

## York Boat

The York Boats were used from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries on the waterways to Northern Manitoba. Their purpose was to carry Hudson Bay Company furs and freight to and from the remote trading posts to tide-waters or railways. The York Boat could be up to 40ft. long by 10ft. wide and the first one was designed and built in 1745 and replaced the smaller canoes.

The name comes from York Factory, which was the middle point of the boat's round trip from Hudson Bay to interior Canada. The normal crew was 6 to 8 men with an average load of 3 tons. By the 1880's steamboats had replaced the York Boats on most large rivers and lakes and they were finally abolished in the 1920's with the invention of an engine suitable for canoes.

A replica was built in 1968 by the maintenance wing at Canadian Forces Base Portage. During its christening in the centre of Crescent Lake, the crew went "All the Way" by splicing the mainbrace (drinking a tot of rum to toast the new vessel). This York Boat made several trips including one from Portage la Prairie to Lower Fort Garry, down the Assiniboine River, and on Crescent Lake as a salute to

the Royal Family's visit in 1970. The boat was then retired to the Fort la Reine Museum. The present boat is a reproduction of this York Boat donated by the York Boat Club of Portage la Prairie.

