

A True Story—

Indian Woman Rescues Man

(Bravery of an Indian woman as told to the author by Billy Carter and Tommy White.)

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Before 1910 there were two rapids in the Rainy River right in front of Fort Frances. The upper one had a bad whirlpool. Many canoeists lost their lives in it every year. There was, however, a chance to avoid both rapids by taking the canoe channel which, of course, Billy Carter and Tommy White took that

morning many years ago.

They did not notice that another canoe with two men was traveling west down the Rainy River on the Steamboat Channel. Apparently they did not know about the existence of any other channel.

A middle aged Ojibwa Indian woman had her eyes on that fancy canoe going down the Steamboat Channel while she was confidentially smoking her corn-cob pipe.

As soon as the strangers hit that whirlpool their canoe started to spin. The bow man tried to

stop it from spinning and it flipped over and both men were in the water. One man swam with powerful strokes and headed for the shore but the other one was spinning around in that whirlpool.

When the Indian woman saw that, she did not hesitate one minute. She headed with her birch bark canoe toward the whirlpool. She grabbed the whirling man by his long, curly hair with one hand and paddled with the other heading for the shore.

But when that drowning man saw that birch bark canoe, he reached for it. She gave him a sharp crack with the paddle over the head and a strong lecture. He sank down but came up soon again. When he did, the Indian woman got ahold of his hair again. She hung on with one hand and paddled with the other and brought the drowning man ashore.

There the man's friend who swam ashore tried giving artificial respiration while the Indian woman watched.

Apparently she knew something about that, too.

In the meantime, Carter and White went after the stranger's fancy canoe.

The nearly drowned man proved to be Tom Shevlin, Jr., son of Tom Shevlin, Sr., president of the Shevlin, Mather Lumber Co. of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

When young Tom came to, the first thing he said was, "Where is that Indian lady?"

She had sneaked off.

After spending a whole week around Fort Frances trying to find that Indian woman, he left a check for \$500.00 with the editor of the Fort Frances Times.

According to Carter, she finally got the money, and a Meerschau pipe to take the place of the corn cob which she had lost while she was scolding Young Tom Shevlin.

The dam constructed at the International Falls in 1910 put an end to the two rapids and one whirlpool on the Rainy River.