

This is a brief description of the trip I made this spring to the Mackenzie Mountains of the Northwest Territories (N.W.T.) of Canada. It is no attempt to ^{be} a thorough account but only selections in order to convey impressions of the trip.

The purpose of the expedition was to make a mooseskin boat as the Indians made them from the 1880's into the 1940's. Mooseskin boat means a boat of a wooden (spruce) frame covered with raw mooseskins sewn together, a unique design with a limited distribution. The activities associated with the Indian life in the mountains and the building of the boat were filmed at two different stages for a documentary 1/2 hour film; sponsorship for this part of the project came mainly from the National Film Board of Canada. The Northern Heritage Museum of Yellowknife, N.W.T. was also a sponsor in order that they would have the boat at the end of the trip for preservation and display at the Museum; only one other of these boats has been preserved. I was contacted by the Museum in hopes that I would be willing to join the group in order to record the daily life in the bush camp and the history and specifics of the building of this most impressive boat. Why me? I am the only person who has recorded Mountain Indian history--through historical documents and by eliciting material from the people themselves 9 and 10 years ago--and I am the author of the Mountain Indian article in the Handbook of North American Indians (Smithsonian Institute, forthcoming). This is a goldfish status in a very small pond.

On May 1, a week after I left home, I was chartered from the native community of Fort Norman on the Mackenzie River to the Indian bush camp 30 miles from the Yukon border on the Keele River. I went by a Porter plane which has a very strong single engine and can land and take off within a very short distance. Besides me there were many pounds of supplies, probably

a little over 1,500 pounds, and mainly in weight made up of gasoline barrels that sent off strong fumes throughout the trip; I did not smoke.

It was the most spectacular trip of my life and lasted less than two hours. We did not fly over the snow covered world, we flew through it. The world was still fully frozen and the snow was white, blue, purple and pink; the mountains looked like endless tasty-freezes without their cones. It also looked very cold and lifeless. We landed on a small lake (only marked on maps of 4 miles per inch) which was 5 miles from the camp. The four men were there to meet the plane with their two snowmobiles with towed moosehide tobaggans. There were no introductions which was of no surprise but I recognized the older man, Gabe, and the leader, George, who organized and packed the gear and had me in his tobaggan for the trip to camp. Although the world looked frozen from the air, the deep snow was beginning to melt and the men often had to grind through or push the snowmobiles with their heavily laden loads. The way these men know how to drive their snowmobiles is impressive and I quickly gained a respect for these machines and the men using them in this environment.

We reached camp in a little over an hour and immediately I greeted a stunned women, Vivian (George's wife), an old friend I had known on a couple of trips to the North. No one had told them--Vivian, her aunt Madeline or Gabe--that it was me that was to be with them, only that a white woman was to join the group. They all had been apprehensive for days before, and where the men set up my tent several hundred feet from the main camp demonstrated their concern of having a female stranger amongst them. There was a sense of relief on their part that evening.

I was rather pleased to have my own tent (until the film crew came on May 20th) since I had expected to share a tent of women and children throughout the time; Americans generally like a degree of privacy. The

camp consisted of 4 adult men, 3 adult women, a girl teenager, two girls of 8 and 9, a 4 year old boy, and baby "Posh Posh" of 2. Three of the children were George and Vivian's and the other young girl was Vivian's sister.

On my arrival that night there were 9 moose hides drying on racks, enough to make the boat. Within an hour, about 7:30 and still very light, George had shot another moose close to camp and everyone went to the kill site, women and children just watching while George did most of the butchering of at least 650 lbs. of animal in less than an hour. As always, he took the head off first and then the rest of the hide, and then worked on the gutting and sectioning; all the time there was steam coming off the moose in the cold air. We "naturally" had fresh, boiled moose ribs for dinner. Ribs are a favored section and often the first consumed. More on the subject of meat later but I can say it was delicious that first night. But, on returning home, I never want to see boiled moose or caribou meat again three times a day or roasted heads, etc. for lunch; they loved it.

It was suggested by George that first night that I should take a 30/30 rifle back to my tent because there were grizzly bears. I dismissed this idea quickly admitting I was no hunter and that the kick of that kind of rifle was beyond my control. I left for my tent around 1:00 a.m. that morning (a very normal bedtime for the camp) and there was still a slight lightness in the sky to guide me through sinking snow spots and over willows and stumps. I started a fire in my steel barrel stove and the tent was warm when I got into my bag although sleep did not come easy after a day of such newness and remoteness.

The following day was warm and sunny and it was easy to get acquainted with the basic patterns of activities in camp. I also realized I could be most helpful preparing and cleaning up the meals that were all made in

George and Vivian's tent. I cooked and washed dishes far more during this trip than I ever do at home. That first day was in many ways idyllic; I felt comfortable with those in camp except "Posh Posh" who I considered a deplorable raging beast during the entire trip (his family obviously not in agreement with this viewpoint). I did spend many moments that day viewing in awe the beautiful mountain scenery of which I took far too many photos. That tranquil sensation had its first blow that evening when George insisted I go to bed with a loaded gun; the men had seen grizzly tracks close to camp.

Grizzly bears are the only bears in this region and the Indians fear them in the spring when they first wake up and are hungry. The Indians know they are unpredictable until their stomachs are full, a process that may take two months. George is no fool when it comes to knowing animals and what I should, or could do. He only asked me to shoot up through the tent to sound a warning and not try to shoot at the grizzly since it would have to have been a perfect shot with a 30/30. Besides George being the most brilliant hunter and perfect shot I can ever imagine knowing, he had a larger rifle, a 308, that he had only in case of a grizzly; he never needed it for a moose. Needless to say, my first Saturday night away from Eugene was frightening to say the least. I knew, too, that he would be very capable of handling this situation as well as many others in the coming weeks far better than myself.

It was known later that it was a grizzly mother and her two cubs that continued to approach the camp nightly for a month. The men checked the tracks daily and knew of her presence at night by the dogs barking, but she never got close enough to shoot. Often at night I could hear wolves howling, but this was a pleasing sound of the wilderness. They never conjured up an apprehension as the thought of a grizzly poking its head into the tent.

Meat is about 90% of any Indian bush camp--the sighting, killing, butchering, processing and eating is life. But, there are items of our contemporary world now considered desired to ^{be} essential in addition to meat. We had coffee, tea, Tang, sugar and canned milk with every meal. Oatmeal, eggs, commercial bread, jam and flour are also considered basics. In addition, numerous other items are considered important if not always available although chartered planes made this a well supplied camp. There were canned vegetables, sometimes fresh onions and potatoes for stews, ~~and~~ rice, dried mashed potatoes and always too many boxes of "Kraft Dinner" (macaroni and cheese). Candy and potato chips frequently were brought out of well hidden sacks to please the children. Vivian also used Pampers for Posh Posh but with a very practical rationalization; they were much easier in ^{the} bush camp than daily heating water to wash regular ones. This entire trip was done based on a contemporary Canadian economy. The hunters were paid an equivalent to the approximate cash value if ~~they had~~ ^{of} ~~gone~~ on a spring hunt for furs. The women were paid also for their general labors and essential role in making the boat. The Indians would not have established this remote bush camp or built a mooseskin boat on romantic ^{or} traditional impulse; they were paid to revive an aspect of their own cultural past. But, they wanted to do it, and it was truly an Indian bush camp for two months for which meat was the focus of life until the end.

On May 3, Sunday, the group decided to go on a picnic. To most of us this would seem unnecessary since we were already living outdoors at a beautiful location and did not have to get away from house and kitchen. But, we did go on a picnic. The snow was melting quickly and our two snow-mobiles with towed tobaggans had frequent difficulties through rugged terrain and opening stream^s. This in no way dropped the zeal to reach a specific destination discussed by them before departure. I would have

easily settled for a location with fewer traveling challenges and real hazards but I obviously was not directing traffic.

The first thing done at the picnic spot (and any camping or resting location) was everyone chopped down and/or collected wood for a fire. In order to heat two kettles of water for tea, a fire of at least 12 feet long and 3 feet high is considered normal; wood is a very abundant commodity. Spruce boughs were cut and layed as a carpet, and everyone began eating. We had moose drymeat, smoked back fat which is a condiment of drymeat, 2 moose noses, 2 heads and a couple of sides of ribs. Besides meat there was bannock (a baking powder biscuit bread) with butter and jam. There was napping, card playing and always someone eating ~~more~~ or having tea. During this relaxing family outing, ^{on} a nearby tributary of the Keele River broke open and we were surrounded by water. This really didn't bother anyone greatly and we did not attempt to leave until 11:00 p.m. by which time there was some refreezing. We went through a couple of open streams with only the men getting soaked while we were dashed through in the water tight moosehide tobaggans. Although no one complained, or conveyed any fear outwardly, it was clear all were very relieved to be back in camp and warm again around the stoves.

During the following month in this camp most of the time continued to focus on meat and hides. On May 5th the first caribou herds were sighted and the whole camp went into a frenzied state. That evening everyone was delighting in the success of the kill and the taste of something other than moose. In a few days there were 35 carcasses in camp, and after the initial skinning and butchering by the men it all became women's work. Although there were four adult women in camp, Vivian was often busy with child care and I was not expected to be a full^{time} meat and hide processor. The two older women, both in their sixties, worked 12 to 16 hours most days for three

weeks. Much of the meat is sliced thinly and dried in the sun over a network of horizontal poles. Bones are cracked and boiled for grease. The hides have to have the hair removed and then laboriously scraped to clean and soften them. My main job was taking the skin off the legs (over 100 of which I saved half to bring home for tanning) so that everyone could enjoy fresh marrow. The hoofs and tendons were dried for a future time to boil for grease. The least tender meat was given to the dogs. Nothing of the animals was wasted.

Nine of the caribou were flown by charter plane back to relatives in Fort Norman. Even though the Indians paid for the plane themselves this was a cheaper and much preferred source of meat ^{at Fort Norman} than available at the Hudson's Bay Company store. Once this meat is received by relatives it is then redistributed throughout the community and everyone shares in the hunt.

It was hard to believe we ran out of fresh meat by June 1st and another moose and her two babies were killed (the young and unborn are prized foods). By this time the film crew of three added to the meaty meal requirements. On our trip down the river in the boat 8 mountain sheep, 1 caribou and 2 moose were killed with much of it kept fresh to give away when we arrived in Fort Norman.

At the end of May and after the moosehides had soaked for a week, building the boat became the major concern. Before this time the spring melt of the mountain snow was rapid and the river was too dangerous for travel. Also, the river was at a flooding state that endangered our camp's survival on the island location. There was about two feet of land between the river and the tent before the water finally started to subside.

Because of the Keele River's temper and Gabe's temperament, the boat was not completed until June 3rd. Gabe and others have proudly told how they used to make these boats in a couple of days, not a week as was true for this construction. Gabe was known by everyone as tempermental, good at sulking, proud, and prepared to be a full fledged prima donna for this trip. For a change in his later years, and maybe for the last time, Gabe was in charge of an important project, and understandably he didn't want it all to end. We had another prima donna in the young film director. He is the oldest son of my closest friend in Fort Norman. These two men added to the tensions of a small isolated group but teasing and silence were effective old ways to contain overt expressions of frustration.

For days before work on the boat began the women made sinew thread from the back tendons of the moose. Describing how sinew is made is most difficult but it is a tedious process with alot of saliv^ue involved to soften the strands. We all drank alot of tea during these many hours to obliterate the flavor of rancid fat. The rolled fibers are about 30" long and will make about 3 1/2" of sewn seam. We made a tremendous quantity in order to stitch 8 mooseskins together (most in a double overlapping stitch). The hides are then stretched over a spruce frame of over 40' long and 7' wide. The sewing is hard work and takes many, many hours but the worst of it is the pain of sewing through two or three layers of raw moose hide with sinew. The fingers are continously cut by either the metal leather needle or the sinew, and all our fingers were badly cut and heavily bandaged. After a couple of days of sewing none of us could endure putting our hands in soap; the cuts were so tender.

While the women make the thread and sew, the men select trees for the various parts of the boat's frame. The selection is carefully done

because each part of the frame requires different curvatures as well as straightness of grain. The complexities of the boat's constructions is technical and lengthy and is a major part of my report to the Museum.

Although one man and woman have to know the basic process of construction, most of the actual work can be done by any Indian trained in traditional skills. One of the older women had never even seen a mooseskin boat previously, but within less than 10 minutes became the second most accomplished and hard working sewer. The men knew their forest well, and every necessary aspect of each tree's qualities. Their skill with the axe is learned young and they preferred shaping each piece by axe although they had a power saw. They work by trained eye and confidence in their use of the axe to within incredible accuracy, far greater than by using a power saw, they say. The standard of measurement was coined by the cinematographer as the "Imperial Gabe." Gabe accepted the principle that his arm span equalled his height of 6'. By this one measurement all the wood frame sections were cut and fitted together exactly.

The boats basic design was a Norse fishing vessel of the 10th Century along with a long steering oar of Mediterranean origin adapted by the Norsemen. How could such a boat design be an Indian boat near the Arctic Circle in western Canada? The Norse conquered and merged with the Orkney Islanders of the northern British Isles. In the 18th and 19th centuries Orkney men were the predominant employees of the Hudson's Bay Company which had a monopoly of the Indian fur trade in Canada by 1821. On Company request, or demand, Orkney men were told to build boats to transport the inland trade. With some revisions in order to adapt to new environmental conditions, they built what was familiar to them. These boats, called York boats, were used as the basic transport of the fur trade into the 20th century. The York boats were of all wood construction. The Indians

adapted the general design but added their innovative input by using a hide covering. To unravel the origin, development and distribution of these Indian boats is my problem, and one that still provides as many questions as answers.

Our first day traveling in the boat was most memorable and totally miserable as far as I was concerned. There was a raw mist to a full downpour from the time of departure throughout the first night and into the next day. We had to pass through what Gabe considered the worst curve of rapids of the trip and the concern showed on his face before departure. They unloaded for safety and weight the women, children and 12 dogs at the base of a gravel cliff that seemed to be 500' with no slant; it probably was less than 150' high. No one warning me of this "adventure," I carried my "purse" of all writing materials and two cameras in case the boat had trouble. The group also thrust upon me two loaded rifles to carry up the cliff, one without a shoulder strap case. All that can be said is: somehow I made it up the cliff with neither arm free to grasp anything. On reaching the top we all had to have a tea rest. It was raining hard so my rain poncho was taken to cover Posh Posh. Already soaked, we walked across land to meet the men and the boat beyond the dangerous bend--then more tea in the rain. We were all at the night's campsite by 11:00 p.m., around another one of the typical gargantuan fires having more tea and boiled meat. Gabe, without asking of course, took the rain poncho from Posh Posh and draped it over his tent where there was a leak. I slept in wet clothes with rain draining on my sleeping bag in another tent where ten of us crowded in for the night--ah! the romance of adventure.

The boat was 46' long, 7' 2" wide and about 6'6" in height. It was big and majestic; but with 12 people, 12 dogs and several tons of gear

and drymeat it provided no tourist class comforts. Gabe sat in the stern with the 31' steering oar, 4 men were at their long rowing oars; and the women, children and dogs crowded in by assigned seating of Gabe's, resting as best as possible on the bottom's frame or on a pile of gear. The boat was extremely sturdy and the frame with its hide cover moved easily over shallow areas when it touched rocks. It took a week to make the trip down the Keele River but there was no sense of hurry. Many hours were spent eating, resting, setting up camp each night, as well as hunting and butchering more game. It took at least two hours each late morning to dismantle the campsite as well as have a breakfast with many cups of coffee. True for the spring bush camp as well as these overnight camps; they were always left as clean as possible with almost no evidence of our presence.

On the Sunday going down river we didn't travel at all. Various reasons were given--it was Sunday, the boat needed a small leak repaired, men wanted to hunt mountain sheep, and the weather was bad--all true. On this day there is a Posh Posh story that illuminates my previous negative comments as a non-native. Posh Posh was still being breast fed at the age of 2, which is unusual but undoubtedly added to his self indulgences. He ate anything he wanted anytime but most preferred walking in others' plates for attention to get personal feeding. He would scream if he couldn't have some of what you were in the process of eating. Like all loved babies in the North, he is given full and favored attention by everyone with the obvious result of a totally spoiled child able to have his own way at all times; he was never ignored and almost never disciplined. Like all other children, he is trained early in attitudes toward animals. When near one of the dogs, none of which were mean in temperament, he would display a big smile and say in English "Doggy, Doggy!" The unnerving aspect was, in

addition, he would always try to get a stick to hit the dog. (by the age of 6 to 8 all children are proficient at hitting dogs, a talent never forgotten or modified as adults.) On this Sunday a rabbit was shot with a 30/30 rifle and was brought to camp rather "pre-gutted." It was Posh Posh's greatest toy as he played and dragged it about with a happy expressions of "rabbit, rabbit, pretty rabbit." A hunting society has its own approach to socializing their children who will become its future hunters.

The scenery of this week's voyage was magnificent and always dramatic with mountains on all sides until the last two days when we left the foothills and entered the huge Mackenzie River. On the last two nights of camping there was a heavy film of mosquitoes and we slept on the pebble beaches instead of in the woods. But, we were not under the stars. By early June it is light all night in this part of the world. We were greeted by several motor boats of friends and relatives for the last night of the trip and the atmosphere was very jovial. On approaching Fort Norman the entire community (340) was waiting on the shore to greet us. The older people had tears for recalling times now past but everyone found it an emotional moment of joy. The expedition was completed, and for those involved there was a sense of relief and exhaustion that went along with the coming days of joyful celebration.

Beryl C. Gillespie
1981

Moosekin Boat Project

Keele River, May and June 1981

Daily Journal by Beryl C Gillespie

are omitted from the journal except the obvious mention of the 9 moosekin hides used for making the boat. A general mention of beaver hunts is included since most of these will be sold, but again, no exact number for any individual.

In the past hunters were proud of the number of game killed to provide for their family and their camp. That pride, of course, is still very strong as it should be because it shows skill, energy, hard work and desire to have as many people as possible eat well. Unfortunately the current game laws and questions from game wardens discourage any record of countings since they cannot reflect the distribution of food through time and of the number of people who benefit. Game is killed for food, never for sport, and food is not wasted.

[It was brought to my attention that the hunters in camp were concerned about my counting the number of game and who was getting how many. They are worried I would give these figures to Game Management who then might disapprove. I feel their concern is unwarranted but also very real. It definitely indicates confusion and misunderstanding between the natives and governmental agencies. If in the future the apprehension of hunters is reduced I will be able to include the number of game killed and used which will support their ethic of hunting.]

Keele River Mooseskin Boat Project

March 21st - 1st group sets up camp at June Lake -

Raymond Yakaleya, Bill Stewart, George Pellisey, Jonas MacCauley, Leon Meyelle, Labe Etchinelle, and dogs.

March Margaret Dick from Yukon stopped on her way to Fort Norman.

March 28 - Vivian and children, Madeline

April 2nd

May 1 My arrival.

May 18 Bill Stewart's arrival.

May 20 Raymond Yakaleya + Nora Jim arrive

June 2 David Etchinelle + Jim Barvard.

April 28, 1981 Fort Norman

(B. Gillespie)

Arrive before noon to warm welcome by Laura Lennie, mother of Raymond Yakaleya and a dear friend I have not seen for years. My last work at Fort Norman on historical-cultural matters was 1972.

After noon meal Laura and I surprise her mother who knew nothing of my arrival. I return later for a longer visit with Harriette Gladue (84 years old by her certificate, 86 by Father Ducote 1914 statistics) - Oblate records).

Beadwork

Our main conversation is about our beadwork and my use of "old timer" beads which includes colors, size, some cut beads (not round) and none opaque except white. Thorning she will remember also as the old time way. I used the term as a guess since there are several for the pattern but it is her term, too. For the connecting between ~~floral~~ floral designs are two rows of beads "thorned".



Sewing Mooseskin Boats (she is a Mountain Indian)

Harriette shows without needle on a piece of flannel how they sew the moose skins together with leather "sawing" needle and sinew.

April 29, 1981 Fort Norman - Harriette Gladue (B. Gillespie)

She demonstrates the double-stitching for the bottom of the boat and that only the first fold for a single stitching is needed for the sides. [Needs a demonstration sample]

Laura said she heard from Tatsi (died in 1972, almost 100 years old) that a long time ago when the Mountain Indians would be approaching Fort Norman they would shoot off their guns if it had been a good year; if it was not, like someone died, they would drift in quietly with their oars low.

The weather continues to be very warm and no boots are necessary so much is dry already. I meet Harriette Gladue on her way to the Bay and we do her shopping and return for the afternoon at her home. She is in one of the newer homes with her husband Noel, a three bedroom house, plumbing and fully furnished and clean. background (Harriette adopted Laura Lennie when her mother died when she was about one year old. Harriette was first married to Albright Wright, made Chief in 1921 when they signed Treaty. He was Tatsi Wright's son, the new school is named after him - "Chief Albright Wright school". Most of Harriette's time in the mountains was with her first husband, his mother Tatsi and their family. Her father was Horresi, a Mt Indian and her mother was from Wrigley. Horresi was a Fort Hunter (H.B.C.) and spent most of his time closer to Fort Norman than in the mountains).

When Harriette was very young, probably ab 2 or 3 she was very sick and was taken to the Anglican mission in Bay River. She only remembers being carried by an old woman on her back in

April 29, 1981 Ft. Norman - Harriette Gladue (B. Gillespie)

She remembers crying there just before she was to begin school, probably at 6 years. She says she didn't learn much in school, just sat there.

Albert Wright also was in school there at the time and she says he told her then she would be his wife and she didn't want to be, and he teased her about that after they were married. They both were among the first people here who spoke & read English.

First site of
Moosekin
Boat

Harriette thinks she came back when she was about 8 or 9. She stayed with the H.B.C managers sister and was told to keep looking from the ridge for boats coming - moosekin boats - and that would mean her parents were coming. First time she saw these boats, remembers in was Timothy Gaudet (H.B.C), Jane Gaudet's father (Jane is still living in Fort Norman) that first saw the boats and yelled several times "Skin boats!" "Skin boats!" Harriette thinks there were five, maybe more, the first time she saw them. Most of the time after there were four to six boats with 2 or 3 families per boat.

~~17~~

Harriette also remembers that first summer home they went across the River to camp and she didn't know what to do (she also could not understand her native language). Her mother cooked supper and then said it was time for her and younger brother to go to bed, she was unhappy and quiet and her mother kept asking ~~what~~ what she wanted. She wanted her father to make a bed. She was often teased that summer or later to be a mola, white girl.

I ask about whether they would shoot their guns off on arriving at Ft. Norman in their boats. She can only remember this happening once.

A year or so after she was back from Hay River some of the Mountain People went to the Yukon for 2 or 3 years and people here worried they were lost. When they came back in the moosekin boats they fired their guns and again Timothy Gaudet yelled out "Skin boats!" Two uncles of Harriette's were in the group. As they got close the man in front of the first boat stood up and all the people in the boats followed him in singing Yukon songs and also sang a good "been on the other side [Yukon]"

good time, we're back, good luck, good to be back" The man standing and starting the songs was Jim Pellissey, he was a preacher on the Sundays when they were in the bush. His son still lives in Wragley. She thinks there were about 5 boats that time.

First time Harriette ~~made~~ helped make Mooseskin Boat

Fred Andrew's mother, father, grandfather, me (married about 5 years) and my husband and Fred with his wife were together in the mountains. The first three and family went ahead down the Kede walking to stop at a creek where Fred's mother had a baby. They were to wait for us there. That time my husband and Fred made the boat and us two women sewed the mooseskins - 6 of them. I had only watched before show me how to get started and then it was simple. We had two moose in the boat so it was really full when we went down to meet the others. After we stay at the creek we make another, about 8 adults and some kids in each [obviously others not mentioned in the party]. Don't carry furs just drymeat, pemmican, grease, fat. We make bales [about 2' long, 18" high by arm demonstration].

April 29, 1981 Fort Norman - Harriette Gladue (B. Gillespie)

which were covered with caribou or sheepskin to keep the bales clean and dry. When we get to Fort Norman men carry up the hill the bales of meat by trumplines to the Bay warehouse. (The meat in the warehouse reminds Harriette of when she was young and saw the pemmican balls in the warehouse in winter - they looked like a pile of stones, not meat.)

Needles and sewing skins

She had square needles with her when she sewed her 1st skin boat. Women had them by then (1920's) but before then her mother (all women) an awl and bigger needle (2 1/2" about) with single point. Mother was the first woman around here to get the square needle and it was much faster. Harriette thinks the square needle was introduced about the time she came back from school because she remembers women talking about them in the 1st or 2nd year. Mother told her they used to sew with awl and babiche but there was greater chance of leaking. With awl and larger needle - sinew harder to work than with square needle - takes longer and the sinew gets wit and harder to pull through.

April 29, 1981 Fort Norman - Harriette Gladue (B. Gillespie)

Summer activities - Mountain people stay a week or two and then go back into the mountains and return in fall with drymeat of winter goods.

I ask if they took any flour or sugar with them. Very little or none when in the mts, maybe a little sugar; even around here in the bush the sugar and flour only last a short time.

Her father, as Fort Hunter could come into the Fort more often and when across in the bush or mountains would give others tobacco, loose tea and matches. Her father stayed in the bush around the Fort during summer and she never went to the mountains in summer, go in September and usually her father came in at Christmas, too, for supplies.

Tents ?? Remember her first year they were in a skin ~~tipi~~^{tipi}, didn't like it with all the smoke that made her cry. But that first Christmas back her father got the first tent and stove at Fort Norman and took it across the river to their bush camp, others still in skin tipis at camp.

Down the mountains, at some time, they had

small tents for summer and skin tipis for winter.

Talking of beading, Harriette says at first the Keele R. is fast but later they just float down quietly and all the women would sew or bead.

June Lake used to be called Two Lakes, in Slavey "Ju da fela".

April 28, 1981 Ft. Norman - ~~Harriette Gladue~~ (B. Gillespie) NWT Archives/Beryl Gillespie/N-2003-017:1-1

I was invited to have dinner with Father Labat and two young people staying at the church.

I was hoping the Fort Norman Codex Historicus were here, especially for the 1880's to indicate the first moose skin boat here (1886 in Good Hope) as well as other references to the "Gens du Montagnard". He found them after some searching but they are basically illegible xerox copies - neither of us could read more than occasional phrases. If this source is good it will have to be found in the originals at Fort Smith.

We do have a general conversation around the history of the moose skin boat. He doubts improved guns increased # of moose taken in one area at one time but has no ideas as to why the boat was developed when it did.

He did bring up his knowledge of starvation in the mountains - whole families and a few cases of eating others when starving. We agree the mts. were worse than here and east with no alternative foods to large game - if the caribou didn't pass where expected, couldn't get to a cache, or have one at all - you were stuck.

April 29, 1981 Fort Norman - Harriette Gladue (B. Gillespie)

Second day we meet as she is going to the Bay. Very warm again and good to be outdoors. After a morning check of old notes I realize it is almost to the day when we first met 10 years ago.

moose skin boat sewn with babiche

Wide babiche, about 1" wide and is used to tie bow and stern and moose skin to sides. The bottom plank is about 8" wide and ribs are about 4"; they are pushed in between bottom plank and sidewalls.

I ask about spruce root baskets but has only heard about them but does talk of willow root as it was used around here. Women cut it away from tree and pull it up toward the tree. They wrap in rolls and when sewing with, put it in a pan of water covered w/ moss. Pull out one strand, pull off outer bark to discard, and so forth; seems any time without snow cover is okay.

May 1, 1980 Fort Norman to Keele River camp.

BCG

Again another day of being ready and waiting, 11:00 a.m. was the declared time but the plane arrived at 4:00 p.m. Off by 4:30 and landed on June Lake 6:00 with two skidoos with sleds getting there at the same time. A Porter plane George says its one engine is like a twin otter.

A perfectly clear day and the trip magnificent. All of the east sides of the mountains are still snow covered and there is nothing but curves and swirls of deep blue to white.

The camp is on a high ledge above the river - members are Gabe Etchinelle, George and Vivian (Mac Cauley) Pellissey, Jonas Mac Cauley⁽³¹⁾, Leon Neyelle, Madeline Karkagie⁽¹⁶⁻¹⁷⁾, Cecilia Jesso and Pauline Jesso⁽²⁹⁾. George and Vivian's 3 small children are ~~Shiela~~ Shiela⁽⁸⁾, Clarence and baby Lawrence & Sally⁽⁴⁾ - Vivian's sister.

There are 4 tents and I have one to myself, certainly not expected + a 12' x 14' is certainly more than needed. George and Vivian have the main tent since they have besides their family, her brother and Leon and a cooking stove.

It took about an hour from the plane to camp with full loads of supplies to

May 1, 1981

BCG

unload. George fixed the stove for my tent and then brought a sled load of wood by skidoo. They have set up the tent a bit removed from the other tents and is facing the river and mountains, a grand view and the tent's floor is covered with fresh spruce boughs. Naturally the children have to see what all this is about and everything I unpack but do get them to help start a fire. Vivian comes to check things, first telling me they stay up late and get up late. She tells me they only were told by Raymond and Bill a white woman was coming, nothing more and she, at least, could not imagine who they were sending! To have told her it was Beryl might have saved them all some anxiety.

Pauline also stops to visit and we hear a rifle shot. At 10:00 p.m. George has shot a moose about 1/2 mile from the camp and the whole camp walks out to see and watch. He does almost all of the cutting - a female he thinks about 650 lbs - with some help from Gabe. We return to the camp about 11:15 on foot while Jonas brings the hide and meat by skidoo. After midnight there is dinner and

boiled moose and fresh, cooked ribs and tea. The children are too tired after a full day to eat and are asleep. After doing the dishes I return to my tent and are in bed by 1:45.

The two tobaggons in camp have moosehide sides, not canvas.

The women have their own brush-sided tipi in front of the camp. Spruce boughs up about 2' and Cecilia is working a moosehide and Madeline is breaking moose bones with the blunt end of a hatchet. She plans to make grease from it tomorrow. Vivian says ~~it has been a very long time since she has seen this done~~ ^{she has never seen anyone do this}. There are drying racks all about but most of them near the women's work area - 8 hides drying for the boat and drymeat above their fire within the pole structure.

May 2, 1981. Keele River Camp

BCB.

Quiet morning with warm sun and do not visit the main camp until 11:30 a.m. after some notations and unpacking. The men are out getting wood including a tobaggon's load for my stove. Cecilia is back on the moosehide and Madeline finishes cracking moose bones and begins making drymeat.

They take a "tea break" and come to Vivian's tent wanting to see my beadwork with old fashioned beads - the deep blue everyone's favorite - and photos of Eugene that are studied carefully, especially those with his beaded parka, beaded shirt and his dance outfit. 2:00 p.m. meal of boiled moose and mashed potatoes.

An hour and more in the women's tipi beading. Cecilia still cleaning fiber from moosehide, Madeline on drymeat, Pauline beading a vest and Vivian with her baby. Older women often eating drymeat.

Vivian wanted to make a stew today - but no potatoes, fresh carrots but I cut up alot of onions and we eat moose cubes - add soup mixes and spices and the end result appreciated later by the men (10:30 p.m.) The men were out in the afternoon beaver hunting - no luck and return about 9:30.

In the camp so far we have four beaver skins

2 by Gabe's tent - stretched the traditional way on round frame of spruce branches. George has his two nailed on sets of spruce planks. According to Vivian her brother, Jonas, is the plank maker, making more than she can use around the stove so I now have one for a desk top, - resting on two logs in front of my tent.

While the men are still gone Vivian decides to make bannock and delights at the idea of music. I first try the Winnabago pow-wow songs, "sound like Cree" but bring all the women to the tent. We soon turn the cassette over to Ft. Rae drum and tea dances to everyone's delight and Madeline does a little dancing. When the men return and hear of our music hour, George states they probably should have stayed home. But, we begin it again and especially Gabe enters in singing and much encouraging of baby Lawrence to dance and much fun by all watching him trying. Music is continued after dinner, including Chippewa songs.

Vivian and I do dishes - as we did last night and earlier today. No one has been

May 2, 1981. Keele River Camp.

BC 9

helping her with the cooking chores except George sometimes, never any of the women or Pauline. Vivian says of Pauline she was brought up by Cecile and never allowed to do anything and therefore, still does not know how to cook etc or understand when to "pitch in."

After supper and after I ask if anyone is interested in reading my paper "The Mountain Indians" George responds "of course" but before him, Jonas reads it during many disturbances by the children. I surprise Gabe with a 1972 tape he made of stories but only he listens intently so we turn it off after awhile.

Even after 24 hours here there is a difference in the mountain snow cover and amount of open water. Once the May sun begins and longer days, the landscape changes quickly.

I leave for my tent at 12:30 on the first sour note. George insists tonight I go to sleep with a 30/30 rifle by my side - loaded - even though I have never fired one. Jonas saw fresh bear tracks today, less than a mile from camp, and they could be those of a Grizzly Bear who can be trouble in summer - but there should also be a muskrat.

May 3, 1981 Keel River Camp. BCS.

I ~~awoke~~ ^{awoke} at 3:15 last night with the dogs barking - getting out of my bag in apprehension - naturally nothing or a wolf as the night before but a cause for sleeping later after I was able to relax again when it was lighter outdoors, 4:30 a.m.

As soon as I make my morning visit Vivian asks if I want to go on a picnic with them and we leave at little after noon, everyone w/ the 2 skidoos with sleds.

Before leaving I ask George about Harriette's statement of 1st using babiche to sew together hides of boat - Agree and also agree they leaked alot more that way too. He says the bow and stern frame is tied together just by parts of the mooseskins, not by separate babiche. In answer to my question - the moose pieces drying near the women's camp tent are the sinew sections that will be later cut. They are only planning an 8 skin boat; it should be large enough for the group and gear and plenty big at that size for the Museum.

Also before leaving I bring out my map of the Keel headwaters and I know for the first time where we are. Of course there

May 3, 1981 Keel River Camp. BCS.

tease they don't need a map and most definitely they don't but after not thinking of bringing one, everyone but especially Gabe, George and sometimes Jonas spend alot of time reviewing it; especially previous trips.

We are ~~at the~~ s.w. of Sekwi Mountain at the confluence of an ~~un~~ unnamed tributary of the Keel and the Keel itself, on an island. We picnic on the Keel and Sekwi, about 4 miles down stream, as the crow flies and over an hour by skidoo, at least at this time of year with soft snow, dangerous ice and open water.

The trip to the picnic grounds takes about an hour, sometimes women and children getting out and walking because of the wet snow, mud etc. When we get to the sight the river is too open so some of us cross over by foot and the skidoos take a wide, circuitous route.

One the way Gabe points out a dangerous curve with ² jagged boulders, only one visible to me, that will be under water later. At this point the women and children get out and walk. On asking Gabe, there has never been an accident here but it is a place treated with caution. Another place of

May 3, 1981

Sekwi canyon. On asking Gabe during afternoon, he only remembers one bad accident, in a rapids further down where the women and children walked but all the men were lost in the boat.

Picnic first means making a large fire and everyone including children collect branches to chopping down large trees. It is a very complete Rene picnic - drymeat, smoked backfat, stomach ^{outer} lining (also used as a grease condiment for drymeat, 2 moses, ribs, tongue, jowl (2 heads with us) tea, bannock, sugar, butter and jam - can of weiners and beans not used. All eat on the spruce bough ground cover and materially some enjoy a short afternoon nap in the warm sun.

Throughout the afternoon and evening Gabe frequently sings - in the manner I associate with the tea dance. Sometimes he sings to Lawrence, other times for himself.

A card game of rummy begins about 5:00 and children playing, often down near the river. Between 6:30 and 9:00 the stream we crossed over to get to the point breaks open (while I am making a few notes) making us stranded - to some extent, George decides we will wait until things begin to

freeze up again. The card game continues and everyone remains jovial and placid - this is not a serious problem. About 8:30 the fire is built up again, and as if it was planned we would be here longer, there is still a lot more mose - a full side of ribs are cooked, tongue, jowl and always more drymeat and bannock. At 9:30 George decides it is time to get ready to leave, figuring it will take 1 1/2 hours and jokes a lot with me on how we will jump rivers etc. Leave camp at 10:00 and snow is still very soft, Vivian steers the tobaggan since Gabe has gone ahead to check the "road" and ice. At the stream that opened today - Jonas gets through but Madeline and tobaggan get very wet and George with wet feet helping them out of the water and crossing back to our rig. Our tobaggan is tied by rope thrown over the stream to Jonas & his skidoo and George ~~walks~~ then guides the tobaggan from the other side. A safe - dry cross but George then has to wade across again a bring over his skidoo. The two skidoo parties keep close to one another and there are several times requiring mutual help - pushing and home by 11:00 and all quickly to our

tents. All good humor before and during the trip but also a relief to be back. I don't think anyone was very worried but an unexpected "adventure" is just that.

Moosehide siding for tobaggons - both at camp have it (George and Jonas). George says they are much stronger than canvas and relates a recent death of a boy from Good Hope who was stabbed by a branch in canvas tobaggon. George says they last 2 or more years, this one is 2 years old and looks perfect to me and it certainly takes heavy abuse here.

George says you can make a small boat with 3 skins. We talk of the weight a large one can carry and it is alot - we guess 5,000 lbs at least. He says they don't get lower in the water with more weight and after everything is loaded they kill moose on the way, they can just add those to rest of the gear.

May 3, 1981. Keela River Camp

BCS

George points out on the map where he was with a group that made a mooseskin boat - his first. He was "a kid" but carried his own .22 so it would be in the early 1950's. Location was about 4 miles east of June Lake where a tributary meets the Keela.

Gabe - on my mentioning my camera is from the early 1920's (everyone in camp is intrigued by the old camera) he recalls a trip in 1922 where a large group gathered to make mooseskin boats at the confluence of the Intga River and the Keela. He thinks there were 7 or 8 boats that time, "lots of old timers still at that time [before 1928 flu]. He was a young man then. 12 skin boat "big one".

1936 - made mooseskin boats about 3 miles downstream from Sekwi Canyon (at a entering stream after trapping on the Natta down to the South Nahanni and back northward, getting to the Keela by way of Sekwi Brook. They were ~~trapping~~ trapping martin. I ask if people made skin boats on the Nahanni and traded to Simpson - he heard they did but doesn't think they were anymore when he was an adult.

1938 or 1939 came to Norman in spring and in mid-July starting walking to the Yukon.

They took their time, about a month, stopping 2-3 days when they killed a moose. Trapped in the Yukon that year and came back the next spring, built moosaskin boat on Twitya River that time.

? How many boats per season, Gabe thinks 7 to 9, spring and fall.

May 4, 1981 Keele River Camp. BE 9.

Late start for the whole camp today, no one awake until after 10:00 after yesterday's excursion. Men go out for several loads of wood, now wanting a good supply on this island in preparation of the stream breaking open.

Madeline cleans of the hair of the moose killed on May 1st and she and Cecilia are working moosehide, Vivian is boiling the moose bones for grease, with two batches skimmed off but more to come.

Noon meal at 3:00 and then men leave to look for beaver and do not return until 11:30 for supper - moose meat, moose tripe and Kraft macaroni and cheese.

Much of the afternoon visiting with Vivian on many matters, how I got to know Raymond, Laura's life after John's death etc. and what I should do here. She now has the old notes of mine, read a lot later that evening, but although everyone likes the old stories, doesn't know if Gabe or Madeline - the only ones with stories of the mountains will feel like telling stories. Bush camp is very different than when people are sitting in their homes

Family and Group background.

Take never had any children but did take care of nephews and nieces. She thinks he has 3 nephews - Maurice Mendo, George and _____?

George was born in Wrigley but came to Norman when he was young, after his father, Wilson Pellisey, remarried. Pellisey is "Belesi" in Father Ducot's genealogies of 1914 and is a Mountain Indian family of Fort. Norman.

Madeline and Vivian take down mooseskins from drying racks in the afternoon. It takes about 5 days for the drying.

May 5, 1981. Keele River Camp

BCG:

By 10:30 the camp is moving about, Vivian back to cooking more moose bones for Madeline and George is reading my old notes. (The last three days there have been song birds in the morning, but today they seem very frequent and obviously increasing in numbers. The weather remains warm and sunny and is light until after 11:00 - then only slightly dark.

George has run out of things to do so all the men sit around a map. Beaver hunting ~~is~~ discouraging, lots of open water making travel difficult, he and Leon bury under snow the rest of May 1st moose - now only things are look for caribou and make the boat.

There are plenty of moose around and the men see them or their many tracks daily but George sees no point to killing any until the camp needs the meat; his practice before my arrival, too.

Although it is a day of men resting the women continue on their usual paced way. In the afternoon Madeline and Vivian, sometimes Pauline, make drymeat, Cecilia cleaning membrane off moosehide and I bead. No specific meals during the day but snacking - drymeat, peanut butter and soup

(only the children find it has too much pepper)

In mid-afternoon, as Gabe is poking around in a little stream in the mud I ask him if he would answer some questions on the map. I nail the map on George's plank board for beaver. When I ask if he knows why I am doing this he still doesn't know & laughs some. I explain about the need of background for the film, seems to understand but pointing out a few things on the map is all he does and then says "that's all I know." Often maps bring forth special years, events and interest in old time stories but Gabe isn't interested and any information is an effort. Since Gabe easily gave me stories 9 years ago (although too busy for long sessions) and he is the one who wanted this filming of the mooseskin boat I can only wonder why now, with plenty of idle time, he thinks there is so little to say.

When I ask George how many of the 10 moose killed this spring did he shoot - will not answer. He now fears that information with Game Wardens and Number per individual is now no longer mentioned much.

May 5, 1987 Keele River Camp

Gabe and comments from the map

Ask if Good Hope and Norman people meet in the Mountains - Sometimes, years ago. In winter time mountain people from Good Hope sometimes in headwaters of the Mountain and Twitya Rivers, Norman people often on Keele and Twitya headwaters. He remembers one year, 1927 when Michelle Barnaby and others on Twitya R. and they join Norman people and built boats and go down the Twitya and Keele R. together.

terms for. When I ask if he remembers the difference of eba people and edao tinna he smiles and says edao is Good Hope dialect for sheep, dō i in his (edao I got from numerous Norman peoples, never from Good Hope) but says he calls their people from Norman shī ot'mna which means mountain and is generic for all groups in the mountains

Redstone R seldom used with mooseskin boat because the rapids past Drum Lake make it impossible to go beyond and to the Mackenzie.

S. Nahanni Repeats from the other day that only heard from his Dad about people making mooseskin boats and going to Simpson (so by 1920 at least this was no longer done)

Natla R. If people make a moose skin boat they have to
1. pack and walk about 10 miles above reaching the Keele.

He remembers 2 or 3 times making small
boats, 3 skins ~~at~~ the head of a tributary west of
the Twitya and go down to the Keele with just
steering oar, too narrow to use oars - would have
to pack at the Keele about 10 miles and then make
larger boats - 5 to 8 skins. This route was a
fall one (I think). On route is a hot springs.

A familiar fall route was also starting on the
headwaters of the Twitya to the Keele and down.

Marked is where 6 men drowned in the rapids
of the Twitya headwaters (about 10 miles east
from west end of map section "Mount Edeni")

Marked on map is "Fish Lake" ~~not~~ named
on map, at headwaters of Keele. On asking,
never heard of fishing there in winter - summer
and fall is what Gabe knows.

May 5, 1981 Keele River Camp

BCL

A very quiet day until 7:05 - George sites caribou
and the whole camp is in high scurry and motions
to keep dogs and people quiet. The men rush for
their boots, jackets and guns at the speed of a
firemen's alarm. Poor Leon didn't get so far as a
jacket and left in a T-shirt. George tries 1st skidoo
and decides it is out of gas - by the time he is
starting the second one Jonas and Leon are leaving
with the first - obviously not out of gas. The women
also rush out of camp to watch. Soon there are
rifle shots and in about 10 minutes the women
return - not knowing any results.

At 7:50 the men are back with ~~3~~ caribou, ~~1~~
~~with~~. One was close and had fallen
through the ice - other ~~two~~ further away from camp.
While the men are gone Vivian and I hurry to
make coffee, wash dishes, especially cups for
men's return and straighten up the tent. When
the men arrive with the caribou they first, and
quickly come to the tent for coffee - The joy and
thrill of the hunt on their faces and in their
talking - There are two herds, one beginning to
pass earlier today and another following
close behind - George estimates 10-25 per herd.

May 6, 1981 Keele River Camp

BCG

After coffee and joyful talk for 10-15 minutes the men go out to skin and cut up the caribou (Gabe stands by). By 8:00 all is finished and caribou is cooking and at 9:30 there are boiled ribs and baked fetus. Everyone enjoys the change of meat and hearty appetites. Shortly after 10:00 George, Vivian and baby take a walk - in the direction of the caribou. Gabe takes Skidoo with the children, Jonas and Leon off on other skidoo.

Gabe is back first with a caribou - shot at two and Sally thinks the other was wounded. George & Vivian back by 12:00. They heard Gabe's shooting so did not go far - caution as always with George - George complains men shoot just everywhere and fast and crazy - wait and select out the big ones, preferably bucks and aim carefully.

I kept the tent stove going and made tea but decided not to wait up for the return of Jonas and Leon but hear their skidoo around 1:15 a.m.

George is now excited about tomorrow and days to come - if he shoots lots of caribou - Gabe Horassi will charter a plane to get it (radio communication)

Jonas and Leon got a caribou last night, 1 bull and 1 cow, not far from here, about a mile, and they are already cut up and stored under snow near the river - 6 caribou the 1st day.

Gabe, at my asking, said people used to eat ground hog and ground squirrel but not for a long time now - mainly with old timers (before his young adult life). He is not familiar with marmot so I'm not sure if ground hog and marmot are both present.

Quiet morning with men in camp sitting around. George sharpens knives for the women who are both working moosehide. Vivian continues to cook down more moose grease for Madeline. Vivian has a big job - small children and preparing of meals - 3 per day with only Madeline, Cecilia and Pauline taking care of themselves part of the time.

Meal at 2:15 of instant soup and roasted caribou ribs and men and children are off at 3:00 hunting. Two older women working moosehide. During the meal ^{Jonas} mentions seeing another set of bear tracks but apparently going in the direction of June Lake. George is not aware of any

black bears in this mountain region, only grizzly. (!)

About 7:00 George returns in a hurry; he has run out of shells. The caribou are close and everyone goes to see them - Vivian asks me to watch the roasting meat and make potatoes. She, the older women and children do not return until 10:00, George has coffee and leaves to skin 11 caribou with Labe. About 10:30 Jonas and Leon return - have a quick bite and leave to help George. They have 13 caribou a little further away. In all ~~13~~ caribou in less than 2 day and they all say there is at least 100 walking the river, most passing very close to camp. The men all return a bit before midnight - all expressing sore backs and general fatigue. George splits wood and feeds dogs before he eats and they are almost finished at 12:30 - 9 hour day of very hard work with almost no break but the thrill and excitement of the hunt are all very much still in the camp. This is much, much more rewarding and enjoyable than sitting around camp although this pace cannot be kept endlessly - by the men but also the ultimate

May 7, 1981 Keele River Camp

BCS

May 6 - change in the animals movement patterns.

May 7 - Rain this morning at 6:00 but by 7:00 it had stopped. In morning the men bring in the loads of caribou shot yesterday and Madeline and Cecilia are making drymeat by 10:30. I make a loin of caribou for meatloaf which is ready to bake by 12:30 but the men are ready to leave and George asks me to keep it for supper.

The men ~~and~~ with skidoos, Sheila, and caribou depart for June Lake at 1:00, the plane chartered by Vivian's family is to land there between 4:00 and 5:00 to pick up the meat and leave a few supplies - gas, nails, potatoes, onions and magazines + candy.

Women are making drymeat in morning and afternoon. I work on skinning leg skins. A little after 3:00 there is great scurry by women and children since someone sighted caribou close to the back of the camp. (We notice at this time the stream has fully opened and just recently happened.)

Madeline wounds one in the leg after 5 or 6 30/50 shots and only then does the herd gradually start walking away and into the woods - the wounded one, turns to follow. Madeline and Pauline

with 22 cross the river and the rest of us return to camp. They return in 1/2 hour to report they (Madeline) got 2 caribou (~~one~~, ~~one~~). I babysit with Selly, Clarence and Lawrence while Vivian helps the other 2 women cut up and store the meat until the men are back.

We hear by radio in early evening the plane came and left with no sign of the skidoos. We all snack and work late - hoping the men will return. We finally eat the meat loaf at mid-night with all the women and children. I leave for my tent after 1:00, all concerned about those gone.

May 8

The group returns at 9:30, sense of relief and all of us in camp had little sleep as did the men (apparently Sheila slept well). It took them almost seven hours to get to the lake and most of the time they were pushing through mud or water. Doubting things would freeze at night they left in the morning with almost no load and made it in 3 hours.

We cook them breakfast and although every one agrees to rest - no one does for long.

May 8, 1981. Keele River Camp.

BCS.

Vivian watching children, women start making drymeat, I clean leg skins. By noon George is off in skidoo with tobaggan to get spruce boughs for their tent's floor.

At 3:00 we have a meal of caribou ribs after which George decides to put together the Zodiac boat. After a few testing rides he, Jonas & Leon take 2 loads of meat across the river to store in a cairn (term used by George) since the north slope still has snow.

I continued to skin legs as the women make drymeat and all the racks are full. Men rest except George who chops wood, visits about, other men snack on leg marrow about 7:00 and rest.

Dinner ready at 10:30 but Vivian wants to wait - but she and Leon are still sound to sleep an hour later so I fix and serve supper etc (our first real potatoes) and before I finish dishes - George and Jonas are outside and using skidoo for some job activity.

George said there were lots of caribou at June Lake, too. The plane could have landed, stayed and killed the number easily ~~that~~ ^{then} ~~those~~ from this camp, ^{that} is just stored there now.

He says he and group here will not shoot any more caribou, at least for awhile, because the women have so much drymeat to make

May 9. See page following the May 10th entry:

May 10 - Sunday - Keele River Camp

BCS.

A quiet Sunday with a breakfast at 11:30 but ending somewhat like last Sunday - with hours of restrained anxiety but by midnight all of us to our respective tents, under clear sky w/ half moon and the sound of the river.

In mid afternoon, about 3:00, the water began to rise between the main camp and the river. Things remained steady until 7:00 when it started to rise again. There is a large block of ice on the north side of the island and if it breaks all at once - which the men think is likely, the whole island will flood. Meat and skidoos were brought to higher land and the women take as much of the boxed drymeat from the tipi to their tent. I am in charge of watching the supper and packing up my things - roll and clothes in trees and in important pack brought to George & Viviane tent. With George declaring "let's eat, nothing we can do now, anyway", we eat at 9:30 the stew and ribs with everyone in the tent. Cecilia puts in another hour making drymeat 10:30 - 11:30 and George and Jonas watch the ice until 12:30 when it is agreed we are safe for the night and the next time of concern will be 6:00 p.m. tomorrow,

Until this concern - all were in camp and men resting and puttering. Although usually people don't work on Sunday the making of drymeat began around two and continued to 7:00 - Vivian and Pauline, too, while I continued to skin legs and prepare dinner. Yesterday and today at least a dozen legs have been split for the marrow-eaten with drymeat and almost constitutes a full meal.

When I ask Gabe when the H.B.C. stopped trading for meat and fish - a straight "I don't know!" But I know it happened in his lifetime and maybe an important reason for the decline of use of the Mountains.

On asking George on when they came to the mountains - with his Granny - to return in a moosskin boat he replies - "March." He has never wintered in the mountains.

Leon is better today and has an appetite & less concern of a serious sickness during time it is very difficult to get a plane to land nearby.

All day the radio has not worked.

All racks are filled with drymeat.

May 9, 1981

Keele River Camp

899.

Vivian comes to my tent a little before noon, I am cleaning leg skins. She slept late this morning even after going to sleep early last night - but reports George and Jonas left early for June Lake! (I don't know from George they left at 6:30 - no fire or food, just put on their clothes and on their way). Vivian assures me Jonas is just like George; they do not give up! There is no reason for them to go to June Lake today except to see the plane land, as scheduled between 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. and to make it in fewer hours than last ~~one~~ time. Vivian says they are always ready to go, go on etc and some people don't like it, they get tired.

They are back by 4:00 and finally George admits his muscles and back are "Ka put" after so much pushing and lifting of skidoos but says he still can keep going. But after feeding the dogs at 10:00 he is asleep for the night; all asleep early except Vivian and children so early out for all.

During the day as the women continue to make drymeat - all day and I skin more legs, Gabe offers some conversation -

Leon is better and less concern now of it leading to any emergency.

Mabe

Remembers one year when his mother tanned 48 moose hides and 70 caribou, worked on them steadily all winter. In trade the moose skin were worth \$10 and the caribou \$5.

When one could get fresh meat near the post a bull moose, ~~at least~~ was usually only worth 2.50 (no fat) and a cow was 7.00

Mentions again 1935 a year very bad for caribou and moose in the mountains.

"The good old days" - you didn't have to have a job and still could have money by trading - "drymeat, dry fish, fresh foods, everything". When asked if there was a preference of trading to the R.C. Mission or H.B.C. he doesn't suggest one - all about the same.

People did trade also to the Anglican hospital in the 1940's - good meat from Norman people and fish from Franklin.

George & Jones put up another 4 pole tipi adjacent to the working tipi - about 12' at peak (other about 9') and each tipi has 12 drying poles plus 2 connecting and 18 are full by evening.

May 11, 1981 Keele River Camp

BCS

Day of sprinkles, winds and sun and camp life as usual - the women making drymeat before the rest have finished breakfast. There is no concern of flooding since that is not an issue until evening - so carry on according to pattern.

The men leave after breakfast to check out and start clearing an airstrip just west of camp. They are back between 2:30 and 4:00 for mid-day meal. Find out then that George and Jones also were able to puncture the ice dam in several places and there should be no flooding.

I continue skinning moose legs - \$15 - about the standard these past few days. The marrow of these bones is eaten fresh so far but all the thigh bones are cleaned of meat and saved to boil out the marrow. George said yesterday that his grandmother said - "marrow is the Indian's vitamins." And nothing is wasted, the scraps and overly dried outer pieces of meat are fed to the 12 dogs. The women are drying meat steadily - 10 to 11 hours in spite of flood and other ~~inter~~ weather conditions.

Supper and dishes were finished by ten this evening and our first radio contact - very

May 12 - Tues. 1981 Keele River Camp. BCG

but at least something. Although the clearing of the airstrip was largely in hopes Raymond and crew could come by Porter rather than helicopter, there is a new problem tonight. The Keele River is rising very fast and I left for my tent in a cold, blowing wet snow. The possibility of rain added to the fast rise in the water could create another level of flooding - the airstrip, and possibly the camp. My personal problem in addition during this stormy night is the stove pipe blowing over twice - once before while in the main camp and once after a fire was started.

- Vivian clarifies George's family - after his mother died (a child) to was raised by Gabe's mother, mother of his mother and also another woman who died and had a daughter Rose. She raised both children until she died (seems George would have then been a teenager) and then Gabe took care of them.

One of three cairns was lost today in the rising water - 2 more higher up are safe so far. One lost was mainly backs & not a great loss according to George

Went to my tent last night in a wet snow storm and cold winds and woke up to a continued stormy day - our worst since I arrived with occasional snow through the day but with the wind finally settling down at night and clearing of the skies

During the day George was able to contact Fort Norman - but just barely. All the radios have been out, not just this one; and it was good to know there was contact again. Vivian says it has only been a few years, maybe three, that bush camps have had them. The majority of use is by those at Willow Lake - with Fort Norman and Franklin receiving but also hear Rae Lakes, Lac la Martre, Wrigley, Rabbit skin River and Simpson. By radio it was known the Mackenzie is now completely open, at least as far as Norman Wells by the 11th.

In spite of the bad weather Cecilia and Madeline went out in the morning for "brush" - fresh spruce boughs for the tipi. They continue to make drymeat in afternoon and evening inside their tent with Vivian helping too, while a bead with them. They both want horse hair and Vivian wants threads and cateloa.

Man rest for the day, George secures my stove and tent and besides chopping wood there is little for them to do. They do put up our 4th tent between the other two in the central camp and almost fill it with supplies. I will be anxious to see how much the mooseskin boat can handle besides people, 12 dogs, personal gear, tents, drymeat, foods, stoves.

The coldest night so far and an early night to the tent and heating up the stove. Before leaving, George was able to talk to Danny Yakabenga in Ft. Norman very clearly and so far Raymond and Crew expect to get here this weekend. Our first good radio contact since the 9th.

May 13, 1981 (Wed) Keele River Camp.

BCS.

Full sun and no wind today and working outside good again. Then men take the Zodiac boat across and return by 3:30 with timber for 2 oars and pole. I take photos but they say they will wait until Raymond is here to select the trees and make the other 2 oars and steering oar. They work from 4:00 to about 9:00 with sharp axes to chisel the oars in shape.

Another small tipi structure was put up in the morning, adjacent to the others for more drymeat and bones w/ meat for the dogs. Today the women crack bones and take out marrow. Madeline takes out marrow all day 11:00^{am} to 9:00^{pm} and Cecilia, after a break in early evening works until 11:00. Each piece of marrow taken out is kept so clean, everything in the working area is always cleaned of fur, spruce needles, etc.

I now have 67 moose legskins at my tent, 15 done today and now the women are breaking up those leg parts as well as the femurs for marrow. There are 7 more legs to skin and Madeline hopes to begin working on the hides. When I mention my concern that there will not be a skin home in tent

May 14 (Thurs) 1981

Keele River Camp

BC9

by tomorrow to make a scraper, she selects one from the pile - one of the larger and thinks Gabe will make it if George doesn't get around to it.

On the oar making - George works on one and Jonas the other and Leon works on the pole. The logs are first smoothed down and the paddle end takes most of the time, making it straight and flat.

Gabe, by Vivian's report, said a couple of days ago they shouldn't build the boat until May 20th; she doesn't know why that date but presumably it is related to the snow melt and river conditions. Today George says Gabe said they shouldn't leave until all of the snow is gone - and there is still quite a bit on some of the north slopes of the mountains. It remained cold enough today (and yesterday) that there is little to no melting and the river is not rising.

The first issue of the day at 11:00 a.m. was what date and day it was. Vivian was sure it was Wednesday the 13th based on listening to the radio and bingo in Fort Norman. I was asked to bring this journal to the tent and read sections since Sunday as to how each day has passed. It was convincing.

Gabe agreed to make a scraper this morning at my request and Madeline gave him the bone she chose last evening. It was ready at the mid-day meal and on the kitchen supply shelf but Vivian said he made it for her - very confusing. George, who was supposed to make one over this past week, got involved enough to look for his missing hacksaw handle to split the bone - but never found it. Gabe managed fine without a saw but made the scraper at his tent - which also means in privacy.

The women began cutting off the hair of the caribou hides at about noon. It is mid-night when I leave for my tent and they still are not back to the camp. They are working near a stream about 75 yards from

May 14, 1981 (cont.) Keele River Camp. BCS.

camp, out on the river bed rocks. They are at least 50 feet apart, each at a small stand of willow with a larger log, about 4" in diameter propped up in the bushes over which they drape the hide for cutting, moving the hide to a different spot on the log as they need to in order to keep cutting from the same position. They sit in that one position with legs underneath or to the side for most of 12 hours. They only took one major break to return for a meal of caribou bones and heart with tea around 4:00 p.m.

After their break Vivian begins scraping a hide and it finished by 10:00 with several interruptions. Pauline begins one later, does not finish it and is obviously a novice. So far I have not been able to help - no scraper or finished log as yet. When cleaning the hide they use a log cleaned of bark, about 3' long and 4" in diameter with a smooth and rounded top so that it will not puncture the hide.

Compared to the two seasons I have seen barren ground caribou hides from

spring hunt - April; the woodland caribou have less warble flies in their skins - 2 dozen or less on those seen today.

Last evening, late - meaning after 10:00, the women cleaned up the working tipi. All hoofs and connecting leg tendons are tied in bunches - about 8 - and hanging along with the drymeat. All the bones of yesterday are gone and a completely fresh carpet of spruce boughs is laid as well as fresh boughs around the perimeter.

Women cutting fur off hides are not working in camp for good reasons. They keep all the fur cuttings in large plastic sheets and can then dump it into the stream; they can clean and soak the hides in the stream (held in place by a rock or two) after they are done; and they can give them an initial soaking to soften them for working, cut out the warbles and clean off some of the excess fat.

The men are having a hard time keeping busy. George has Jonas give him a haircut in the morning. After meal of ribs and macaroni the men go off to the airstrip - They return about nine saying there was nothing to do there so they looked for beaver - their catch was 4 ducks that George singed in the working tipi and they were boiled, as well as caribou bones for supper. George did a little scraping of hide along with Vivian before supper. I only did one leg skin today and not enough to keep me busy.

All through the afternoon the dogs are crying, especially the mother setter dog. Vivian says they are thirsty but nothing is done about it until George returns.

Day was clear and sometimes hot but melting snow is no longer a flooding threat. The creek to the west of my tent is almost completely dry.

May 15, 1981

Keule River Camp B.C.G.

After breakfast (11:30) Vivian and George begin scraping hide and do nothing else but eat the mid-day meal until 9:00; they have finished two completely and the non-fur side of two others. Pauline also works much of the day scraping.

Jonas & Leon cross the river for meat and prepare the main meal of 2 caribou heads and roasted ribs. the heads are a treat and Madeline joins for the meal.

By early evening (8:00) women have stopped cutting caribou fur and according to Vivian only four (out of 32) are left to be done. That is 28 in two days - alot of steady hard work. But Cecilia won't quit; she is scraping a hide from 9:30 to about 11:00.

George put in a full day scraping, feeling sore muscles as well as Vivian and Pauline but the other men have very little to do - chop wood, get water, play with the children etc. Jonas and Gabe do some fishing in late afternoon and Gabe gets 3 trout (2-3 lbs) using a long spruce poll, string, leader line and artificial bate. Although the fish are a nice change

May 16, 1981

Keele River Camp

Bees

fishing is a past time activity; not worked at for food (certainly when there is still so much meat still ready for cooking).

While making stew brings up again their trip to the Yukon in 1938 or 1939 when his mother and dad were both still alive. On asking he thinks they had 11 dogs then, "good dogs then, too." What kind? "Just dogs, no, not huskies." He also added that 9 dogs (good ones) could pack a whole moose.

Radio communication with Danny, Yakaleya and Raymond and crew will arrive Monday morning by Porter airplane - need 1200 feet and George reports back 400 yds - exactly the distance needed. Jam, honey & sweet biscuits are added to the request of supplies.

Two weeks ago I arrived - now much of the snow cover is gone except from distant mountain peaks and the river didn't even have drifting ice today.

In the morning after breakfast I ask in general - but probably expecting George if anyone to answer - why people stopped making moose skin boats. He thinks it's because no more drymeat for trade, exactly my line of thinking these past two weeks. People do not go to the mountains for furs but for meat; once it is no longer an item of trade there is no reason to go to the mountains any more.

Vivian and George put in full 8 hours scraping hides. George breaks to eat but Vivian continues and only snacks on fish afterwards. Leon did the cooking - bannock and boiled caribou ^{ribs}. Although children try catching fish none succeed but Gabe gets 5, 1 trout and 4 grayling. The grayling are baked for supper and I avoid it at first thinking they would be the "choice food." Not one of the men had any, only children and later the women and Cecilia having the trout. She is from Fort Franklin and loves having the fish. Vivian relates a visit to Franklin and the family she stayed with first had lake trout for supper. Offered her fried herrings.

for breakfast which she refused and they had fish for lunch; that is enough fish for a month for her - Even when Gabe and George have mentioned fish in several nearby lakes it is ~~not~~ ^{now} clear that this maybe interesting but certainly not a sought after food.

Scraping hides - Vivian says they have done 9 so far, 2 only on inner side for drymeat bags and 7 full cleaned. There are still 4 hides with the fur on. Cecilia has "de-furred" 8, Pauline has done some work on them but Cecilia out at tipi ~~at~~ ^{working on} tonight. from 9:30 past 11:00 ~~working on~~ hides, too.

I visit the women's tent and Madeline is cutting out raw caribou hide (fur cut off and other side scraped clean) bags for drymeat. One bag takes at least 3 hours. Shortly after visiting, Madeline takes out her syllabic prayer book which has numerous greeting cards and photos and shows a picture of her husband when he was a young man.

Cecilia in the meantime is folding drymeat

and with oil cloth on top, kneels on several pieces at a time to flatten them as much as possible. We have music during this time and both women occasionally sing a little.

Madeline has an old Singer sewing machine on portable wooden base - I'm guessing it is a 1920's vintage (comparing it to mine which has many similarities and is 1940 (power driven and less ornate).

Madeline thinks I should make a parka from the caribou leg skins. I clean two today and she estimates it will take about 60; I have enough if they tan properly and that is what I want to do.

When I mention to Vivian that she is lucky that George is willing to scrape hides, she agrees. Most men won't but he will help with anything. Jonas was like that too when in the bush just with family but not now when others are around. Used to help scrape hides, help do the wash, everything.

meat bags and in evening Cecilia scrapes hide for an hour or more 9:00 - 10:00 plus and both again cutting and sewing caribou.

River begins rising tonight after 10:00 and I return early to tent (10:45) while group plays Mexican rummy.

Shilda and Sally, Lawrence and Clarence all make a brief visit and the 2 girls return again after 12:00 - just after I had seen about 10 caribou across the river from the tent. Shilda says she still feels something is watching her and wants binoculars - goes back to get her Dad's, is quite sure she sees a bear at the airstrip (she saw one there this morning but only told her Dad later and he did see tracks at the airstrip). She reports back and the men (not Gabe) all run past my tent a distance but see nothing - Madeline, Vivian, Pauline and girls also watching for awhile. What was a possible bear track near my tent Jones knows is not (Shilda and Madeline Ist think it might be, as do I). A cold night, full moon rising at midnight, fast running water, caribou - but fear of a bear staying near camp ruins the entirely placid atmosphere.

(1st mosquitoes in the tent)

May 18, 1981 Keele River Camp

A day of waiting to hear the plane coming with Raymond and crew. The radio is not functioning until late afternoon but Danny reports at 4:30 the plane will leave Norman Wells between 5:00 and 6:00. The men leave camp at 5:30 with skidoos, gas cans, bed roll, boxes of winter boots and boat. They wait there until after 9:00 and return to camp. Just before their return Vivian reaches Danny and he is surprised the plane is not there and it is just Bill arriving. Almost minutes after the men are in the tent for coffee Danny radios that the plane should arrive in about 20 minutes - at which time we hear the plane. Bill arrives with all the photographic material; Raymond planning to come tomorrow (or as Bill later comments probably not until Wednesday. Nora - - - ? who will handle the audio aspects did not make the plane in Yellowknife and should be coming with Raymond. It will be the four of us in what has been "my" tent.

May 17 (Sunday) 1981. Keele River Camp. BCS.

In the morning I ask Gabe how they brought the drymeat to trade before the moose skin boat. he ignores the question and begins talking to Vivian. Vivian suggests I talk to Fred Andrew or Paul Wright in Fort Norman.

Breakfast still going at 11:00. At 12:30 the men, except Jonas, and 3 children go to check out the airstrip and do not come back until 8:30. George decided to make a second airstrip fearing the first will be too short with the rising river water. By the time they get back supper is on but George not hungry (1st day with just one meal).

Although Sunday is supposedly a non-working day, it is a best not as hard a working day for the women. Madeline, Cecilia, Vivian and Pauline take an hour walk at 1:00 p.m for "brush" and return each with about 20 lbs of spruce boughs for fresh floors in the three tents. Madeline and Pauline come to help me with mine, undoubtedly concerned I wouldn't know how. They take each spruce branch, needles downward for surface and push each into the floor, each branch 12" to 18" long. Madeline - with all the children and general traffic changes her floor at least once a week; it was the first change needed for our tent. also some of us in clean clothes today and Cecilia in a skirt - perhaps all indications it is Sunday?

I clean 6 more leg skins - over 70 now and 50 baled. Women making caribou drymeat 4 pounds

Madeline is packing drymeat in caribou bags. While she is filling the first one Bill and I are there and ask her to wait to fill the others later when he can film it.

Madeline also brings to Vivian's tent a $\frac{1}{2}$ gal. plastic bowl with solidified moose fat - very clear, looks like lard and Vivian doesn't know where it comes from. She is sure it is not from the bones boiled by her - 3 days of cooking 5 gallons plus - which she says only got her about $\frac{1}{2}$ a lard bucket = about 1 quart fat.

At 2:00 Vivian is able to get through to Danny, hear that Raymond will not come today - tomorrow. She got a grocery list through before the radio cut off again.

Men return from airstrip about 3:00, left about 11:30. They cleared more trees and increased its length. The pilot yesterday said it was too uneven for the Porter and continued concern that the rising water will eliminate the airstrip enough to make it useless. George has always been bouyant with previous challenges but today is not the same - the rising river, the rainy weather (which could increase the river's height)

May 19, 1981 Keele River Camp. BCY
and little to do but wait for the uncontrollable conditions to improve provides no challenge.

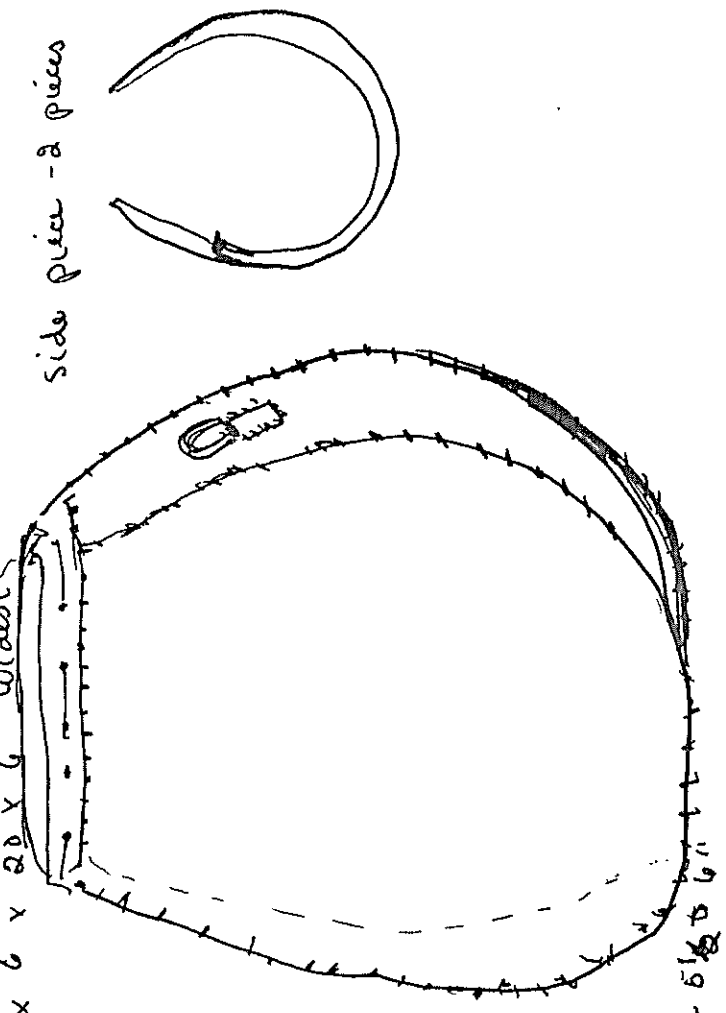
A cold and rainy afternoon - so for the first time we start a fire in this stove during the day since the main camp is resting and so quiet. Interesting talk with Bill on early guns and later on the York boat - built by Orkneys from Hebrides which is Norse in culture since the 10th century and the York boat is a copy of the Norse fishing boat -

At 10:30 Sally Ann announces supper - the afternoon-evening went by quickly and by this time the sky was clear and no significant rise in the water. By 11:30 Vivian and children sleeping so we return to the tent - then noticing a rise in the water beginning about 12:30 and continuing. Were able to contact Danny again at 11:00 p.m. and re-state need of nails and necessary contact before any plane flies out tomorrow.

George also concerned today that the wood supply - considered ample these past two weeks - might not be enough.

Madeline and Leslie continue softening marshmallows in spite of the weather.

Caribou bags for drymeat
 May. 19 three assembled and two larger ones filled w/ drymeat
 ① 17" x 3 x 17" x 3 top band 1 1/2" on all
 20" x 6 x 20" x 6 widest top



- bottom 5 1/2" to 6"
- ② 2nd one 14" x 4"
17" x 1"
- ③ small one 5" x 9"
5" x 15"
bottom 6"

bottom 5"

caribou hides - outside is hide scraped of fur and inside is
 cleaned by scraping. Bags sewn together with ~~the~~
 soft, artificial babiche.
 largest one holds about 25-28 lbs - (judged by comparing it
 in one hand with a 20 lbs sack of flour in the other)

May 20, 1981 (Wed) Keele River Camp.

The river continued to rise last night - watched by George and Jonas until 2:30 and this morning's check of the airstrip by George is that there is no more adequate airstrip for a plane. Raymond is in Norman Wells when this information is radioed to Danny in Fort Norman and future plans are at "stand by" by 12:00 p.m.

During the waiting afternoon I ask Gabe when he was last in this area - not sure but around 1963 - when his mother was still alive.

On the height of the water, Gabe says he has never seen it like this in the area and isn't sure why it is so high but suggests that maybe the light snow cover this winter (comparatively speaking) and quick warming and melting of less snow has caused a faster than usual melting and filling of the streams. A very reasonable idea. By radio we are also hearing that the Mackenzie is staying unusually high as well. Gabe is hoping that in 4-5 days the river will begin to go down.

Bill films drymeat, Madeline and Vivian making moose in the working tipi and Madeline

May 20, 1981 Keele River Camp.

BCC

At about 7:30 the helicopter lands with the last of the crew - Raymond Yakaleya, the film director and Nora Jini, in charge of audio. She is Southern Tutchone, has freelanced for CBC for 2½ years and has worked for CBC in Yellowknife since last October. She is on loan by CBC for helping with this film; another part of how they have been able to do this filming on much less a budget. According to Bill, so far they estimate \$36,000 in costs and ordinarily it would be about 160,000.

We got all the supplies requested except potatoes (unfortunately substituted w/ Kraft cheese & macaroni) and again there are candles.

The boat-mow with Kicker - is taken out about 11:00 by George, Gabe, Raymond, Bill & Clarence. George got 2 beaver and missed the 3rd when his gun broke. They are back by 12:15.

Cecilia and Pauline still working hides and Madeline for part of the day before making drymeat. Cecilia works until 11:00 - a 12 hour day and is sewing a caribou bag after midnight!

Warm day and water higher than last night.

May 21, 1981 Keele River Camp.

A beautiful warm day but the river is still high. Film crew begins about noon - mainly of Gabe skinning a beaver.

Madeline sewing another small caribou bag this morning, filling it with moss to dry in its full capacity shape. She now has at least 2 small and 3 large bags for drymeat and Cecilia has 2 - and who continues to work on hides through the day, Pauline working on one too. Madeline says she and Cecilia each have 4 mooskins prepared but at least Madeline plans to smoke hers at home in her own smoking tipi. Madeline also shows me the moose intestine, about 14" long and 4-5" wide filled with moose fat from the boiled bones, only 2 lbs of fat. She, Vivian and Jonas also made a bale of drymeat by wrapping a cleaned but raw caribou hide around it, tied with string, puncturing the holes with an awl. In evening (after 8:00 p.m.) Madeline makes pounded meat in her tent - pounding drymeat on a smooth, flat rock w/ back of axe blade - Is to be mixed w/ the purest moose grease that was

May 21, 1981 Keele River Camp.

BCG.

By 11:30 a.m. George is beginning to think on how to repair his gun - needs a piece of steel and by 4:30 has shaped an intricate part out of ~~the~~ a section of a file - the extractor which pulls the empty shell out - ^(no handle by now) hacksaw blade and 2 files and some heating of metal.

Leon and Jonas each roast a side of ribs over the open fire in the working tipi for the mid-day meal but the tent is still too hot for most of those in camp. Afternoon is quiet and the hottest day so far. Raymond obviously has arrived tired because he slept through the afternoon.

George, about 5:30, reports bear tracks very near the camp - on the island and obviously the reason of all the dog barking last night. Two dogs are moved to behind our tent - now that there are 2 men with their 30-30's! George thinks this is a smaller bear than by the tracks at the airstrip and thinks several might be gradually approaching the camp.

Bill mentions story from Gabe on their first flight out in this area in March. When flying over Natla Lake Gabe mentioned that is where they used to go for stone points - especially spear heads for killing bears. They didn't have to work or shape the stone points - just look around and could find stones already good for spear points.

For the bear spear the point would be about 12" long and then about 2 feet further down the spear would be a cross bar because with spearing a bear; he would continue through the spear without the cross bar. Bill also thinks the spear base end was probably wedged into the ground. The man with this spear would first tease the bear from its den into the open and then use the spear with force.

Raymond mentions Gabe will not shoot a bear or have anything to do with them; they are a medicine to ~~them~~ him.

May 21, 1981

Keele River Camp

BCGJ

Bill mentions the cooking of beaver meat at Gabe's tent and it was vague references but the beaver cooking was kept private among the men, women not wanting it even cooked on their stoves. Madeline had earlier asked if I had eaten and liked beaver, when I said I didn't like the taste very much she agreed but it appears there is avoidance beyond personal taste buds.

The women go for another load of brush and Vivian recarpets their tent again - with a busy tent and children the spruce boughs are worn and dry in four days now.

May 22, 1981 Kelle River Camp

Almost sleepless night for me with the dogs barking frequently. And the water was higher than ever last night. The height of the water and the daily greater nearness of the bear, or bears, are main concerns for which there is nothing to do about.

This is the beginning of the 4th week here for myself with great changes in the landscape by the snow melt but the weather is erratic. Today was the heaviest in rains, one with strong winds that blew down the women's tent and stove - the first time it wasn't mine. The weather limited activity in camp and people rested much of the afternoon.

By 10:30 in the morning the women had taken in all of the drymeat from the tipis' drying poles, leaving nothing but the dried, boney sections for dog food and the tendon-hoof bunches - the tipis look very bare. Most all day the women pound drymeat - sometimes Madeline, Cecilia, Pauline and Vivian together and keep it up until about 11:00. Each has a flat smooth stone and pounds with another rock or blunt end of an axe. Also more bales of drymeat are made (at least 3) with the cleaned, raw caribou hide as the wrapping

May 22, 1981

men got last night on their 7:00 - 11:30 trip up the river - George, Jonas, Gabe, Bill and Clarence.

Moose skin boat - George had never made an oar for a moose skin boat before the trip with Simmons - so neither he or Jonas have made them more than twice and yet - with their knowledge of tree selection and control of the axe with wood the first two oars were executed quickly, with no guidance and both oars almost identical. George does remember before the Simmons trip that 4 men would go out and each select a tree and return to shape an oar - it was a generalized knowledge and skill, not an individual talent.

He remembers that it was near here - about 10 miles further downstream that he was lost in this area, the spring they made a moose skin boat and his granny, Gabe's mother, was sick and died soon after they made it to Fort Norman. He remembers he was still young and didn't have, and couldn't get, a job. This coincides w/ Gabe's guess that the trip was in the early 1960's (1963 Gabe's first date considered).

May 23, 1981. Keele River Camp.

BCY.

The men - George, Jonas, Leon and Bill - did not return until 3:00 a.m. last night, after leaving at 7:00 up river for beaver as well as an unsuccessful attempt to find the cartridge of Sabes gun which he lost in the water the night before. They got 2 beaver, missed 2 (blaming it on a lack of good guns). They ate beaver meat and were still very full when they returned, Bill estimating that they did not begin their return until after 2:00 a.m. He said they reached the true headwaters, above the tree-line and the Keele a ~~very~~ much narrower stream.

Madeline had started separating the moose sinew for sewing the boat before 10:00 a.m. and has it in strands $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ " thickness. She stops with that project shortly after 11:00 a.m. and is in back of the camp where they have been ~~wrapping~~ ^{fleshing} hides this week - fleshing the beaver from last night's catch, using a sharp knife to slice off the excess fat and fibrous inner ~~part~~ ^{peritoneum}. It is the same process I used for the caribou leg skins when a flesher and scraper are not used when the fur side is kept and the skin is smaller.

Madeline says she helped make a moosetkin first time in 1926. She was with lots of people, Gabe, Georges mother and father (Gabe's sister and Wilson Pelissay, Gabe's brother [Bedere?], an Andrew. Then reminiscences of her own family - only one brother left - Paul MacCauley (Vivian's father). There were 7 of them but 2 brothers and 2 sisters died. When I asked if any in the flu she answers "mostly from T.B." She has made 8 moosetkin boats.

At 1:30 p.m. the men have taken the 9 dried moosetkins from the supply tent to in front of our tent. It will be an eight skin boat with the 9th to be used for tying and binding it together. They had planned to use nails and had worried about them coming with the last load of supplies. But now that the nails are here George has decided they probably won't use any. Bob Jones had already asked that all nails be covered with raw moosetkin ~~the~~ ^{so} of it ~~would look~~ ^{would look} like the previous boats when nails were not available.

While writing - the men bring the 9 skins and all is filmed. A rope is put through

near the beach. The skins are weighted down by a tree stump and 4 rocks. A 15 minute job extended to a half hour for the filming.

Cecilia pounds meat most of the day, at least 9 hours. She cut herself on her middle finger of the left hand yesterday but she is still using the hand easily.

Raymond shot a porcupine after mid-day meal - 3:30 and Madeline 1st began pulling quills (and is filmed) and then Pauline, myself and Nora fill several buckets and that is at most a quarter of the total quills. Pauline and I are at first left with the task of singeing off the fur and quills - the blind helping the blind situation. Nora comes and furthers the process until it is fairly clean of fur etc but very bloated. The smell of the oil on the quills and the smoke of the burning fur and quills is offensive and everything smells bad to me for hours. At this point I can understand why Gabe and Jonas won't eat porcupine although I am sure their moosetkin also ~~are~~ ^{are} ~~do~~ ^{do} recall

were starving in the mts when no big game was around (told by Harriette Gladue of Iatsi & her mother). As George has told Bill - in the old days people probably ate anything - [perhaps food restrictions decided upon on an individual basis increased during historic times].

According to George again; they probably even ate grizzly bear even though it tasted terrible - like bad fish.

Men take a brief excursion today and are back in camp by 7:30 with just one beaver. George and Bill spent most of their time checking the bear tracks - there are many, they are large and on our side of the Keele, just across from the dividing water to the island.

By evening (8:30) Madeline is making moose sinew.

Some meat has spoiled in the cache across the river and George is considering putting it out for ~~a~~ bait on the "airstrip" for the bear(s).

Dabe didn't eat with group until evening - no straight, boiled or roasted meat - just meat - loaf and starches.

May 24, 1981 Keele River Camp (Sunday) BC95.

Although Sunday is a day of rest, or at least until noon it just isn't that way at this spring camp. By 11:00 Madeline and Cecilia are at moose sinew making in their tent. They are filmed at about 1:30 and I join in the process about 4:00. Cecilia quits for the day about 7:00 and Madeline and I continue until 10:00. She quite naturally admits she is tired, even before stopping. It is not hard work but monotonous and tedious.

George, Jonas, Bill and Clarence leave in the boat about 6:00 for filming and beaver hunting up river.

Raymond and Nora were to interview and record Gabe today but it is continuously postponed and never occurs. Vivian is going to be the translator, George prefers not to do it and wants her doing the translating. Vivian in early afternoon goes with George and children for her first ride in the zodiac boat for brush. In early evening she bakes bannock and with Nora fixes a meal (only eaten by Raymond and Gabe) but she is around camp at the time and

the putting off of the interview is not the lack of a translator. I find out much later that night (after the men return at 3:00 a.m. and Bill's return to the tent rekindles conversation) that Raymond is finding it hard to get Gabe to talk. He will occasionally give out an aspect of his life but does not respond to direct questions and does not, as yet, want to talk about the history of the Mountain Indians in any lengthy manner.

In morning George indicates to me he is ready to leave when he teases he could just quickly build a small boat and go. In the evening Vivian asks me if I am anxious to go, admitting she is ready to leave - she has been here almost two months.

In morning George asks for the map to show Bill a view locations. He corrects a couple of things from Gabe's discussion - showing a greater familiarity with maps and the areal perspective. He also thinks people can travel on the Natta between the area marked by Gabe in a mooskin boat, even though

at the map, according to Bill, that made George decide this evening's trip up the river should be to the very headwaters of the Keele since they had already been within 5 miles of it on a previous beaver hunt evening.

Madeline said yesterday she will be 63 on June 14th but today Vivian corrects that to 64. Woman playing various games of solitaire for 10:00 p.m. or at least past my 1:30 departure.

May 25, 1981 . . . Keele River Camp BCL

Madeline starts working with making sined about 11:00 a.m. She is still at it when I leave the tent at 11:30. Cecilia certainly is helping but not steadily. She does pound out a few more slabs and tears them into $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ " thicknesses. I help for 10 hours with a few breaks for dishes and snacks. As a beginner I am given the shorter pieces and Madeline is doing most of the long strips which are first used for the boat's bottom. Vivian is helping by early ~~morning~~ evening when ~~she~~ not cooking or feeding etc. with Lawrence.

Except for the steady work of the women there is little activity in camp. The men do go across the keele to ~~the~~ skin and flesh last night's beaver catch - 8 - and get ribs for dinner from the cache (they are getting a bit "high" as noticed while eating but not yet putrid.)

Jonas stretches out beaver hides by nailing them to the plank boards 4' x 4' approx.

Raymond talks to Gabe at the women's tent, mainly eliciting replies from Lockin at

no pen, so nothing new is marked.) Gabe points out where he was born on the ~~Carcajou~~ Carcajou River but little or nothing else is new information. The conversation does bring out that Madeline was born in the mountains (where not specified). Her family is not from the mountains but often joined people to go to the mountains.

According to Raymond a short excursion by the men through the trees behind the camp resulted in the selection of trees for the boat, ~~the~~ the Keels. Across the river they have marked trees for the curved bow piece + steering oar ^(I think this was May 23rd).

The bunches of sinew Madeline makes range from 50 to 80 sinew threads - when I asked how many in each it is George that offers to count several. The number is not important but it is a way to keep them orderly and they appear of similar size. It is said - I think by Gabe or at least primarily the men's decision how many bunches there should have before the sewing begins, and the number is 11; yesterday I heard 7. The figure 11 is mentioned by George when Raymond is there and says

May 25, 1981. Keele River Camp

BCY

(Cont.) Sewing goes fast, otherwise they have to stop sewing to make more; he might be remembering the last boat and the men helping make sinew during the sewing of the sides (Simmons notes). Madeline says they will spend another day making sinew before they begin sewing; there are six bundles by late evening. I cannot but wonder from my different cultural perspective why the sinew is not made gradually within the last week or two; at least some of it. Certainly the women have kept busy, sometimes having to do things - drymeat and cleaning caribou hides - but since the sinew making is tedious and therefore, ~~and~~ at least somewhat boring, it would seem to me easier to do now and again over time rather than all at once - and it is now the determining factor of building the boat.

And people are anxious to go. Uwan said to me that in the afternoon George said he just wanted to get a plane today and go. It is my impression everyone wants to go with Madeline in a yes-no state of mind. She has told some

here and being busy. She also says she is tired,
~~but~~ but admits she likes the bush better than
staying in Fort Norman where there is nothing
to do - a little visiting, some sewing and
that is all. But for a change she also thinks of going.

Still no interview with Gabe by Raymond
and Nora today and the film crew inactive.
Nora is anxious to get going and has heard, or
thinks, the trip will take 4-5 days. George
tells Raymond, as they are looking at the map,
7-8 days, weather permitting. George said on
Sunday he thought the boat could be
finished by this Friday (told to Bill). In
summary, it remains difficult to evaluate the
different statements on when we will depart and
how long is the trip. It might simply mean
various and the same people making several
guesses.

The river continues to rise and tonight Bill
and I returned by the Zodiac boat since George
wanted to further secure the soaking moosekins.
The working tipi and drying rack tipis are all
now slightly under water and the standard ones

May 26, 1981 Keele River Camp BC8.

Our tent this morning is only about 12' from
the water's edge but with the rise of the land we
can remain if it is less than 3' more.

I was in the main camp by 10:30 and
Madeline was already making sinew, with
joking along with Vivian it seems she started
by 9:00-9:30 this morning. By 2:00 I had
finished the starter strands and now it is
Madeline and Vivian working the rest of the
longer ones. On another sunny and warm day
I decided to wash my pants - but not entirely
by walking in the Keele waters as Sheila and
Sally Ann can do - it is as cold as one would
expect as a mountain river filled with melted
snow & ice.

The film crew were in camp after 1:00 p.m.
in what appears as another day of little or
no activity as of 4:30. The men are clearing an
area beside the shallow overflow and behind the
tents for the boat building. By Bill's report,
George thinks the making of it this time will go
faster because when they built it with Simmons
they had to keep asking Gabe what to do. But

are doing and that makes it quicker and easier.

The women had stopped making sinew before midnight and Madeline was stretched out on her mat, relaxing with a cigarette.

Still no interviews by film crew and Bill did a little more shooting of Cecilia pounding sinew and the women making more thread.

Men complain during the day it is too hot to do anything and the pace of camp is very slow with only the women working toward a goal of making enough sinew thread for the boat.

In the evening all the men ~~are~~ join in (except Lake) at burning the rotting moose in two caches, 1 behind + 1 to the side of our tent. They use gasoline numerous times and Raymond does more on our return of burning, still many maggots and putrid smell. The men also clearing the now flooded tipis - ~~the~~ throwing out the spruce limbs ~~of the side~~ siding of the main tipi and quite a bit of rotten meat and bones. (Nora's meat-rice soup tonight is the last of the fresh meat.)

May 27, 1981 Keele River Camp.

BCH.

Again last night the water rose again and our tent and 2 dogs behind are by now on a very small area of land. On reaching the main camp, George is just waking up although the rest were finished with breakfast. He talks of moving the camp, a very unpleasant thought when everyone is ready to make the boat and then pack up. George goes off - with Vivian - and fleshes a beaver hide and Vivian has water heating to wash clothes. Obviously the prospect of spending the day finding and moving to a new campsite is considered carefully. As the day goes on it is clear no more is planned. The day was extremely hot and since the river was not rising rapidly in the evening - moving camp seemed less and less essential.

By early afternoon, 1:00, the moose skins are checked by Madeline, Cecilia, Vivian and Jonas and Leon tow them back to the main camp. According to Vivian they had not all soaked completely so they are now in tubs of water. The women are relaxing - putting in a fresh spruce carpet, ordering their tent - never not doing anything but the

Report by Bill BCL
 (1 to 2 1/2 miles)

May 27, 1981. Keele River Camp. Steering Oar

being made.

The men - George, Jonas and Bill - go in the boat about 4:00 up river for the steering oar. Previous to this Jonas and Leon when directly across the river to throw in the river the rest of the meat cached there. While the men are gone later, Leon burns again the cache pits near our tent. Even by late evening there remains, putrid smell but not as bad as the last couple of days. Unfortunately enough to attract bears and there are more fresh tracks directly across the creek from the island.]

The men go by Zodiac boat - slightly upstream - to begin the steering oar. The tree was selected several days ago by Hake while they were in that area. At that time, according to Bill, Hake checked 3 trees, rejected the first two and marked the 3rd as his choice. The process took 10 to 15 minutes. Of course on other occasions it might take longer; simply depending on location of lookers and the right tree.

Tree selection for all pieces of the boat the most important feature is that the grain of the tree be straight and the majority of the spruce trees will have a twist or spiral in them somewhere and trees that begin straight may have spirals approaching the top.

To Bill's question as to where straight grain trees are most likely to be found - the reply is they are at random among the trees and there is no way to predict their location.

Straight grain is important so that the cutting and axing into shape can be done by following the grain. For the gunwales it is crucial so that the pressure is evenly distributed if it touches an

④

Bill's report. BC9
 or blunt contact. The ²gunwales have to be longer than the boat, each from a long and thin tree and for this boat will have to measure over 40' feet.

The number and location of branches are important. One tree near the camp's attempted airstrip was considered for one of the 4 side oars. It was tall and tested for straightness but was then rejected for its branches which were large and began about 4' from the trunk base. The branches create knots that ~~are~~ are considered weak points by George. The tree selected for the steering oar was very straight, tall and no live branches and only a few dead ones for the first 15'.

Standard of measurements

Since on this project the boat is considered Gabe's boat it is measured by his height. Gabe thinks he is 6' and that the fully extended arm span, including straightened index fingers is considered to be equal of a person's height it is this arm span that is the basic measurement. The steering oar is $4\frac{1}{2}$ spans.

May 27th, 1981 Keel River Camp Bill's report BC9
 the shaft is 3 and the hand grip, which is narrower, a $\frac{1}{2}$ span. Since the men cut down the tree without Gabe, George estimates his span, probably a few inches shorter than Gabe's and allows an extra two feet to the oar until it can be checked by Gabe's span. In the bush George cut a willow branch for his span and then added to accommodate Gabe's measurement.

For measurement of the vertical, the level, the parallel etc - all is done with eye but checking frequently and chipping off small widths at a time are part of the careful measuring process.

A general principle is to chop everything larger than the exact and cut down.

Steering Oar

As with all selected trees, a vertical cut is made on the side to check the straightness. The tree chosen is straight. There is a vertical crack at the bottom of the trunk so the crack is cut off before the tree is felled, concerned that it may be irregular or deep; it is neither but

Bill's report

roughly axed out. George deciding that he could not tell if the blade would be off center after cutting slightly on the side opposite the crack felled the tree - its trunk about 10" in diameter

On the ground he cut the other side of blade, making sure it was parallel with his initial cuts on the side of the crack and continuously checked the \parallel cuts of the blade. The steering oar would have been largely completed ~~at~~ on location if Gabe was there but waiting for his measurement of it they returned to camp at 8:30

Bill estimates it was $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours that George and Jonas worked on the oar up river. From 9:00 to 11:00 Gabe and George shape the oar further but not completely. They will let it alone for awhile to check if there is any warping. The oar is still too long, just as George expected after they made extra allowance for Gabe's measurement.

While shaping the oar here in camp they set the blade in a vertical groove of a 12" stump made to fit the blade to secure the oar and allow eyeing the lines from the same

May 28, 1981 Keele River Camp - Sewing Beg.

Women - Madeline and Cecile set up to start sewing hides at 10:00. Through George and Vivian I understand Madeline has been ready to go since 7:00 this morning and only waiting because of the film crew. If she had started earlier this morning they think they may have finished tonight. After about two hours of sewing Vivian says it is going fast and Madeline is like she had special energy and if it keeps up she might stay with it all night. On asking Madeline when she quit making sinew thread last night the reply is 2:00 a.m. Her stamina and cheerful energy remains indefinite.

The longer sinew threads are about 30" ^{28" to}. A knot is made about 2" from the "fuzzy" end and then the over cast stitch holds in the frayed end and the thin needle end within the then stitched sinew. The ~~sinew~~ needle holes are about $\frac{1}{3}$ ^{more} apart and the sinew spreads so that no skin is exposed between stitches. The over cast, or overlap stitch is about $5/8$ " in order to encircle both thick edges of hide and $1/2$ " on the double fold. One strand of sinew thread uses 3" or

May 28, 1981 Keele River Camp Sewing continued

When Madeline and Cecilia begin sewing they start at the center and work outward.

On the double stitch for the bottom of the boat, the overlap is about 1½" to 2" with fur side to inner side, then inner side folded over. On the second folding the 2 inner sides are sewn together. This requires going through three thicknesses of hide twice for each seam.

Moosekin is kept wet, most is under a plastic tarp with some water distributed. That part which is being worked on is kept wet and edges are frequently in need of water - spread by fingers from the "finger bowl." They cannot completely resaturate hides once they are sewn because the sinew will expand. ∴ Once the sewing begins - there is no long delays.

The sinew thread is wetted in the mouth to tie the strands together and to make it easier to get through the hides; if it dries it is apt to fray and/or tangle.

[Vivian estimates Madeline cleans 2 moosehides in ½ hour or less.]

* May 27, 1981 - continued, Keele River Camp. BCG.

Bill recalls now that on the night of May 24th when they went beaver hunting up to the headwaters of the Keele, George showed him the trunk of a fallen tree with the same kind of notched groove. George was beaver hunting there once before [at what time not known] and it might have been made by him. At that time he built a 2 mooseskin boat for beaver hunting. Regardless, it is the traditional way to cut out mooseskin cars. (not photographed). Bill suggests the one he saw was likely cut out with a cross cut saw - the sides smooth and sharp. The one in camp was cut with a power saw.

When men return with steering oar the women immediately check the soaking mooseskins. By 10:00 Madeline is pounding out more sinew and back again to making sinew thread past midnight. The feeling is the boat time is now. No fresh meat in camp and my drymeat fried rice not enjoyed by the men.

At most 2 men put in 5 1/2 hours each on the steering oar.

May 28, 1981 Keele River Camp - Boat building by Bill's report. BCG.

While women begin sewing and at first Gabe as well as Madeline giving Cecilia instructions others have breakfast and men leave at 11:00 for across the creek on the back of the island for more parts of the boat - Bill filming and all men but Raymond. They return at 3:30 with bow piece and 6 longitudinal supporting beams that go between the gunwales and keel, 3 to each side.

The men first looked for three trees for the support beams. They had to be straight grained and not taper very much at their tops and had to be at least 3" in diameter for somewhat beyond 40'. (or 6 1/2 Gabe spans). After they were given the vertical cut test they were felled and by power saw were cut down the middle except for a short distance (12"). A notched tree trunk was used again for a brace and for alignment. The part wedged into the notched groove was trimmed first and placed in the groove after which the rest of the beams were axed down to proper size. The beams are 6" wide at one end & narrow down to 3" and less at the other end. The wide ends are 1/2" thick but the rest of the beams is 1" to gradually 1 1/2" thick.

May 28

Bill's report

2. While sawing the middle cut, rather than not doing anything. Leon made 2 more poles for the boat (3" in diameter). There is now five in camp, all made by Leon, I think, and they want 6. They are mainly used in the rapids to check depth and added control.

While George and Leon cut and work down the 3rd tree for 2 beams Gabe looks for his chosen tree for the bow. He has forgotten where it is and it takes as long to find it as it does to fell the tree and do the rough shaping (3/4 an hour each). This includes cutting out the notch for the keel which is done by power ^{fell}saw. Much of the rough shaping is done before the tree is

The bow piece (as well as the stern) has to be a naturally curved tree; it is not found on a cut-bank as was described by Simmons but was with the middle of the forest. It started to lean when it was young (for unknown cause) and then grew straight. The bottom 4 1/2' to 5' were curved before the tree grew straight. The tree was about 10" in diameter at its base and 5" in diameter where it was cut

May 28, 1981

Bill's report

In the vicinity of the tree for the bow there are several trees with old scars where they have been checked for their straightness of grain. (They are photographed). Gabe says these were made in 1937 and a mooseskin boat was made in the area and that Leon was there, just a lad at the time.

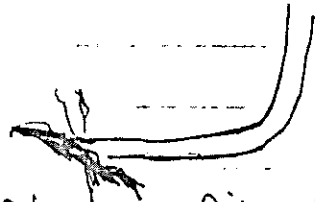
Between 4:00 and 6:00 George and Gabe did further trimming of the bow at camp and Gabe continues on and off the next hour with final cuts by axe and then planes the bottom because the bow and stern, but especially the bow, will have a lot of pressure and possible touching with rocks and they do not want the wood edge rough edged with the moose skin wrapped over it.

At 6:30 Jonas, George and Leon go off by boat for the stern piece. Jonas remembers its location since it was selected by Gabe near where the steering oar tree was located. They return before 9:00 with stern, roughly trimmed and 2 planks for the helmsman's platform. The stern was too curved so George (and

May 28.

Bill's Report.

river and a very short distance downstream. The one chosen appears to Bill as a tree that had fallen over when young but held on and gradually grew straight. He estimates that 3' of the base went straight out and then curved upward with some of its roots still stick out vertically.



It was like the others, in the middle of the forest. Bill suggests that this growth pattern is very common because of the thinness of the soil.

This second stern took about an hour including the time of selection. As previous sections of the boat, it too was ~~being~~ trimmed and shaped while ~~still~~ the tree was still standing. More was done with the power saw than with the bow. 9:30-10:30.

At 12:15 the men quit for the evening after further shaping of the stern. It is marked with pencil in order that it matches H.

May 28, 1981 Keele River Camp.

BCS

Changable.

At 11:00 p.m. the women stop sewing the moosehides. They are ready to attach the 4th moosehide. Earlier they had planned to work longer but the hide was getting dry and they decided to soak it for the night. Dry or not Vivian was ready to stop, her back aching and Cecilia also ready to rest. Some teasing about the fact the pressure isn't on yet to finish.

Jonas and Raymond leave at 11:00 to try to find something to kill for dinner but return before 1:00 a.m. with no success. The camp got scrambled eggs and french toast for supper and all are wanting some meat. No effort by anyone to fish today or in days past.

The river remained low through the day after last night being the first night of no appreciable increase in weeks. Since yesterday was the hottest day so far it is hoped the river has reached its peak from the early and fast spring melting.

All of us on return to the tent are still very aware of the rotting meat smell which is

the first hide with the 2 side pieces underneath and fitted along the edges ready for sewing. At first the 3 women plan to work on the same edge but there is a fullness in the side piece so Madeline decides she and Cecilia will start at the two ends of the hide and work toward the center and Vivian begins at the far end on the other side. On the sides is the single overcast stitching.

One hide will make 4, sometimes 5, side strips so it will probably take $2\frac{1}{2}$ hides. Vivian indicates there will also be a front and back piece attached. From the hides sewn already there are some narrow edge strips that have been saved for boat lashing and at least one full hide will be left for this purpose, too.

May 29, 1981 Keel River Camp.

By 12:30 p.m. the men have checked and cut into the tree on the island selected for the keel. It is rotten and they have to find another. George, Jonas Gabe and Bill go off in the boat returning at 3:30 - not looking for a keel as anticipated but for the two gunwales.

They went 3 to 4 miles upstream and into the forest. George tells Bill it was common for them in the past to go that far from camp to look for the right trees since those near favorite campsites would quickly have been used and with the slow growth of trees in the area replacements took a long time. They would either carry back or float down the logs selected and they are heavy - especially the gunwales which are also long. Bill said an added difficulty is to maneuver them through the trees and trod through the deep moss cover.

The first tree selected was a good 10" in diameter but when felled its upper diameter was too small. The second tree was a similar size at the base and when felled it was

Bill's report

4 1/2" at its needed length - the length was measured by Gabe who brought along a string of that length. 43' ~~It~~ ^{They} will extend somewhat beyond the length of the boat.

Unlike previous selections, after the standard test to judge the straightness of grain, the tree is felled before any trimming or shaping. The important criteria of the diameter of the upper part cannot be judged for certain until it is on the ground. Besides trimming off the branches they used the power saw to cut out a wedge, about 12' in the middle of the base and upward and then sawed the upper part in half. For the gunwales they not only want straight grain but parallel ^{side} grain throughout to give them rigidity. Each of this gunwale is trimmed and shaped to about 4" wide.

At first Gabe looked for a tree of the same size but when one was not located in the vicinity he selected a shorter tree with about a 9" diameter at the base but a diameter

May 29, 1981 Keele River Camp.

Bill's Report

off at 6 1/2 Gabe spans (39'). When asked by Bill if in the old days they sometimes chose a shorter tree to make the inside 2 gunwales, his reply is yes. If two trees chosen are identical, each is one side's gunwale. The approach taken when one is shorter is to use its ~~two~~ halves for the inner gunwale on each side and the longer tree for the two outer gunwales. This second tree is just trimmed before returning to camp. At camp the same wedge cut is made as with the first gunwale and is over 5' in length. The power saw was ~~the~~ predominant on this expedition but axes used, too. On the afternoon trip of 3 hours Bill estimates 1 hour was spent traveling and searching for the right trees and 2 hours of working on the trees. Gabe said during this excursion that in the old days they sometimes would make a boat in one day.

On their return the men select another tree on the island for the keel but it is not

It will be shaped at the very last when they are ready to put all the boat parts together. All that has been done is the felling and a saw cut up the middle of the tree but not all the way. Since it was George rather than Gabe there for the cutting (but selected by Gabe) it was measured by Georges span $4\frac{1}{2}$ times, 25" and 3". A 2" ^{thick} piece will be cut of that length.

From 7:30-11:00 George, Jonas, Gabe and Bill went to look for game but came back unsuccessful and no one is eating much since eggs are the only possible food besides Kraft Cheese dinners or rice. The men did check the rapids below (about 4 miles and place checked on picnic) and the rapids are very strong. Gabe doesn't think they should try it in the moose-skin boat until the water is down 2 or 3 feet.

Weather remained warm and mainly sunny and the water level did not go down very much during the day.

It is now four weeks since I arrived in a snow-covered world. Now the surrounding mts. have only small veins of snow and there is green.

May 30, 1981 Keele River Camp.

The first news of the morning is that Johnny Yakeleya, Raymond's grandfather, has died of a stroke ~~this~~ at 7:30 after 5 days in the hospital in Inuvik. Later in the day arrangements are made that the plane expected tomorrow will come Monday morning for Raymond and Gabe and that they will return the same evening after the funeral.

By noon the women have finished sewing the side seams on the first bottom hide (about an hour and a half) and are filmed as Madeline cuts sides for the second hide. I am asked to join in the sewing at 1:00 and by the time it starts raining - 5:30 - I have several cuts on my left thumb and one on the index. Although sewing two thicknesses of hide are easier than the three on the bottom, for the novice it is difficult not to get cuts from the needle. The women are working on the third hide's sides when by 6:00 it begins to rain hard and they have to make more sinew thread and no more sewing until later in the evening.

May 30. Keel River Camp

BCY.

men are putting finishing touches on various parts of the boat. Gabe planes the bottom of the stern and further shapes the steering oar - that has not warped in the last couple of days. George says if it had; they would have been able to adjust for it in the final shaping. George trims the longitudinal supports, Leon smoothes down the poles. *

The gunwales are dropped in the water of the canal adjacent to the working area so they will not dry out.

The men except George and Leon take the boat at 4:00~~pm~~ to try to find game. They return at 10:00 p.m. and everyone is full of joy and renewed energy when the moose, in numerous sections, is taken out of the boat and quickly some ribs are boiling, others cooked outside and calf is baking. Leon especially is very busy unloading the boat, cutting sections for cooking and keeping fires going. This is so much better than a quiet afternoon of a nap during the rain and

May 30.

* Also in afternoon Gabe drills a hole in each the bow and stern, one Gabe span from the notch and they are squared off by George and are $1\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$ in which the wooden pegs will be secured.

George and others collect a number of small ~~logs~~ ^{logs} and cut off ends in points so they can be pushed into the ground. These will be cross props for assembling the boat.

People are eating at various times but before midnight all the men have joined the women sewing on the hide, and Nora helps too. They quit for the night a little before 2:00 a.m. and Nora says most of the 4th hide is finished. Although the night is cold and damp there is new vigor with the joy of real food again - meat - and the near completion of the hides. Once they are finished they will put the boat together.

May 31, 1981 Keele River Camp

In morning there is more making of sinew thread and Madeline is working with the moosemeat. A new, small ~~lean-to~~ lean-to is set up near the woman's tent and she has meat on poles and other parts sectioned as well as a fire going with a Kettle of boiling meat.

After 12:00 the crew is back to sewing on the mooseskins and when the rain began at 2:00 they continued under a lean-to of a large plastic tarp. There was hail at 3:45 but the group is determined to finish the sewing even though it is raining and it ~~there~~ is a raw cold day and evening. The sewing is not finished until 11:00 and the original plan of building the boat at 4:00 p.m. is obviously delayed until tomorrow. By now they have run out of band-aids (their supply plus my box) and all the women's hands are sore and cut.

Gabe is quite determined to go to Fort Norman tomorrow for the Yakaleya funeral and drum dance but knows he is also responsible to

May 31, 1981 Keele River Camp

BCG

if they get started early in the morning they could have it finished by noon.

Gabe describes to Raymond and myself that in the old days they made the boats in much less time. [this does not explain why this boat is taking so long - since he is in charge and there are hard workers to help - men and women. The filming of construction has caused a minimal to zero ~~time~~ delay in the work.]

Gabe talks of one time in the 1920's when a group of them made a 12 skin boat for 5 families plus dogs, drymeat & gear. The women did the sewing in 2 days and 2 nights. Each family had "14, 15, 9, 8 and 9 dogs and 4 to 5 adults per family.

Bill finds out through George that Leon was very young when his family camped here to make a mooseskin boat and only remembers a little snow and rain.

June 1, 1981 Keule River Camp

Gabe told Raymond last night that they might start the boat at 7:00 in the morning and that it could be done in 3 hours, before the plane comes and then he too, could go to Fort Norman. This morning it is also said they will begin early if it is raining but later if it is sunny. Rain would allow them to keep the boat wet during construction. Since they start at 10:00 and the day is predominantly sunny, Bill surmises they started then when it could be dry and hot for a long time rather than later in the day because Gabe still hoped to finish the boat and get to Fort Norman.

*



By 4:30 and some hours of pulling hide tighter into place a rip in the sewing on the left upper ~~side~~ part of the side between 2nd & 3rd hide. George says it can't be repaired, would have to take the whole boat apart. "leave it as it is." But Gabe thinks differently and gets a scrap piece of hide and shapes it with his knife and starts sewing. He has it finished and through the

his hand with the needle and a deep, bleeding cut but doesn't stop until finished.

Madeline fleshes and cleans 2 baby moose-hides in the afternoon (2:00 - 5:30) after last night's work and sore fingers. (She wants to make Clarence a parka, has 1 at home and needed 2 more.

At 5:40 the plane is overheard for Raymond and Gabe to go to Norman. Finally! fog in the Mackenzie Valley has made a day of continued delays. The boat leaves to meet the plane with the 2 men, 2 dogs and ~~the~~ meat. The plane doesn't take off until 6:40; it took several attempts to make an okay take-off. George gets back from the landing-take-off area at 7:00. Not much to do on the boat but lash it in several places between gunwales so it won't widen during the night. Finished by 9:00 and talk of going out for more small spruce ~~for~~ for the ribs - but don't. Jonas returns later with the 2 dogs sent to go on the plane but left - to much weight? or bothersome.

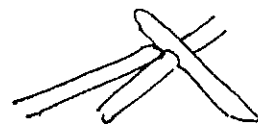
An early night (11:00) for returning to tent, Bill

June 1, 1981 Keele River Camp.

B.C.S.

By 10:30 Madeline is cutting lashings (3/4") with her knife and works for about an hour. There is nothing now for the women to do and for most of the day they are not at the boat's construction site, obviously not interested now that their job is finished.

The construction supports have already been placed.



At 10:00 the gunwales are first layed on the ground on both sides from the tripods and moosekins are rolled out between tripods.

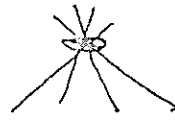
Stern and bow pieces are retested on construction supports and pegs are driven through moosehide about 5" in from edge and then driven into bow & stern.

A "false keel" is set between bow & stern. It is shorter than the final one and will be taken out later; its function is to support the bow & stern while they set the gunwales. There are grunts and groans with the hard force needed by 4 men to get it in place.

Now a much larger tripod is set up in the center, between the other 2 supports. It is about 10' but it is decided it is too tall so Jonas and Leon are off 2' at the bases. Elabe is watching and making the judgement of this support's height. After the tripod

June 1 Keel River Camp

BEG



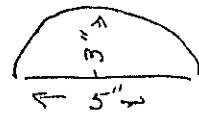
is at 10' Jonas adds another pole and it is now a quadpod and it is ~~to~~ tied with hide lashings. 11:05 - Then the outer gunwales were raised and in their centers, tied with hide lashings to the quadpod while others lash together the gunwales just ahead of bow & stern as tightly as possible, all men & Madeline helping in the holding up of the gunwales and lashings at the two ends and in the meantime making sure the gunwales are set & tied on their sides. The lashings at bow & stern were done by Gabe while George and Jonas push as hard as possible to keep the joining of the gunwales tight together. The process is repeated about 2' beyond on the extensions of the gunwales from bow ~~to stern~~. Lashings are secured by a simple slip knot.

Gabe begins in center of gunwales to ~~put~~ lap over them the hide cover and George, Jonas & Leon helping, working outward to bow & stern with a 4" to 6" ~~overlap~~ overdrop. Hide is secured by lashings to 2 of the quadpod poles and then inner gunwales are set in place & held, and rest of hide is pulled up between gunwales so that it is tight at the 2 poles. The hide is knifed outside of gunwales and willow sticks are inserted so it won't slip and is lashed to inner gunwale. This process is continued toward bow

and stern after a noon coffee break. The outer and inner gunwales are mailed together about every 3' and the willow pegs holding the hides are almost 12" to 18".



12:30 tarps placed over the boat to keep the hides moist and men starting working on keel that was cut down this morning not far from working site.

The log was $9\frac{1}{2}' \times 5'$ and Gabe cuts it in half with a power and is finished further with axe to



1:00 a meal is served at the working site

1:30-2:00 most of camp fetching water and/or dousing boat's hide cover with water.

2:00-2:30 Setting of the keel. They first decide to raise the boat at each end about 18" in order to get the keel in place. The tripods are readjusted and Jonas adds another pole prop to each (for bow he axed a pole for the purpose and was fitting ~~it~~ into place within 7 minutes.) The curved keel  is then pushed to bend in opposite manner  which takes several efforts by

June Keel River Camp.

B.C.S.

afterwards to the lashing of the keel to bow & stern at 3:00, George at ~~bow~~ ^{bow} and Jonas at ~~stern~~ ^{stern}. Lashings have to go under the area of overlap of keel with bow & stern ends. At bow George asks Bill to stand high up on bow piece to raise area of overlap so he can get lashings underneath; it is hard work to push lashing underneath the overlaps since boat is very tight already. In meantime Leon continues to add pegs through the hide on outside of gunwales. While Jonas finishes tying bow lashes George and Babe bring the 4 longitudinal support planks. They are checked for length and chopped off, leaving the narrower ends for the bow. Two are placed on each side of the keel and then they place 3 logs between gunwales at center and midway between center to bow & stern to widen the boat. Longitudinal supports are lifted and shoved by foot into place up the sides, each about 12" apart and from keel at the center and all 3 (2 supports and keel) joining at bow & stern.

More nails are put in gunwales (axe handles as well as hammers at use) and a number of thin rib poles are tested (diameter approx. 2"), first 2 break and George complains they are not green enough.

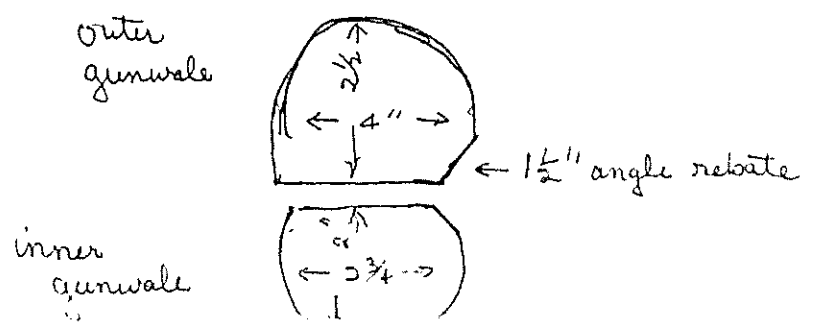
As ribs are placed the 2 wood braces...

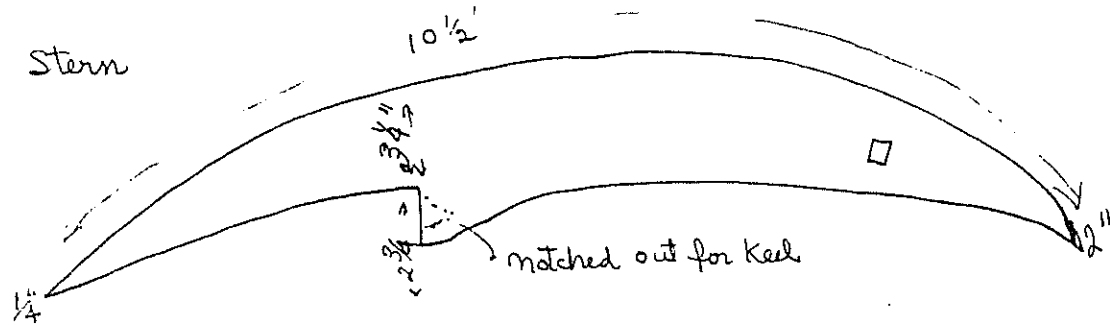
from center are moved further toward bow & stern as boat widens, & also ribs in central area are moved toward the narrower bow & stern. While placing ribs the longitudinal supports (+) are also more permanently set in place.

Rib poles are not cleaned of bark except the pointed tips that are inserted between the inner and outer gunwales. The poles are first bent by leaning on them and/or stepping on ~~one end~~ while jammed into place.

At end of day I measure the boat with Bill's aid - it is 46', bowsprit 3', stern extension 1', 7' 2" wide at the beam, 6' 6" ground to front of bowsprit.

gunwales - inner 2 3/4", outer 4" in width
2" 2" in depth
angle rebate (Bill's term) 1 1/2" [to hold ribs]





Bow the same within $\frac{1}{4}$ " in width & depth - no ruler measurements involved.

Notches in bow and stern were $3'' \times 3\frac{1}{2}''$ wide ^{deep}

My tape measurer was not known until the boat was finished today. Once it was measured George asked to borrow it. [It was not returned until several days down river and was often used in the interim - but obviously never needed for basic construction.]

Pages titled "Major Boat Construction" were rewritten from another notebook since notes were taken in telegraph style.

June 2, 1981 Kele River Camp.

BCG

George frustrated; doesn't feel he can do much on the boat until Gabe gets back but also can't reach Norman on the radio at 10:00 a.m. & before and reported fogged in by other reception.

Maybe Gabe & Raymond won't return today and still no rain and the boat is drying (but there was no effort yesterday or today to keep splashing water throughout its inside.

George and Jonas do the lashings on the gunwales from 1:00 - 2:30. The lashings will hold the hide tight between the inner and outer gunwales but the temporary pegs through the hide on the outside of gunwales are kept in place but trimmed down in length.

In morning Madeline cleans a moosehide, a 3 hour job for her (10:00 - 1:00). Afterwards she and Cecilia make moosehide lashings from wet hide, cutting in a circular fashion. The lashings are approx. $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide.



Another thing George doesn't feel he can do is set the oar locks. First Gabe has to decide where he wants the steering

June 2

BCG

regular oar locks are located.

Also need full crew and additional men to get the boat into water.

At 1:30, by radio, the plane from Fort Norman is expected to leave in a couple of hours. At this hour the women had taken down their tent and by 2:30 ours & supply tent are down.

4:30 George and Jonas take rubber boat a short distance upstream for a log right for the steering oar lock. They return a 3 prong log base - probably an old base cut that then produced 3 shoots; they need 2 curved prongs for the lock.



At 5:30 the rubber boat is loaded with camp goods and Sheila and Sally and they leave to meet the plane. At 7:00 the boat returns from plane with Raymond, Gabe and 2 more men that will help it the rowing down the river, they are David Etchindle and Jim Bavard. (never introduced). Raymond says they saw the mother grizzly and her 2 cubs when their plane took off yesterday.

At 8:30 the men are at the boat Jonas &

June 2, 1981

the bow allowing the boat to widen about 3". Men around the boat until 11:30 but can't do very much until decides where the 5 thwarts are to be placed. Then they are set, nailed and lashed. The thwarts are important braces to keep the boat frame from collapsing and are the seats for the oarsmen.

Bob trims more off of the steering oar with axe and knife and roughly shapes out main piece of oar lock.

All pegs of willow fastening hide to outer side of the gunwales are trimmed.

Vivian mentions today to Bill and to myself she has seen a type of hide glove when she was about Sheila's age that was used by the older women to sew the moose hides. She thinks the thimble was a late introduction. Glove protected palm and lower parts of the fingers, but as vaguely described it doesn't seem to protect the upper finger digits.

Last evening project by men was the beginning of shaping the 4 oar braces and one is hammered in place.

June 2, 1981 Mooseskin Boat - Keele River Camp. - BCS.

Men begin working around boat after 11:00. At 11:30 Jonas, Jim and David in Zodiac boat with power saw to select 2 timbers for 2 oars (2 were made weeks before) and they return at 2:30 and begin axing them into shape.

In the morning, 9:30 - 11:00, Cecilia and Madeline make more sinew, not expected to be used on the boat but to take home. At 12:00 Cecilia and Vivian make more lashing and almost all of the 8th skin used for the boat is now being made into lashings.

George checks lashings of thwarts to make sure they are tight and comments that before they had nails they had to check the lashings every morning; they could wear thin and if they broke the sides would just give out.

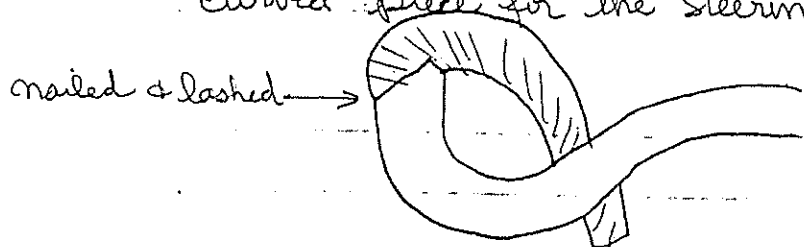
Between 12:00 - 1:30 George adds a 5' brace overlapping bow and keel (between 7th rib and not quite to 2nd rib toward bow front). It is nailed and lashed once to under bow & keel joining and in 2 places to bow & keel lashings. This is apparently just a practical, innovative idea and is not necessarily a "traditional"

brace
Keel bow

June 3

The men are cutting small spruce saplings and fitting them in the boat with 31 placed. The bark is not removed and George says they will have to be replaced, probably twice on the trip down river as the moosehide stretches further when in the water. Ribs are first set in the center of the boat and then work outward toward bow and stern. The ends are cut into points so they fit between hide and inner gunwales and they are bent and shoved into place by at least 2 men on each. Some are quickly moved further from the center or replaced as the hide stretches in the process.

By 2:00 p.m. Gabe and Leon were still refining the steering oar, now using plane as well as axe. Then Gabe shaped out other curved piece for the steering lock.



Others refine rowing oars but often are just standing around. Bill hears from George

June 3

Kele River Camp.

BCs.

they expect Gabe to tell them what to do but he won't say anything. George tells them he is always like that and all one can do is go ahead on something and he will only comment when you have done it wrong - Gabe is not easy for anyone, expects people to learn on their own but then is very particular with anything he feels he has charge over.

In afternoon a few holes in the hides fairly high on the sides are patched with smoked caribou and sewing glue. By now the moosehides are dry on the sides and one can see through the single stitching in many places - with the stretching the sewing holes are larger than the sinew thread.

During a break Gabe tells a story that a long time ago a mooseskin boat hit a rock and the gunwales came loose on one side. Steersman said "don't move" everyone in the boat, women and children were very still. When he got the boat to shore it collapsed. He had good medicine to have the boat hold together until safely at shore. The place this happened

June 3, 1981

Keele. The channels change every year in places and that makes each trip tricky and requires careful watching (these boats don't go backwards.)

Comments by Bill on rowing oars: Although the men refer to the oars as paddles they are oars which makes it almost definite this is an adaptation of the York boat and no North American Indian boat - they paddle and would not think of rowing with their backs to the bow - their forward direction. And, the steersman has to steer faster than the current for the steering oar to be able to steer, otherwise the oar would just pull them to the side. It is especially important that the men row fast in dangerous areas because the faster the boat is traveling, the more steering control in relation to current.

Rowing is done from opposite side of boat from where oar is in oar lock. Each man will have the same oar and same seating place throughout the trip.

Most of the camp's goods are taken to the shoreline by 5:00 ready for loading

June 3, 1981 Keele River Camp

BCG.

By 9:30 p.m. rowing oar locks finished, put in place as well as their pegs. Steering oar lock is attached with nails and lashing (it still has the bark on). One oar is still only roughly shaped and Gabe still at planing steering oar.

10:00 The boat is lifted and carried to the shore, about 200' from construction site. All adults except film crew and myself (they don't want me in the film) help and it takes several efforts at several spots to lift and move the heavy boat.

10:45 - 11:30 Madeline & Cecilia covering seams except at very bottom. They do half the seams with moose fat - rancid and moldy - that they chew (yuck!) first to soften. It hardens within minutes after applied. The other parts are smeared with deep fry tallow (H.B.C. item) and the rest of us women help with this substance. Still have to grease bottom but everyone wants to quit a bit before midnight.

Water continues to go down in the river yesterday and today. Both days cool and sunny except for one afternoon shower today.

June 4, 1981

Camp is active by 10:00 a.m. and by 11:00 men are working on cars and by noon boat is fully greased, at seams and put in the water.

Between 1:00 - 3:00 camp is dismantled and all packs are taken to the shore. The camp site is carefully checked for any litter and all is burned or otherwise destroyed and area is left very clean.

The boat is gradually loaded and there are mounds to load. At 3:30 George makes 1st trip in Zodiac from the camp to high cliff before dangerous river bend - about 4 miles downstream. This load included Vivian, Children, Madeline, Cecilia, Pauline & myself. Besides being foolish to carry my heavy bag of writings & camera they dumped on me 2 loaded rifles, one with a loose case & no shoulder strap. The gravel & sandy cliff was probably less than 150' but seemed to be over 200'. It was a difficult climb.

2nd load arrived at 5:30 in Zodiac with Bill, Nora & 3 dogs and Raymond for round trip. At this hour plane sent to camp site to pick up another load of gear. It is frequently raining, my rain poncho used for Lawrence and much

June 4, 1981

It is gradually realized during the day by me, never clearly stated to most of us, that Gabe's goal of this first day in the boat is only to get through the dangerous curve of rapids and several sharp boulders, a distance of about 5 miles. Gabe is aloof, showing quiet concern through the day and continues to plane his steering oar and cut off 4'. Also others cut off more from rowing oars before leaving. Since the men have taken my tape measure days ago, the final measurement of the oars will probably be at the museum.

8:00 p.m. the mooseskin boat reaches cliff and everyone is on the cliff for tea in the rain. Gabe is concerned of the weight of the boat for the curve so only he and oarsmen will take the boat and all women and Bill as well as all the dogs (12) hike overland to other side of the dangerous river bend and wait their until mooseskin boat has passed through the bend and is moored at tonight's camp site and until George returns from there in the Zodiac at 10:00 p.m. We leave after a hour of tea & rest and dog catching and get to

Bill and dogs and get to camp site at 12:30. By the time the women arrive the men have set up camp and men are already eating boiled moose meat and several pots of tea & coffee. Gabe still has his own tent - takes my poncho to cover a leak - it is still raining. Jim & David have a tent, Vivian & George but the rest of us, some of us at least not asked to, pile in the one large tent taken with us.

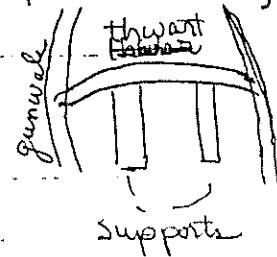
It is ~~not~~ wet & cold, group getting into tents after 1:30. My pants have been wet since this afternoon in the Zodiacs, water drains on other clothes & sleeping bag and a generally miserable beginning of the great voyage.

June 5, 1981 Keele River.

Bey.

Madeline & Cecilia are up at 8:00 a.m. (their usual time) to start a fire and make tea and coffee but others not up until 10:00 and everyone needing breakfast of oatmeal, eggs, toast etc. The weather is rainy and raw and George says we probably won't travel at all today if the weather doesn't change.

Men work on boat after breakfast and replace most of the ribs with larger ones and put supports under 4 of the thwart, not under to one closest to the bow.



Now the thwarts are curved slightly $\cap \cap$ and Bill believes that too is a York boat feature, nothing should be straight of the wood frame. The flat bottom of a York boat he suggests might be an adaptation to portaging.

The new ribs and supports have raised the height of the boat about a foot, according to the Start reloading the boat at 4:00 with the plan of traveling some forty miles.

June 5

and we are not ready to leave until 5:30 with the radio the last thing taken down. We travel until 9:00 with one 15 minute stop where George cuts off his oar about 5" - he is the bowman and rows from the shortest thwart. At 9:00 we reach a rapids and the women, except me & children walk overland to other side of rapids. There were short rough waves but to me not that dangerous in such a large and sturdy boat. It seems the women are generally very afraid of water and the men treat it with due caution & respect. The men row hard here as in previous rough waters and sharp curves - otherwise they row when they feel like it which is at least half of the time. Gabe sings and talks during much of the trip and all are in good humor. The Zodiac is run by Jim Bavard and today had Raymond and Bill with him although bad weather continued. It started to rain steadily at the rapids so we stopped to camp soon afterwards. This site was in a mature forest up from an abrupt mud bank of 6'. The large tent, fire with coffee & tea were ready in 1/2 hr.

June 5. Keele River

Beryl

to nearby creek & returned with 3 trout (Madeline cooks them for the women & children). At 11:00 pm George, Jonas, Jim, Dave & Raymond leave camp to see if they can find any sheep.

June 6

Men return at 5:30 this morning w/ 3 sheep cut up a little ways down river. They go to sleep at 6:00 and Madeline, Cecilia & myself up at 8:30. Leon, Gabe & Vivian up at 10:00 but others sleep until 11:30.

First morning in days of blue sky - great day, but certainly no hurry to travel & Madeline roasts the one side of sheep brought to camp.

At noon I go with Raymond and Jim in Zodiac to get the sheep meat. At this time we were expected to leave at 1:00 & depart at 1:30. At 6:00 p.m. we are passing through Caribou Flats country and caribou are sighted. George gets one while still in the boat. The boat is hurriedly moored and everything jumps out in a frenzy except me holding down 2 dogs. It takes an hour to cut up the caribou, haul it, collect deers

June 6

back in the boat.

At 7:45 the group stops for a meal while George and Bill take groceries & empty gas tanks to an abandoned air strip of a mining company. The mooseskin boat has so much gear no one can move while traveling and that is not good for filming. They hope the supplies can be picked up by a plane at some future time.

By the time they return, 9:45, Gabe asks if we shouldn't camp for the night (while the 2 men were gone and after fire is made 8:00 - Gabe cooks his own dinner and uses just his own dishes and eats by himself).

During today's travels 2 salt licks for sheep are pointed out by Gabe, not distinctive to an unpracticed observer. Sheep were sighted 3 times, one - three - three. All were at the tree line or above it and men comment closer to hunt than those they killed last night.

Bill estimates today the Keela current is about 6 m.p.h.

10:00 p.m. Once it is known we are to camp the women cut up the caribou and hang sections.)

June 6

Keela River

Beryl

Sheep meat and put 2 sheep heads in ashes for slow roasting. The women enjoy fresh marrow while cutting up the meat.

The day was cloudy and windy but no storms while in the boats but at 10:30 high winds and storms after midnight. Warm night, the most mosquitoes so far and Gabe and others still talking after 1:00 a.m.

June 7, 1981 Keele River Camp.

His father went to Liard 2 times and use of the Nahani River is mentioned. He never heard of anyone from his group going to McPherson but implies going to Good Hope to any post to Liard were all possible.

People traveled in small groups looking for game and traveled all over, never a yearly pattern but tried different places, then people would meet at the Twitya and Keele Rivers and then go down the River together.

When some went to the Yukon they would go about 80 miles in the Yukon with dogs + tobaggons and after hunting and trapping return with dogs with packs (this answer is confusing)

Gabe tells Bill sometime in the past day that muzzle loaders never missed, were good for hunting sheep, he has shot a sheep with one and his father used his muzzle loader often

A formal interview was set for 1:30 at which time Raymond would interview, Vivian would translate and Nora would record. It actually begins at 3:00 with obvious concern of the time. It is clear before this that we will

June 7, 1981 Keele River Camp.

by Pauline is "We Indians don't travel on Sunday. This is true when wished to be and especially Gabe is in no hurry to end this trip in which he is the King pin, a role not available when living in present day Fort Norman.

The taped interview is finished at 4:00. After this Raymond, Nora, Jim and Dave + Jonas go sheep hunting. Gabe, Bill and Pellisey family take afternoon excursion in the Zodiac - it remains raw and sometimes rainy and Gabe now borrows my wool poncho.

June 8, 1981 Keel River BCG

We leave the Caribou Flats camp at 11:15, by far the earliest start. Madeline, Cecilia + I are up by 7:15 - obviously trying to get things moving after the usual drawn-out breakfast and several pots of coffee.

At 2:00 we stop briefly so that I can be in the Zodiac and Bill in the moosekin boat for filming since the sky is blue and scenery grand. We get far ahead in the Zodiac and have to go back upstream to find the rest of the group moored and having the afternoon meal (about 4:00). Group starts out again at 5:30 with an increasing strong wind.

In Zodiac Jim, Raymond and I stop at site of Albut Wright's log cabin and others. It is shortly after the confluence of the Twitya and Keel Rivers. Jim knows exactly where the cabins are although he is not in this area frequently, maybe only several times (he has been to Caribou Flats only twice according to him). Jim stays next to the boat while Raymond and I walk around the generally collapsed cabins. I notice 5, Raymond finds 6. The site is impossible to see now from the River and can only be found without knowing it is there.

June 8, 1981 Keel River BCG

where to stop.

At 6:15 we notice the moosekin boat resting at shoreline. It is the first travel time that George is the steersman but the wind is so strong they can make little headway and all the oarsmen got blisters in a short time. By 6:30 we start out again with the Zodiac towing.

At 8:30 we stop so that George and Hake in the Zodiac can go ahead and check a bad curve. It is decided to have the women and children walk to other side of curve and as the case previously, Madeline takes the lead and walks briskly and confidence she knows where to cut through the woods to a good spot on the other side of the curve.

The men with boats stop at tonight's camp site at 9:00 and George picks up us walters in the Zodiac and at camp by 9:30.

By my personal evaluation I would consider this a miserable camp site. It is on a steep ridge above the River so all gear and buckets of water are carried uphill. There is no even ground for tent. The mosquitoes are thick in the

immediate area. Gabe is the one who selects the camp sites and there is no indication there anymore than a personal, arbitrary decision.

An evening meal of lamb, caribou chunks & and the baby sheep is cut up & strung near the fire to dry.

During today's travel a couple of salt licks are pointed out. It is impossible for me to make notations or use a map during travel. In either boat there is no time to look at a map, paper would get soaked and usually one is too crumpled anyway for such matters.

June 9, 1981 Keele River

BCY.

Us three women up at 8:00 and when getting more water at 9:00 Madeline sights a moose on the other shore and yells. George and Jonas jump from their tents with guns ready and George ~~shoots~~ wounds it and quickly takes the Zodiac across to finish the kill. After a brief return to camp he and Jonas go across again to butcher and return at 10:00.

We are packed and leave at 11:30 and at 12:30 sheep are sighted and all the men begin the chase. George and Bill do not walk far but the rest run up the mountain side, each group with success. The sheep have to be carried down, skinned, cut-up and loaded into the boat and do not get off until after 3:00. At 4:00 we stop for a meal and do not begin again until 6:00. The meal site was on an open, rocky area to avoid mosquitoes and by now the mountains are lower and approaching foothills.

We travel until 9:30 and camp on a flat large wide beach of river smoothed rocks. Most sleep in the open on a bed of spruce boughs, with few mosquitoes as compared to the nearby woods.

June 10, 1981 Keele River

BCE

Begin travel day at 11:30 in good weather and quite a bit of filming. At 1:30 a moose and calf are sighted and shot; they were very close to the river bank. The boats are moored quickly and George, Jonas and Jim take Zodiac to the kill and return later with the moose meat. We remain at this mooring until 5:15 during which time of course there is a major meal including some of the fresh moose.

At 7:15 we stop at the sight of power boat of men from Fort Norman to begin the greetings of several groups as we near the flats and end of trip - the group included Albert Menacho & son & Paul Andrew. They had just got a moose themselves. After about a 45 minute visit of tea and snacks all boats travel downstream until 8:45 when we stop at next boat - this is David ~~Etchinelle's~~ Etchinelle's family and we make camp at 9:30 after going upstream, mooseskin boat in tow, to a camp site selected by Babe on a small island. The men insist this is no good and turn around and make the selection.

There is much visitation around an enormous fire.

June 11th 1981 Keele River.

We leave the campsite about 11:30 and soon are in the flatlands and wide, fairly slow channels of the Keele River. The other power boats are much faster and usually go a distance ahead although about an hour after departure the mooseskin boat is towed by the Zodiac. We reach the Mackenzie River at 3:30 and soon afterwards picnic on the west shore with other boats of Fort Norman greeting groups. ~~at 4:00~~

At 6:00 we leave this last stopping site and are towed by the Zodiac until within sight of Fort Norman. After the mooseskin boat is on its own power of rowing the guns are shot to announce arrival and the boat is docked at 10:45. The arrival was greeted by almost the entire Fort Norman population on the shore below the Hudson's Bay Co. complex. It was an emotional event, especially for the older generation that remember previous arrivals of mooseskin boats. But soon after personal greetings the boat was unloaded, many helping, and gear and supplies were loaded in several pick-ups for various locations of houses and store houses.

June 12th - 14th Fort Norman, 1981

BCG

Maurice Mendo steering the boat. She had met me on our arrival and that was basically when my role as recorder of the Moosekin Boat Project ended.

~~June 12~~ - June 12th - 14th, 1981 Fort Norman.

BCG.

Last night there was a drum dance in honor of those on the Moosekin Boat Project from 1:30 to 3:30. There were also many family & otherwise gatherings before, during and after the dance and much drinking.

Bill Stewart & Nora Jim left on the 12th for Yellowknife, Raymond left on the 13th and myself on the 14th. This was a time of visiting and parties and I only saw Lobe of the crew after the drum dance of those who live here. There was also a sense of let-down to exhaustion that the project was complete and no real desire on my part - or anyone else's that I could ascertain - for serious interviews.

On my asking Laura Yakeleya and Fred Gaudet when they thought the dry meat trade ended they admitted they would have to guess, but suggested 1943, 1946 or 1948.

Fred Gaudet also added that it wasn't infrequent that dogs got to the boat's moosehides before people had a chance to take them off the boat frame. He remembers the arrivals of moosekin boats - 10-12 together and all their packs of meat and grease.

Sue Cross, Conservator of the Museum left on 4/5. 13th with mail boxed to Norman Wells.