



Outdoor Illinois

RUNNING A CHOPPY RIFFLE in the Sangamon River on the Lincoln Heritage Canoe Trail are Sy Gold, Division of Recreation Planning, and Rudy Dorner, Division of Parks and Memorials, both in the Illinois Department of Conservation. The short drop in background accounted for three upset canoes the first day of the canoe trip, and was responsible for a soaked camera for this photographer.

LINCOLN HERITAGE CANOE TRAIL

State's First Marked Paddling Trip Dedicated Memorial Weekend

GOV. OTTO KERNER dedicated the Lincoln Heritage Canoe Trail, first marked canoe trail in Illinois, on Friday, May 28. More than 70 canoes took part in the three-day trip from Lincoln Trail Homestead State Park, near Decatur, to New Salem State Park, near Petersburg. Spectator on left happened into the picture while looking for the chow line.

ILLINOIS FIRST MARKED canoe trail was dedicated in grand style during the Memorial Day weekend when Gov. Otto Kerner and members of his official staff turned out to give the Lincoln Heritage Canoe Trail on the Sangamon River a big sendoff.

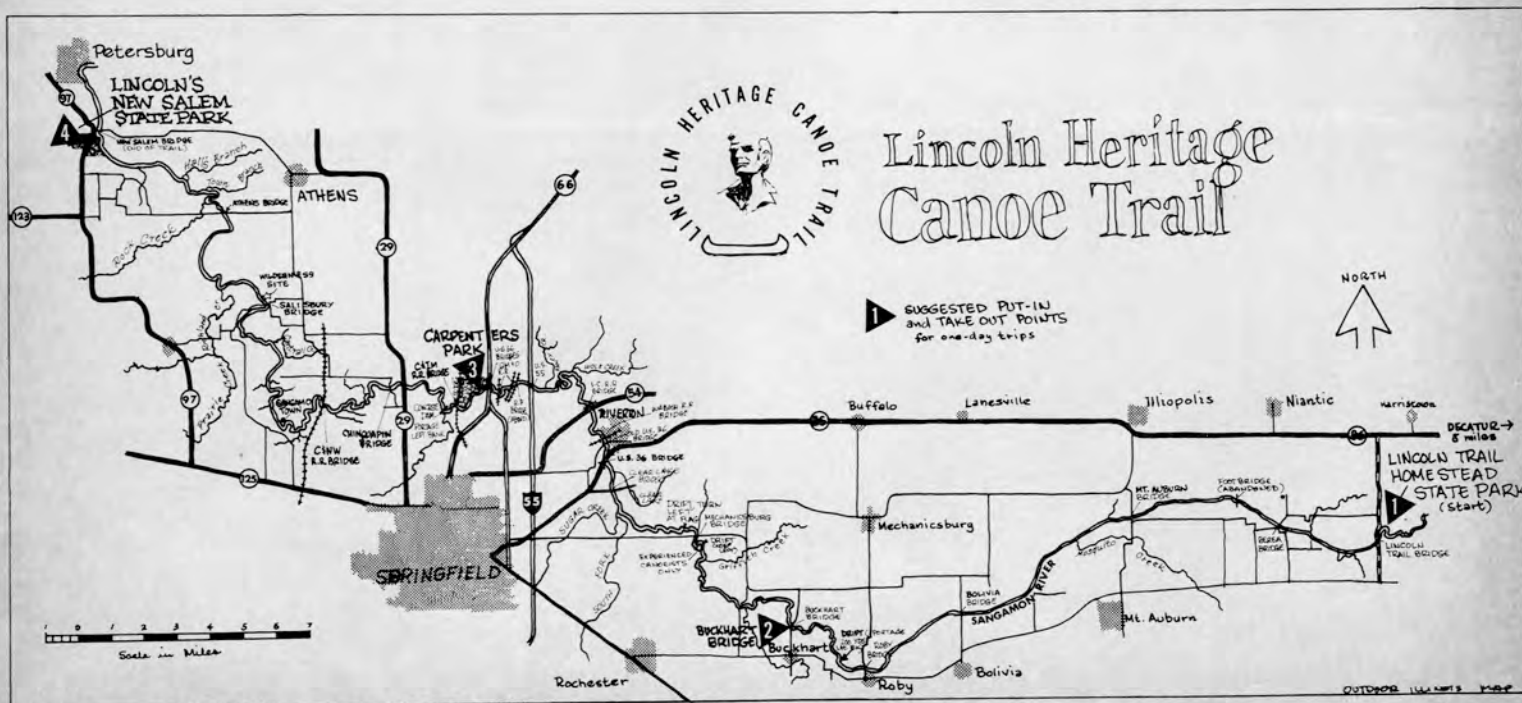
The new canoe trail extends from Lincoln Trail Homestead State Park, near Decatur, to Lincoln's New Salem State Park, near Decatur, a distance of some 65 miles.

In 1830, just prior to the famous Winter of the Deep Snow, Thomas Lincoln built a log cabin above the Sangamon River, southwest of Decatur at the site of what is now the Lincoln Trail Homestead State Park. The thirteen members of the family wintered in the one-room structure.

In late winter, Denton Offut, a Springfield businessman, hired Abe Lincoln, his cousin, John Hanks, and step-brother, John Johnston, to pilot a loaded flatboat to New Orleans as soon as the snow went off. In March, 1831,



Illinois Department of Conservation





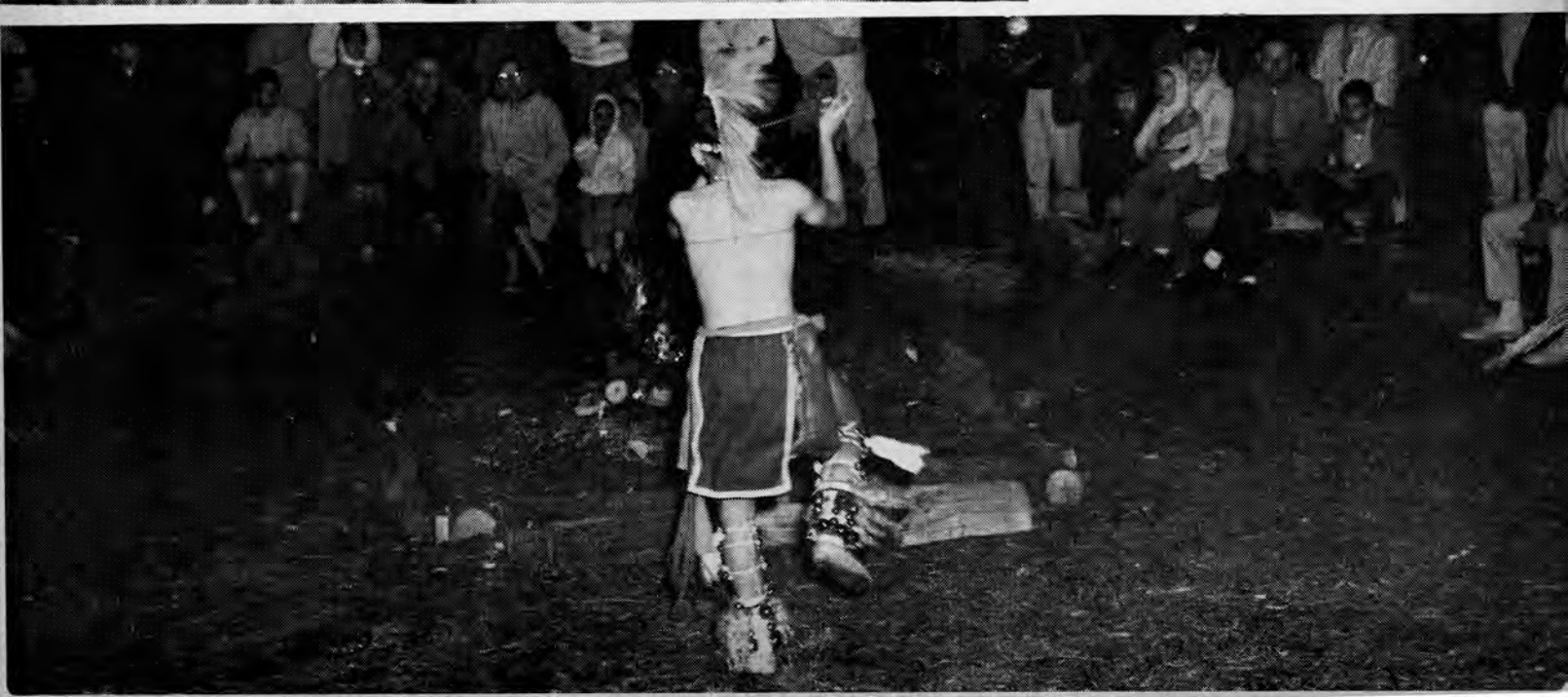
the three young men paddled a cottonwood dugout canoe on the flooding Sangamon to Riverton, then walked seven miles to Springfield to seek their employer.

At Sangamo Town, just downriver on a high bluff above the Sangamon, Lincoln and his kin spent a month building a big flatboat near a sawmill in the bottomlands. In April, they floated the flatboat downriver, loaded with corn and hogs, only to become stuck fast on the milldam below the New Salem bluff. Impressed with the growing community, Lincoln promised to return after freeing the stranded boat and setting out anew for New Orleans.

The Lincoln Heritage Canoe Trail, a memorial to this early river trek by Abraham Lincoln, was sponsored by the Sangamon Valley Chapter, Izaak Walton League, and ably organized under the chairmanship of Jack Johnson, Springfield. It has also served the purpose of stimulating interest by the

JACK JOHNSON, of Springfield (with m'ke) did yeoman work in arranging ceremonies. From left: William T. Lodge (partially hidden), director of the Department of Conservation; Gunner A. Petersen, executive director of the Open Lands Project, Chicago. Seated, with voyageur cap, is Ralph Frese, Chicago; Richard Newman, Division of Tourism; John Troike, chairman of the Illinois Youth Commission.

SYMBOLIC INDIAN DANCES were performed by Boy Scout Indian dancers around bonfire. A nippy 38° chill, unusual for central Illinois at end of May, made the wood fire more welcome than usual.



Department of Conservation in maintaining this and other canoe trails in Illinois, and the hope that perhaps a booklet on canoeing streams in Illinois will be forthcoming.

The 1965 trip began with campfire ceremonies presided over by Gunner Peterson, executive director of the Open Lands Project, Chicago, and dedication of the trail by Gov. Kerner and William T. Lodge, director of the Department of Conservation.

The cruise began Saturday morning, after canoeists shuttled cars to Buckhart Bridge. First of the canoes put in about

FACING CAMERA, Chicagoan Ralph Frese discusses the canoe route with Mr. and Mrs. Gunner Peterson and son, Eric, of Homewood.

THEY'RE OFF! Paddlers in canoes of every description floated along easily on the fast current of the upper Sangamon. First day's 25 miles was longest stretch of canoe trail, but relatively rapid current made it an easy seven hour jaunt.





SOME PADDLERS DRIFTED ALONG . . . OTHERS DIPPED AN OCCASIONAL OAR . . .



. . . WHILE SOME MEANT TO GET THERE IN A HURRY!





VETERAN OF LAKE MICHIGAN, this voyageur canoe was equally at home on the Sangamon. Motive power was furnished by Red Fancher, Mrs. Gunner Peterson, Mrs. Ralph Frese, Gunner and Eric Peterson; Ralph Frese demonstrates the canoe's stability by standing while handling the directional duties.

8 a. m. and the follow-up canoes put in after 10 o'clock.

Current in the upper reaches was rapid enough to make good cruising speed without excess exertion.

A series of three riffles several miles above Bolivia bridge added excitement along this stretch. The third of the riffles included a drop of a foot or two at what was either an old mill dam or a rock outcrop. Crosscurrents were swift enough to upset three canoes, and O. I.'s cameraman shipped enough water here

to ruin an entire roll of film, save one picture.

Only one portage was encountered, and that a short one below the Roby bridge. Destination was reached by the followup canoes at 5:30 p. m., and canoeists drove their shuttled cars to Springfield's Carpenters Park for overnight camp.

The second day's 18-mile section was renewed at Buckhart Bridge, with a noon stop scheduled for Riverton for lunch. A number of visitors were there for the arrival at Riverton, and again at Carpenter's Park, the destination of the second day's run.

The stretch of the Sangamon from

MINOR REPAIRS enroute helped keep this kayak seaworthy though rubber boots were more helpful to the paddler.



BUCKHART BRIDGE, first day's destination, proves again an old theory you can't wear a kid out. Some of the older canoeists display a bit of lethargy but the youngsters in the water still haven't reached their limit.

NOON STOP AT RIVERTON PARK. Numerous spectators crowd the bank as bereted canoeist and two friends glide toward the shore.





PORTAGES ON THE LINCOLN canoe trail are few and far between. The sponsoring committee, headed by Jack Johnson, Springfield, marked portages and did a marvelous job of mapping the cruise.

LOW CLIFFS ALONG the Sangamon are part of the everchanging variety of scenery. Gravel and sand banks were found in places. Many varieties of trees were spotted during the three day jaunt.





A FAMILY FISHING GROUP watches as canoeists head in at Carpenters Park on second evening.

Carpenters Park to the grist mill at New Salem made up the third day's run. About 40 canoes made the entire three-day trail, with others joining for each of the one-day runs.

A word of praise should be inserted here for the very fine—and hurryup—job done by the Division of Parks in preparing Lincoln Trail Homestead Park for the onslaught of paddlers, and to the Illinois Youth Commission for the work its young men put in.

The Decatur Chapter, Izaak Walton League, is to be commended for putting in a full day—and most of a night—reg-

istering canoeists; the Springfield Chapter similarly commended for thinking up the idea and putting in what must have been an enormous number of hours in its organization, for it was smoothly run and planned to the last detail. Illinoisans who would like to organize similar canoe trails in other areas of the state would be well advised to contact Jack Johnson, 12 North Cotton Hill, Springfield, for a copy of the mimeographed "Guidelines for Trip Participants" and map, which were provided each Lincoln Trail paddler.

The Sangamon is an interesting

stream to paddle. Scenery offers variety, from low bluffs to gravel banks, and enough timber has been left along the river bottom to hide the presence of civilization only a short distance away from the bank.

It is recommended for central Illinois paddlers often, and paddlers in other parts of the state should give it a try. While it doesn't offer the whitewater thrills of the Vermillion, nor the tremendous cliffs and scenery of Lusk Creek, it does provide a good, safe, pleasant trip for families and is eminently reachable from most parts of the state. 