

Ode To Brigaders

by Terry & Ursula Lowrey

This story is set on the 2017 Canada 150th Celebration Brigade down the Athabasca River from Jasper to Fort Assiniboine. On the first day out, our team Wild Currents was well back in the flotilla of 15 voyageur boats. There was the smell of tobacco drifting through the clear mountain air - someone was smoking a cigar or pipe. As the days progressed we would occasionally get whiffs of the odor which would usually evoke comments like “what is that”?

At the Hinton Camp the word came down that each team was expected to make some kind of presentation at the end of our 6 day trip culminating in Canada Day Celebrations. I remember our team leader Teresa expressing reservations about performing some kind of song or skit.

Next day on the river, we again smelled the cigar. Someone commented “He’s smoking that stogy again” and that prompted Ursula to pitch in with “Old stogies I have found...” from Roger Miller’s *King of the Road* song. That inspired Tracy to change the words beginning with “Pup tents for sale or rent...” and it went from there with contributions from most everyone in the canoe. Singing and lots of laughs quickly passed the time paddling the Athabasca River. We renamed the song *Ode to Brigaders (with apologies to Roger Miller)* and had it down pat ready to perform. We were excited and ready at Fort Assiniboine for the closing ceremonies but alas it never came to be. There was a full slate of excellent professional performers that occupied the balance of the afternoon. Anyway, here is the song we worked up. Sing it to the tune of *King of the Road*.

“Ode to Brigaders”

Sung to the tune, “King of the Road”. Composed on the Athabasca River. All rights reserved

Verse 1

Pup tents for sale or rent,
Beaver pelts 50 cents
No phone, no cars no jets
Our main goal is not to get
wet!
We’ve got
Life jackets all around
Short – and some are big
around
We’re the Brigade team of all teams,
Wild Currents rule!

Verse 2

Each morning up at dawn
Paddling early while we yawn
Wet booties on our feet
A bio-break would sure be sweet!
We've got
Men left and women right
Oh what a pretty sight
We're the Brigade team of all teams
Wild Currents rule!

Bridge

We'd like to meet paddlers from every team
Hear all of their journeys and all of their dreams
And bond with our teammates at end of the day,
And sneak a sip of Caribou when Peter's away.... We sing...
Repeat verse 1
Pup tents for sale or rent...