

Canoe Lake Canoe Trips

Ontario, Canada

Four Annual Trips

Two Days, Two Nights Each

Four of us – Dean Wertz, Mark Doner, Dean Doner, and Brian Doner – went on an annual canoeing and fishing trip to Canoe Lake. Canoe Lake is in the middle of Lake of the Woods, but officially not part of Lake of the Woods. The only way to get to the lake is to portage into it. The lake is very remote with no other people or even animals, but it does have fish and mosquitoes. The lake is also light red (like this document background) – evidently from the type of soil at the bottom. It took a little getting used to even though the water itself was clear. The first part of the lake we called Haunted Canal, because of its eerie feel from the narrow canal and the inward leaning dead trees on both sides. Lake of the Woods is relatively flat, but as you enter the main part of Canoe Lake, you get a surprise view of a small mountain (which surprisingly, we never got a picture of). The lake is a decent size with open bays and narrower fingers. The fish in this lake consist primarily of Northern Pike (Jack), along with some perch.

Each trip entailed the four of us in two canoes to canoe 4.7 miles with all our gear from Wertz Island, through Echo Bay to the other side. At that point we had to portage the canoes and all the gear on a trail about 525 feet. Then get back in to canoe about a mile to our campsite. We would fish and hike for 48 hours before canoeing back to Wertz Island. Total canoeing distance is estimated around 15 to 20 miles. We cooked 5 meals including 2 fish dinners. The weather varied, but was never bad.

The trips unfortunately stopped after 1985. By 1986, Brian had limited time at the lake as he had to start into the real world of finishing college and starting work.

These trips were a lot of fun and forever memorable. Each trip is detailed here along with pictures. Unfortunately, we didn't take enough pictures, but what we have here will always help us remember.





Marine map with canoeing route from Wertz Island to Canoe Lake, along with camp and mountain locations



Satellite map of Canoe Lake, along with part of Echo Bay and Clytie Bay

1982 – First Annual Canoe Trip

Caught 20 Northern Pike (Jack)

- Brian = 7
- Mark = 5
- Dean = 4
- Dean W = 4

Weather: cool and overcast

This was our first trip into Canoe Lake, so it was a time of discovery, as we had never been to the lake before. Besides the area itself, one of the things we discovered is that the mosquitoes are worse than anything we have ever encountered. The first evening, we went back out to fish after dinner. Just before darkness, we started filleting our fish, and the mosquitoes started to come. We had some Army repellent that was supposed to be good stuff, but that didn't even help against these hungry mosquitoes! We were getting bit all over while trying to fillet on the rocks (we also learned after that to bring a fillet board along). Anyone that wasn't filleting at the time would try to swat the mosquitoes off others. We definitely lost some good meat during that fillet session! Every night after that we made sure we were in our tents by ten to ten, because that's when you can actually hear the loud hum of the mosquitoes coming.

Another thing we discovered is that for some strange reason, there didn't seem to be any wildlife, especially Seagulls, in the area. Normally, when you throw fish guts on the shore outside of Canoe Lake, Seagulls are ready to attack. But here the guts will sit for days without being touched.

This trip started out with Dean W. falling into the lake – not once, but twice! He fell in the first time while canoeing through Echo Bay. He stood up to stretch and fell backward over the canoe into the water. The second time he slipped into the lake while washing dishes. Dean W. also had this lucky (or unlucky?) lure that kept landing on the shore and in trees. He even went swimming one time to get it unhooked from a log at the bottom of the lake. He was always able to retrieve the lure and finally caught a large Jack with it.

Our camping site was on top of a hill in about the middle of the lake. It wasn't the ideal location as the banks to the lake were somewhat steep, making it tougher to park boats and get water. But it worked out fine.

We would usually take a midday break from fishing to do some exploring of the area. This trip we climbed the small mountain and found a small waterfall. We also found a bear trail on the way up. On the way down, we were led through the swamps, so it took longer than it should have.



Getting ready to leave on our trip – Dean W., Mark, Brian, Dean



Dean W. needed to cool off on the way to Canoe Lake



Portaging our canoes and gear from Echo Bay to Canoe Lake



A view of Canoe Lake from the small mountain



Our first fish catch!



Mark, Dean W. and Dean getting ready to cook our fish dinner

1983 – Second Annual Canoe Trip

Caught 23 Northern Pike (Jack)

- Brian = 8
- Mark = 8
- Dean = 4
- Dean W = 3

Weather: very hot and clear

During this trip we had about 18 of our fish fillets go stale because of the extra hot weather. We did not come prepared for the hotter weather compared to the previous year. The ice we used was not fully frozen inside, so was not enough to keep the fillets cold the entire trip. Dean W. caught a very large Jack, but we don't know the weight.

We camped at the same location as the first trip.

Our fishing break exploration for this trip consisted of hiking behind the small mountain. We followed a wide trail for a few miles to a small unknown lake. There we found a boat that belonged to Ron Eastman, from the Rockeries. Evidently, that is one of the locations he collects his minnows.



Getting ready to leave Wertz' – Dean, Brian, Mark, Dean W.



In our Canoes and ready to start the trip



A view of Canoe Lake from our campsite



Our catch of 10 large Northern Pike



The stringer of 10 Northern Pike ready to be filleted



Fish guts from the 10 filleted Northern Pike



Dean W. with his very large Jack, along with some normal size



On our way home through Echo Bay

1984 – Third Annual Canoe Trip

Caught 25 Northern Pike (Jack)

- Brian = 3
- Mark = 8
- Dean = 3
- Dean W = 11

Weather: hot and clear

We came better prepared for hotter weather, and used solid ice. This trip Brian and Dean's canoe could not catch any fish the second day. They would fish in the same bay as Mark and Dean W., whom were catching fish right and left. Everyone pretty much used the same lures – they were usually Dare Devils, but still no luck for the one canoe.

Our camp location changed this year to a much better spot. It is on a peninsula in the furthest bay and had been used by other people. It was much flatter and more level with the lake, and there was a nice fire pit with log seats. But the best part was that it had a rope swing into the water! There was a drop off to deep water near the campsite where someone had tied a large rope from a long log positioned over the lake.

We didn't do any exploring this trip, because Mark and Dean W. were catching too many fish. Although, we did take breaks to use the rope swing and cool off.



Canoes are packed and we're ready for the trip – Dean W., Mark, Dean, Brian



Mark and Dean W. canoeing through Haunted Canal



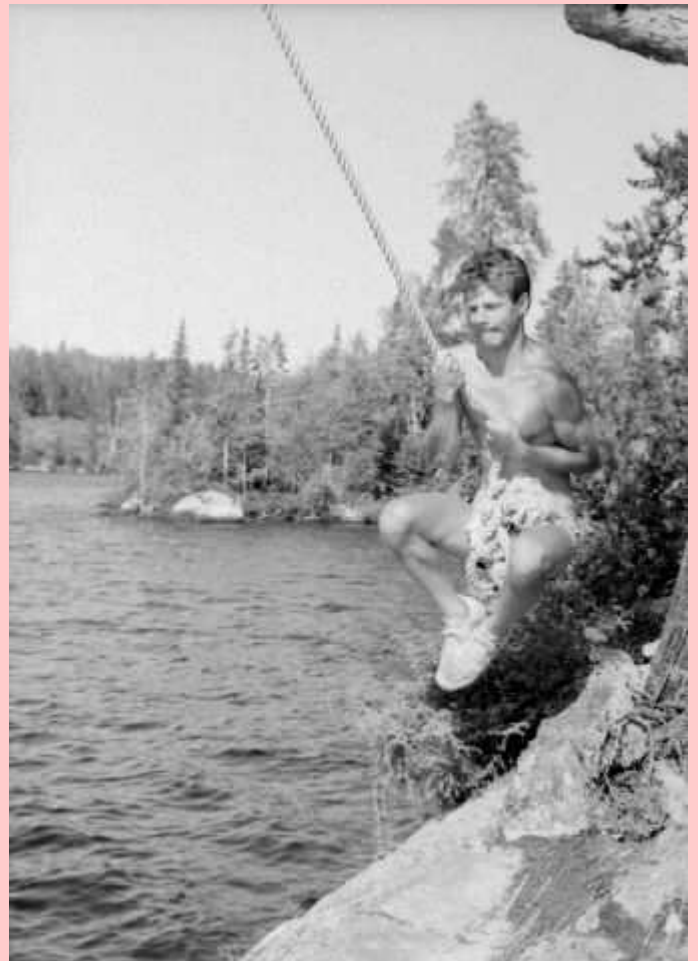
Mark and Dean W. waiting for a strike



Mark taking a break, while Dean W. waits



Mark swinging on rope swing at new campsite



Dean W. swinging on rope swing



Brian swinging on rope swing



Dean swinging on rope swing



Mark and Dean W. trying to free a ½ pound fish from the brush



Having a peaceful morning breakfast



Mark, Dean W. and Dean filleting fish



Playing with the guts



Getting rid of the fish guts – flying guts



The two Deans cleaning the fillets and knives



Preparing a good fish dinner

1985 – Fourth Annual Canoe Trip

Caught 21 Northern Pike (Jack)

- Brian = 8
- Mark = 8 (6 count)
- Dean = 4
- Dean W = 1 (out of 15)

Weather: mild (warm) and overcast

We got a late start on this trip because of a passing storm and large white-caps. We wondered if it would have to be postponed, but the storm cleared enough. It actually turned out to be nice weather for the trip, but more of a challenge paddling through Echo Bay, since that's a big bay with large waves.

No lures were lost on this trip! And we camped at the better site at the far end of the lake with the rope swing.

For our midday exploration we hiked to Clytie Bay. There is a portage into Canoe Lake from Clytie Bay at the opposite end from the Echo Bay portage. The trail was a couple miles long. On the way, we saw Ron Eastman riding an ATV down the trail to the small lake we had found on our second trip. We also discovered another small waterfall.

As always, the last morning we had to wake up, eat breakfast and cleanup camp. Then pack everything into the canoes to start our long trip back home.



A view of part of Canoe Lake



Campsite all set up



A relaxing lunch after six miles of canoeing and setting up camp



Nice catch by Dean W. and Mark



As usual, they get their lines caught again!



A view of the campsite location on the peninsula



Dean W. says "I didn't want to do this", while Mark watches!



Dean says "check this out, I'm standing on water"!



Mark runs on land and water



Dean and Brian's fish catch – all Northern Pike as usual



Six large Northern Pike



Dean W. and Mark preparing to fillet the fish



Dean washing the fillets



Mark taking a break



A tiny frog found on our hike



A view of Canoe Lake



Hiking up a waterfall



Mark preparing our last breakfast



On our hike by the waterfall



Another view of Canoe Lake



Dean W. cleaning out the tent



The last view of Canoe Lake