskers to the NW). Very disappointed we couldn’t run the rapid; it definitely would have been a tricky challenge of waves and boulders, but well worth a try if the consequences of a mishap were not so great.

Along with the appearance of the characteristic eskers and large white spruce, this area around Hinde Lake and the river north to Boyd Lake show the return of hardwood trees (birch, some poplar) and considerable stands of mature black spruce. It is quite surprising that here within 20 miles of the extreme northern limit of the trees we would find such timber, while 40 miles to the south virtually none exist. The “country

Bruce LeFavour, left, and Art Moffatt on one of the numerous esker ridges, vicinity Hinde Lake. Courtesy Creigh Moffatt.
club” meadows also have disappeared in favor of wooded hills and large tracts of timber. Perhaps it is the appearance of the sandy soils of the esker and perhaps a rather anthropomorphic “last gasp” before the land is truly plunged into the treeless Barrens.

Days such as this certainly smack of the north; temp stayed in the 40s all day; grey, leaden skies hanging very low, giving a dull, steel-like coloring to everything and making the monochromatic rapids hard to analyze and difficult to run; our party perhaps best characterized by the gradually narrowing circle of men standing close to the campfire, holding steaming red bowls in both hands.

**Peter | July 30, Dubawnt River**

After looking at Ptarmigan Rapid, we decided it could be shot, but it would be easier and safer to portage. We portaged along the right shore, right from our camp. After we loaded and got started again, we ran two more fairly easy rapids without looking and stopped at a large sandy hill on the left bank. It was a very pleasant spot, ground cover of lichens and a few blueberries, as well as some evergreen that grows flat on the ground like a carpet. The esker was covered with huge white spruce with big trunks, very tall and straight. The hill was quite high and steep, and from it you could see a very long way in all directions. The country is full of these eskers. The trees are growing more and more sparse now.

The day was cloudy and cold, but fitted the mode of the country. A little elevation like this esker makes a big view in this country as it is relatively flat everywhere else. There is something fantastically beautiful in looking at that expanse of desolate, barren country. Here I could get a sense of what land I am in, instead of just seeing a little from the river. Traveling in a group too takes one’s mind off the country a great deal. I don’t know what it is that makes a man want to travel all over the land that he can see though he knows that it must be pretty much the same everywhere. There is nothing I would rather do than set out with a light pack and a rifle, live off the country as much as possible, and walk all over this land. I don’t like the river travel as much as going by foot. The big trees and the ground cover on this esker remind me very much of the Sierras.
After having lunch here, we shoved off down the river, aiming to camp on the esker at Boyd Lake. Tyrrell mentions in his journal that the shores are shallow far out, making them hard to approach by canoe. This makes the eskers the best place to camp. We went on down through little sections of fast water and small lakes with current. As we neared Boyd, we came to some bad rapids. The first of these is a narrow channel between rocky hills with big waves. We shot right through the middle, swinging to the right at the end to avoid some rocks at the tail. About another 100 yards along, we ran another short rapid on the left, avoiding waves in the middle. Then we went on about 1 mi. and camped at the head of the last rapid into Boyd. The country approaching Boyd is all rocky, rounded hills.

Skip | July 31, Dubawnt River

Heavy overcast, strong NW wind and 47°F temp greeted us this morning and finally induced us to remain in camp all day. This particular region (according to Tyrrell) is the distinct zone of transition between trees, temperate topography and the real Barrens. Before this we have seen patches of barren land, but it was always interrupted by the scattered return of the trees. Within a few miles we may be in the true Barrens.

Art and I both kept our eyes skyward all day hoping for a brief break in the clouds so that we might photograph this unique area of transitional vegetation, but no luck. Somehow we have to record this region as a pivotal point in the entire metamorphosis of land, flora and fauna; perhaps tomorrow.

We have been out for well over a month and although in normal circumstances this would not be very long, in terms of our isolation, our limited food and strenuous life, it is quite a long period and the effects of the strain are beginning to show. The problem of catching fish and then cleaning and cooking them became a major issue today. Pete and Bruce caught the fish; Pete refusing to clean them; Bruce, George and I cleaned them; George refusing to skin or scale; then whoosh! an argument developed into a battle between George and me concerning the motives of each party member . . . whether we are to be individual or group
directed. We argued in general terms, thereby avoiding some antagonism, but the issue remains. He maintains that every one must look out for themselves and thus, indirectly, the group will prosper most effectively. I countered that in our present situation where so much depends on unity, we cannot leave positive group dynamics to individual chance. We must be collectively motivated; that this is a matter of survival, not philosophical nit-picking. We ended agreeing to disagree.

On the brighter side, I caught my first grayling today; fine jumpy, fighty fish, but a great big lake trout is still my favorite; calories prevail!

We are camped in the midst of blueberry heaven. Walking through the laden bushes reminds me of those portages in Quebec where Mom and Dad and I were forever wandering off the trail in search of a bigger, sweeter handful.

Tonight, we had a big meal of glop and blueberry bannock in anticipation of a long day tomorrow, to try and make up for today.

Skip | AUGUST 1, BOYD LAKE

Rose this morning at 6 AM and while breakfast was cooking, I watched the grey overcast sweep away to the West and a perfectly clear, light blue northern sky take over.

Spent 3 hrs., 9–12 PM, making a film sequence of shooting the rapids into Boyd Lake: panoramic shot of the entire rapid from the cliff shore, close ups of faces watching the canoes; three stern men discussing route;

_Tyrrell_

[W]e paddled over to the high point two miles north-west of camp. . . . The point is a long sloping ridge 150 feet high . . . on its crest is a large boulder, nine feet high. . . . On top of this boulder we erected a cairn of stones, under which we put a Worcestershire sauce bottle, with a short record of our trip to that time, and a sketch map of the course followed.
side view of shooting canoe from a very low angle behind big waves. Then paddled into the island-dotted lake where we stopped again for a few shots in brilliant sunlight.

Back again into the rhythm of lake travel . . . dip, push; dip, push . . . Trees have disappeared for most practical purposes . . . firewood becomes the object of very passionate scavenger hunts; twisted stumps and water-soaked driftwood are treasures.

Incidentally, it occurred to me that my last bath must have been over 2 weeks ago . . . socks are getting crusty, but I’m still just as sweet!

The terrain is now studded with small, rocky, barren hills, one of which includes our camp. The rocks as well as the ground are covered with varieties of predominantly grey lichens forming a rather gloomy, severe landscape. Some of these hills remind me of old, dilapidated New England cemeteries. From a distance, the lichens resemble clipped grass and the rocks could certainly mark the moldy remains of our dear forefathers.

Perhaps the sunshine and glare . . . perhaps a touch of constipation . . . at any rate, something caused a headache and generally lousy feeling, making me realize that even the most insignificant decrease in efficiency can become a serious problem for the whole group. Our daily exertion
is now just normal, but a minor illness or accident could create a serious situation. Paddling on large, open stretches with the sun always behind us to the left as we did today inspires the feeling that we are steadily heading closer and closer toward the prospect of severe northern weather, and the unpleasant anticipation of hardship looms nearer and nearer.

Peter | August 1, Boyd Lake

Up at 6:30. Cold and cloudy at first, but cleared off to a fine, warm day. Art is going wild with his movie camera. He set up high in the right bank to get Skip going through the rapid. Then he got down next to the water so as to make the waves look big when I went through. I had no trouble at all. The current went straight through the channel and though it was narrow, I had no trouble in it.

Boyd Lake was quite calm and we had no trouble paddling. We stopped at a sandy spot, perhaps the first esker marked on the map, for lunch. Breaking into the case of peanut butter, we found two jars out of twelve broken. Art took more movies of us paddling after lunch. While I was waiting for Art to get through with the movies, I had a peculiar experience of memory that has happened more and more often in the past year. I remembered certain scenes and especially feelings of my early childhood at San Marino and San Mateo with painful clarity. Painful because they made me long for them and the happiness I had then and yet I know I can never have them again.

The people and places are all gone and changed forever, as I myself have changed. I had a feeling of intense homesickness with no home to return to. No place to rest and call home. Maybe this comes from being away from my parents and sisters for so long, almost nine months now, but they have all changed too. I have a need for close personal relations, but no way to find them as I seem to repel everyone and remain aloof, rather than try to get close to them. Now I am just like an old man hoarding memories of happy times within the family that are all gone. It seems almost impossible that I should ever love some girl enough to have the same feelings. I am too afraid of them and I try too hard to be something besides myself; but perhaps these problems will work themselves out in time. As it is now, I don’t feel at home or at rest
anywhere or with anyone. I never quite know what to do with myself or how to act with other people.

We paddled on about four hours from where we had lunch and camped on a small horseshoe-shaped island in the narrow part of the lake where it is supposed to be the limit of trees according to the map, but there is still a fringe of trees close to the water’s edge. Beyond this, the islands and the shore rise as bare low hills with a ground cover of lichens, Labrador tea and carpet-like stunted plants. Art got some shots of making camp, but some long wispy clouds coming from the south began to cover the sun during dinner. It is still fairly warm, but the sky to the south looks ominous. There was a fantastic sunset. I tried to get some shots of it, but was probably not very successful.

The screws are starting to come out of my soles again. I hope they last another month.

Skip | August 2, Boyd Lake

Woke this morning to howling wind and pattering rain . . . rolled over and didn’t crawl out of the sack until called for breakfast at 11 AM . . . cook’s day off!

Spent the usual wind-bound day, highlighted by Art’s catching a tremendous 15# lake trout right off the camp. Just as I was in the middle of a rare warm-water face wash, a yell from the nearby rocks, “Skip, bring the camera! Bring the camera!” I dropped the soap, grabbed the camera and went bounding through the brush onto the rocks and set up the camera and tripod, getting some terrific shots of Art landing the monster, complete with a final, bloody death struggle between fish and fisherman when the line broke and Art pinned the beast with a full-body press. Sequence ended with butchering and a bountiful dinner of fish, mashed pots, bacon and tea.

Peter | August 2, Boyd Lake

I awoke to rain on the tent. I feel some pain in my stomach, lower in my intestines; perhaps I did get a few chips of broken glass in the peanut butter I ate yesterday. Only time will tell.
We ate breakfast in a gloomy mood with a slow drizzle of rain down our necks. I think I will really regret losing my poncho later on when there is no fire to dry out by. I tried to do a little fishing, but with no success. Joe found some large bear tracks on the island.

I am really beginning to get worried that we will run out of food before we get to Baker Lake. We aren't moving today, though the rain is very slight and the wind not too heavy. After lunch, Art caught a huge lake trout fishing from the shore with a Dare Devil, 39" long, 15.5 lb. Then he caught one about half that size and we had enough for a fish dinner.

That night, while I was walking on top of the high hill before going to bed, I found a perfect arrowhead, long and narrow, notched at the base for tying into the shaft.

**Skip | August 3, Boyd Lake**

Anticipation of a days traveling dragged a somewhat weary breakfast cook out of the sack at 7 AM in spite of a windblown tent and slight rain. Oats, fried fish and tea for breakfast and then the chilling continuation of wind-bound weather. With one or two exceptions, we have not had any real driving rain storms; instead, a monotonous windblown drizzle with the temperature remaining close to 40F.

Only consolation for our stay here is that this lake is full of large lake trout which seem to be spawning and are feeding close to shore so that we can catch them on a Dare Devil. This is a big help to our supply inventory in as much as we have about 45 days of food left and we estimate it will
take us at least that long to reach Baker Lake. Stay-over days consume food, but don’t decrease mileage and so on days like this we have ½ ration oats + fish, fish chowder for lunch which only needs a package of dried soup and a little milk with boiled chunks of fish; and then fried fish and mashed potatoes for dinner.

The day drags by with a group of wet, disappointed men huddled around a sputtering fire. As I write (5 PM), occasional patches of sunlight appear in the clouds, perhaps forecasting a break up, in which case we will probably break camp after dinner and travel most of the night, stopping late tomorrow afternoon. I’ll try to get some sleep now to fortify a long evening paddle.

9:30 PM. We have decided against night travel this evening in spite of clearing skies due to the difficulties of navigating among the many islands of this lake; instead we plan to get up at 4:30 AM and get in as many miles as possible when and if the sun shines.

During dinner today, Art brought up the condition of the supplies and distance to travel, and for the first time made everyone collectively conscious of our situation. We discussed the possibility of returning to Stony Rapids before it was too late, but were agreed to a man to continue, with the definite intention of longer, more strenuous travel days. The

\[\text{Fish Chowder}\]

Boil gutted fish; remove bones, head, tail, etc.
Boil 3 c diced potatoes, or any other dehy. veggie.
Fry ¼ lb. bacon; break into pieces.
Crisp chopped onion in bacon fat.
Mix above in pot with drippings.
Pour in 1 can evap. milk or use amount of mixed powder milk.
Season with salt, pepper.
Just before chowder comes to boil, add 1 can tomato paste.
Stir and simmer until ready to eat.
attitude of the party finally is changing from that of a leisurely summer vacation to the serious determination of an expedition faced with an urgent objective, and serious consequences if it fails.

Peter | August 3, Boyd Lake

Rainy and windy. We decided to stay put for a while. Art and I made a thorough search of the island, but could find no more artifacts besides those on the hill. This must have been a workshop of sorts. It had lots of fragments of white quartz scattered around, but the points that we found were all of a coarse gray or brown quartzite. We found several more points, all broken and in fragments.

By dinner it was still fairly rainy, so we decided to go to bed early and get up at 4:30 tomorrow no matter what the weather. Art seems very worried about our slow pace. Tonight he asked if any of us would consider turning back, but no one wanted to. We are not yet halfway, but we have consumed more than half of supplies.

Skip | August 4, Dubawnt River

My day began at 4 AM with cold, wet breakfast preparations. By 6:30 we were loaded; shoved off in a mounting drizzle . . . Temp. 44°F. For the next 4 hours, we paddled in cold wind and rain. The dull ache of cramped wetness and shivering cold slowly seeped into me until I could no longer control the spasmodic shuddering that passed through me. Only the faint warmth and rhythmic dullness of paddling kept us going. To add to this misery, we were lost in a haze of islands, groping for an opening out of the lake to the river; the uncertainty and discomfort were immense.

Around 11 AM the rain eased and we pulled into shore under some over-hanging scrub and built an enormous fire. We brewed a pot of cocoa and slowly dried and warmed ourselves. In an hour or so we were back to normal and with the lifting sky could look forward somewhat optimistically to the rest of the day. The conviction grows that this kind of discomfort is a relatively short-lived experience and that determined
endurance usually prevails. We are elastic enough to very quickly forget past discomfort and revive in the relief of a comfortable present.

Somewhat reluctantly we left the fire and continued paddling. The country has now definitely evolved into the treeless Barrens and the rocky, gently rolling ridges spread over the entire landscape, forming a series of plains-like skylines.

An hour or two later as we rounded a curve, two buck caribou were seen silhouetted majestically on the ridge directly before us. Their huge “U”-shaped antlers and shaggy white-brown coats contrasted sharply with the light-colored clouds and seemed to intensify the importance of these animals. From that moment on the land seemed to erupt with life. Actually, everywhere we looked groups of caribou could be seen. The horizon was a constant panorama of moving bodies and antlers. The small fawns and indulgent mothers were feeding peacefully along the shore while the bucks remained more distant and perhaps somewhat aloof but just as unconcerned of the silent intruders. Bruce and I approached two caribou in the water and paddled along side for a while, watching the powerful, heaving animals with uplifted heads and fear-rolling eyes.

We soon came to the large rapid at the entrance to Barlow Lake and made camp. The fishing is excellent; the rapids roar in turbulent whiteness, and everywhere the caribou pass by; the more curious stop . . . almost walking through our camp. Such a sudden change from the lifelessness of just a few days before to this swarming migration is magnificent to see. The sun is slow to sink, the flies are temporarily gone, the land pulses with life and vastness, and I go to sleep brim full of positive feelings and excitement for tomorrow.

Peter | AUGUST 4, DUBAWNT RIVER

Up at 4:30. Beautiful red sunrise, then it clouded over and set into rain by the time that we were in the canoes. Cold, about 42 degrees and raining all the while we were paddling through Boyd Lake. It stopped when we got into the river again and we pulled up and built a fire to dry off. I was sure miserable. My wool pants were soaked through, but my upper
body was dry. The surplus parka stopped the rain all right, though it was soaked on the outer layer.

We went on down the river through a few small rapids when we saw our first caribou calmly grazing on top of a high bank. Art pulled up and ran up like a wild man with his camera but they were gone by the time he got to the hilltop. When Tyrrell went down, he didn’t see caribou until Carey Lake, but we saw them 20 mi. before Barlow Lake. He found one immense herd. We saw many caribou today, but all scattered along the banks in small groups. The horns are still in velvet; even the cows have short prong horns. The calves are abundant this time of year, ranging from dog sized up to colt sized. It was an overwhelming event to see this barren land suddenly running over with big game. We even headed off a couple that were swimming the river and got so close to them in the canoes, we could have killed them with a spear. The caribou really make this trip an experience, along with the country, which is getting quite barren and rocky now with small patches of stunted spruce.

We made camp above a big rapid that sweeps around to the left and Art went out to get pictures of the caribou. I caught a few grayling for breakfast, then climbed a hill to look at the country. It is full of long, low hills, barren for the most part, but green with ground cover of grass and moss. The country is dotted with lakes. We will probably stay here tomorrow and get a caribou for fresh meat. There are several herds of about fifty or less around here.