

History of the canoes essay



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The activity of paddling is usually referred to as canoeing. Over the years, the activity has basically been used for recreation, transportation and sporting. In virtually all cases, the canoes are propelled by paddling using human power. They are usually propelled using either one or two blades. The canoer or canoeist has to kneel, thwart or sit with their legs beneath them and their knees bent while paddling so as to propel it (Sanjuan, 2009).

History of the canoes The development of canoes started more than a thousand years ago. Canoes were made for the first time by the North American native people.

The word canoe finds its roots from the word ‘kenu’, which basically means dugout. There is also another story that tries to explain the origin of the word canoe; the story suggests that it originated from the word canoa. This word is believed to have originated from Caribbean islands’ native people who were known as the Arawaks. The word was then passed to the Europeans by Columbus. However there is a counter argument of this story as some historians believe that the word canoa existed in Europe several years among the Portuguese who used it to refer to the feeding trough (Sanjuan, 2009).

The canoes had for several years been used by the Red Indians who inhabited North America as a very essential component in their lives. The Red Indians used canoes for hunting, war, fishing and for transport. In the early days, these water crafts were made using animal skins or hollow tree trunks which were first treated so as to make them water proof (All about Canoes, 2009). As more inventions were made in various ways of making

them, bones and wood were then used for the framework which was then covered using barks of Birch trees or animal leathers.

The leather's hunters, gold searchers and colonists later started using canoes as a transport medium for lakes and rivers of Canada. The canoes therefore, became a very essential tool in their activities (All about Canoes, 2009). Primitive crafts were then developed in Britain in a faintly different manner. These canoes were known as coracles. They were almost round in shape with a wattle frame work which was covered by a skin. The currachs in Ireland became the fore runners in developing modern canoes but they maintained the shape of the original primitive canoes.

The British borrowed the American canoe idea and began to make canoes which were well varnished by use of ribbons of wood which were then covered canvas in order to make them water proof. They used the canoes for touring and recreational purposes (Sanjuan, 2009). Canoeing started to meet certain basic requirements of transporting along and across water ways. It eventually became the basic mode of water transport especially over long distances throughout most regions of North America, Polynesia, and Amazon Basin among other areas.

However, in the wake of increased industrialization and technological development, canoes have faced a lot of competition in the water transport industry and have in fact been replaced by boats which are motorized.

However, they are still very popular as sporting or recreational water craft (All about Canoes, 2009). Canoes were boats that were used in the oceans by Indians who were known as Caribs who inhabited the islands of the

Caribbean. They were made from huge trunks of trees which were hollowed and shaped, these canoes had to be strong enough to enable them pass through the islands (All about Canoes, 2009).

The Indians of the North America are the people who are responsible for the invention and development of the canoes; they were able to make an advanced model of the canoes. They made their canoes from wooden ribs which were in turn covered with the barks of cedar, elm or birch; however, the barks had to be light to enhance buoyancy of the canoes. These boats from the northern America Indians have virtually remained the same in design over the years. This clearly shows how suitable they are for traveling in several rivers, lakes and streams of North America (Sanjuan, 2009).

The use of barks obtained from barks of Birch trees was a perfect option of building canoes since they were not only smooth and light in weight, but they were also resilient and water proof. This made it quite easy for the communities that lived in areas with plenty of these trees to make use of them while building canoes. The Birch trees were also in plenty all over Canada apart from the sub arctic region which is in the west. The spruce barks were used in this region as a substitute of the Birch barks to make canoes.

The canoes' joints were usually held together by use of the pine roots and then hot spruce or pine resin so as to make them water proof (All about Canoes, 2009). As a result of increased trade in North America, the demand of canoes rose sharply. The fur business increased significantly, making the French to start a factory for making canoes at trois-Rivieres in the early

1750s. This was the first known factory in the world for making canoes. Most of the canoes that were built in this facility were tailored towards meeting the needs of the fur traders.

The canoes had the capability of carrying about twelve crew members and goods weighing approximately two thousand and four hundred kilograms (Sanjuan, 2009). Types of canoes The North American natives basically made two types of canoes. The first type was known as the kayak or the K-boat. It was a vessel which was closed and decked. It was commonly used by one person as it has a single paddle for propelling it. The paddle had two blades one at each end (Sanjuan, 2009). The Canadian or C-canoe is the second type of canoe; it is more traditional compared to the kayak type.

It was made from several diverse materials which ranged from Kevlar to wood. The C-canoe was in most cases seventeen feet in length, but its weight varied depending on the materials that had been used to make it. This type of canoe was basically made for carrying two people. They had to paddle it using one blade (Sanjuan, 2009). Conclusion The history of canoes is very old dating back to thousands of years; they originated from North America due to the way of life of the native inhabitants of the region who relied on waters heavily in their daily lives.

The canoeing industry was also greatly supported by the presence of raw materials which were used in making the canoes. The canoes were basically used for transport, recreation and sporting in the early days, but due to increased industrialization and technological development, they are currently being used for recreation and for sporting since more advance water vessels

have been invented which are used for transport. Even though various types of canoes have been made, their shape has remained largely unchanged and thus the design of the traditional canoes remains unaltered to date.