

The Peterborough Gang 1849-1910 Herald Stephenson Gordon Strickland



A section of plant workers and managers pose in front of a canoe, mid 1920's.

Taking a trip around Rideau Lake in the late 1960's you were likely to see a Peterborough or Lakefield boat at almost every cottage, either in a boathouse, tied up to the dock or up on the shore. Over 100,000 canoes, outboard boats, some inboards and even a few steam cruisers came out of the Peterborough workshops. Thousands survive to this day. Many have been restored and are still in use.

There were several boat builders in Peterborough operating continuously from the 1850's to the 1960's. They competed against each other (Wm. English and Ontario Canoe), sued each other (Peterborough v. Chestnut), bought each other out, and occasionally went bankrupt together (Peterborough and Canadian Canoe). The best known of the builders were the Canadian Canoe Co. , Lakefield, and Peterborough Canoe Co. If the tradition of the Green Bay builders was

straight from the British Isles, the Peterborough gang were the great adaptors of the native canoe. It was the canoe they adapted, an Anglicized strip plank version of the birchbark canoe that put Canadians and Americans on the water.

Unlike Kingston, which had been founded with military money and came with a ready-made gentry, officer and business class, Peterborough was founded by settlers and entrepreneurs. They began arriving in the 1820's and some did well in the lumber business, funneling logs out of the boreal forest in what is now Algonquin Park and down to sawmills in Peterborough. In the pioneer years up to the 1850's, most settlers were simply happy to survive and build up their farms and families. By the mid 1850's, one the villages and settlements had become established, and there was more free time, some people began to take vacations to fish and hunt. As the local lakes became crowded they began to push into the lakes in the northwest shield areas of Ontario. A few adventurers began to set up camps in the remote lakes north of Peterborough and Orillia. The only way to get to these lakes was by canoe and the demand for canoes begat a canoe building business. The canoe was the best way to get around. It was light, solid, and easy to carry since portaging was a necessity. The rowing skiffs and the lake boats built in Kingston and Green Bay were too heavy to be much use in the bush. White settlers had been copying the birchbark canoe for years. There is a surviving canoe from the loyalist era around 1790 and it is probably the oldest surviving boat built in Ontario, sadly there is no builder's mark.

In 1846 the first organized canoe race (in this case true canoes- the regattas in Kingston had been going since 1822 but featured British pulling boats only) in Upper Canada was held on Rice Lake. There were two classes of canoes, naturally birchbark and dugout. The battle was between the Rice Lake locals and the Lakefield boys. A Lakefield boy named George Strickland had come down to watch and was inspired, not by the birchbark but by the possibilities of the dugouts. He went home and began work on a new kind of dugout. Strickland was a master craftsman already and he cut out the hull to an amazing thickness (thinness would more apt!) of 1/2 inch. The way to do this would have been to carve the outside of the hull, rough cut out the inside and then using a pair of calipers set to 1/2" methodically scrape down the interior checking the thickness as you work your way to the ends. He christened this unique boat the "Shooting Star". Strickland's Shooting Star dominated the Rice Lake Regatta dugout class for the next ten years. I suspect Shooting Star was a beloved racing toy, not a practical boat for fishing or hunting. Strickland probably had a much tougher dugout boat he could bang around on rough waters and shoreline rocks.

In 1857 two young carpenters named John Stephenson and Tom Gordon were hit by a different

inspiration. Why bother with the fiddly birchbark canoes or the sleek but still too heavy dugouts. Why not apply the British carvel planking method to building canoes? One writer (Ted Moores) suggested they started by bending the ribs over a dugout canoe. It's possible but they would have had to find a way of getting the dugout away from the new hull once the planks were nailed on. More likely they simply took the lines off of the fastest canoes and set to work building six or seven hull molds, brackets which served as rib forms that planks could be bent over, install the ribs, and then finally remove the forms once the hull is intact. The planks were made of the same material preferred for the dugouts: basswood. Basswood is a broadleaf tree, but like birch it's one of the softer of the deciduous or hardwoods. Thus the basswood board canoe was born. There were three wide 1/4 planks running the length of the hull on the sides and four more on the bottom. The bottom and side planks had to be fitted to a curve, but they were relatively straight. The real challenge was the chine plank, which is the plank that has to curve where the sides curve into the bottom. Even with a relatively gentle curve this plank still bends, not only from end to end but from side to side. However, cutting basswood out of a freshly fallen and wet tree, planing down on the spot to 1/4 " thickness and then chucking it into the steam box for maybe 5 minutes at the most, the resulting board would have the consistency of wet cardboard and could be easily pulled over the demanding frame curves.

X

ADVERTISBMENTS,

THOMAS GORDON

MANUFACTURER OF



CANOES,

—FOR—

HUNTING,

FISHING,

TRAPPING,

PLEASURE

SAILING,

ETC., ETC.

Lakefield, Ontario, Canada

Thomas Gordon Canoes strange ad, 1887, no canoes pictured but a sidewheeler on the ole Mississippi. I meant the American river, but at this point there were already steamboats on the Madawaska area and the Upper Ottawa, built by Gillies Bros. of Arnprior.

The first white man's canoe builder was Stephenson, so he technically held the trademark and the rights in the colonial world of patents and intellectual property law. Handily, his actual money-making business was wood planing, and he was a partner in the Stephenson and Craigie Planing Mill, so he had a means to supply planed planks and also to do the fine bead and cove work needed to allow the planks to lock together. It's possible he inserted a cotton string between the bead-and-cove of the fitted planks to help lock out the water and cut down on the leaks- a time-honored method of sealing small boat hulls. He already had the saws, planers, woodworking tools and certainly the lumber already on hand and it provided a higher-level use for the planing mill products, and they could plane down a basswood log and then use it to plank a canoe. The first plant was a relatively small affair in the village of Little Lake but in the 1860's Stephenson built a much larger three-story factory in the town of Ashburnham. This now incorporated both the planing operation and the boat works. The boat division never accounted for much of the enterprise. Only Stephenson and his son worked on the canoes. In actuality it was Tom Gordon who was the more aggressive in developing the canoe business. Gordon built up a dedicated canoe factory and invested in expensive trips overseas to the British Empire Exhibition in London where he was awarded the Prince of Wales Medal for Craftsmanship. Recognition like this from the Mother Country meant a lot and Gordon was soon an established name in the canoe business.

Other builders were now entering the game. The original dugout expert, George Strickland had set up his own business in 1862 as Strickland Canoe Co. It appears he went over to the Stephenson method as well, perhaps he realized the relative ease of the basswood board method. The Lakefield gang had prospered in building the basswood board style canoe, much the same as their Peterborough rivals.

One of the most unique designs came from the Herald & McBride Canoe Co. The design, patented by Daniel Herald in 1871, consisted of a primitive form of plywood. There was an outer layer of planking, running lengthwise over an inner layer running from side to side. In between the planks were bedded with a sheet of cotton covered with white lead putty in between. This style of design became the standard bottom design for the planing hull runabouts developed in the 1920's by John Hacker and Chris Smith, although by that time Herald's patent had long since expired. No ribs or stringers were needed, and the inside was completely smooth, and the canoe hull was remarkably strong. Some of the larger canoes could carry 2-3 tons of cargo, i.e. two paddlers, camping equipment, provisions, beer, guns and one dead moose. The problem was the double plank design, which was a harbor for dry rot. As long as the Canoe was properly stored after use, i.e. under cover and away from the elements, it would last, otherwise

once the rot got in, the construction made repairs almost impossible, and it was short journey to the fireplace. After Daniel Herald's death in 1890, his younger brothers continued the operation as the Herald Brothers- Builders of Rice Lake Boats. Eventually the company became best known as the Rice Lake Canoe Co. A Herald Canoe from the 1850's is on display at the Museum of Science and Technology in Ottawa.

As Gordon, Strickland, and Herald all prospered and became powers in this industry Stephenson had not grown much by comparison. In 1880 he sold his designs to another Peterborough businessman, J.Z. Rogers who wanted to add another business to his planing mill, which became the Ontario Canoe Co. Ltd.



Three Colonels, J. Z. Rogers left, father Richard, and brother George, right.

Peterborough Boats, as we know it, was the creation of James Zacheus (J.Z.) Rogers, with the backing of William H. Hill and Elihu Edwards. Hill was a general (all lines) insurance agent and Edwards was a barrister, both were looking for an investment, none had any background in the boat business. The Rogers family had immigrated to Canada from England, and they went into the lumber business. J. Z., his brother George and their father were all active militia officers; all three rose to the rank of Colonel. Unlike many business "colonels" Rogers was the real article and eventually reached the rank of Regimental Commanding Officer of his unit, known as the Peterborough Rangers. The Rangers were an amalgamation of several local militia

companies and in 1900 was given the formal registration as the 57th Infantry Regiment. J. Z.'s first brush with combat was at the age of 24 in 1866, coming up against the unexpected incursion of the Fenian society onto Canadian soil. The Fenian raids are mostly treated lightly by historians, but they were no joke; most were Irish immigrants with combat experience in the Union Army during the Civil War; the plan was to collapse the very weak Canadian militia and put pressure on England to leave Ireland. Poorly trained and with little ammunition, several hundred Canadian militia soldiers faced off against the somewhat disorganized but battle experienced Fenians at Lime Ridge near Port Colborne in 1870. After a short firefight the Canadians retreated into town, but the Fenians did not press their advantage (they had not planned that far ahead) and the whole plan eventually fizzled, although Rogers was called back from time to time when they returned to make trouble. Rogers found more success as a businessman, opening a planing mill and then venturing into the small boat business.

In the 1880's Peterborough was a town with 4500 residents by the 1886 census but growing rapidly. Generally the town of Peterborough at the time was divided from the town of Ashburnham, across the Otonabee River. The two towns were incorporated into the larger city in 1905. It aggressively pursued manufacturing industries and became a successful mid-sized industrial hub, RCA, General Electric, Johnson Motors, and then OMC, Canadian Watercraft among others, at least until the 1970's, when the various plants began to shut down, culminating in the widespread contraction in the 1990's after the introduction of free trade, and the resulting closure of the Canadian tariff-based manufacturing subsidiaries. Production went back to the U. S. for a few years, then even these operations were closed, and the assembly work sent overseas. Television Road is still there, the only TV sets are in people's houses.



In 1880, having acquired the rights to the canoe and skiff designs of John Stephenson and took over the operations of the Ashburnham plant. Rogers had big plans for the Stephenson canoe line. By 1883, he and his business partner John Burnham formed the Ontario Canoe Co. Along with the basic basswood board style, the next and more expensive model was the strip hull, a new technique where thin interlocking strips of either cedar or basswood were used for the boat skin. Two styles were offered, one where the strips were bent perpendicular to the hull, running from gunwale to gunwale and the more recognizable stern to bow method. There were now six sizes offered, from small 10-foot hunting canoes to full 30-foot war canoes, which were the mainstay of the rowing clubs popping up in almost every lakeside town in Ontario. The war canoes, which the author became familiar with at summer camp in early 1970's were big and heavy beasts that could seat sixteen paddlers and a steersman (one of the camp counselors). The steersman sat at the stern, where he could call out the pace and watch for "lily dippers". The two person (or in our case one counsellor and three campers) was 14 feet long and about 120 pounds, but they could be portaged with two of us, or in one case, the most buff of the counsellors carried one solo, bug eyed and red faced after several hundred yards to the next water launch point.



The 30-foot war canoe. Circa 1900.

The success of the Peterborough builders in the 1870's and 1880's was also benefiting from the fact that Indians were "in". Now that the Indigenous peoples had been pushed onto reservations, (white) people could afford to romanticize them. Indian (I'm using the term of the period) lore and culture, or at least a sort of mushed-together version of it came to symbolize the outdoors, and all that was not urban and civilized. This image, accurate or not began showing up on every product imaginable, from board games to cigar boxes to match packs to boats. The Lakefield Boats insignia shows a Cherokee style headdress for a region that had been dominated by the Mississauga's. It's worth noting that the First Nations were still building canoes for their own use and did so up until the 1950's once outboards and second-hand outboard boats became widely available. A few, such as Johnny Bay went off reserve and became a well known canoe builder, selling his products, and also an extensive line of furniture to the local white cottagers.

THE CANADIAN CANOE CO., LIMITED, PETERBOROUGH, ONT., CANADA.

5

Our Different Styles of "Nassau" Canoes.



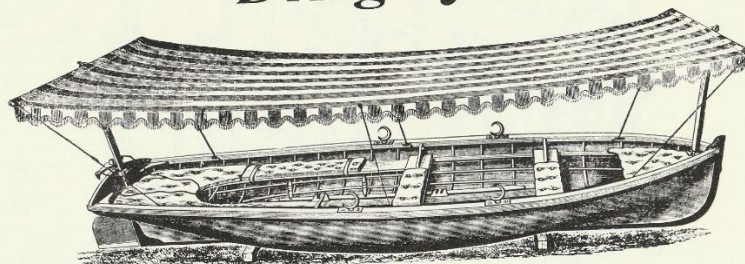
THE above cut represents one style of our "Nassau" or "Open Canoes," and you will observe that they have the shortest decking at the ends, and consequently the largest open space of any of our build of canoes. For this reason they are in more demand than either of the other styles, as they can be used for almost any kind of sport or work for which canoes are intended, and for Camping, Fishing, Hunting, Shooting, or Surveying, where large loads have frequently to be packed away, and as much room as can be had is required, these canoes have no equal.

They are fitted with mast ring and step at the Bow, and are frequently used with a Sail, but when persons can do with a little less open space, we recommend some of our other make, if it is intended to do much sailing.

THE CANADIAN CANOE CO., LIMITED, PETERBOROUGH, ONT., CANADA.

25

Dinghys.



AS we have had several inquiries from owners of yachts for something to use as a "tender," we are now building Dinghys in two qualities, as follows: The varnished quality is built of select Cedar, nailed with Copper Nails and Brass Screws. Those painted are built of the same quality of Cedar, but are nailed with Tinned or Galvanized Iron Nails and Iron Screws. Both qualities can be built either "carvel" or "clinker" style and fitted with standing keel, or if preferred, with plate or folding centreboard. The prices quoted for the two smaller sizes include one pair of oars and rowlocks, also rudder; while the price for the larger size includes two pair of oars and rowlocks, also rudder.

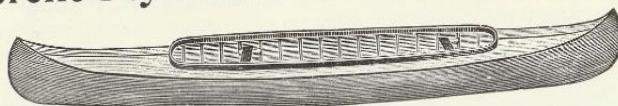
No.	Length.	Beam.	Depth.	Painted.	Varnished.
250	9½ ft.	4 ft. 2 in.	14 inches.	\$55 00	\$65 00
251	10½ ft.	4 ft. 2 in.	14 "	60 00	70 00
252	12 ft.	4 ft. 2 in.	14 "	70 00	80 00

The following are extras, namely:—Awnings, \$10.00; Cushions, \$5.00 and over, according to material and finish; Centreboards, \$5.00 and over.

THE CANADIAN CANOE CO., LIMITED, PETERBOROUGH, ONT., CANADA.

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Our Different Styles of "Otonabee" Canoes.



THIS Canoe is decked 3 feet at each end and 3 inches along the sides, thus leaving a long and wide cock-pit. A combing stands up from the decking all around the cock-pit about $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches high, and is finished round- ing at each end. These Canoes can be built with standing keel, or for folding or plate centreboard. Movable air tanks, and also rudder with deck or foot steering gear, can be added when required. Our prices are without keel, centreboard or rudder, and decked 3 feet at each end, and 3 inches along each side.

THE PLANKING, and all the material used in their construction, as also the finish inside and out, is exactly simi- lar for any of the following qualities to that described for the same quality of our "Nassau" make. The only difference between any size and quality of this make, and the same size and quality of our "Nassau" make, is as regards the decking at the ends and sides.

PRICE LIST OF "OTONABEE" CANOES.

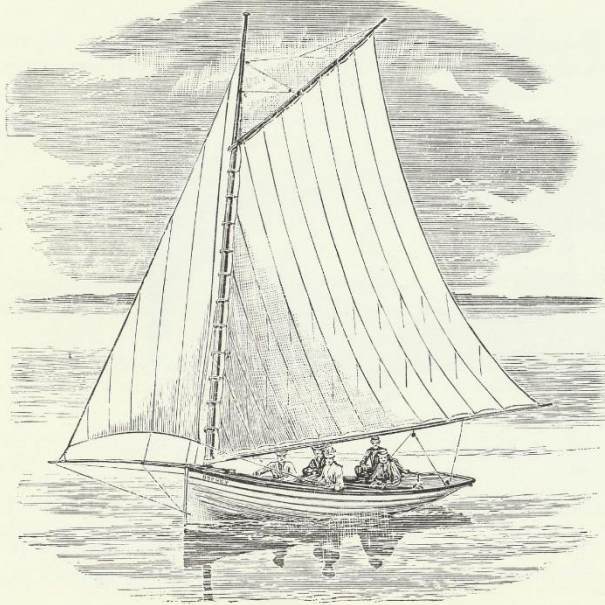
EACH PRICE INCLUDES TWO PADDLES.

No.	Length.	Breadth.	Depth.	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
				Varnished Cedar and Butternut Strips.	Varnished Cedar Rib.	Varnished Cedar Strips	Varnished Basswood Strips.	Painted Basswood Strips.	Varnished Basswood Boards	Painted Basswood Boards.
41	14 ft.	26 ins.	9 ins.	\$53 00	\$50 00	\$49 00	\$47 00	\$44 00	\$40 00	\$34 00
42	14½ "	27 "	9½ "	55 00	52 00	50 00	48 00	45 00	41 00	35 00
43	15 "	28 "	10 "	57 00	56 00	51 00	49 00	46 00	42 00	36 00
44	15½ "	29½ "	10½ "	59 00	60 00	52 00	50 00	47 00	43 00	37 00
45	16 "	31 "	11 "	61 00	64 00	54 00	52 00	49 00	45 00	38 00
46	16½ "	33 "	11½ "	63 00	68 00	56 00	54 00	51 00	47 00	40 00

THE CANADIAN CANOE CO., LIMITED, PETERBOROUGH, ONT., CANADA.

21

“CAT BOATS” AND “SAILING YACHTS.”



THIS cut represents one of our “Cat Rig” Boats (to which a small jib has been added) which have been in large demand for the last two seasons, and for which we have received from the persons having purchased them, strong letters of praise.

Those mostly ordered are 18 or 20 feet long, and 7 to 8 feet beam, and are built as follows : The keel, keelson, and stems of White Oak ; planking of clear Cedar ; timbers, Red Elm or Oak ; centreboard box, lower streak Oak, and upper streak, Cedar or Pine, with seams doweled and caulked ; decks, alternate strips of Butternut and Pine, made perfectly smooth, and blind fastened and sprung on : centreboard and rudder of Steel Plate ; tiller of Forged Iron.

They are built lapstreak, floored, and finished in three coats of paint.

The following prices are for the complete boat with sail, fittings, and one pair of sweeps, but without “jib.”

Price for Boat 18 feet long by 7 feet beam,	-	\$225.00
“ “ “ 20 “ “ “ 8 “ “	-	265.00

The Canadian Canoe Co. brochure from 1895; A little bit of everything.

Up until 1892, there were two canoe builders in Peterborough, William English, now owned by his son James with another son Samuel as works foreman, and Rogers’ Ontario Canoe.

Life, Fire and Accident Insurance, Placed in the Best Companies.

W. H. HILL, Agent, 404 Water Street, Peterborough.

TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH DIRECTORY.

35

AUBURN.

Arseno Jas., works Auburn Woolen Mill, h Brown.
Billings Geo., laborer, Auburn Woolen Mill, h Brown.

Bowen Morris, pattern weaver, Auburn Woolen Mill, h Brown.

Carter Elijah, hames maker, h River Road.

Carter Alexander, fuller, Auburn Woolen Mill, bds E. Carter.

Cooper Wm., dyer, Auburn Woolen Mill, h Brown.

Coveney Stephen, brickmaker, M. Curtis & Sons, h Brown.

Coveney Stephen Jr., carder, J. M. Masson, boards Stephen Coveney, sr.

Coveney George, works M. Curtis & Sons, boards Stephen Coveney, sr.

Downing Joseph, works Brodie's Woolen Mill, h Lisborn.

Fischer Fred, laborer, h Brown

Fowlis Samuel, gentleman, h River Road.

Gaskins Stephen, stonemason, h Brown.

Gaskins Wm., stonemason, h Lisborn.

Godfrey John, gentleman h Lisborn.

Goule Alvin, laborer, h Lisborn.

Guerin Jos., laborer, h Brown.

Guerin Louis, works P. Hamilton, h Brown.

Hartley Wm., dresser, Auburn Woolen Mill, h Brown.

Hamilton Hon. Robt., gentleman, h River Road.

Hervie Daniel, dyer, Auburn Woolen Mill, h Brown

Johnston James, gentleman, h Lisborn.

Kemp Thos., miller, h Brown.

Kemp Henry, carder, J. M. Masson, h River Road

McIntyre Jas., works Auburn Woolen Mill, h River Road.

McQuade Thos., laborer, h Brown.

Meade Richard, gentleman, h Dunlop.

O'Donnell Michael, teamster, h River Road.

Phelan Peter, laborer, h Lisborn.

Pratley George, watchman, Auburn Woolen Mill, h River Road.

Ray Thos., dyer, J. M. Masson, h Brown.

Renton Ellen, (wid. James,) h Brown.

Scriber Robt., laborer, h Brown.

Stewart Jas., bookkeeper, Porter Bros., h Smith.

Turner Adam, dyer, Auburn Woolen Mill, h Brown

Vinnette Edward, sawyer, Geo. Hilliard, h Lisborn

The Ontario Canoe Company, Limited.

PETERBOROUGH,



ONTARIO, CANADA

Manufacturers of PLEASURE, FISHING AND HUNTING CANOES, including Patent Cedar Rib Canoes, Patent Longitudinal Rib Canoes, Patent Folding Canoes, Basswood Canoes, Decker and Sailing Canoes, Paddles, Oars, Sails, and Canoe Fittings. J. Z. ROGERS, President and Managing Director. Gold Medal London Fisheries Exhibition, 1883. *Send Stamp for Catalogue.*

FACTORY.---Elizabeth Street, Ashburnham.

TOWN OFFICE.---439 Water Street, Peterborough.

The Ontario Canoe Co. prospered until a fire in 1892. The company or mostly the staff, split more or less in two. A new startup took over what was left of the moulds and equipment, which was little more than the IP knowledge and skill of the workmen, the physical assets had been incinerated. The Company was to be known as the Canadian Canoe Co. Limited. and set up at 439 Water Street, with A. R. Tebb, a partner in steam laundry Tebb and Sharpe, as president and Felix Brownscombe as secretary-treasurer. Hill and Edwards made an offer to Rogers; come over to manage the new Peterborough Canoe startup, bring your boys from the old factory. Rogers ended up with a tiny 4% interest in the new company, but an executive salary and likely stock options. Per the directory, Hill was president, George A. Schofield secretary treasurer and Rogers as managing director. Hill was also now managing director of Central Ontario operations of Sun Life Assurance Co. at 400 Water, just up the street from Peterborough Canoe at 290 Water. By 1903 Hill was still two-timing as executive for both Sun Life and the boat plant, with Schofield gone Rogers took his place and was now both managing director and secretary treasurer. Edwards was a passive investor. Peterborough listed canoes and boats, but also furniture and planing services, Rogers' old business.



Inside the Canadian Canoe factory, 1900's.

HARDWARE

ADAM HALL,
407 GEORGE STREET.

SHELF & HEAVY

**THE BANK OF TORONTO,
PETERBORO' BRANCH, P. CAMPBELL, MANAGER.
FARMERS' NOTES DISCOUNTED.**

PETERBOROUGH CITY DIRECTORY.

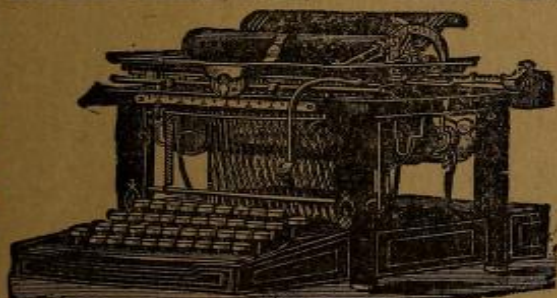
107

Perry Robert F, clk Lock Works h
451 Water

Pese John, mach Wm Hamilton h
15 Cedar

**Peterborough Business Col-
lege, Alex Blanchard C A Prin-
cipal 368 & 370 Water (see adv)**

PETERBOROUGH BUSINESS COLLEGE.
A. BLANCHARD, C. A., - PRINCIPAL.



All Commercial Branches Including: Shorthand
Day and evening classes. 323-370 WATER ST.

Peterborough Canoe Co Ltd,
W H Hill Pres, Geo A Schofield
Secy-Treas, J Z Rogers Mang Dir
290 Water (see adv)

PETERBORO' CANOE CO. LD.,
Mnfrs of all kinds of
Hunting, Fishing and Sailing Canoes.



290 WATER STREET.

Peterborough Carbon & Porcelain
Co Ltd, J W Taylor mngr 270
Townsend

COX & DAVIS,

PETERBORO' - Agents for

Royal Ins. Co.,
North Brit. & Mer. Ins. Co.,
Lancashire Ins. Co.,
Alliance Fire Ins. Co.,
Guardian,
Sun Insurance Office,

Caledonia,
London & Lancashire,
Western,
Phoenix of Hartford,
" of Brooklyn,
Manchester Ins. Co.

Mnfrs. Life Ins. Co.,
Toronto.

" I received your
cheque for \$10,000 within three hours
after I filed claim papers".

KATHERINE RIDOUT.

**Peterborough Hardware Co
(Ld), R B McKee Pres, H Phelan
V Pres, R H Fortye Secy, R S
Davidson Treas 368 George & 140
Simcoe**

Peterborough House, John Clancy
Prop 189 Hunter

Peterborough Light & Power Co, T G
Hazlett pres, T E Bradburn V Pres
A Stephenson Secy, office 417 Wa-
ter

**Peterboro' Lock Mnfg Co, Jas
Stevenson Pres, Jno Carnegie V
Pres, Thos Brooks Mng Dir, F
Adams Secy-Treas 198 Simcoe**

**Peterborough Music Co, Tur-
ner & Cunningham Props, Pianos,
Sewing Machines, Music etc 404
George (see adv)**

Peterborough Review (The),
The Peterborough Review Print-
ing & Publishing Co Ld pubs 164-
166 Hunter (see adv)

**Peterborough Review Prin-
ting & Publishing Co Ld
The, F H Dobbin Mng Dir, J
Carnegie Pres 164 & 166 Hunter
(see adv)**

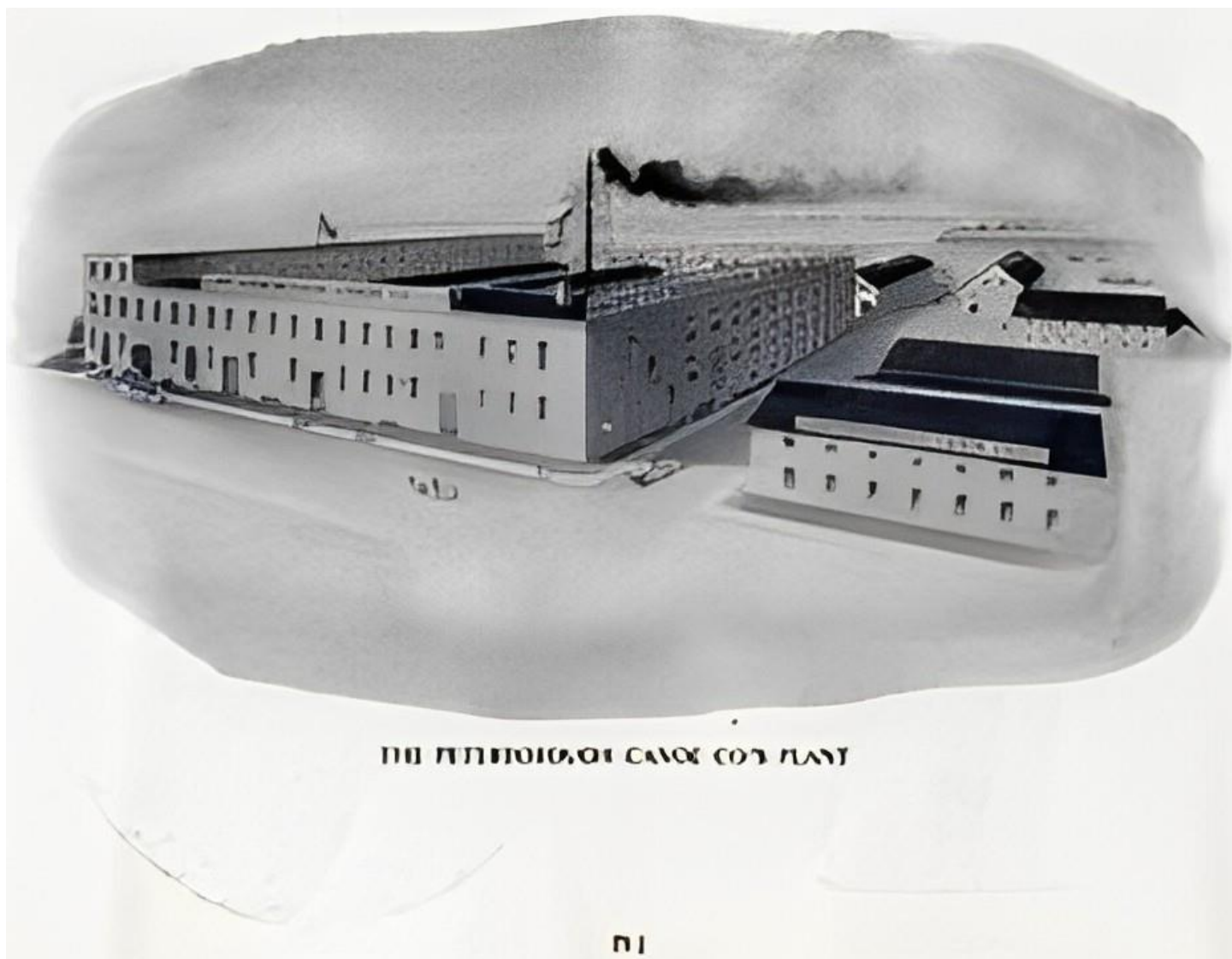
**Peterborough Steam Laun-
dry, A Parker Mngr 179 Charlotte
(see adv)**

Peterborough Water Works Co, Jno
Burnham pres, G W Hatton secy
253 Hunter

CENTRAL CANADA LOAN AND SAVINGS CO
MONEY TO LOAN ON EASY TERMS
DEPOSITS RECEIVED.

Best of all, canoes, unlike skiffs, were relatively easy to stack and ship by rail. So it was easy to set up distributors. In the city the department stores such as Eaton's had an outdoor leisure section that sold various camping items such as canoes, fishing poles, tents, and the new Coleman portable stove. Under Rogers, Peterborough had branched out into other boat and cottage related items. There were now over 120 different canoe styles to choose from, and now they were building duck monitors and carvel and lapstrake skiffs as well. They also built office furniture, as well as cottage and verandah furniture and even window shades, spun off as the Ventilating Shade Company. They also offered steamboats between 20 and 50 feet. How successful this was is open to debate, as this type of building was all custom driven and at odds with the company's specialty in high production small boat products. Luxury steamboats were a business that worked best with connections, reputations, mechanical expertise, (and a lot of money) all things that the Davis and Polson Works had in abundance.

By 1900, there were three builders in Peterborough/Ashburnham, Peterborough Canoe, Wm English and Canadian Canoe. There was a shuffle in Canadian Canoe, Tebb was gone as president, replaced by a former Peterborough Electric Company executive named Homer O. Fisk, and a new plant manager Morley Lyle. That year an ambitious young man named William Richardson answered an ad for the position of secretary at the Peterborough Canoe Co. This was an entry level position for a man (a terminal position for a young woman, who would be expected to quit as soon as she was married and expecting, or a long career in the same job should never be married; at best over the years she might become an office staff manager, but never above that). Richardson had no such limitations, he was a sharp cookie and rose through the ranks, in 1907 he was promoted to bookkeeper, in 1910 he was now in the senior management level, as secretary treasurer.



The Peterborough Canoe plant, 1900.

J. Z. Rogers died from a heart attack in 1909 after a full day at the plant, passing the operational torch (William Hill was still technically president, although his day job was still his insurance business) to his son Claude and Will Richardson, the secretary treasurer. The company had dropped the furniture and planing side businesses and was strictly offering canoes, rowboats and now they were hoping to cash in on the motor launch boom. This was not going well. In spite of the company's size, it was not having an easy go in this business line. They had a contract with the St. Lawrence Engine Co. Ltd in Brockville to supply engines, which Peterborough would then install in their product. Motor boats were a very competitive market (Capital Boat and Canoe in Ottawa offered a basic 18-foot boat and 2hp engine for \$100) and most likely the builds were rushed, and the engines simply bolted in without taking the time to do a proper alignment. Customer complaints began to filter back into the Peterborough Office and Claude simply blamed the problems (vibration mostly) on the quality of the St. Lawrence

engine itself, so the customers began routing their concerns to Harry Going. Going blew a fuse and wrote back to Rogers essentially terminating their relationship, lucrative though it might have been, and pressed on with their own matched unit program using launches from their Brockville neighbor, Gilbert Boats. In spite of Peterborough's commanding lead in small boats and canoes, it never really gained much traction on the motor boat line, although it eventually solved its quality issues.



THE RED BALL OF
QUALITY

SHOT SHELLS

The Difficult Shot

THE long shot, the quick snap-shot, all require steel lined Arrow or Nitro Club Shells of U. M. C. make. The steel lining protects the powder, your gun and face, and is the finishing touch in perfect shells. No matter what gun you use, or what powder or load you specify, you will get satisfaction if the red ball U. M. C. trade mark is on the shell box.

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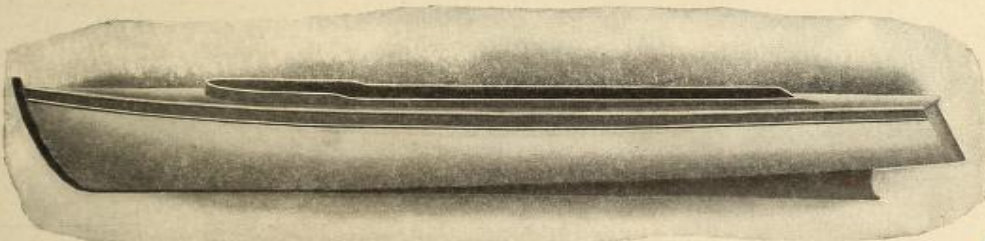
313 Broadway,

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Peterboro "Launches"

Are Becoming as Famous as Peterboro Canoes



Cut shows one of our Popular 20-ft. Runabouts. This Launch complete with 2 cylinder, 4-H.P. Motor, reverse gear, lockers, cushions, etc., arranged for ONE MAN CONTROL. Capacity 7 persons. Speed 10 miles. **PRICE \$350.00.**

We build Launches and Motor Canoes of all sizes. Write and tell us what you want and we will surprise you with our price.
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PETERBORO CANOE CO., LIMITED
PETERBORO, ONTARIO

Famous, more for their quality issues with the poorly fitted engines

Lakefield Common sense and no frills

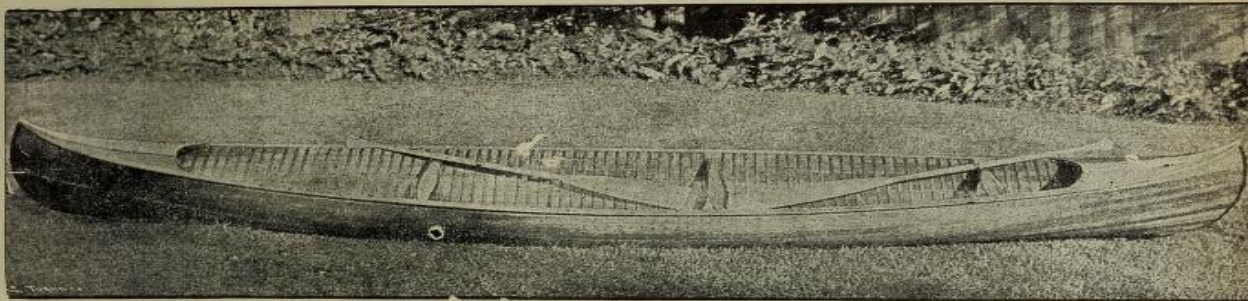
Several miles down the road in the town of Lakefield there was a new business, or rather a new name for an old business. In 1892 Strickland & Co had become the Lakefield Canoe Works. There were three builders in town. The first had been Thomas Gordon, who had set up shop about the same time Stephenson had in Peterborough. Gordon's own foreman, J.G. Brown had set up his own business across the street in 1870 known as the Brown Boat Co.

I became acquainted with two Gordon canoes while living off campus at Ottawa University. The house I was renting had a shed at the back with two antique canoes stored in it by the previous tenant John Gordon, a graduate commerce student and a descendant of Thomas Gordon. These family heirlooms were in their original condition, untouched by repairs or restoration. The woodwork was hardly scratched. There were pieces of a 1930's newspaper stuck to the pilled varnish, where it appeared that someone had made a halfhearted attempt to wrap the hull like a pike fillet. The workmanship and woodwork detail were impressive, very much in the fussy canoe construction style of the turn of the century, complete with the rather delicate period metal fittings. The smaller boat was a true canoe, and the larger one was a hybrid canoe and rowing skiff, without the curving stern and bow gunwale horns typical of canoes. All the pieces were perfectly shaped and fitted together, the clench nails neatly peined over and there was none of that rough and ready style of finishing more typical of the canoes and outboards built in the 1930's and 40's. This boat had two sets of oarlocks and although it had the hull of a canoe, it was intended to be rowed. In 1904 the Strickland and Gordon enterprises merged to form Lakefield Canoe Bldg. and Mfg. Co. This suited Thomas Gordon's son Gilbert until 1909, when he left to form the Gordon Canoe Co. in the town of Bobcaygeon, which was on the shore of Lake Simcoe and near to the rapidly developing cottage community on the Lake.

One of the unique items made by Lakefield was what our family called duck boards. This was a fold up series of cedar slats that one could lay out in the bilge where there was always a puddle of water. This would keep your feet dry, to a degree assuming there wasn't too much water. Once the boat was at speed of course all the water would run to the stern which would defeat the purpose.

ROD AND GUN IN CANADA

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THIS CUT ILLUSTRATES
ONE OF OUR STRIP CANOES

PRESENTED TO THE PRINCESS OF WALES ON THE OCCASION OF HER WEDDING TO H. R. H., THE (at that time) DUKE OF YORK.

This is, undoubtedly, the highest grade canoe constructed. Only the most skilled mechanics and special machinery provided for the purpose, can be employed in the manufacture of the strips for sheathing.

WE GIVE THE VERY BEST VALUE FOR MONEY OBTAINABLE. WE GUARANTEE THAT EVERY BOAT OR CANOE SENT OUT FROM OUR FACTORY REPRESENTS THE VERY BEST MATERIAL AND FAITHFUL, SKILLED WORKMANSHIP.

On these conditions we solicit YOUR order.

The Lakefield Canoe Building and Manufacturing Co., Limited.
(Successors to Strickland & Co. and Thomas Gordon.) LAKEFIELD, ONTARIO.

THOS. GORDON, President.

JOHN E. RICHARDSON Manager.

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Only first-class hotel in city overlooking the Detroit river :: ::

European Plan, \$1 to \$3.

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FOR THE SEASIDE, FOR PICKNICING, FOR
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Lyman's Fluid Coffee

The Great Convenience and
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NO COFFEE POT REQUIRED.

Rich and Full Flavored, Wholesome, Stimulating,
Economical, no cheap substitute of peas, wheat or barley,
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For sale by Grocers and Druggists in lb., ½lb. and
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We make for

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A weedless hook with unbreakable spring that can be
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takers. We make a minnow-holding tandem, open
hooks or weedless, that WILL HOLD a minnow for hours
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bait. Our frog-holding devices are equally practical.

We will send any of our hooks with privilege to return
and get your money if you are not satisfied. Circulars
upon application. Discount to the trade.

THE WEST WEEDLESS HOOK CO.,
12 Pearl St. COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA.

Lakefield Canoe Ad: Rod and Gun and Motor Boat in Canada, 1908. Also canned liquid coffee for the outdoor caffeine addict. Will Richardson's brother, John, was in the management position at this rival firm.

In 1909, the New Brunswick based builder, Chestnut Canoe Co. patented a canvas sheathed hull. Peterborough had been using the design since Roger's takeover in 1880 and the method had been in use for twenty years earlier than that, but no one had thought to patent it. Ironically, Peterborough found itself in legal violation of a patented process even though its use of the process likely predated Chestnut's claim but proceeded to use it anyway. Chestnut sued Peterborough in 1909 for infringement. Peterborough fired back with a blistering legal defense, justifiably arguing that the idea had been around for years and that there was no real innovation by Chestnut. Patent law is not just business gamesmanship, you have to prove to the courts that you actually invented the thing yourself before anyone else did. Chestnut never brought this lawsuit to court. In 1923, three years before the dubious patent would have expired anyway, the two parties shook hands and set up a joint venture to manufacture canvas canoes. The actual canoes would be built at Chestnut's Moncton plant and shipped to Ontario to be sold under the joint venture trade name.

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ROD AND GUN IN CANADA



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Wales and His Majesty the King of Italy and patronized by the Leading Authorities in the Angling World.

The Field says: "It ought never to be forgotten that it is to Messrs. Hardy, of Alnwick, we owe the supremacy we have achieved as rod makers. They have left all competitors hopelessly behind."

The World's renowned Rod and Tackle Makers were awarded the "Grand Prix" International Sports Exhibition Crystal Palace, 1904, making a grand total of 39 International Awards.



Extraordinary Success of Hardy's "PALAKONA" (Regd.) Cane Built Rods

One Firm Beats All Others.

Grand Tournament, Crystal Palace, "HARDY" RODS won TEN championships against SEVEN by all the world.

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Manufacturer of SALMON & TROUT Rods in Built Cane, Greenheart, etc. Salmon and trout Reels, Sea Reels and Nottingham Reels in Aluminum, Gun Metal, Ebonite, and Wood, etc.

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Outfits for all parts of the world.

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Largest manufacturer of Fishing Reels in the world. Catalogue Gratis.

There is no better Sport than Canoeing,

But when you paddle a Canoe made by the Peterborough Canoe Co., Peterborough, Ontario, the sport is made many times pleasanter, because our models have attained a world-wide reputation for their unexcelled

BEAUTY and GRACE, LIGHT WORK, SPEED, CARRYING CAPACITY



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PETERBOROUGH, ONT., CANADA.

We Have Customers in every part of the world.

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Peterborough Canoe Ad: Rod and Gun and Motor Boat in Canada, 1908

The Polson and Davis works, with their rich customers and British boatyard way of doing business, which meant fuss and fiddle, could take its time in building its steam masterpieces. The Peterborough companies were factories, cranking out production line boats as quickly as possible. The business owners were entrepreneurs, not tradesmen, or they had started out in the shop, that was usually a long time earlier and after some years they had lost touch with the workmen's experiences.

By 1902 there were 60 employees at the three main factories. By 1908 there were 90. The workers made some halfhearted attempts to unionize but these never went anywhere. In 1919 the Canadian Canoe company employees staged a strike, possibly inspired by the violent workers rebellions in Winnipeg and across the US as well. Perhaps a lack of local communists or socialist agitators did them in (when was the last time you heard of a "small town communist"?). The big wood working union at the time, The International Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners was primarily American and in spite of its deep pockets, seemed to have little interest in supporting strike action north of the border, such as their disappearance during a strike at the Davis Works in Kingston. The pay increase demands as well as recognition for the union were ignored by management. Shortly after things returned to normal. Up to the Great War, Peterborough had been selling canoes and skiffs and the occasional motorboat. Now the outboard motor was coming to Canada and after the war and these engines were much lighter and were quickly developing more horsepower. They would need a boat to put them on.