

Brown's Guide to Georgia

July/August 1977

Volume 5

Number 4

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Art, Photo Credits

Cover: Children by the Sea. Oil by Dan Poole. Born in Unadilla, Poole, 34, received his early art education at Valdosta State College, the Atlanta School of Art, and Georgia State University. He has painted exclusively for the last five years and presently maintains a studio in the Buckhead area of Atlanta. His main interest is painting; he believes, however, that good drawing is the nucleus for all painting. Says Poole, "I love paint in all of its many delicious colors but wouldn't know what to do with it if I couldn't draw." Mr. Poole's canvases, influenced by the vibrant color usage of the Fauvists, a group of French painters of the early 1900s, are skillfully executed and are characterized by a variety of subject matter. He is represented in Palm Beach and Nantucket by the James Hunt Barker Galleries, in New Orleans and Jackson, Mississippi, by the Bryant Galleries, and in Atlanta by Cathreen's.

Photographs: Frank Loose, p. 2; John Findley, p. 12; Paul Dingman, pp. 20, 22, 24, 38, 39; Laurie O'Brien, pp. 30, 32, 33, 66 (top); John Mull, p. 46; George Krasle, pp. 62, 63; Edmund Marshall, pp. 69, 73; Larry Stevens, p. 66 (bottom); Tom Denard, p. 67 (top); Barbara Rust, p. 67 (bottom). **Illustrations:** Richard Loehle, p. 56; Earl Mathews, p. 63. **Maps:** Earl Mathews, pp. 33, 40-41, 48.

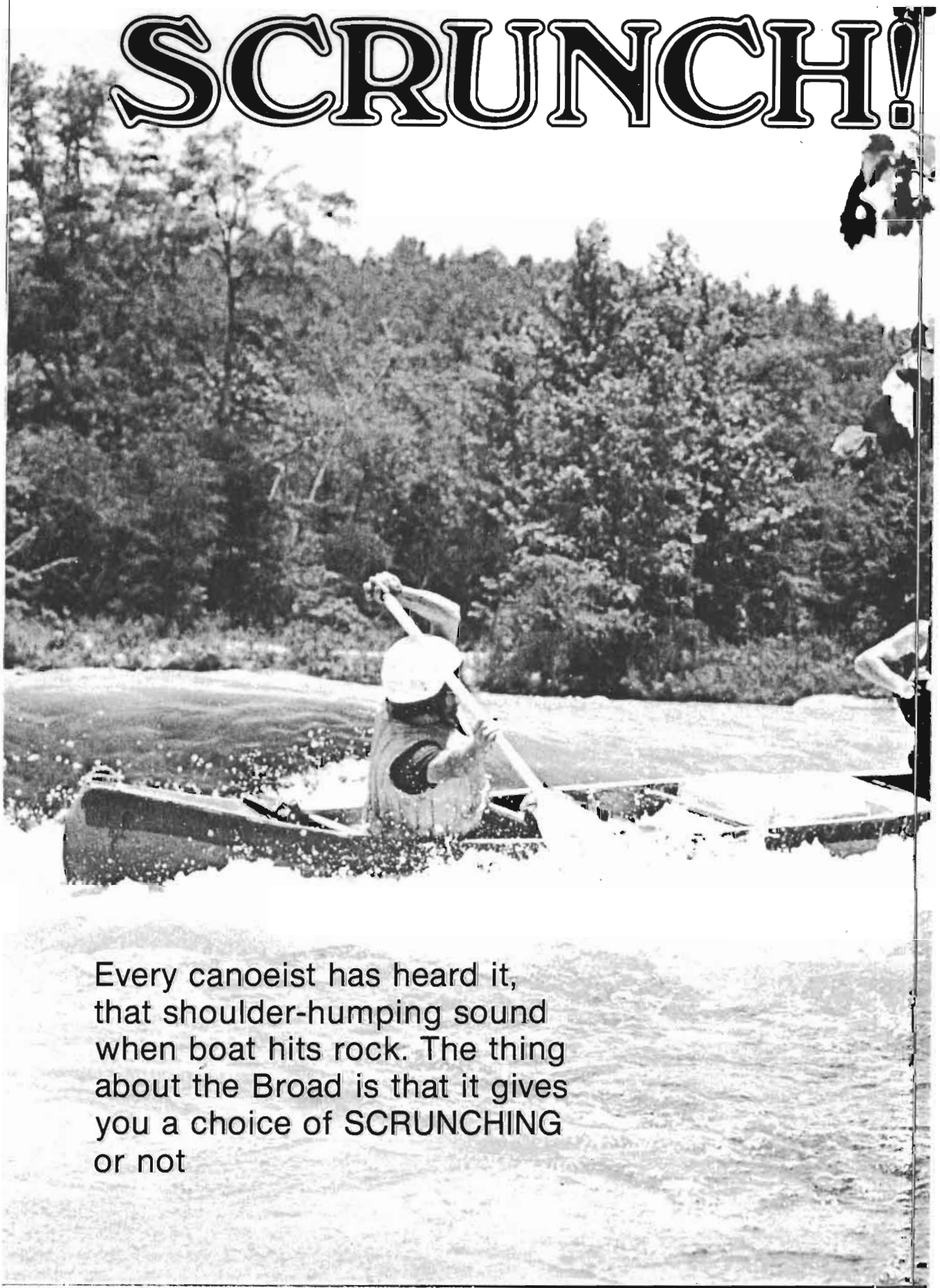
Map Key

Adairsville, Rome, Talmo, Sardis and 12 other cities in and near Georgia where antique auctions are held on a regular basis, p. 20; Atlanta's Piedmont Park is a looking glass through which you can see just about anything you can see, p. 12; Augusta, good food, good atmosphere, good luck, Craig Calvert, p. 46; there are canoeing thrills for the expert and the novice on the Broad River, p. 46; Brunswick, life in a hostel, p. 67; touring Columbia County with cyclist, historian, good ole boy, "Bear" Thompson, p. 38; Wilson Hall has been catching bass on Gunterville Lake for 30 years, p. 56; Morrison Spring is a clear water paradise for skin divers, p. 62; sight-seeing on St. Simons, p. 66; Savannah, home of Emma Law and Margaret DeBolt—good cooks and nice ladies, p. 72; sharing a sleeping bag with a dog in Shining Rock Wilderness is one bad way to spend the night, p. 30; Stone Mountain has a "please touch" museum, p. 67; Toomsboro kicks up its heels at the swampland opera, p. 66; West End, near downtown Atlanta, where you can buy a restorable house for under \$15,000, p. 68.



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SCRUNCH!



Every canoeist has heard it, that shoulder-humping sound when boat hits rock. The thing about the Broad is that it gives you a choice of SCRUNCHING or not



By Reece Turrentine

Brown's Guide Canoeing Editor

"Well, are we going to paddle upstream, and see it?" I asked once more. We had discussed it earlier, but now the time of decision had come. The canoes were in the water, and we were in the canoes. We couldn't put it off any longer.

"I just hate the thought of paddling upstream for a quarter of a mile," Owen complained. "We'll be worn out before we start." I couldn't disagree with that. I didn't look forward to an upstream paddle, especially since all of us were soloing. But I replied half-heartedly, "Mr. Parham said that in his younger days they used to pole their flat-bottom boats and race up to it."

We were talking about a place upstream that had intrigued me since hearing about it the day before. I had stopped by Mr. Parham's house on the river bank near the put-in bridge. He had been sitting on the porch surrounded by a bunch of children and grandchildren. As I drove up and told him of my interest in the river, his eyes lit up. He replied, "Well, I've lived on its banks all my life. There are a lot of interesting things on it. Take the Devil's Pulpit, for example." And then he went on to describe this large rock overhang with caves and cliffs. Being a minister, my curiosity was immediately ignited.

"Where'd it get that name?" I inquired.

"Nobody seems to know that," he replied. "It's just always been a place where strange things went on. Folks have always been kinda leery of it." Then he went on to recount some of the mystery and intrigue that had surrounded the "Devil's Pulpit" through the years. Once a band of escaped slaves hid out there. Then a Civil War deserter holed up in the cave with the slaves. He became a shoemaker, selling shoes to the local residents and using the slaves as his secret salesmen. Nobody ever saw him, but they bought his shoes. They say he was mean and evil, and would shoot any intruder on the spot.

As we continued to debate the upstream paddle, Jan entered the conversation. "Why not wait till your next trip? You're gonna want to run this river again soon, and you can put in at the next bridge up, make a two-day run of it, and see it on the way down." That made sense and settled the question. After all, Jan was the professional of the group. He operates his outdoor center known as "Blue Ridge River Touring" a few miles from the river in Danielsville, and has been on this river many times. We took his advice, saved the Devil's Pulpit for another day, and slid our canoes out into the steady current of the Broad River.

Though full of intriguing history, it was the present we were interested in right now. Foreboding mysteries may hover over its past, but it's a fun river now.

"Why, sometimes there are so many folks camped under the bridge," laughed Billy Martin at his Riverside Fish House restaurant, "that you can't unroll another sleeping bag. A lot of them are students from Athens, but a lot of families come, too. It's close to Atlanta, Augusta, and Athens. Folks come here rather than travel up into the mountains. And you got all kinds of rapids at each spot. It's fun for experts and beginners. And this pretty weather's gonna really bring 'em out."

He was right about that. We shared the put in with several groups. Right behind us were two couples in canoes, and grandma and grandpa with a bunch of grandchildren in a big rubber raft. The weather and river were bringing 'em out.

As the bridge disappeared around the curve, we heard our first sound of the coming excitement ahead of us. The roar of the rapids. No matter how many rivers you've run or how many rapids you've raced, that sound has an effect all its own. It always stirs the blood a bit and quickens the heartbeat. Even calm water foreshadows their presence. Deep water, backed up, means something's blocking it up ahead, usually shoals, rocks, and rapids. When you hear them long before you see them, you think it may just be the wind in the trees. But as the faint sound grows louder, it takes on an unmistakable roar. So you adjust your knee pads, glance around to be sure everything is tied in securely, and get ready for the fun.

"Flat Shoals ahead," Jan called back to us. "We'll stop and scout these and check on the optional runs." It was a favorite stopping place. Large flat boulders stretched across the river, with the current being squeezed between them. It was too inviting to pass by, so we slid our canoes in beside the largest flat rock and got out to scout the rapids.

"I usually like to run that chute on the far left right up against the bank," Jan said. "But that log jammed over there recently, and it makes the approach pretty tight. This one right next to our rock is probably the best one today. Let me see how it runs." With that, Jan was back in his canoe, shoved it at an angle upstream until the current caught its bow, and swung it down towards the run of the rapid. He shot the chute cleanly and swiftly. Once through, his body arched far over the side, as he reached with a high brace stroke and dug his paddle into the calm eddy water beside the rapid. Using his body as the pivot, he smoothly swung the bow into the eddy, allowing the current to swing the stern behind him. With one expert stroke the whole canoe glided into the eddy and up to the rock where we were standing.

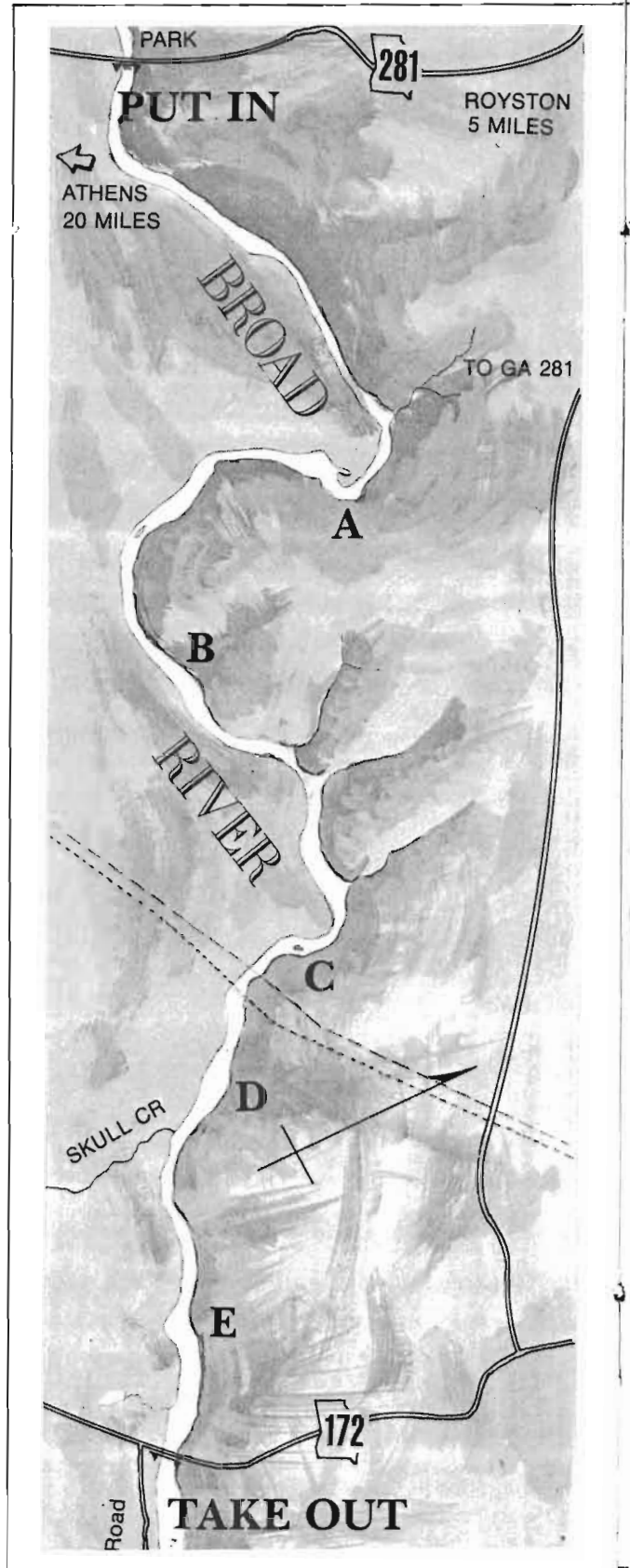
"That's just plain beautiful," Owen sighed to me. And it was. It looked more like ballet than paddling. Jan Fortune had told me that canoeing had always been his first love. So after a stretch in college at Athens, he and his wife decided to try to make a business out of doing what he loved most. With such skill he's bound to make it.

"I wonder what happened to grandma and grandpa and the grandchildren behind us?" Owen asked. They had put in right after us and we hadn't seen them since. But as we looked upstream, there they came around the bend. And it was obvious why they were so slow. They were playing. As their canoes and raft rounded the bend, you could see high arches of spray shooting out from each canoe. Their laughter echoed up and down the river walls. It was the age-old game of paddle splashing, a favorite river sport.

"We'll probably end up like that before the day is over," Owen smiled at me with a devilish grin.

"Yeah, and you'll be the one to start it," I shot back at him. I know him too well. Owen Williams lives on

continued on pg. 50



Canoeing guide

MAP INFORMATION

Mile 0-1

No particular fast action in this first mile. Swift, deep water with plenty of fishing holes. Overhanging limbs and swift current could cause trouble if fishing too close to shore.

Mile 1-2

Around sharp bend in river to right is Flat Shoals (A), first good white water. Stop and scout and stretch on inviting rocks. Fast chute against left bank may be blocked by recent drift limbs. Several optional runs through these shoals.

Mile 2-3

After Parham's Deep Water, one of the deepest pools on the river, you come to Scarbrough Shoals (B). Watch for ferry pipes sticking out of mid-river rocks. This is location of off-river beaver ponds, ferry crossing, and possible old bridge debris. Class I and II rapids here.

Mile 3-4

Our lunch stop (C) on these rocks near left bank and old road entrance. Unsightly pipeline throughway gashes through forests around bend. This was site of famous but now extinct "Still House" (see text).

Mile 4-5

Below pipeline throughway is Brown's Shoals. A must stop to scout waterfall on right (D) of mid-river island. Unless you're an expert, use chutes to left of island, which should be scouted, too. If you choose to run the waterfall, take the right side of the island. The water will pass over the ledge in three well-defined places. We chose the left drop, about 15 feet from the left shore. This would rate the mildest class III, and that only because the drop is four to five feet. The approach is flat water and simple to make. Aim for the slight dip in the very center of the drop. The ride is more of a slide and is the most fun of any on the river. Below Brown's Shoals notice Skull Creek entering river on right. Human skulls of Indians or slaves found along this creek bed.

Mile 5-Take Out

Class I and II rapids in and around Compton's Shoals (E). Fun place to practice runs and reruns within sight of take-out bridge. Since you're already wet, continue downstream past bridge to island (and good take-out point). Take a flying swing on the rope at this favorite swimming hole.

General Information: The Broad is a wide river in the Northeast Georgia foothills, 20 miles northeast of Athens. Its north and middle forks join with the Hudson River just southwest of Royston, and thus supplied with a great volume of water, it continues southeast until it enters the Clark Hill Reservoir on the South Carolina border.

Type of River: Clear, mountain-type river with Class I and II rapids, shoals, and shelves. There are possible class IIIs in high water. Ideal for the intermediate-range paddler. Rapids usually offer two or more runs, so paddlers can choose according to their skills. This same quality also makes the Broad an excellent teaching river.

Put In and Take Out: Put in on state highway 281 five miles south of Royston. Northeast corner of bridge has large dirt parking area. Road leads down to river's edge for unloading, but only if ground is dry. Suggest leaving vehicles parked in large area in case rain turns road into impassable mud slide. Take out is on Georgia 172. Good dirt road parallels river on southeast side, offering several optional take-out points below bridge.

Shuttle: Easy and short. Paved county road parallels river to north (see highway map) between Georgia highways 281 and 172.

Water Level: No water gauge on this stretch, but just below take-out bridge on the upstream side are the old remaining foundation blocks of a covered bridge. Unless water is flowing over the tops of these, river should be safe.

Distance: River distance from bridge 281 to 172 is about 5½ miles, making this an easy afternoon's run, allowing time for drifting, fishing, and picnicking. Trip can be doubled by using put-in bridge on U.S. 29, extending it to a 10-mile run.

Hazards: Serious problems could arise from failure to scout the few more advanced rapids on this stretch. Though mostly class I and II, there are several optional runs approaching III. Don't allow the leisurely nature of the river to drift you suddenly into the currents of these stronger rapids and waterfalls (see map for location).



Photographs and assistance on the "Canoeing Guide" provided by John Moll of Rapid South, Inc.

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Scrunch, *continued from pg. 48*

the edge of laughter. His bushy beard, muddy boots, and messy pickup hardly identify him as the minister of the Methodist church in Roberta. But his genuine love for people and joy of life do. Young people follow him around like his old trailer and its fleet of canoes. His canoes are special, memorial canoes given in memory of young people who died in his town. Names like "Johnny Wright" and "Mary Ann" are painted on them in large letters, and the bow decks carry shiny little brass memorial plaques with inscriptions such as, "This canoe is given to this youth ministry in memory of Johnny Wright by" Though the canoes are meant for fun and laughter, those little plaques add a note of touching sentiment. Reading them makes it easier to think of the deeper meaning of the great outdoors and the beauty of God's nature.

"We can't stay here all day," Jan warned. "We've got rapids to run." So we slid our canoes into the current and down the chute, and on to the shoals below.

The tree line and the drop along the shore now gave definite indications of a good downhill run ahead. The back of my neck gave off the little sting of exhilaration that always comes just before such a run. And it was a good one. The pace was rapid and the choices plentiful. The smooth-bottom whitewater canoes responded to every touch, gliding through Vs, over shelves, bending and blending with the currents. I felt my face reflecting my choices: a smug smile when the choice was right, and the familiar frown when the "scrunch" of the bottom was heard.

Soloing increased our margin of error somewhat. The canoes rode high and seemed to bounce on top of the water. But on one twisting turn I misread the current, and the midsection slid sideways onto a rock. The rushing water lapped dangerously close to the canoe's edge, threatening to spill over the side. I shifted my weight forward, and the canoe windmilled on its axis, spinning me around and releasing me back into the rapid. Down the chute I went—backwards!

"What are those pipes sticking out of those rocks up there, Jan?" Owen called out. Before Jan could reply, I butted in. "Mr. Cornwell's great-grandfather ran a ferry across here," I answered smugly.

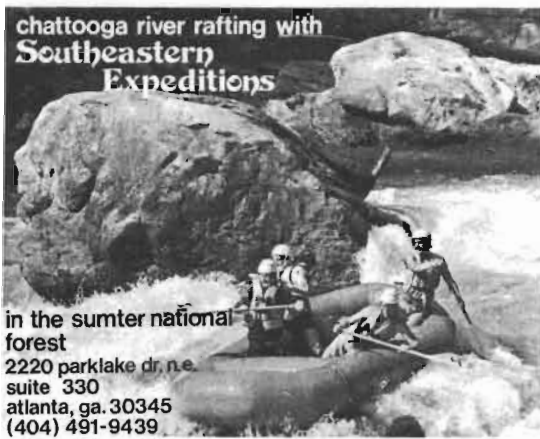
"I asked Jan!" Owen snorted with friendly contempt. "You don't live around here."

"No, but Mr. Cornwell's lived on this river all his life," I shot back, seeing a rare opportunity to get the upper hand on Owen. "I tried to get you to come up with me yesterday and talk to some of the folks that live around here, but no, you were too busy."

Through his bushy beard, I could see his devilish grin. "I was about the Father's business," he said with a superior tone. I didn't even bother to reply.

I enjoy talking with the folks on the rivers almost as much as I do canoeing them. They all love to talk about "their" river when I inquire with genuine interest. Their bits of history and local color give me an added dimension when I enter the river. I respect it more. I feel as though I take some of their love for it with me as I look for rocks and old roads and decaying ruins that have played so important a part in so many

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Scrunch, *continued*

lives. Those old landmarks occupied the river long before modern canoes came along. Rocks that now provide shoals for canoe enthusiasts once held pilings for ancient bridges, or fish traps, or bygone ferrys. To run them so quickly without at least an awareness of their bygone importance seems a little disrespectful.

"Let's stop for lunch," Owen called out.

"Stop again?" I replied. "We'll never finish this run." What started out to be a serious canoe run had become a stop-and-go fun-time. Carefully planned schedules had fallen victim to the mood of the day and the carefree leisure of the others on the river.

"My sardines are getting hot," Owen retorted. "There's a perfect place ahead." So we slid onto one of the massive boulders in mid-river and settled down to our favorite canoeing cuisine: sardines and sal-tines.

"Where does the pipeline cross the river, Jan?" I asked, remembering another one of Mr. Cornwell's yarns.

"Just around the curve," he replied. "Why?"

"Well, according to Mr. Cornwell, that was THE spot on the river years ago. It was the location of the famous 'Still House,' a stagecoach inn which was an overnight stop for aristocrats traveling from the Carolinas to Georgia. They called it the Still House because next to it was a government-operated still. They say it used to be the best stop on the line. Until recent years you could still see the old stone wall along the river bank, but the pipeline throughway erased every bit of evidence."

With lunch over, and back on the river, we rounded the curve, and the pipeline throughway came into view. It was like a giant gash across the land, with no trees, only clay hills on each side of the river. Mr. Cornwell was right. There wasn't the slightest evidence of the Still House. I couldn't even imagine it in my mind. But I could imagine, looking up a little service road that ran down the throughway to the river's edge, that at any moment it might come into view: the cloud of dust and the pounding horses, racing the stagecoach down the hill on its scheduled run.

In the few remaining miles, we took advantage of Jan's company and the ideal conditions of the Broad River for instruction and practice. Just below the pipeline crossing is a healthy waterfall on the right of an island. Jan had run it before, but warned against it because of the water level. The chutes to the left were fun enough.

We spent the last hour within sight of the take-out bridge, running and rerunning rapids, practicing various strokes, and generally having a ball.

After an easy take out and shuttle, Owen and I were back at the put-in bridge, sinking our teeth into some of Billy Martin's fresh catfish at his Riverside Fish House, and making our plans for a return to the Broad River.

"I knew you'd want to come back," Mr. Martin laughed. "Most folks do."

"We have to," I smiled back at him. "We've got to make that upper run that comes by the Devil's Pulpit. I have an idea it'll just fit Owen." □