

# Canoeing Polluted

## Neponset--A Memorable Trip

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SHARON — The stench was unbelievable!

That was the unanimous opinion of the five people who took a nine mile canoe trip down the Neponset River Saturday afternoon.

The idea originated with George Bailey of 74 Glendale Road who wanted to see just how badly the Neponset River is polluted. With him went Walter Newman of 175 Bay State Road who, incidentally, works for the Federal Water Pollution Control Agency.

In the second boat were Gary Clough of 10 Winslow Road, an ardent conservationist, Rep. David Ahearn (D-Norwood) and this writer, on the scent of a story.

The moment we set our canoes into the putrid, murky water on Neponset Street we were overwhelmed by the noxious odor caused by the industrial waste dumped into the river from various firms along its banks.

Globs of sludge floated past us in the water. We traveled upstream for a while towards Route 1 but were forced to turn back because of a dam of old boards, refuse and sediment

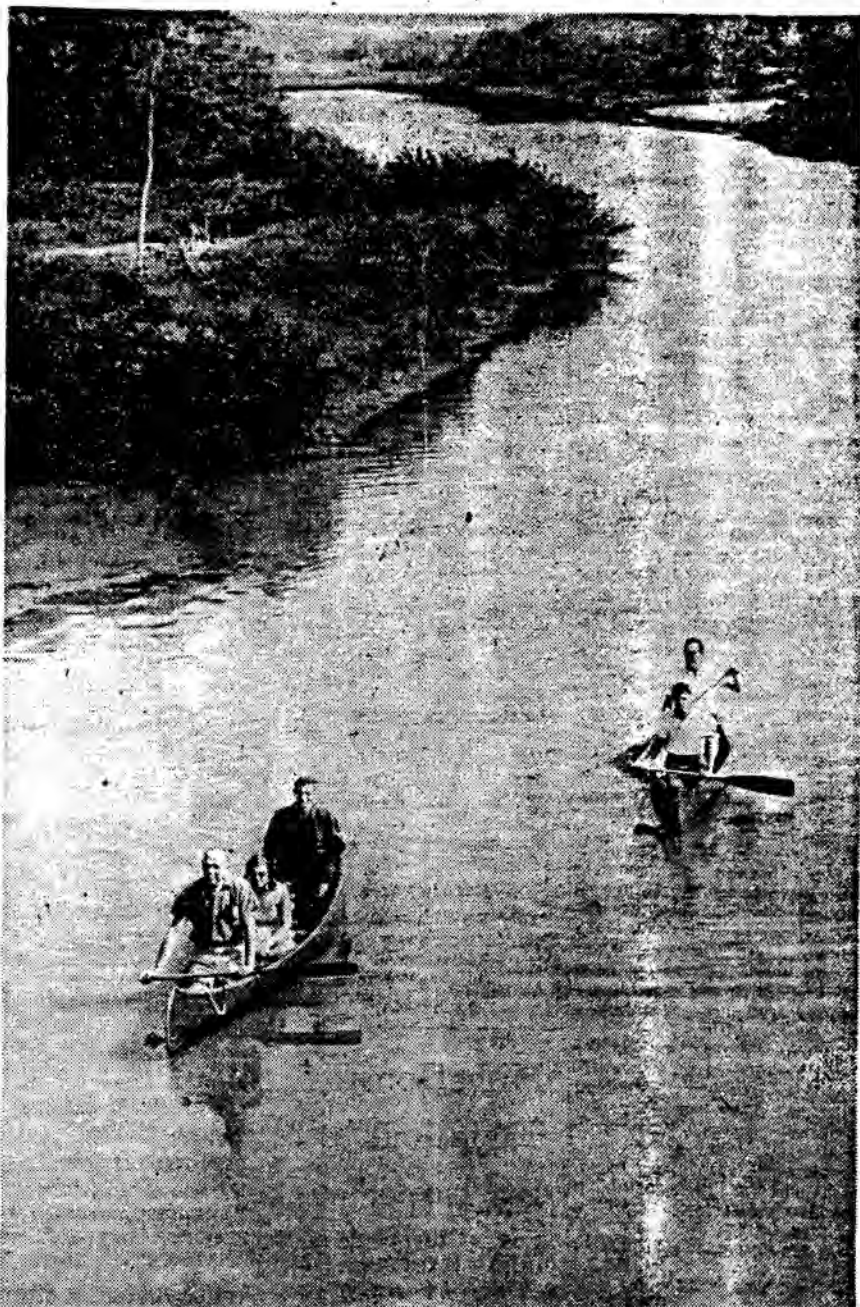
### Most Polluted In Canton

The aim of the trip was to arrive at Milton Lower Falls, thus seeing the course of the river, the purest and most heavily polluted areas, Paul's Bridge where a Southwest Expressway Interchange is planned, and the exact progress of the dredging project which has been under way for many years.

The portion of the river which travels through Canton is definitely the most polluted area we observed.

Members of the party decided most of the waste probably came from industry. Great globs of pulp were in the water. More globs, of raw paper over a foot thick, so blocked our passage along Route 95 that we were forced to carry the canoes for about half a mile until we found a clear area.

The pollution that has occurred in this river is illegal. There are laws on the books to prevent it, but they are seldom enforced because of the economic aspect. Installing equipment to remove waste products from manufacturing plants is extremely expensive. It is easier and cheaper to dump into the nearest river.



### Tax Incentives Proposed

In the state legislature being studied now is a bill which would provide tax incentives to a firm which would install antipollution devices for disposing of its waste products. Action has not yet been taken on the bill.

Most of the land along the river has been zoned for industrial use.

Most of the land along the river is extremely beautiful.

One of the purposes of the trip was to see the potential of the Fowl (at this time that should be "foul") Meadows adjacent to the river, as a recreation site.

They would be perfect. There are many acres of untouched, unspoiled land which follow the course of the river.

All of us could see their potential as a park site, a place for an afternoon fishing or canoe trip. Rep. Ahearn remembered swimming in the East Branch of the River (in Canton near Plymouth Rubber) as a boy.

Even now, except for the awful odor of the river, it is a beautiful area. As we came into Hyde Park and Milton, the river ran in back of homes. How much more lovely those homes would be if there were a beautiful body of water in back of them instead of a foul, stinking river.

### Not For Swimming

There is a legislative bill which is going to be filed which suggests that the Neponset River be reclaimed. It would do for inland waterways what the coastal waterways bill did for Cape Cod.

As we got further along the river, the globs of sewage became less frequent. We had a discussion of the color of the river — greenish-grey, greyish-white, brownish-green, "puge?" All we agreed upon was that it did not exactly resemble water in which one would like to swim.

Further downstream in Hyde Park, the river was dammed in many places and we had to portage, for a few yards or even more until we could again take up our course.

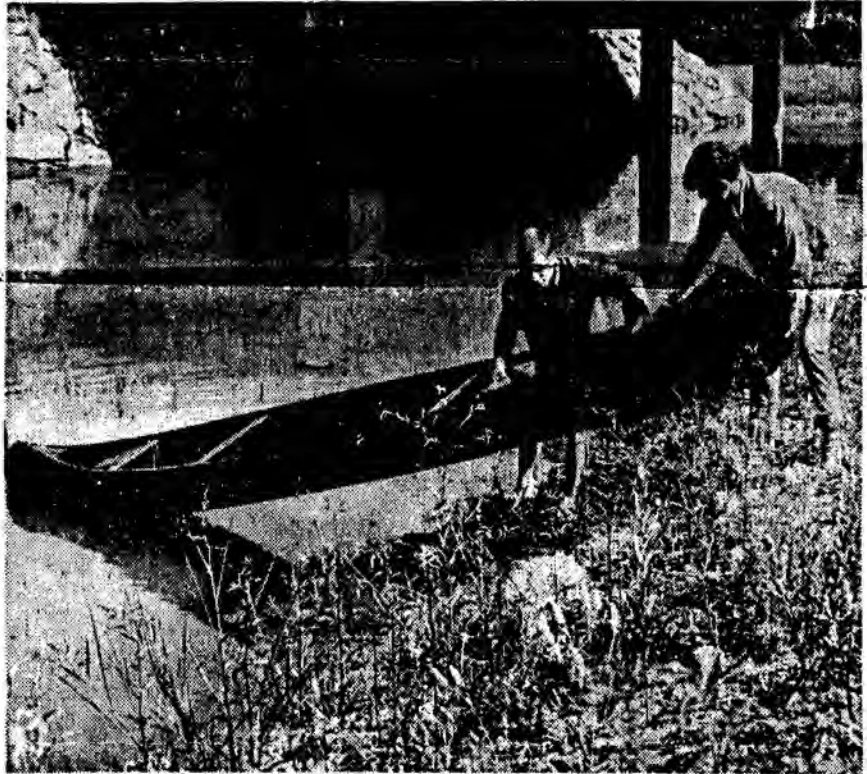
As we paddled our way through Dedham and Readville the smell got more bearable and some of the stuff almost looked like water.

We decided that to destroy the 2,000 square feet of land necessary to create an interchange for the Southwest Expressway at Paul's Bridge would be to destroy 2,000 square feet of extremely beautiful land.

And we saw that parts of the river, mostly near the highways, had been dredged. In Hyde Park and Readville, the banks are shouldered with rocks and piles of earth in places give evidence that the project is still underway.

We didn't quite make it to Milton Lower Falls. We didn't see the river flow into the Atlantic. At Tielson and Hollingsworth in Hyde Park, aching muscles and the lateness of the day forced us to quit.

I am not a conservationist. I know very little about polluted water. But to this I must agree, something must be done to transform the Neponset from the noxious mess it now is back into a river.



"HOPE IT DOESN'T LEAK!" Gary and Alan Clough lower one of the two canoes into the "water" hoping that it won't decompose from all the chemicals floating around.