



KKK Canoe Adventures

The KKK waterfront had a lot of opportunities for swimming, lifesaving, rowing and canoeing instruction, but it was the troop canoe trips that were the real adventures. Of course, it always seemed like the troops that signed up for the overnight canoe trip or came down for the twilight canoeing were not the ones that had been taking the canoeing instruction. One Scout in the bow and one in the stern was about all they would get right. We helped them choose the right paddle with the paddle tip on their toes and the handle at their chin, but how they would use the paddle was sometimes their invention. A “J” stroke was something we stressed in instruction, but in these freelance type of trips, it was usually paddle on one side, switch to the other side, then back and forth. The canoe would turn right for a while and left and back in forth with usually one Scout yelling at other giving them directions regardless of their knowledge.

It was the canoe overnights that provided me some of the more interesting Staff adventures. The destination was Raccoon Springs and except for the sometimes bank to bank traverses, the trip up did not provide the real adventures. It was the coming back down with the current where they figured out how to really mess up. One such adventure was right behind the Cherokee Village headquarters where they had been digging out gravel. There was a very fast stretch of water that followed the deeper water that had resulted from their digging at the bank. That would have been fine except for the large Sycamore tree whose roots had been washed out and was now leaning straight over this section of water. Having them move to the other side was easy to tell them, but their ability to do it was another. One ended up going straight down the fast lane and then trying to avoid the tree, turned their canoe over. Now this would have been a pretty common experience if not for the fact that the open side was upstream and right at the bank, the tree and the bottom just accommodated a canoe's

width. The canoe wedged between the tree and the bottom with the force of the water pushing the canoe and gravel quickly filling it up. It took the whole troop to extract it.

Another interesting adventure happened real close to camp, at Upper Falls. A canoe turned over which was again pretty normal. We righted it and came on into camp. One of the Scouts was crying though and I asked him if he was hurt. No, he said, he had lost his glasses when they turned over. I thought it would have been a good idea for him to tell us at the time instead of after we got back to camp, but we dutifully went back and searched the bottom. Fortunately, there was a some still water right at the base of the falls so it did not take us long to find the glasses – along with several unmatched shoes.

The twilight canoeing did not have the same type of adventures except for perhaps the one time a Scoutmaster decided to take his troop below the low water bridge for a panty raid at Miramichée – but that is another story.