



STARTING FOR THE BIG CIRCUIT

A WISCONSIN CANOE TRIP

By WARREN B. BULLOCK

THEY say four men in two canoes can make it in four days.

Old-time guides may be looking for "time" when they say a party should make it in not less than ten.

You can guess for yourself whether two men, four women (three of them tenderfeet), and a boy loafed on the job or took it too easy when they negotiated it in an even week.

"It" is the Horseshoe Circle, a canoe trip of 39 of Wisconsin's most beautiful lakes, none visited twice on the entire circuit; two crossings of the continental divide, fishing from trout and bass to muscallonge, and back again; and last but not least, 30 portages in the 70 miles of traveling.

Starting at Cisco Lake, in Upper Michigan, reaching down across the divide to the famous Manitowish of Wisconsin, back to Horseshoe Lake, and then along the crest of the divide with a finish at Cisco, the tour takes in three main water-

sheds and touches wide-thrown divisions of these main "waters," striking from Cisco, whose waters drop down to Lake Superior, across the lakes on the crest of the divide, to the Manitowish, whose lakes and branches eventually debouche into the Gulf of Mexico through the Mississippi.

Traveling with a tenderfoot is not a trial, for guide or guided, if the preparations are adequate. This is true whether the canoe cruisers are men or women, and with The Boss, a seasoned camper, heading the party, the three other women were told every detail of their needs for a week in the great north woods. The Boss showed them how to cook, open-air fashion, as they never cooked before. She made girls paddle who had never before sat in a canoe. She fed her hungry Husband and the Groom, when the two men staggered into midday camp with their two canoes yoked on their shoulders, sweltering under their loads and—yes, this is a true story—sending an occasional

feasting mosquito to the bug heaven. The Bride learned to carry a blanket roll, one of the four halves of regular army "pup" tents, bought at a sale of discarded army goods, containing two blankets, a bag of toilet articles which women insist upon even on a canoe trip, an extra pair of stockings and shoes for each of the party, all rolled tightly and tied in army fashion.

Teacher's job was to assist the mere men, Husband and The Groom, in making and breaking camp, while Cooke assisted The Boss in the chef's department. The boy? He helped get the firewood.

The Boss told the tenderfeet girls to get, as she had done, khaki or corduroy riding breeches, high boots, lacing to the knee; a man's flannel shirt, and a short skirt—perhaps. She herself soon cached her skirt in the pack-sacks. The tenderfeet girls soon wished they had taken her advice in the matter of the riding breeches, instead of trying to use ordinary gymnasium bloomers.

The men were dressed like unto The Boss.

Food? Yes, there was plenty, and plain, chosen with regard to food values and weight. Rice, beans *au naturel*, not in cans; flour, baking powder, salt, coffee, tea, sugar—a lot—a slab of bacon, a few raisins, corn meal, even canned milk, one small can to the meal, made up the table repertoire. Yes, there was butter at first, until the tenderfeet learned that bacon drippings provided a "shortening" which could give the yellow spread half the race and win in a walk. There was bread for the first day, for the Groom and Husband decided to make the first day's trip sufficiently strenuous so that the tenderfeet would not awake in the night thinking the crackling of trees in the wood was a horde of voracious wild things attacking the camp.

And then the start. From Cisco, through the Ontonagon River to Lindsay, Morley, and Big lakes, the Horsehead Circle tour found its first portage into Deadwood, then to Palmer lakes. When the four women each carried a blanket roll through the forest trail, so closely wooded that the leafy branches of the trees met overhead, Husband and The



THE KIND THAT GROW IN THESE LAKES

Groom threw their canoes to their shoulders and plunged across. At the far side, while the women waited, the men went back to "double the portage," carrying the "grub packs" on the second trip. And food for seven, for seven days, dishes though of aluminum they be, make some load! But the short portages from Palmer to Cochrane, to Jones, to Devil's Lake, and then the 240-rod carry to High Lake, across the divide, produced an appetite at reaching High Lake which demolished the bread supply. The afternoon on High and Fishtrap lakes, fishing for "musky," and going into camp before 4 o'clock, to get things in order before dusk, resulted in one 20-pound muscalonge, caught by The Bride, who had never fished before and who finished him after a sharp battle, helped by a pistol in the hands of The Groom. This initial day developed appetites fit to grace the baking-powder biscuit prepared by The Boss, in a folding aluminum baker, before an open fire.

The rolling of boots in coats comprised the extent of the negligee overture to dreamland, and two ponchos spread under

the tents, two thicknesses of blanket over and two under the sleepers, comprised, with the two tiny tents, the balance of the stage setting. Three under blankets built for two, either on the ground on a bed built of balsam boughs laid in shingled rows, is crowding, it would seem, but more comfortable than it sounds. At any rate, even the three tenderfeet slept until sunrise.

They say it is a seven-mile canoe trip down the Manitowish from Fishtrap Lake to the dam, and it is a carry of a mile and a half across, so Horsehead Circlers often make the carry if pressed for time; thence four miles to Boulder Lake, with the second-night camp on this lake, after more time fishing for another musky. If you must have a balsam bed, let the experience of The Groom warn you not to use jack pine by mistake. It's an awful job to cut, and worse to lay. Three hours is a reasonable time to make a bed, if this mistake is made.

Little Bear Lake, with an ideal camp among the pine needles, is an easy second day, across Clear Crooked Lake, portaging to Wolf, then another carry to Little Bear. Fish in every lake is the rule, and with chances to see deer on Little Bear with half-way reasonable luck, it enticed the tourists for a stay and a fish. Also, the bean-hunger was upon the canoe carriers, and this means a long day in camp, for His Excellency of Boston, as any woman knows, needs prolonged boiling, and then boiled, and buried in the ground, with a hot fire all night over the pot. Say, doesn't it sound nice? In the morning the beans are burned at the top, it may chance, and the bean-hunger must be satiated with rice, boiled in the open fire and decorated with raisins tossed in at the finish, served—listen to this—with sugar and the hot, meaty juice of the pig, alias baconfat, fresh from the pan. Roughing it? Yes—but a dish to rave about when squab *en casserole* palls on the taste.

Going into camp in the dark would sound like an impossible stunt, but after a hard day, through Round, the three Crabs, Armour and Horsehead, the barren shores of Horsehead Lake, stripped of their mantle of green, offered little shelter, and in the dark the tired tourists took

a chance in the hollow between two giant cedars, and slept. Things, it might be observed, are often not so bad as they might be if you lack light to seek defects. Weary tenderfeet slept through the crash of the aluminum dishes as a deer, heading for the water, plunged into the pantry. Two porcupines, fighting over a discarded crust, awoke none but the old, experienced campers, with their ears attuned to awake only at the unusual amid the murmur of night noises of the woods.

Four days gone, and three to return, the men, while the women broke camp, pushed one canoe to the far end of the lake, heading then across country to Winegar, a tiny mill town, to replenish the store of sugar. Then came a day of portage-paddle-portage, through Oxbrow, across a fresh burning, with trail-blazes obliterated, to Anna, then to Carson, also known as Lynx, to a camp among the balsams on Rudolph. While Husband and The Groom made camp the far side of Lake Rudolph, miles from the sight of fellow men, the four women lingered in Carson Lake for a swim.

The portages from Rudolph to Lost Canteen, to Bettine, and then to Lone Pine, are famed in the Cisco-Horsehead region for their mucky swamps, threatening to mire the portager who slips from his foot-grip on the mud-greased roots of trees as he carries his canoe, sometimes leaping from root to root. This makes camp on Lone Pine a welcome rest, in preparation for a long, hard final day. Here is the last day of the trip on a breakfast of good solid pancakes. A mile and a half portage from Lone Pine to Twin Island, five—it seems like ten—miles up the shallow Presque Isle, disembarking frequently to lift over log bridges, across Sanborn, 100 rods of carry to Tenderfoot Lake. Then to Plum, with a third of a mile carry, through an inlet to the Inkpot, half a mile portage to Long Lake, a lift over a narrow bank to Bay Lake, another of the same to Emmeline, half a mile to the two Mosquito lakes, separated by a bit of dry land, through a marsh road to Grace Lake, the trip is nearly over. Half a mile across country ends the tour at Cisco Lake, just on the seven-day schedule.