Jim Dolan’s Raquette River Journal

July 1971

## Sunday, July 25, 1971

I was told about noon that I was definitely going and heading up the trip. Sunday afternoon was very busy, Bob Jones (the camp director) showing me the food and tents. Later that evening I had to rearrange the food for more variety. Then, with each day’s menu spread out on the floor in the kitchen, the time came for a senior staff meeting at Barr’s house (Barr Morris, the camp owner) - did not get to bed until 1:30 am.

## Monday, July 26, 1971

Planned to get up early, but slept until the normal time. Had no time to shower Sunday - this morning perhaps an omen: no hot water.

Very disorganized getting off. We were all set about 12 noon when we discovered that one kid, Kevin Dardano, had decided not to come without taking his name off the list. I talked him into coming and finally left at 12:45 pm Timlo time. (Timlo time was one hour behind daylight savings time i.e., standard time. In other words, we left at 1:45 pm regular time.)

Arrived at Blue Mountain Lake and shoved off about 3 pm. (This must have still been Timlo time. ) The day was hot and humid and it was evident that a thunderstorm was brewing. Had planned to stop at Utawanda leantos but they were filled, so we had to push on to Raquette Lake. Soon it grew cloudy and thunder and lightning appeared. Some of the longest 5 miles in my life going down Marion River watching the lightning in our metal (aluminum) boats.

We couldn’t make the Big Island leanto. By luck, found the only campsite on shore just as we got to Raquette Lake. Set up camp in the dark and everyone but myself and Ron (my assistant counselor on the trip) had shelter when it began to rain. We rigged up a 3 canoe shelter but the ground was wet and we had no ground cloth. I was completely soaked and just crawled in and lay down, thinking about what would happen to me if lightning struck one of the 3 canoes around me. Finally the rain stopped but I only dozed and not for long. About 3 am, Ken (one of the campers) and Ron came - Ken had left a knife, Steve May’s - back at the portage, 5 miles down the Marion River. They were going to go back and get it. They did, arriving back about 6 am.

## Tuesday, July 27, 1971

Beautiful cool, clear summer day. Very disorganized breaking camp - understandable - leaving about 10 am. Very windy, coming from the west, with 2-3 foot waves. Ate lunch after making wrong turn - saw a bald eagle, very exciting. Had to go into the wind. Shipped a small amount of water twice, but everyone made it safely. Stopped early on the north shore of Raquette Lake at a lean-to with a very hard floor.

## Wednesday, July 28, 1971

Up at 5 am, off at 8, better but not good. Second morning for pancakes. Portage fairly easy, wide road. Made real good time on Forked Lake. Also didn’t have to wait too long at the public campsite. Lady with a station wagon took us past Buttermilk Falls. We had to wait, so Ken, Mike, and David went to look at them.

Hit Long Lake Village about 1:30 pm. I got bologna and cheese and let the kids go to the snack bar - good meal treat in the middle of the journey. (I learned just last year that my assistant counselor and one of the campers also bought some cigarettes while we were in town.) Left at 3 pm. Made the end of Long Lake in a very good time with a following wind. First campsite taken but went up to Calkins Creek and found a good place but a little buggy. Had a good night’s sleep in tent.

## Thursday, July 29, 1971

Up at 4:23 am, off by 7. Planned to camp at a shelter past Axton but prepared to go all the way. Cloudy and began to rain. Portage went well but many people were lazy - I had to carry 2 canoes and packs. Had lunch before we left. Made real good time as the river current added 1-2 mph.

Started to rain after the portage, soon soaked through. Passed the shelter about 3 pm - it was taken. Everyone was pretty tired but we had to push on - last part I paddled solo. Everyone was really cold, tired and hungry. Weather cleared up about 5 pm and we finally hit Simon Pond - a truly beautiful sight. Once again, by luck, went straight to an empty campsite and set up camp.

## Friday, July 30, 1971

Beautiful calm and sunny day. Everyone feeling much better. Slept late, took our time for breakfast then went to cliffs. Went to town (Tupper Lake) and ate at a diner - so many good things on the menu. Tomorrow we get picked up!

## Saturday, July 31, 1971 - no journal entry

Return to camp.

## Our Route:

Blue Mountain Lake

Eagle Lake

Utowana Lake

Marion River

Raquette Lake

Forked Lake

Long Lake

Raquette River

Simon Pond

Tupper Lake

## The Voyageurs:

Counselors

Jim Dolan

Ken Buckley

Ron Sprout

Campers

Mike Rush

David Dain

Kevin Dardano

John Carpenter

Bob Schlegel

Mark Parker

Chuck Hartig

Chris Reed

Duncan Mayo