

# Study Guide



Folkloric Workshops

2009-2010 season

The legend of the  
Flying Canoe

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## **The legend of the Flying Canoe**

The legend of the Flying Canoe is an old Québec legend set in 1850. It was first published in Montreal in 1900. It is part of Quebec's cultural heritage.

Original story summary (Written by Honoré Beaugrand):

In 1858 a young man goes to a lumberjack camp for the winter. On New Year's Eve, the lumberjacks are stranded in the camp because of snow accumulation on the roads. Some of them make a pact with the devil to return to the village. The devil allows them to return to the village in a flying canoe. To obtain this privilege, the lumberjacks are not allowed to say the name of God or to touch a cross.

The lumberjacks pronounce the oath and paddle in the air towards the village. They can therefore spend the evening with their loved ones. On the return trip, one of them is too drunk and capsizes the canoe in mid air. The lumberjacks will find themselves in the snow near the camp.

## **The legend of the Flying Canoe** **(FrancoFolk's version)**

Martin is an 18 years old young man. His uncle invites him to a lumberjack camp for the winter. He is secretly in love with Elise Beauchemin, a girl from his village. He hesitates to go, fearing another man from the village might ask Elise to become his wife. He finally decides to go to the camp. This will allow him to make some money, allowing him the possibility to buy land or a house and therefore to ask Elise to marry him.

He goes to the lumberjack camp with his uncle and his cousin Antoine. At the shanty, he joins the team of "piqueurs", under Baptiste Durand, one of the foremen. As tradition would have it, Martin being the youngest and a rookie, becomes the victim of other lumberjack's teasing and pranks. Martin who has more pride than wisdom does not take his co worker's jokes well.

In the winter, the roads that lead to the village became impossible to use because of the snow volume. Martin and the other lumberjacks must therefore remain in the camp on Christmas Eve. That night, Martin goes to bed early and dreams about Elise. He imagines her dancing with other men.

Near 10, in the evening, Baptiste Durand comes to wake Martin and invites him to join him and some other lumberjacks as they run the flying canoe. Martin knows that he must pledge allegiance to the Devil and refuse to come. Baptiste will finally use Martin's pride against himself, and convince him to join him.

Seven Lumberjacks take off in the air after having taken an oath not to say the name of God or not to touch a cross. They fly for an hour and reach the village.

Martin dance the whole evening with Élise. Late in the night, the seven friends return to the lumberjack camp. Unfortunately, Baptise, who steers the canoe has drunk too much alcohol and cannot steer properly. The canoe goes towards the village church. One of the lumberjacks touches the cross of the church with his paddle and shouts "oh my God".

The canoe becomes uncontrollable and a great wind will send the lumberjack in the snow. The Devil comes and teases them. He asks which of the lumberjacks is the most scared. Martin, being the youngest and the victim of the other lumberjack's teasing is designated as the "scaredy cat".

The other six lumberjacks are taken by the Devil and condemned to paddle in the sky for the next 300 years. Martin, being the most scared, is condemned to tell the story of the Flying Canoe for the next 300 years.

## **Post presentation discussion**

In FrancoFolk's version of the legend of the Flying Canoe, Martin does not like the teasing of the other lumberjacks. When he must choose between the security of the shanty and the adventure of the Flying Canoe, he is influenced by Baptiste who uses Martin's pride against himself.

- Must we always submit to the will of our friends?
- Are friends who push us to act against our principles, good friends to keep?

The oath of the Flying Canoe allows us to gain quickly a dangerous pleasure.

What type of "flying canoe type" negative experiences are today's teens exposed to today?

- Find contemporary type of Flying Canoe type experiences, drugs, theft, peer pressure etc ...

## **Bibliography**

(French books only)

La Chasse-Galerie (Honoré Beaugrand) ISBN: 8940-6060-2

## **French songs about the legend**

Martin d'la chasse-galerie

(La Bottine Souriante, *La Mistrine*, 1994)

Chasse\_Galerie

(Claude Dubois, *Fables D'espace*, 1978)

## Vocabulary

**2 men cross saw:** Type of saw used by two lumberjacks to cut tree trunks.

**Foreman:** A man who serves as the leader of a work crew

**Log Drive:** The transportation of logs using rivers and creeks.

**Log Drivers:** Lumberjacks who follow the log drive and prevent piling up of logs in narrow part of a river or in rapids.

**Northern lights:** A colorful phenomenon seen in the night sky during the winter.

**Shanty:** A roughly built cabin.

## Jeopardy style quiz

Materiel:

- A photocopy of the quiz on a transparency (the blank copy)
- The master copy with questions and answers
- Overhead projector
- The name of each team's participants on a piece of paper
- 

This activity must be done after viewing the legend of the Flying Canoe presentation.

The class can be divided into two or four teams. The teacher draws the name of a student from the first group. The student must choose a category and the number of points ventured. (The higher the number of points, the harder the question)

The teacher asks the question corresponding to the category and number of points. If the student answers correctly, the teacher writes the name of the team in the proper cell on the transparency. If the student fails, the teacher writes an "X" in the cell.

The teacher draws the name of another student from the next team.

Once all the cells have been answered, the team with the highest number of points wins.

The legend of the flying canoe	Characters	Definition	Inventions	Context
100 points	What was the name of Martin's sweetheart? <b>Élise</b>	What term is used for the lumberjack camp? <b>Shanty</b>	Were planes invented before or after 1850? <b>After, circa 1900</b>	What gossip was always talked about in the village? <b>Who was Martin's sweetheart?</b>
200 points	What was the name of Martin's uncle? <b>Marcel</b>	What was the function (job) of Martin's uncle in the camp? <b>Foreman</b>	Were trains invented before or after 1850? <b>Before, circa 1800</b>	What were the two things that lumberjacks could not do while flying a canoe? <b>Touch a cross or say the name of God</b>
300 points	What was the name of Martin's cousin? <b>Antoine</b>	Name the phenomenon seen in the winter's sky at night. <b>Northern lights</b>	Were bicycles with pedals invented before or after 1850? <b>After, in 1861</b>	Why were the lumberjacks not able to return to the village? <b>There was too much snow on the roads.</b>
400 points	Who steered the canoe during the flying canoe run? <b>Baptiste Durand</b>	How do you call men who help untangle logs in rivers? <b>Log drivers</b>	Was the phone used in homes in 1850? <b>No, no until 1877.</b>	Why was Martin working harder in the field during the summer? <b>His father hurt his leg.</b>
500 points	Who hosted the village celebration? <b>Mr. Lebel</b>	What is the name of the transport method used to bring logs to town? <b>Log drive</b>	Was photography invented before or after 1850? <b>Before, in 1839</b>	What was the job of Martin's crew? <b>To cut the branches of the trees.</b>
600 points	Who asks Martin if he is going alone to the dance? <b>Catherine</b>	How do you call a saw that cuts trunks and requires two men? <b>2 men cross saw</b>	Was the telegraph invented before or after 1850? <b>Before, invented in 1794.</b>	Why were the rowers following the river bed? <b>That was the road they had taken to come in.</b>

The legend of the flying canoe	Characters    Definition    Inventions    Context			
100 points				
200 points				
300 points				
400 points				
500 points				
600 points				

## **Post presentation activity #1**

Personal development

### **Your own Flying Canoe**

In the legend of the flying canoe, Martin is influenced by his friends to take poor decisions. In your life, you have taken wrong decisions. Talk to us about your own flying canoe, about an instance where you took a wrong decision. If applicable, you can tell how people influenced you into taking the wrong decision.

Write a 250 word text describing your experience.

## **Post presentation activity #2**

Personal development

By teams of 2

### **End the flying canoe**

The legend of the Flying Canoe has many different ending depending on the person telling it. Create your own version. Use the original legend, but when Martin is ready to enter the canoe to go to the village, start your own version.

Be creative!

Write a 750 word conclusion to the story.