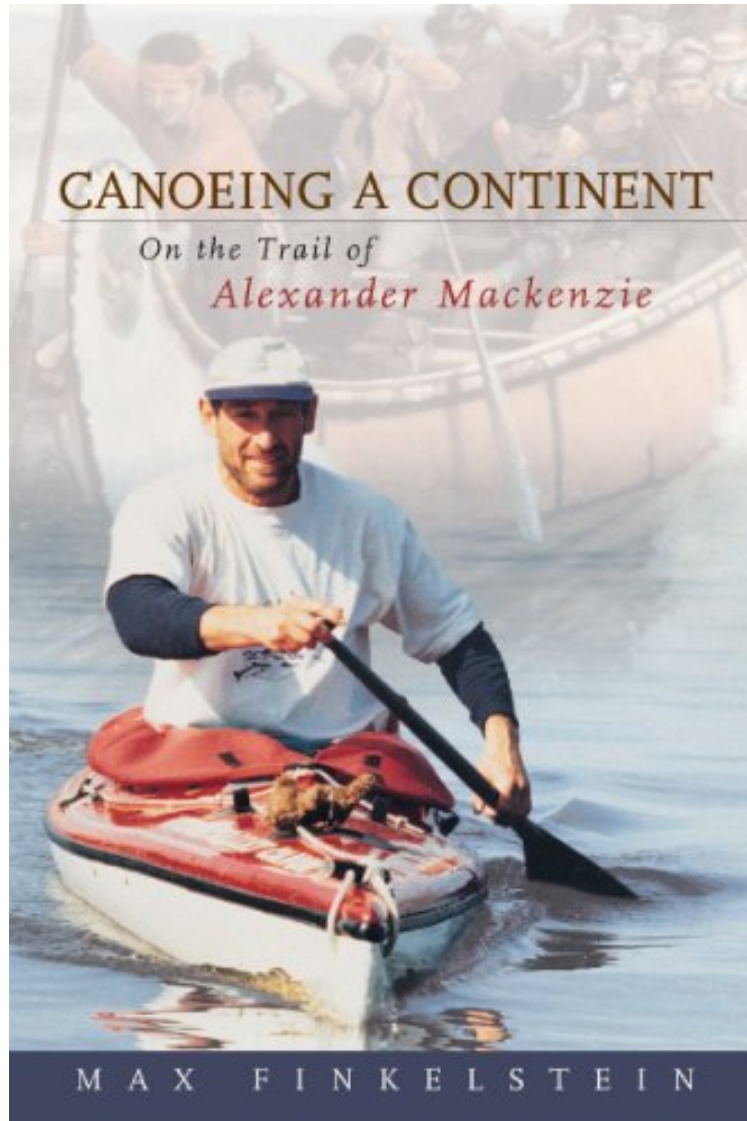


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## Canoeing a Continent: On the Trail of Alexander Mackenzie

*Max Finkelstein*

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#2822236 in Books Dundurn 2005-03-21Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.94 x .77 x 6.14l, 1.13 #File Name: 1896219004312 pages | File size: 63.Mb

**Max Finkelstein : Canoeing a Continent: On the Trail of Alexander Mackenzie** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Canoeing a Continent: On the Trail of Alexander Mackenzie:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Paddling, personality and persistenceBy Stephen A. HainesOver a decade before those icons of Manifest Destiny, Lewis and Clark, finally camped on Pacific shores, Scots fur trader Alexander Mackenzie had already crossed the entire North American continent. Mackenzie's traverse prompted President Jefferson's counter with the government employees' well-equipped expedition. Mackenzie had undertaken

the journey at his own initiative. Likewise, Max Finkelstein suddenly convinced himself it would be a fine idea to duplicate, as far as he might, the traverse Mackenzie made at the end of the 18th Century. Due to time constraints, Finkelstein had to follow Mackenzie's track in stages over several years. This book is an account of those expeditions. The opening chapters portraying Mackenzie's journeys and more recent continental crossings reveal the immensity of the task. Finkelstein then describes his personal crises, an aged mother and his own doubts, as he prepares [with a list of equipment at the back of the book], then is blocked from launching by Ottawa River Valley weather. Once under way, he imparts his successes and challenges with deep feeling. It's a wonderfully descriptive, evocative story of a man almost driven to explore Canada's river and lake systems. Max is helped, coaxed, encouraged, frustrated and elated by turns. You are with him at every portage; you share his joys and illnesses; you feel his rapture at being on Canada's rivers. Mostly, you gain some insight as to what kept both Mackenzie and Finkelstein going as they sought the vast Pacific shore. It's easy to disparage the modern canoeist, particularly one on such an immense, but well-planned, journey. Finkelstein carries a GPS locating device, video recording equipment, Kraft Dinners [TM] and even "Sir Alex", a Teddy Bear, for good luck. With modern conveniences, friends who provide dinners and showers, getting a lift over crossings in a ute, it's clear he's not portaging into the past. That wasn't his intent. Finkelstein wanted to see, so far as possible, what Mackenzie saw. He succeeded and imparts his observations in a readable and truly captivating account. Along the way, he gently reminds us that GPS devices and Kraft Dinners fade into obscurity when you're alone in a Lake Superior storm or shooting rapids down the Blackwater River in British Columbia. Then, Finkelstein is every bit the man the Scots explorer was and deserves much credit for his endeavours - and his narrative of the adventure. [stephen a. haines - Ottawa, Canada]

A highly personal account of the travels of Max Finkelstein as he retraces, some two hundred years later, the route of Alexander Mackenzie, the first European to cross North America (1793). Mackenzie's water trail is now commemorated as the Alexander Mackenzie Voyageur Route. More than just a travelogue of a canoe trip across Canada, this is an account that crosses more than two centuries. It is an exploration into the heart and mind of Alexander Mackenzie, the explorer, and Max Finkelstein, the "Voyageur-in-Training." Using Mackenzie's journals and his own journal writings, the author creates a view of the land from two vantage points. The author retraced the route of Alexander Mackenzie across North America from Ottawa through to Cumberland House, Saskatchewan, and paddled the Blackwater, Fraser and Peace Rivers, completing the trip in 1999. This route is the most significant water trail in North America, and perhaps the world. "A must-read for everyone who loves wild places and the magic of canoes." - Cliff Jacobson, Outdoor Writer Consultant "Past and present collide in this journey of discovery across the map of Canada. Max craves the extremes. He relishes in coping with what nature throws at him, punishing himself to find his physical limits and experiencing firsthand the inherent dangers in such a voyage. With Alexander Mackenzie as his guide and inspiration, Max finds the strength to carry on against all odds to forge poignant historical and personal links in this incredible cross-Canada paddling odyssey." - Becky Mason, Artist and Paddler, Chelsea, Quebec

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From the Inside Flap  
A personal account of the travels of Max Finkelstein as he retraces, some 200 years later, the route of Alexander Mackenzie, the first European to cross North America. About the Author  
Paddler, author, environmentalist and raconteur, Max Finkelstein works as the Communications Officer for the Canadian Heritage Rivers System, Canada's national program for river conservation. When he is not speaking about, writing about, or otherwise promoting Canada's river heritage, Max can usually be found paddling on a river. He has paddled over 22,000 kilometres in North America, Europe, Africa and Australia. His first book, *Canoeing a Continent: On the Trail of Alexander Mackenzie*, which described his experiences retracing the historic first crossing of North America by a European, was released by Natural Heritage in 2002. Paddling the Boreal Forest: Rediscovering A.P. Low, an extraordinary project undertaken with his friend and paddling partner James Stone, sent the two of them to northern

Quebec to retrace and experience first-hand the routes of geologist, map-maker and explorer A.P. Low. Max and his wife, Connie Downes, live in Ottawa, where they are introducing their son, Isaac Thelon, to a life of travelling on and learning about rivers.