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Canoe Crossings: Understanding the Craft that Helped Shape British Columbia

Sanford Osler

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Often called one of the Seven Wonders of Canada, the canoe has played a particularly important role in British Columbia. This seemingly simple watercraft allowed coastal First Nations to hunt on the open ocean and early explorers to travel the province's many waterways. Always at the crossroads of canoe culture, BC today is home to innovative artists and designers who have rediscovered ancient canoe-building techniques, as well as community leaders who see the canoe's potential to bring people together in exciting, inspiring ways.

The story of *Canoe Crossings* begins some fifteen thousand years ago, when, as compelling new evidence suggests, the first humans to reach the Americas did so by canoe down the West Coast. It continues through the centuries, chronicling the evolution of the canoe and its impact on the various people who used it to explore, hunt, trade, fight, race, create, and even heal. The book contains dozens of stories of colourful, passionate people who have contributed to the province's canoe culture, including a teenager who lived ninety feet up in a tree house while designing and building the world's longest kayak; a group of high school students who practised on a tiny lake and went on to win several World Dragon Boat Championships; and at-risk Aboriginal youth who reconnected with their traditional culture through annual "big canoe" trips.

Canoe Crossings will appeal to anyone who has ever sought adventure, found solace, or seen beauty in a canoe or wondered about the origins of its design and use in British Columbia and beyond.

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