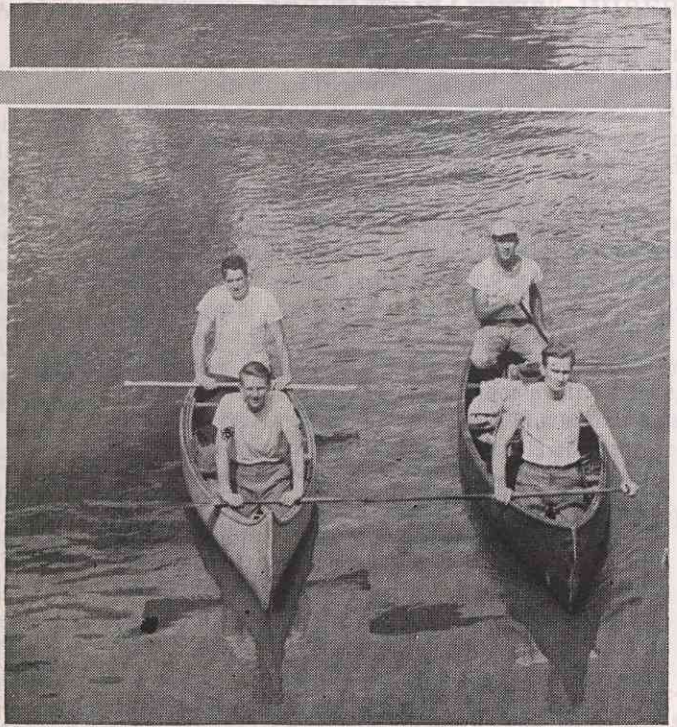


C R U I S I N G

DOWN THE RIVER



By Alex Kizer, Jr.

We delayed our start for a few minutes so the photographer could make a few pictures, then shoved off on another quest for adventure in the form of a canoe trip down the French Broad River. We knew only in a general way what experiences lay in store for us, for, though this marked our fourth trip to Asheville via the French Broad, every previous attempt presented us something new in the way of excitement and tense moments. This time, at the risk of being accused of getting "soft," we had decided to take along a small outboard motor to add to our pleasure and to ease the job of paddling in the long, smooth stretches of the river.

Stowing our duffle securely in case of a tip-over, we left around two o'clock from the bridge at Pisgah Forest. Perry Hamlin and "Jiggs" Price were in Perry's canoe and "Mac" McIntosh and I were in mine. Even in the start this was different from the previous ones—it wasn't raining. However, we weren't to be disappointed, for a light drizzle began soon after we put in. The rain ceased in about a half hour and everyone envisioned a perfect afternoon for the first leg of our excursion.

It wasn't long until our constitution weakened slightly and we broke out the outboard motor (1½ h. p.), fastened the canoes together, cranked up the motor, and sat back to enjoy the scenery

as we sailed along at a ten-mile-an-hour clip. Aside from a few near collisions with a few snags the rest of the afternoon was rather uneventful.

Around six o'clock we passed under the cement bridge near Horseshoe. From previous trips we knew that from the bridge on there were some pretty good campsites, so we cut our speed a little and began looking for a spot to our liking.

It wasn't long before we found one. We pulled in to the bank in a rather sheltered bend in the river and unloaded the duffle. While "Jiggs" and Perry built a fire, "Mac" and I pitched our Jungle Hammocks. From a previous encounter with mosquitoes on a similar trip we had learned that a War Surplus Jungle Hammock with its waterproof canopy and enclosed sides of mosquito netting should be an essential part of one's camping equipment. We pitied "Jiggs" and Perry who had only sleeping bags.

After eating supper we relaxed around the campfire to discuss our plans for the next morning. In the distance we could hear the low rumbling of a train—at least we thought it was a train—the tracks weren't too far from where we had stopped. The rumbling grew louder. It did seem rather late at night for the Hendersonville-Brevard Freight to be coming through. Too late, we realized what it was. Rain! Hastily we piled our equipment under one of the Jungle