

Thursday Release
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A NATIONAL FILM BOARD

Release

THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA, MONTREAL

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QUEBEC ANNUAL WINTER CARNIVAL BIG SUCCESS
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THOUSANDS THROG TO QUEBEC CITY FOR FESTIVITIES
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ICE CANOE RACES CARNIVAL HIGHLIGHT
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Quebec City, February, 1959.

It's winter carnival time in Quebec and local hotels are filled to capacity as thousands throng to the city for a week of fun and excitement. Old man winter was on hand too, but the enthusiastic visitors and Quebecers didn't seem to mind the sub-zero temperatures and biting wind. Quebec was all decked out to celebrate carnival week, and monstrous snow and ice figures were on display throughout the city, including of course "Bonhomme Carnival" --- the spirit of the carnival.

Always a highlight of the festivities is the spectacular ice canoe race --- teams of five men make their way across the ice-choked St. Lawrence River from Quebec to Levis, a distance of about one mile. Thousands of spectators lined the river banks to watch the teams battle their way across, braving the freezing weather. Others watched the race from the decks of Quebec-Levis ferry boats.

Paddling through stretches of open water where the current was swiftest, the teams reached the frozen-over areas and had to half-push and pull, half lift their craft over the uneven and treacherous ice. Although the sun shone brilliantly several contestants reached the finish line with frozen fingers. Top honours went to a team of hardy paddlers from Montmagny, Que., headed by Joseph Lachance. They won their fifth consecutive victory, making the crossing in 16 minutes, 56 seconds.

Spectators on board the ferry sang and danced, adding to the general merriment and at the same time -- very practically-- keeping themselves warm by the activity.

A colourful fairyland night parade was another highlight -- magnificent floats, bands and lovely beauty queens thrilled on-lookers, and of course smiling, jovial "Bonhomme Carnival" was at the head of the parade to greet the crowd.

Visitors from all over Canada and the United States will take home a wonderful memory of this year's winter carnival -- one of the most successful in many years.