

Toronto Harbour 1867-1904

By Confederation, Toronto had leapfrogged both Ottawa and Kingston to become the fastest growing city in the province. Pleasure boating, already well established in Kingston, Ottawa, and Peterborough, was just starting to show up at the Toronto waterfront. Prior to 1850, there was no formal professional identification as a “boatbuilder”. Such a person would be listed as a “shipwright” and might build boats on the side, most of the work was still in commercial shipyards. The first Torontonian to hang out his shingle, or plank, as it were, was Robert Reynoldson in 1848 offering boat-building services, although Bethune & Co. included boat building along with that of the strictly commercial ship and steamboat work. Steamboats at the time, as noted, all had low-pressure engines, which were huge affairs that could only be found on a 150+ foot ship, although Britain was already experimenting with more compact high-pressure systems, Canada was always a technological laggard, at least at this point in history. The Hayes Bros. also listed themselves as shipwrights, although by 1861 the remaining brother Robert would re-brand as a boat builder; they may have already been in the business but were keeping their options open. There were only two others in addition to Hayes, Reynoldson, and a new outfit set up by Walter Bolton. There was Henry Brown also under the boatbuilding lists, but he was primarily an outfitter, which meant oars, sails, rigging and retail and wholesale hardware. At Confederation year 1867 there were five now, still Reynoldson, (misspelled as “Rennardson” in the directory) John Baines, John Clindinning, Samuel Loveys and Frank Noverre, Bolton, Hayes, and outfitter Brown had weighed anchor and left the business. Noverre, Clindinning, Loveys and Reynoldson were all listed at various cross streets on the Esplanade, Scott, Church, Simcoe, and George. Today the Esplanade is an unremarkable commercial street south of Front, and several hundred yards from the water, but at the time this was the waterfront road from Simcoe out to Hahn Street. With the coming of rail yards and Union Station, it was cut off at Yonge. Over the years the city advanced steadily southward into Toronto Harbour, and what was once the edge of the city simply disappeared behind more streets and railways and still more buildings and finally the rock infill known as the Port Lands. Frank Noverre built a small 30’ X 40’ shop on a pier at the end of Simcoe Street. Five small boat building businesses were hardly indicative of a boom, but by 1880 there were thirteen and by 1890 seventeen, all dotted along the harbour side. Henry Aykroyd set up shop as Aykroyd & Sanders at the foot of Yonge Street in 1875, starting a family business that lasted until the Second World War. Walter Dean set up his shop on Queen Street East, only a few blocks from Kew-Queen-Woodbine Beach. Rowing and sailing clubs were popping up all over town, the first was the Royal Canadian Yacht Club, which would come to have such an impact on boatbuilding and sail racing. It was for the elite, not millionaires as there were no such exotic

creatures in Toronto at the time, but for the mid upper-level businessmen and their senior executives, as well as politicians, such as R.C.Y.C. founder James Gifford, who were not wealthy but could make things happen that created wealth.

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ROD AND GUN IN CANADA



THERE IS NO ARTICLE OF FOOD OR DRINK

So indispensable to the comfort of every Camper, Fisherman or Hunter as coffee; but it must be good coffee.

*Seal Brand Coffee is the best that money can buy.....*

Packed in 1 and 2 lb. cans only.

HANDY TO CARRY.

AT ALL DEALERS.

**Chase & Sanborn**

MONTREAL.

**WALTER DEAN**

—Manufacturer of—

Fastest and Highest Grade Only CRUISING, SAILING, PROSPECTORS, RACING and WAR CANOES

The  
Dean  
Canoe  
Still  
Leads



RICHARD ELOMFIELD, (Champion of America)

Winner of 11 First Prizes during Season of 1904. Breaking the record by 18 seconds. Paddled a "DEAN CANOE," No. 38. Time 144 seconds. He made the fastest time in a Dean Canoe ever made by one man.

Write for Catalogue

Long Distance Trade, **WALTER DEAN, 1751 Queen W., Toronto.**

"When writing advertisers kindly mention ROD AND GUN IN CANADA."

Most of the small boats built in Toronto could easily have been forgotten, except for two icons. The first was the boat that put Aykroyd on the map and kept there for decade after decade and that was the Aykroyd sailing dingy. It was built to conform to the Lake Sailing Skiff Association requirement to establish a one-design small catboat. The idea of a one-design rule was to equalize the type of boat so that there was none of the endless one upmanship, bigger sail area, taller mast, wider, narrower, lighter, or heavier of the previous free for all contests; the plan was to focus on the skills of the sailor, not the superiority of the boat. The purpose of the one design was to avoid the U. S. competition problem, where small sailing race rules changed from lake to lake, ocean to ocean and no-one could agree on a common rule set. The LSSA originated in Toronto in 1896, and rather than sign on individual boaters on a sort of petition approach, the LSSA recruited on a club-by-club basis. In 1898 Aykroyd's came out with a model that conformed directly to the rules, 14 feet long with a drop-down centre board, but no keel, steering would be done by the solitary sailor and a gaff rig sail. For non-sailors (such as the author) a gaff rig sail has four corners. The sail is not attached to the main (in the sail dinghy the only mast) at the top but a spar attached at an angle to the main about 2/3 the way up. This approach provides a lot more give and control to the sailor rather than simply making a triangular sail attached only to the mast and boom. It also allows for a much larger sail area. The Aykroyd dinghy had a low profile, rib on lapstrake planking, decked over leaving just enough cockpit room for the sailor to move around as needed. It was light and affordable and popular with the row and sail clubs, as well as cottagers. 2,500 were made between 1886 and 1943, when Aykroyd closed its doors. The second icon was the Sunnyside canoe made by Walter Dean. Dean was the other principal small boat builder in Toronto. He had worked for Harry Hodson for several years before striking out on his own in 1890, opening up a small shop at 1751 Queen Street East. In 1915 he moved once more to the foot of York Street and then in 1921 made the fateful decision to move to Sunnyside (his mainstay product, the Sunnyside Torpedo, was so named years before), now jammed with tourists and day trippers. He was able to secure a spot in the Sunnyside Pavilion lower level and as an income supplement opened a small restaurant on the main level, which held two large dance halls. I can imagine that given the high-traffic location rent was probably pretty high, and he now had rent on two locations, the shop and the restaurant, a new business for him. Any entrepreneur who has done the restaurant thing can confirm that nothing sucks your wallet faster; you have to keep a full staff and a full pantry whether there are customers or not. It was too much, and he closed up at the end of the 1922 season and sold the molds and the rights to the Sunnyside Torpedo to Gidley Boat Works. Gidley was primarily a motorboat builder and may have wanted to add a small craft division, but it is an open question whether any more Torpedo's were built. The Walter Dean Canoe and Boat Co. reemerged like a ghost in 1947, settling up at 2050 Dundas West,

although it disappeared shortly after; nothing more is known about this operation of what type of boats it built. The Sunnyside Torpedo was a cedar sided oak rib craft with three thwarts and a covered foredeck in place of the more familiar Indigenous curved bow and stern structures, it was meant to be used in calmer waters. The fore and aft decking was available in cedar, or for a higher price, mahogany.

**PRICE LIST**

**OF**

**Deans' Sunnyside Pleasure Boats Limited**

BOULEVARD DRIVE - SUNNYSIDE - TORONTO

**MAY 1st, 1923**      All former price lists cancelled

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**CANOES, CEDAR, BUTTERNUT TRIM**

Sunnyside Torpedo, 15' .....	\$ 88.00
Sunnyside Torpedo, 16' .....	90.00
Cabin de Luxe 16' .....	98.00

**CANOES, CEDAR, MAHOGANY TRIM**

Sunnyside Torpedo, 16' .....	\$ 92.50
Sunnyside Torpedo, 15' .....	90.00
Canadian Beauty, 16' .....	90.00
Cabin de Luxe, 16' .....	102.50
Old Style Model, cedar strip, 16' .....	<del>\$ 88.00</del> 75.00
Old Style, varnished basswood .....	70.00
Old Style, painted basswood .....	60.00

**CANOES, SOLID MAHOGANY**

Sunnyside Torpedo, 15' .....	\$100.00 80.00
Sunnyside Torpedo, 16' .....	102.50 80.00
Cabin de Luxe .....	112.50 85.00

**CANVAS COVERED CANOES**

First Grade, Pleasure Model, 16' or 15' .....	\$ 80.00
Second Grade, Pleasure Model, 16' or 15' .....	70.00

**ROWBOATS**

404 Square Stern, mahogany trim, 16' (including 1 pair oars)	120.00
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**TOWING DINGHIES**

9' oak trim .....	\$ 80.00
12' oak trim .....	95.00

**SKIFFS**

Lapstreak, mahogany trim, 14' .....	95.00
Lapstreak, mahogany trim, 16' (including 1 pair of oars) ..	100.00

**SAILING DINGHIES**

14' complete, oak and butternut trim ..	\$250.00
16' complete, oak and butternut trim .....	300.00

**LAUNCHES**

16' MISS KOKA, complete with 1 cyl. Kingfisher motor, (including 1 pair of oars) .....	<del>\$350.00</del> 300.00
GIDLEYFORD, 24' Runabout (circular on request), .....	1,250.00
Plus tax 4½%, f.o.b. Penetang.	

**DIS-BRO**

**ACCESSORIES**

Back Rests, slat .....	.75	Single Paddles, spruce (racing)	2.50
Back Rests, wicker .....	2.60	Single Paddles, maple ..	1.75
Bottom Boards, 15' Canoe, pair	\$2.75	Double Paddles, spruce .....	7.50
Bottom Boards, 16' Canoe, pair	3.25	Life Preserving Cushion single	3.00
Canoe Covers, duck .....	7.00	Life Preserving Cushion, double	7.50
Flag Poles, spruce .....	1.00	Spar Varnish, 1 quart .....	1.50
Flag Poles, mahogany .....	1.50	Leeboards, oak .....	7.00
Oars, spruce .....	7.00	Canoe Sails .....	12.50
Oar-Locks, pair .....	1.50	Keels, shaped and bored .....	1.50
Rudder for Skiffs .....	3.25		

*Pleasure Boats Ltd. was the short-lived new successor company to Walter Dean, in 1923 a subsidiary of Gidley Boat Works. Note the dramatic sale price discount for the all-mahogany Sunnyside Torpedo; I guess it was not selling well.*

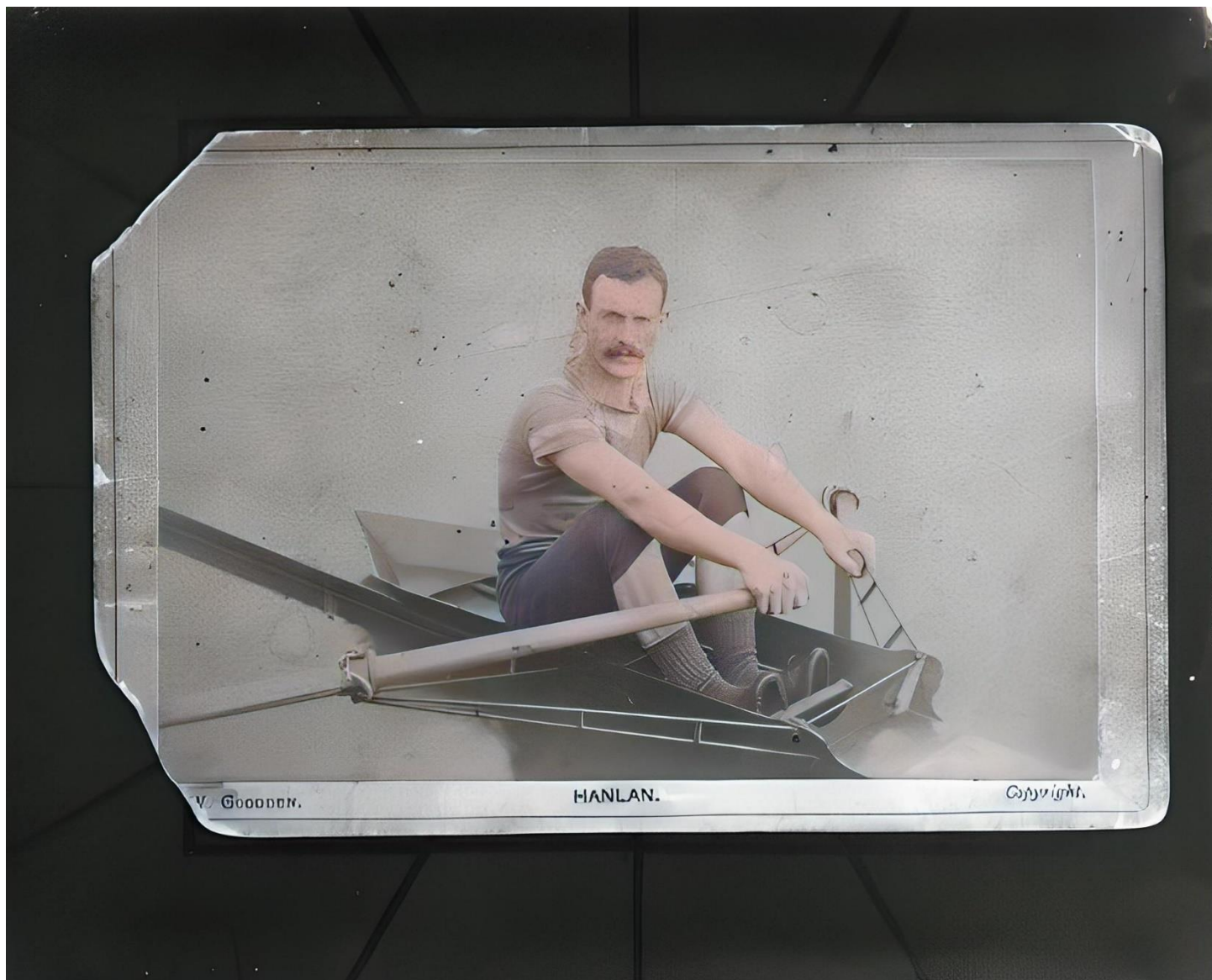
In 1861 what we now refer to as the GTA was composed of five independent urban areas, North York, Etobicoke, East York, Scarborough, and Toronto with a total population of 163,000 persons, by the 1880's it was close to 350,000, way outstripping the other "major" cities of Kingston and Ottawa. Ottawa as the new capital would grow to 100,000 plus by the turn of the century and continues to grow to this day. Ultimately it was Kingston, once intended to be the nerve center of Upper Canada, now dethroned from capital and industrial status, lost its primacy, and stabilized at a population around 50,000, comprised of students, soldiers and the incarcerated.



*Walter Dean built war canoes for sale to rowing clubs, he also had ones that could be rented for a regatta. Some of the boats were from Dean's arch-rival, Frank Dey of Capital Boat and Canoe Works in Ottawa.*

Rowing contests were already a big deal in Kingston and Green Bay, going on since at least the 1820's. By the 1860's Canada had its first international star in the person of Edward "Ned" Hanlan. Hanlan was a prodigy, one of those one in a hundred million who are simply better than anyone else, and he wasn't afraid to show it. He was the Canadian rowing equivalent of

Muhammed Ali, who was never shy about reminding everyone of his greatness and then proving it again and again. Hanlan's big showdown in 1880 was against another Ned, the prior world champion Edward Trickett from Australia.



*20-something Ned Hanlan in 1878.*

There was no evidence of any mismatch, Hanlan was 25 and Trickett was 29, Trickett was taller and bigger at 6' 4" and 173 lbs and Hanlan an average size of 5' 8" and 153 lbs. One might think that Trickett, being taller and having longer arms would have the advantage, but it was not to be. Hanlan pulled way ahead and then started goofing around, stopping, going in reverse a little, pretending to faint, all the while Trickett was struggling just to keep up. Trickett came back for another round in 1882, only to be literally humiliated once more, with Hanlan pulling

ahead, then rowing back behind Trickett and then roaring past once more. Sports science hadn't really even been conceived, let alone born yet, endurance athletes succeeded based on natural talent. They did practice, Hanlan had rowed from the family hotel on Toronto Island to the mainland as a child and teenager, but most also had the sort of high protein, high carb diets of the time, fruits and vegetables were rare out of season and most of the time came out of a mason jar as a preserve, often heavily mixed in with cane sugar and pectin. Hanlan continued as a rowing coach in later years and helped develop a training program. Many sportsman smoked, sometimes cigars or cigarettes, when they became fashionable; Senators team captain Harvey Pulford was often photographed off ice with a pipe in his mouth. Much of the real physical endurance came from an exceptional and freakish metabolism which provided a much higher than normal blood oxygen level and further a superior ability of the muscle cells to dispose of lactic acid, the waste product that makes you tired after exertion. It's the nature of a champion, but not necessarily a long life. In 1904 Hanlan was photographed at Sunnyside Beach in his scull, next to his friend Octavius (O.L.) Hicks, both are in their fifties, but it is Hicks who is still slim and fit from the hard labour of building boats, while Hanlan is hunched forward, and his arms strategically placed to hide his considerable gut. After retiring from the sport, Hanlan went back to the considerably more sedentary work of managing the family hotel and doing professional coaching. He died at the age of 57. Hanlan's hotel burned down in the 1920's and later the southern end of the Toronto Islands were scraped clean of permanent residents and is now a park and public nude-ish beach.



*O. L. Hicks in his skiff and 50-something Ned Hanlan in his signature rowing shell, 1904 Humber Sunnyside. The name on Hicks' shop is whited out for some reason.*

## The Dey's of Ottawa

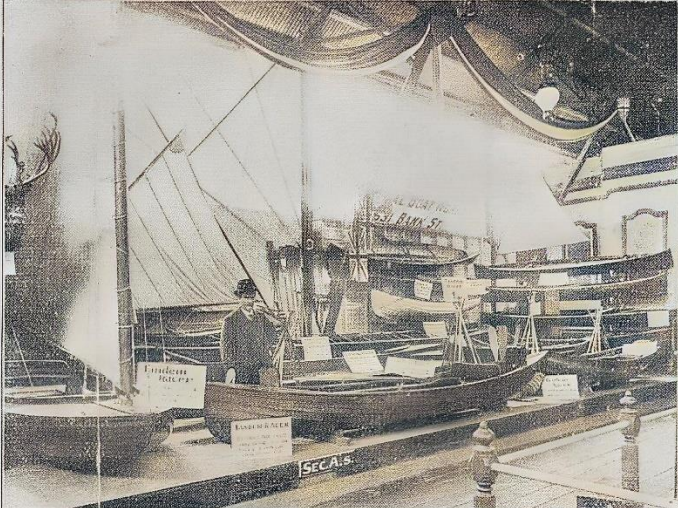
1895 1910

**PRICE LIST AND CATALOGUE A**

**THE CAPITAL BOAT AND CANOE WORKS**

THE FOLLOWING CANOE CLUBS USE OUR RACING CANOES:

Chataguay Canoe Club  
 Britannia's Boat Club  
 New Edinboro C. Club  
 Grand Trunk Boat Club  
 Lachine Canoe Club  
 Buffalo Canoe Club, N. Y.  
 Toronto Canoe Club  
 St. Roses Canoe Club  
 Carleton Place C. Club  
 St. John's Y. Club  
 Narragansette C. Club  
 Pittsburg Canoe Club  
 Providence R. Club  
 Samoset C. Club, Mass.



Wabewawa C. C. Boston, Mass.  
 Ottawa Canoe Club  
 Rideau Canoe Club  
 St. Lambert Canoe Club  
 St. Stephens Canoe Club  
 Winnipeg Canoe Club  
 Longueil Boat Club  
 Medford B. Club Mass. (U S.A.)  
 Smith's Falls Canoe Club  
 Yonkers C. Club, Yonkers, N. Y.  
 Lawrence C.C., Lawrence Mass.  
 Cartierville Canoe Club.

**FAST GASOLINE LAUNCHES.**  
 LUMBERMEN'S DRIVING BOATS AND WINCH BOATS BUILT TO ORDER.

**WORKS, 612-614 BANK ST., OTTAWA, ONT.,**  
 E. F. DEY & SON, Prop.

PHONE 136 PATTISON PRINT.

### *Frank Dey poses with his show space, most likely Toronto Boat Show, 1900's*

By 1904 Frank Dey's business, the Capital Boat and Canoe Works, listed himself and Frank Jr. as proprietors. Frank Jr. had just come off his first place "single blade" (one rower with one paddle) win at the Sugar Island regatta the previous year and was a rising star in both rowing and nineteen was readying to enter the work of professional hockey as well.

Frank Jr grew up in sports. He rowed in the summer and played hockey in the winter, well enough that he was able to turn pro at the age of 18. Nonetheless he kept his off-season job as a boatbuilder and by 1908 he had joined his father in the business. He was doing very well, typically not at building boats but as a player he made as much as \$2,000 for a season. He did not join the Senators (or the Silver Seven as they were known) but instead played for the Halifax Socials. So any boatbuilding he did was from April through November. Even then he took plenty of time to row competitively as well, but at least that was a helpful form of advertising for the business.



**WAR CANOE—Capital Racer.**

Winner Championship of Canada '04, '06, '07, '09. Holder World's Record  $\frac{1}{2}$  Mile and 1 Mile.

*15 boys in the Capital Boat war canoe. Close to 800kg/1 ton of weight, it had to be a pretty solid craft.*

6

**No. 3 TANDEM—Capital Racer.**

Length 16ft, Beam 30in, Depth 12in, 45 lbs.

WINNER :

C.C.A. 1900-01-02-03-04-05-06.—A.C.A. 1902-03-04-05.

Eastern Division A.C.A. 1906-07 08.—Manitoba 1906-07-08-09.

Ottawa 1900—1909.

Price—Varnished Butternut \$58.00. Varnished Cedar \$50.00.  
Var. Basswood \$45.00. Ptd. Cedar \$45.00. Ptd. Basswood \$38.00.



No. 3. TANDEM—Capital Racer.



Length 20ft, Beam 31in, Depth 14, Weight 70 lbs.

This canoe holds the Worlds' Record for 1/2 mile made at Ottawa by the Britannia Canoe Club and is used by nearly every canoe club in Canada. In the Eastern States as seen on cover of Catalogue of clubs using our canoes it has been a winner in every case wherever used.

Price: Varnished Butternut \$75.00. Varnished Cedar \$68.00. Varnished Basswood \$55.00. Painted Cedar \$55.00. Painted Basswood \$48.00.

No. 4 FOUR MAN—Capital Racer.

3

**No. 1 Single Capital Racer.**

Length 16ft., Beam 30in.,  
Depth 12in., Weight  
45 to 50 lbs.

First C. C. A. 1900 to 1909  
without a defeat. Manitoba  
1906, '07, '08 and '09.



GEO. DAVIDSON, Champion of Canada 1905.



MR. BROWNRIGG, Champion of Canada 1906.

**PRICE.**

Varnished Butternut.....	\$58
“ Cedar.....	50
“ Basswood.....	45
Painted Cedar.....	45
“ Basswood.....	37

These prices include 1 single paddle.

H. MERRILL, Champion of Canada, '08, '09.

*Capital Boat high quality wood finish was butternut, which had a mahogany like grain and soft brown colour when varnished but was much cheaper and locally obtainable. Butternut trees are rare now.*

9



We build a canoe between the Cruising Canoe and the Racer calling it the SEMI-RACER or TORPEDO DECKED Fast cruiser.

This model of canoe has a little more dead rise than the ordinary cruising canoe, and is a lot lighter. The torpedo deck makes it a drier boat than the ordinary sheer canoe, and does not when paddling against a heavy wind offer the same resistance. Prices are for canoes decked 36in. bow and 20in. stern. Decks of butternut, Combings of Oaks, Maple or Red Birch. Decks, wales and thwarts of painted canoes oiled and varnished, the rest of the canoe painted in colors to suit.

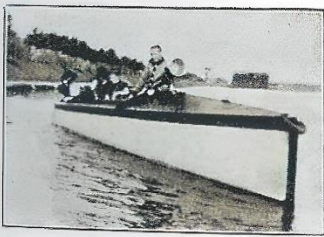
**Semi-Racer.**

No.	LENGTH	BEAM	DEPTH	VAR. BUTTERNUT	VAR. CEDAR	VAR. BASSWOOD	PTD. CEDAR	PTD. BASSWOOD
5	15½	30	11½	\$57 00	\$45 00	\$36 00	\$36 00	\$31 00
6	16	31	12	\$59 00	\$50 00	\$40 00	\$40 00	\$35 00
7	16	32	12	\$61 00	\$50 00	\$42 00*	\$42 00	\$37 00

We can build this canoe Flush Batten, ribs 3 in. centres for \$10 extra. Longitude Rib we charge \$10 extra.

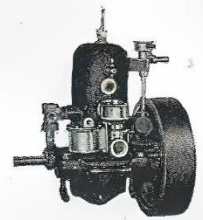
If you are going to take ladies and children in your canoe, have air tanks in the ends, they do not cost much and add to the pleasure of canoeing.

These Prices Include Two Single Paddles.



**WRITE FOR CATALOGUE B.**

**GASOLINE LAUNCHES AND GASOLINE MOTORS**



The lumber company managers threatened the boaters who picked out the deadheads that they were touching their property, and the boaters claimed that they had the right to remove navigation hazards. Downriver there were few logs, but the mill would dump out unwanted sawdust, lignin, and other waste right into the river where these great decomposing waterlogged mats would cling to the shore. This slop tended to end up around the Ottawa Canoe Club off Rockcliffe Park which stuck out into the river like a hook, catching all kinds of unwanted things, as noted in the Ottawa Evening Journal on July 4, 1907:

“...the offending element settles around the Club House and the paddlers are compelled to pass through a porridge like liquid to reach the centre of the river.”

Brockville and Gananoque

By 1900 with the passing of LaChapelle and the sudden exit of the Sauve's there was a vacuum in the boatbuilding field in Brockville. This was filled, at least on a part time basis, by Nelson Gilbert. Nelson Gilbert was already an established name in sailing canoe racing.

Sailing canoes or deck sailors as they were also known were more popular on the St. Lawrence that in Ottawa, where rowing dominated boat sports. The sailing canoe was, as the name suggests a canoe with a bracket for a sail mast. The original British design used common sense yachting principles and had a lead weighted keel to maintain stability. The sailor sat down low in the canoe hull and operated the boat solely from the tiller and the sail. It was safe and competitive as long as all the competitors were similarly weighed down, but it must have been about as exciting as watching paint dry. An American yacht designer chopped off the lead weighted keel and replaced it with a small drop-down keel (some were at the side, and some at the stern) and added a movable cross board where the sailor could clamber out on to on to balance the hull. Sailing canoes tripled their speed, skill requirements and excitement level. Sailing these boats was as much as balancing act as proper sail handling.

Nelson Gilbert had come to Brockville to work in the horse carriage building trade. Nelson was a foreman at the Canada Carriage Works plant where he had learned the fine woodworking skills needed to build the delicate boats. He had three sons, Fred, Merrill, and Irving all of whom followed him into the carriage works, however they did not intend to stay long. Nelson had been building racing canoes since 1882. This was a side business-most of the race boat builders had day jobs as the market was simply too small to do on a full-time basis.

Sailing canoes are a thing of beauty, even today. The wood planking is paper thin, perhaps not much more than 1/4" thickness. All the brass fittings are 1/3 of the size of similar hardware on a motor launch and are cast and polished down to the minimum thickness needed. The rudder is a very light gauge sheet of bronze, and the edges are sharp enough to cut a finger. The sails are ribbed, which gives them a slightly oriental look, but this was done to provide additional surface area for wind to push to boat.

In 1894 Gilbert spent a good chunk of savings and took himself and two canoes to the Columbian Exposition in Chicago (I expect there were probably also sponsors). The Columbian was the premier science and technology fair in North America, the period equivalent of the modern-day tech conventions that are held annually in Las Vegas. He won an award for his display and established himself as a local master race canoe builder. This was an exciting hobby, but it was not a living, and he maintained his regular day job at the Carriage Works. In 1904, the Canada Carriage Works moved its plant to Alexandria and Nelson moved with it, leaving the boys to run the new boat plant on Jessie Street. He remained the design guru of the Gilbert shops, and the boys relied on his unparalleled knowledge of how boat hulls moved

through the water. Even a hundred miles away he still carved the half hull models for both the powered and sailing craft that came out of the shop, right up to the early 1920's.



*Post card showing sailing canoes on St. Lawrence; two sails, one boat.*

In the mid 1920's the fastest deck sailor on the river was owned by a Wall Street financier named Leo Friede, who was also a member of the American Canoe Association, which was located on Sugar Island. Mr. Friede was the President of the ACA, its prime mover and enthusiast and the world (more realistically North American) champion with this type of boat. Mermaid had been built by Gilbert before the war and proved to be something of a wonder boat for Mr. Friede, allowing him to win this class at the annual Sugar Island Regatta for several years in a row. The Mermaid was understandably Mr. Friede's pride and joy, so much so he wouldn't accept leaving it in storage at the river all winter, but once the season was over (after Labour Day) he would head home and arrange to have Mermaid shipped to his winter

residence in New Jersey. Mr. Friede's cottage was in Canada so technically he had to have the boat clear Customs before being shipped to Stateside. The boat was left at the Canada Customs dock overnight, and during that time, a local draftsman and sailor named William Rees took his tools down to the dock and took the lines or the measurements off the Mermaid. He drew up plans for a new boat, improving on what he thought were weaknesses and vulnerabilities in the Mermaid.



*Nelson Gilbert's masterpiece, the unbeatable Mermaid, masts, and sails have been removed.*

Using the obtained plans two other enthusiasts named Harry Hawke and Tommy Fields commissioned Gananoque boat builder Jack Mallette to build a rival boat, the cost of which was ultimately picked up by a certain Mr. Brittain. Mallette built pretty much anything for any customer with money, from canoes to big excursion boats to long deck launches. However, like most builders to true test of skill was a sailboat. Oddly, Mallette, who usually built round bottomed hulls used a hard chine style hull for the sailboat. Perhaps he thought this would

provide the speed edge over the American made deck sailers, which all had round bottoms. It was less than three feet wide and about 14 feet long and had two sails, a large mast forward and a smaller one aft. It was completely decked over, and the hull was divided into air and watertight compartments. The most notable part was a six-foot-wide board on which the occupant sat in a mobile seat that could slide back and forth with the board, which was attached perpendicular to the deck. With this device the sailor could slide back and forth from starboard to port as needed to steer and control the boat. There was no joy for Brittain, Hawke, Fields, Rees, or Jack Mallette. Their boat, named the Tomahawk, was never able to beat the Mermaid; you could copy the product, but not the mind that went into it, as the old adage says.

Perhaps Mr. Freide got the message and decided he wanted to level the playing field and provide a kind of one -class race fleet where skill would depend more on the sailor than the boat. In 1922 he brought the Mermaid back to the Gilbert shops so they could make 12 copies (what had happened to the original model-no one knew). Merrill had almost completed the 12-boat contract when the Gilbert Factory building was leveled by fire in 1923. This disaster didn't hurt Merrill's reputation, and he remained one of the key sailing canoe specialists all through the years and continued to build them for enthusiasts, even as interest waned after the 1930's.



*Leo Friede, in later years, taking Mermaid out for a sail.*

In 1929, a Naval Architect and avid canoe racer named Hilding Froling wrote to Merrill to have a canoe made. He wrote letters almost every other week during spring of 1929 when the canoe was being built, providing new ideas and requests. The canoe was 16 feet long and 30" wide. The inner keel was to be 3/4" thickness and 7/8" wide, or about the thickness of the end of man's thumb. Planking was in Spanish Cedar (no idea what made that so special, but it had to be imported) ribs were oak, the planking was maple and the centre board to be made of aluminum. The wood was covered in seven coats of Valspar varnish and the completed rig, ready at the end of July 1929 was to cost \$264.00. I hope Mr. Froling was a light man. Looking at these boats it's hard to imagine the modern heavy framed 200 lb. 6-foot North American man fitting into one without breaking it to pieces (or sinking it). According to US Army studies, the average (non-overweight) adult male in the 1920's was 5'6" and 145 lbs. That would be just heavy enough. Ultra-light racing cats such as the Y-Flyer in the 1940's and the Lazer in the 1970's would come to dominate the sport, the racing canoes eventually ended up as yard art or as fuel for an outdoor barbeque. A tiny number were still loved enough to be stored in

boathouses, sheds, and basements.

Ottawa's rowing boat master was long out of the business when a young man named Frank Amyot came to him in the early 1930's for a boat, oars, and racing advice. Many years later, after shepherding Frank Amyot to his Gold medal win at the 1936 Olympics, Frank Dey summed up his career for the Ottawa Citizen:

*Mr. Dey is more than just a builder of speedy racing shells. As a young man he paddled professionally and won many awards. He believes that in order to build a good racing canoe you must be able to know how to paddle, too. "The builder of a canoe must know what it is all about."*

*He said. "He must know. Where the spring of the paddle comes from-how the shell will react to every stroke."*

*The love of a good canoe runs in the Dey Family. Chatting with the Citizen reporter in his little boathouse in Hog's Back. Mr. Dey pointed to a number of trophies at the back of the boat house. They were prizes won by his son, the late Edgar Dey, whose promising career as a paddler was cut short in his 27th year. Paddling in his father's canoes Edgar Dey won over a score [25] of trophies competing in the ACA regattas. Among those was 1st prize single blade 1904 Sugar Island), ACA first prize double blade with George Burland among others."*

Frank Amyot's gold was the country's first Olympic Gold medal. By that time rowing was slipping out of the public eye as a great spectator sport. Aggressive team sports such football, baseball and hockey now dominate the sports pages.