

Seventh Annual
RUSHTON MEMORIAL
Canoe Race - Regatta



1962 Winners: Dwight P. Church, 70, and David Church, 19.

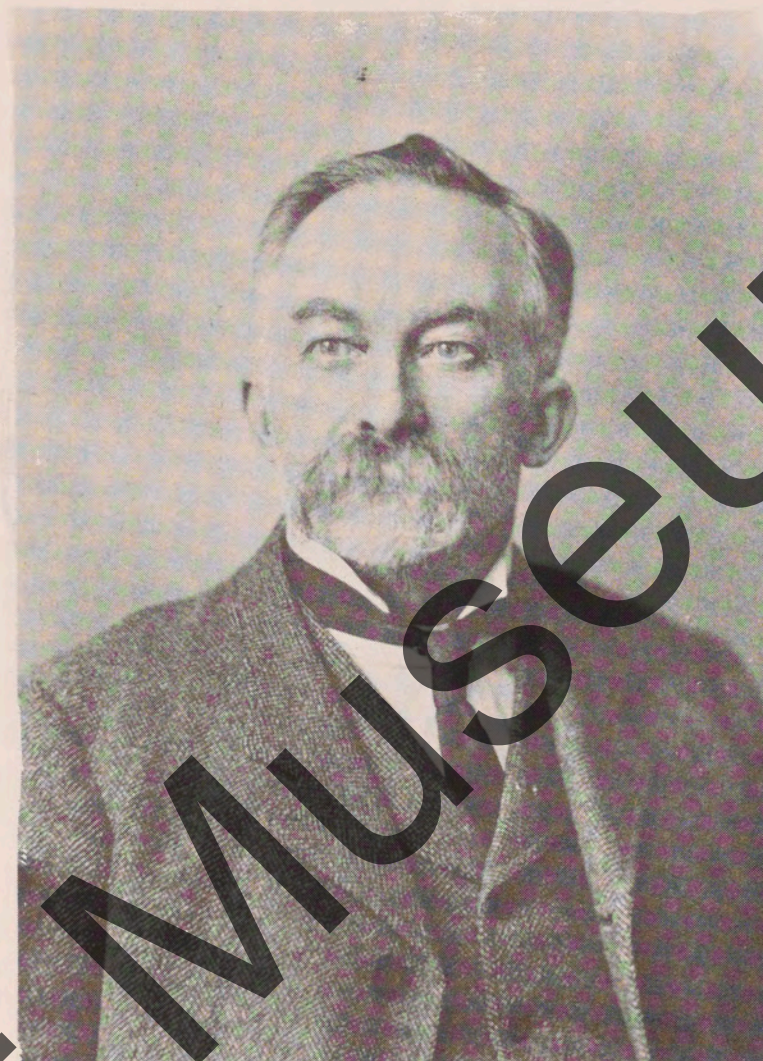
SUNDAY, MAY 19
Canton, New York

THOUSAND ISLANDS MUSEUM
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EVENTS: DOWN RIVER DERBY & SLALOM

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Antique Boat Museum



J. HENRY RUSHTON

1843-1906

CANTON'S FAMOUS BOAT BUILDER

By Atwood Manley *

The name of Rushton dates back to 1828 in St. Lawrence County, the year when John Rushton, a former English wheelright, settled at Edwards with his family. His grandson, J. Henry Rushton, was born near Edwards in 1843, a mere wisp of an infant whose name was destined to become known around the world. As a youth J. Henry Rushton became skilled in woodcraft, in hunting, in fishing. Cranberry Lake was his favorite stamping ground. It was there he met two Canton merchants, J. B. Ellsworth and M. D. Packard. By this chance meeting he came to Canton in 1869 to clerk in Ellsworth's store. He stood barely five feet tall and weighed scarcely 100 pounds, was frail and hounded by a dry, hacking cough.

In 1873 Rushton decided to seek health and rest within the Big South Woods, the country he knew best. To do so he required a boat or skiff, durable and light, one he could yoke over forest carries from stream to stream. From Tom Leonard of Mor-

ley, a veteran guide and boat builder, he obtained the patterns from which he made the forms on which to lay up his skiff.

Before this boat was completed he had sold it locally. Then he started another, and sold that. The die was cast. From that time until his death in 1906 Rushton never stopped building boats and canoes. Canoes were added to his output in 1876, quite by chance, when he built two cedar hulls for Louisville, Kentucky, parties, in which they arrived at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial. That year became Rushton's launching pad. His work and his canoes attracted an ever-widening coterie of

admirers from that time on. In four years he had become famed for his work.

By a turn of good luck some of his canoes came to occupy positions of historic significance in the annuals of canoeing. One of his first and most noted canoes was the *Kleiner Fritz*, said to have logged over 10,000 miles on water and overland. It was one of three Rushton canoes, claimed to be the first made by white man to cleave the headwaters of the Mississippi. The year? 1879.

Another Rushton celebrity, now to be seen in the collection at the Adirondack Museum, Blue Mountain Lake, N. Y., is the *Sairy Gamp*, the tiny 10½ lbs. eggshell in which Nessmuk cruised the Adirondacks in 1883. Another is the *Aurora* in which a dentist, Dr. Charles A. Neide, cruised from Lake George to Pensacola, Florida. Rushton's cup was filled to overflowing when the trim little cruiser-sailer, *Vesper* built on order for an Albany, N. Y. architect, Robert W. Gibson, was skippered by

* A book, RUSHTON AND HIS TIMES IN AMERICAN CANOEING, is being published June 28 by the Syracuse University Press, and the Adirondack Museum, Blue Mountain Lake, N. Y. with Atwood Manley as author, and Dr. Paul F. Jamieson, assisting. 224 pages, including sixteen pages of illustrations plus fourteen pages of line drawings with tables of specifications.

THE RUSHTON MEMORIAL PLACQUE

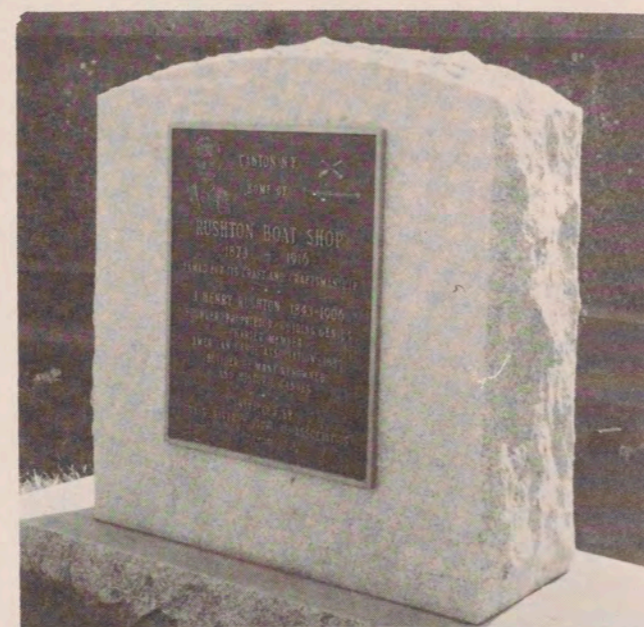
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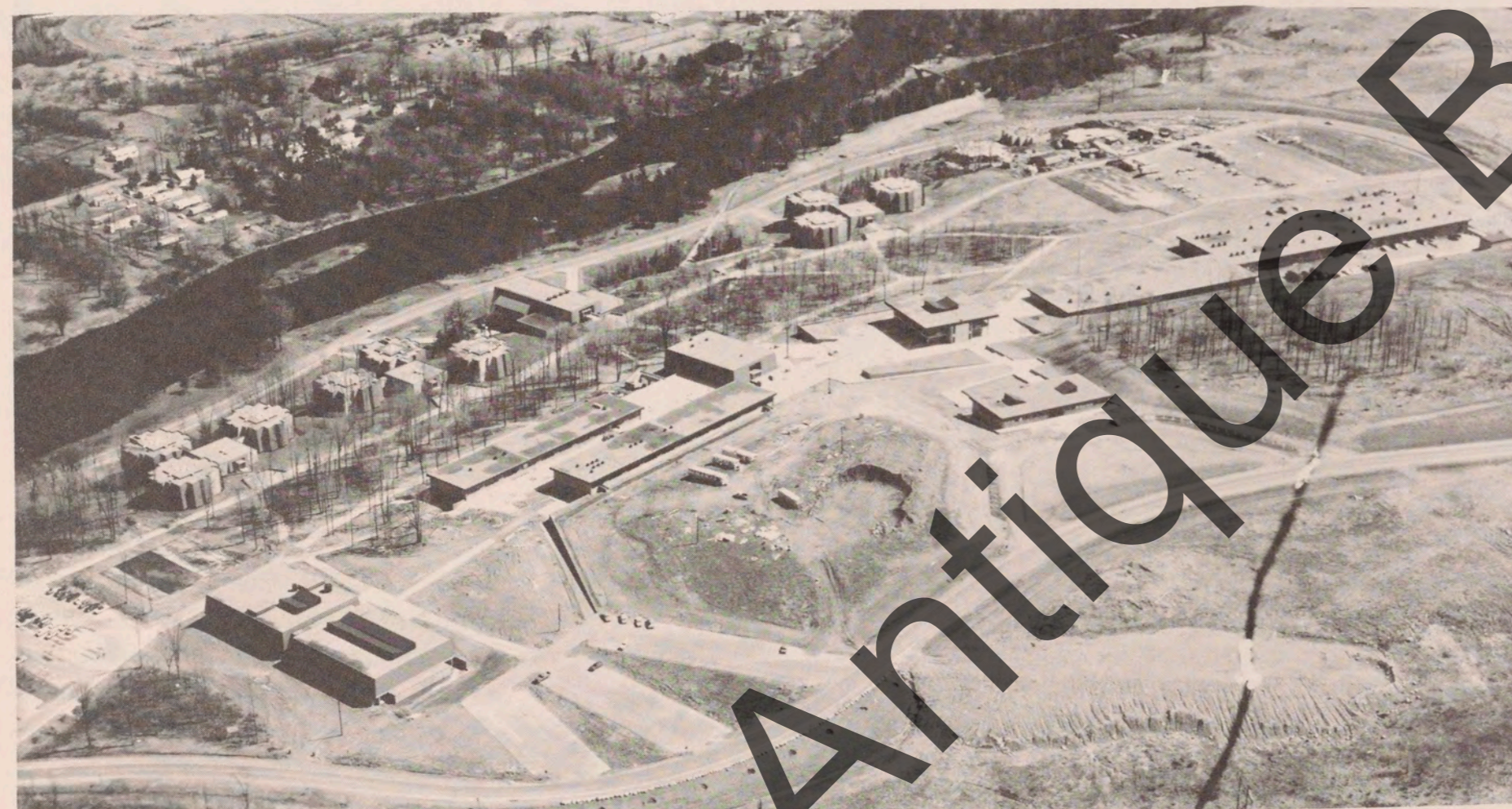
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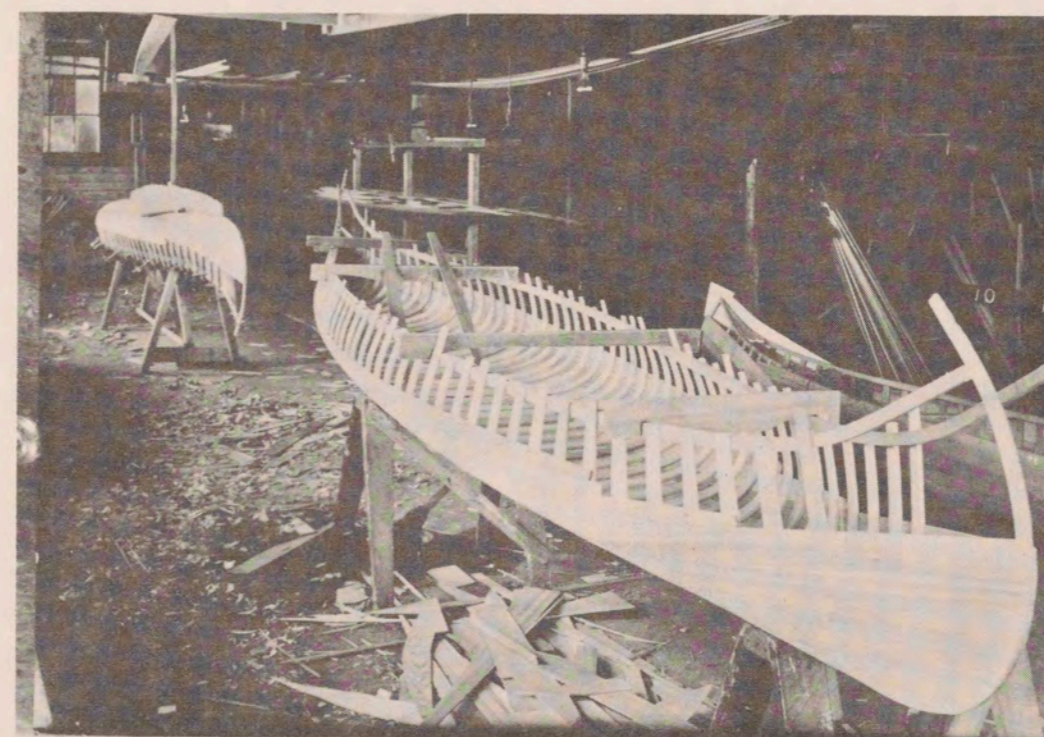
IN THIS AREA



STATE UNIVERSITY Agricultural and Technical College
Canton, New York



Rushton's "Boat Shop"
Corner of Riverside Drive & State St.



Indian Girl canoes under construction.

him to victory at the great American Canoe Association Meet of 1886, in the First International Sailing Canoe Cup Race. Gibson won over a fleet of fifteen contesting canoes, two of them from England.

Time, health and a growing number of new pastimes, as well as strong competition sounded the death knell of the Rushton Boat Shop. J. Henry died in 1906 just as the Boat Shop's peak-year was in full swing. His death was like pulling the bung from the barrel, the cider began draining away. The bicycle craze, and the coming of the automobile, plus a national business depression, were handicaps which Rushton's son, Harry, who succeeded to the helm, could not withstand. Harry was succeeded in 1912 by his uncle, J. Henry's half-brother, Judd W. Rushton, and in 1914 Sidney Rushton, the youngest of J. Henry's two sons, endeavored to salvage the business. But the World War I was in progress and in 1917 Sidney entered the service. The key had been turned in the Boat Shop door. The Shop never reopened. In 1926 the huge, three-story frame structure was sold for lumber. A once-thriving, famous Canton industry had departed but the name of Rushton and the craft he made refused to die.

The late A. Fred Saunders, Commodore of the ACA 1917-1919, and its historian for forty years, stated in 1959 that when he joined the ACA in 1910 Rushton's name "was still magic." though J. Henry had been dead four years. Some of that magic remains. Many fine old Rushton boats and canoes are still in existence today, many of them still in use, testimonials to the remarkable methods of construction Rushton employed. Of Rushton, Nessmuk once wrote, "He builded better than he knew." Of his pride in his craftsmanship and the products for which he became famous Rushton, himself, said that he strove to accomplish the impossible, the perfect canoe. This marked the type of man he was, the master craftsman who gathered about him men he could train in the skills of the trade. Rushton built on



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An August 1880 photograph of types of canoes at Lake George when the American Canoe Association was organized. Photo by S. R. Stoddard from DeSormo collection.

honor. He was a perfectionist. He never sought wealth, and died with only a modest estate. He was ever-ready to discard one canoe design for another if he thought it marked an improvement over the old. He would build almost any type of canoe for a customer, and as the customer desired but only as Rushton was willing to build it in measuring up to his high quality standards. His reputation was first established by the choice cedar canoes and boats which came from his shop. His celebrated Indian Girl canvas-covered models at the close of his career added more lustre to his fame. Over those thirty-three years, orders were received from the world over, the Phillipines, Mexico, New Zealand and Australia, Venezuela, France, England. August Belmont, Jr., in 1881 purchased a Rushton boat for use on the Nile. There is no record of the

number of thousands of craft the Rushton Boat Shop produced. It was not in numbers but in quality that the name of Rushton attained its magic, and won its place in history.

It is interesting to note that among the more than sixty Rushton craft which have been found within the past ten years those in the best condition are without exception the cedar canoes and boats turned out by the Boat Shop. The largest and finest collection of these is now on exhibition at the Adirondack Museum, Blue Mountain Lake, N. Y. Professor Edward J. Blankman of Canton has the finest Rushton feet privately owned, a Rushton Guide Boat, a St. Lawrence skiff, a cedar canoe built in 1893 named *Punkie*, and a canvas-covered Indian Girl. Other of these fine old numbers are owned locally,

some of the Indian Girl models having been striped of their canvas and recovered with fibre glass. Mike Maroney, Phil McMasters, Regie Liscum are among the proud possessors of Rushton items. Second to the Blankman group of Rushton's are those owned by the family of Surrogate Lott H. Wells. Among these is the Princess model built, so it is estimated, about 1881 or 1882 for Joseph B. Ellsworth, the Canton shoeman, who remained Rushton's most intimate friend and adviser during Rushton's entire Canton lifetime. The author of this article acquired a Rushton UGO cedar smoothskin, the *Vayu*, in 1965. It was built in 1912 and was found in the Adirondacks by Lloyd Blankman of Clinton, N. Y. It is as tight and sound as the day it came from the Boat Shop, a striking example of Rushton construction and design.



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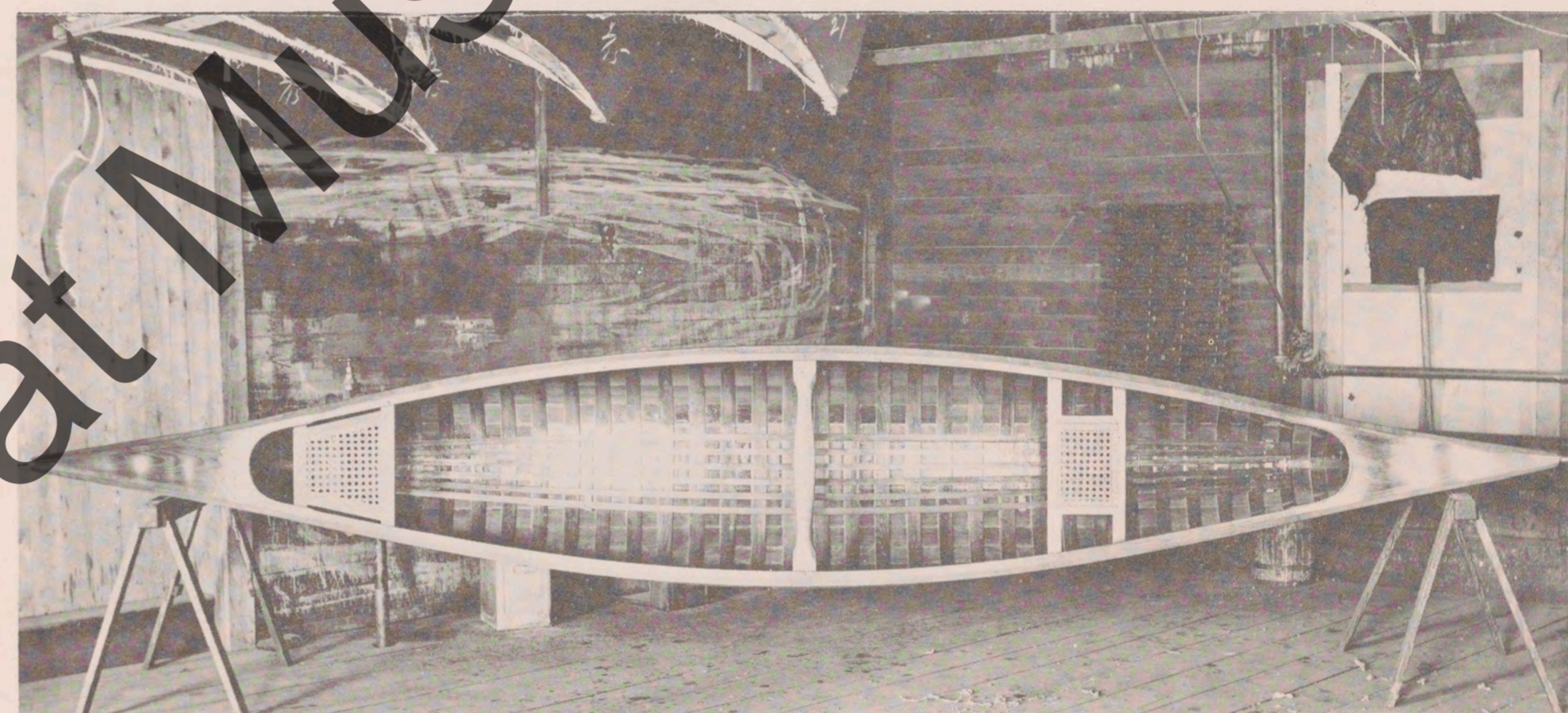
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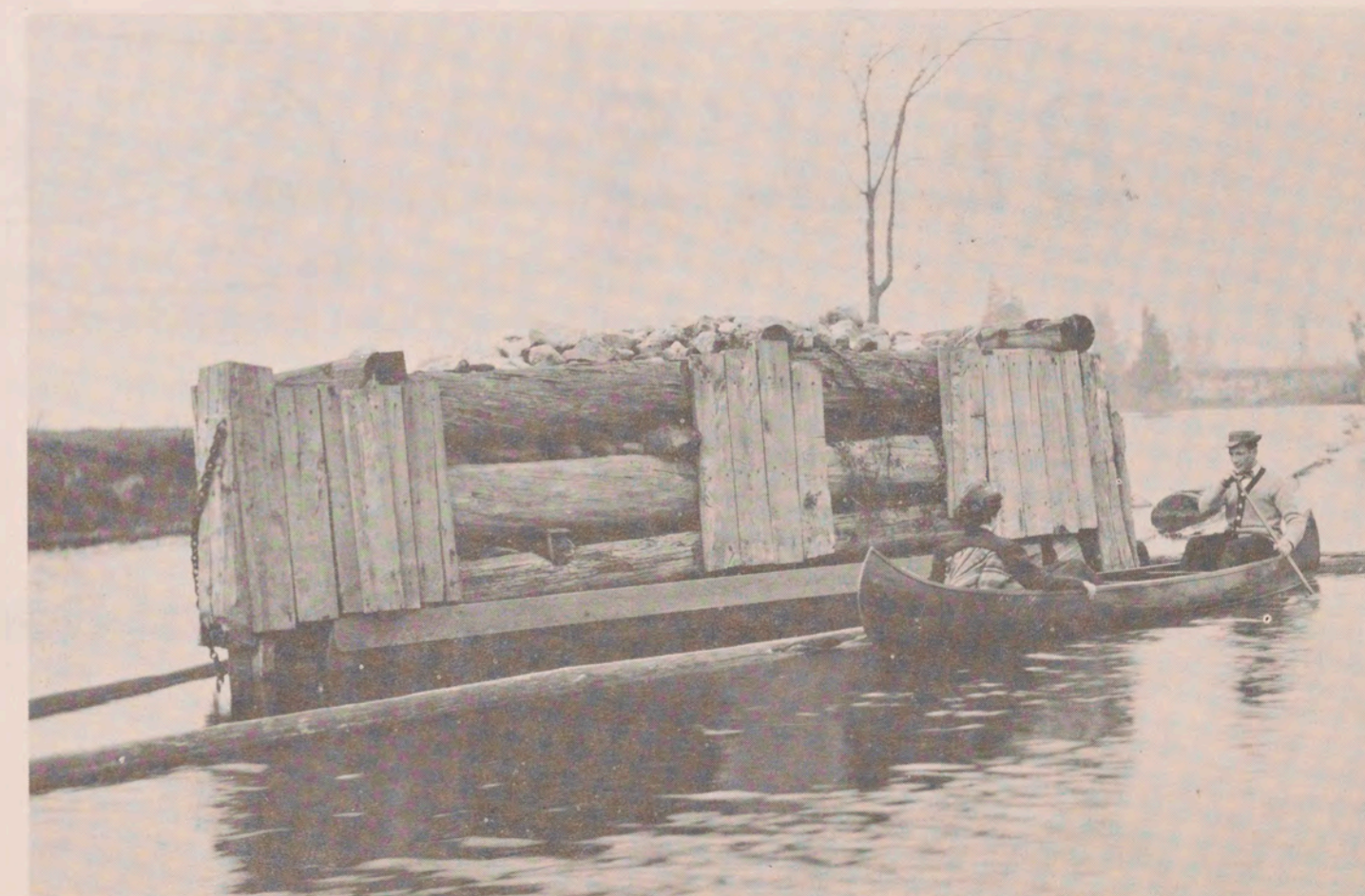
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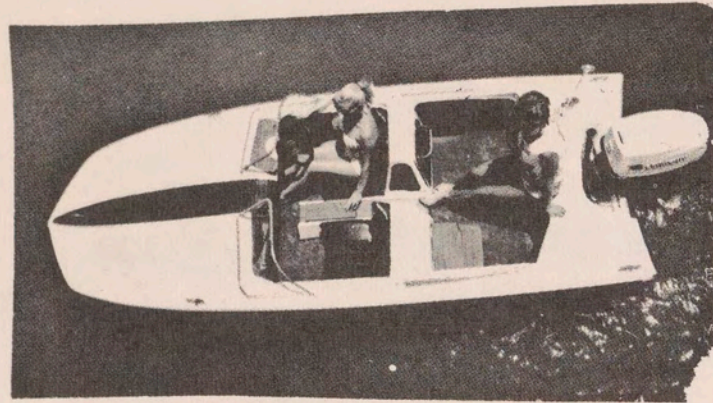
From 1880 Rushton's catalogues listed Nessmuk featherweight models 10½ lbs. up to 25 lbs. all-cedar canoes.



Indian Girl Canoe



Sidney Rushton and friend in an Indian Girl Canoe near today's Sand Banks, Grass River.



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(This diploma, in the original, was found in the archives at St. Lawrence University in 1967.)

Rushton won many top honors at many expositions and world's fairs: 1876 Philadelphia Centennial; 1885 World's Industrial Exhibit, New Orleans; 1886 St. Louis Exposition; and the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. His first blue ribbons, however, were won at the St. Lawrence County Fair in Canton in 1875.

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Seven Years of the Rushton Memorial Canoe Race

It was during Edward Blankman's term as President of Canton's Grass River Historical Association that the seed to hold a Rushton Memorial Canoe Race germinated. Within that small group were also Dwight P. Church and Frank White. With the help of such fellow members as Philip McMasters, Edward Heim, Frank Crary, Richard Myers and Atwood Manley plans progressed. The Canton Junior Chamber of Commerce cooperated. Canton merchants contributed generously and thus medals were procured for the winners. Credit for suggesting this Memorial Race goes to Phil McMasters, who became the first chairman of the annual event.

The start was modest, but from then to the present the same cruising course, seven miles down river from the foot of the High Falls gorge at

Pyrites to the Main Street bridge in Canton village, has been used. Ten canoes participated the first year, 1962 and forty-seven in 1967. Public interest became apparent from the first, hundreds of people viewing the race from various points along the river. Hundreds gathered at the starting area, lining the concrete bridge, watching Bill Bell, starter, send canoe after canoe away on his signal. There is a thrill to watch the canoes one after another pass swiftly beneath the bridge and then sweep down through the quarter mile of rough water below. Other vantage points are popular with galleries; at the head of The Mile Stretch and at the foot where Taylor Park affords an excellent view. But of all the preferred positions none has equalled Leighs Falls Bridge. Hundreds gather there each year, lining the bridge and the nearby shores, excitement running high as contestants

and canoes come into that stretch of churning, turbulent currents. Hundreds more make the finish line area a fitting climax to the race, looking down from the concrete bridge at the foot of the business section, or from the large parking lot in front of the A.&P. Store. From two to after four o'clock interest never wavers as canoe after canoe rounds the bend upstream for the final dash through the home stretch often coming singly, sometimes in pairs, even in groups, paddles flashing, contestants bending in their final effort to beat the clock.

The winning time of the first race was 1 hour, 18 minutes and 23 seconds. This set the pace for future years. The winning team in 1962 consisted of Dwight P. Church, 70 years of age, and his son, Dave Church, 19. In 1967 the hour mark was broken, Mike Maroney and Ernie Locke in their trim Sawyer racer doing



Spectators occupy "ringside seats" to watch race get underway.

"Live A Little"

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the seven miles in 53 minutes, 46 seconds, under excellent water conditions. In 1967 there were three races, the Men's Race, the Mixed Doubles, and the Women's Team race. In 1968 a slalom event is being added.

The 1962 race was marked by the presence in water at the finish point of one of the oldest Rushton canoes in existence, owned by the Judge Lott H. Wells family, and paddled by John Wells. This lapstrake, decked, all-cedar cruiser-sailer is one of Rushton's once celebrated Princess model canoes, originally designed by Judge Nicholas Longworth for the Cincinnati, Ohio, Canoe Club in 1881.

Following are the results of the Six Annual Rushton Memorial Canoe Races held locally with the names of the winning teams and two runners-up in each race. The time for each year's winners is also given, but it is accepted, of course, that water conditions have much to do with making fast or slow time.

1962 Race

- First: Dwight P. and David Church. Time: 1 hr. 18 min. 23 secs.
- Second: Reginald Liscum and Jack Townsend.
- Third: Phillip McMasters and Nat Wells.

1963 Race

- First: Brightman and Gannon, a team from the Schenectady area. Time: 1 hr. 6 min. 42 secs.
- Second: Dwight P. and David Church.
- Third: Gilson and Ashline.

1964 Race

- First: George Grant and Thomas Crimi, of Syracuse. Time: 1 hr. 2 min. 6 secs.
- Second: D. W. and Kane Brightman, Burnt Hills, N. Y.
- Third: Glenn Latimer and Clifford Strait.

1965 Race

- First: D. W. and Kane Brightman, Burnt Hills, N. Y.

McMasters, Rapids.



Canoes lining up for the start of 1967 Race in pool below High Falls Gorge at Pyrites.

- Time: 1 hr. 10 min. 27 secs.
- Second: Ernie Locke and Mike Maroney.
- Third: Richard Church and Edward J. Bliss, Jr.

- 1966 Race
- First: Mike Maroney and Ernie Locke. Time: 1 hr. 4 min. 36 secs.
- Second: Reginald Liscum and Jack Townsend.

- Third: Chuck Verro and Bob Davis.

- 1967 Race-Men's Double
- First: Mike Maroney and Ernie Locke. Time 53 min. 46 secs.
- Second: Reginald Liscum and Jack Townsend.
- Third: John Green and Chuck Nevins.

1967 - Mixed Doubles
Winners: Jim Weimberg and Christine Betrity.

1967 - Women's Team
Winners: Judith Liscum and Linda Townsend.

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Two of the old "pros", White and McMasters, taking the "breeze" at Leigh's Falls Rapids.



Canoes lining up for the start of 1967 Race in pool below High Falls Gorge at Pyrites.

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Mike Maroney and Ernie Locke
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1966-1967

Best time 1967: 53 minutes, 46 seconds
Record, as per this photo.



Second Place 1967
Jack Townsend and Reggie Liscum



Third Place 1967
Chuck Nevins and John Green

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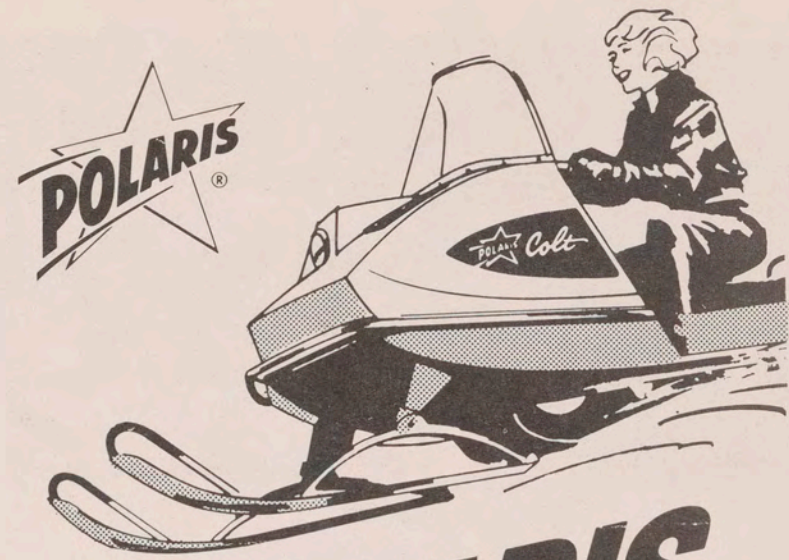
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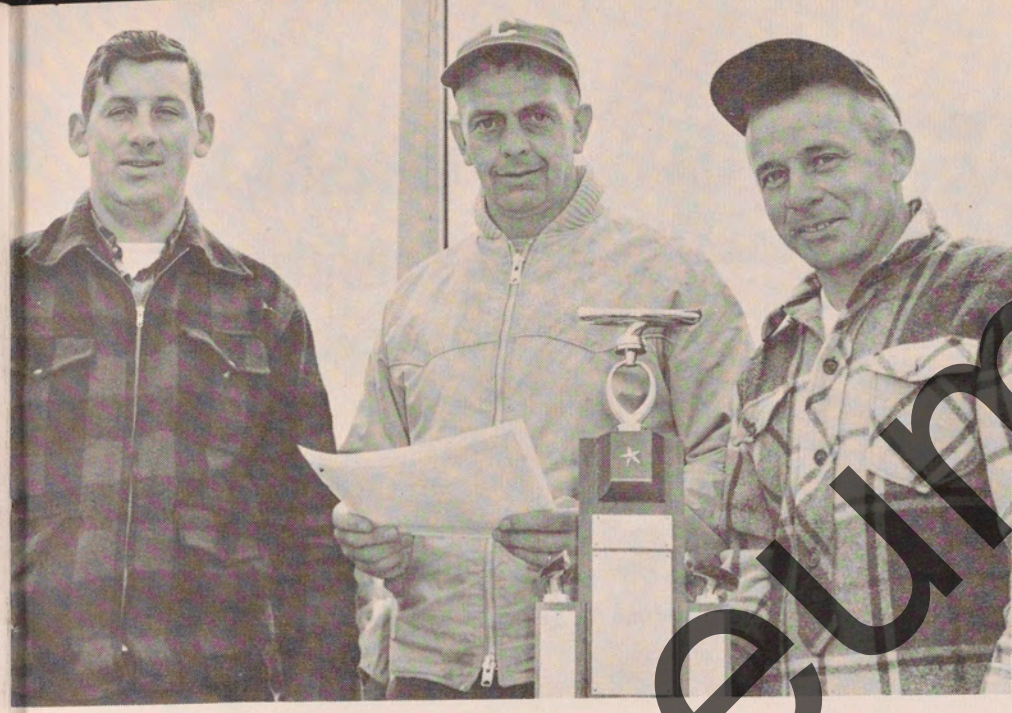
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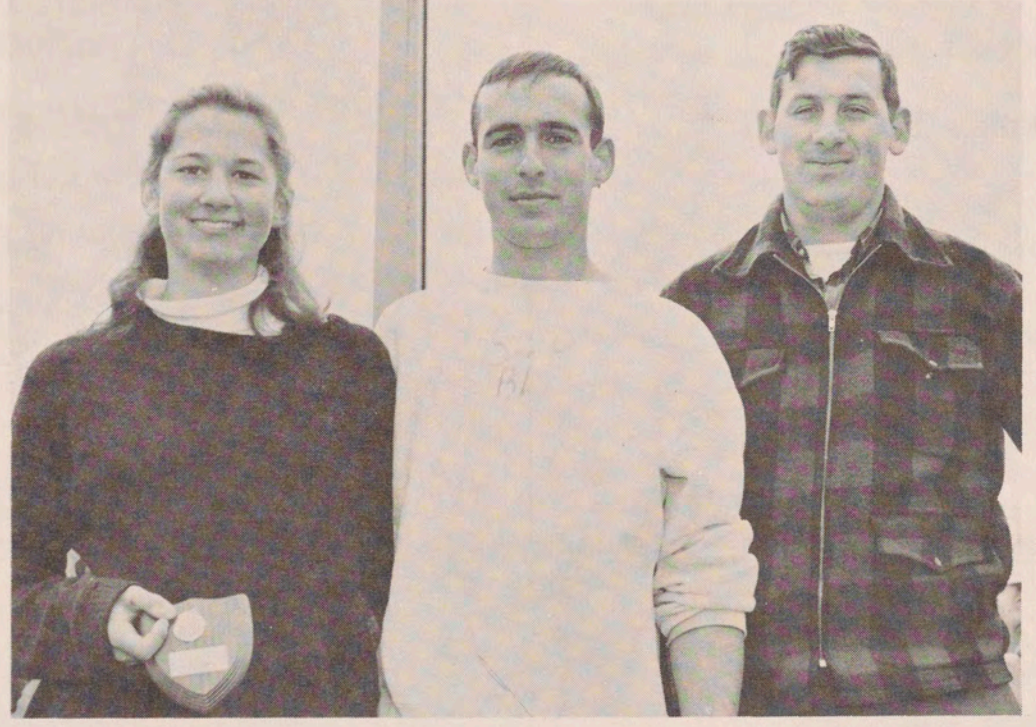


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Robert Goolden, President Canton Fish & Game Club presenting winners trophy to Mike Maroney and Ernie Locke.



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Judy Liscum and Linda Townsend
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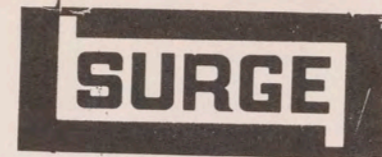
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Canton Fish and Game Club

There is no available record to show when Canton's first Fish and Game Club was organized. Back in the 1900-1910 era the late Byron McCollum made Canton his headquarters while serving as Game Warden for the State Conservation Department. A Fish and Game Club thrived locally at that time. It was then that a large "fishway" was constructed from the lip of the old crib dam on the East Channel of the Grass River. Its purpose was to afford game fish coming upstream an easier way of negotiating the dams which obstructed both the West and the East channels. This "fishway" remained until the dam fell in disrepair and was finally washed away.

To what extent this installation improved fishing along the Grass River from the village upstream to Byrites no man knows. Game fish had been abundant over this stretch many

years before. "Remie" Paro, who annually had his fishing shack near the upper end of the Mile Stretch, entertained his listeners with stories of fabulous catches, both as to number and size of fish. However, in recent years, stretching back to nearly "Remie's" golden age, there have been frequent catches of giant muskies. Field & Stream in a recent article stated that the Grass River at Canton was the finest muskie stream in the entire northeast outside of the St. Lawrence.

Present records show that the Canton Fish & Game Club was incorporated in 1951. The following year, in July, the Club purchased a 40 acre tract of land from Neil Mahoney on Harison Creek. It has been used primarily for skeet and trap shoots. The tract has been partially planted to trees and is still owned by the Club.

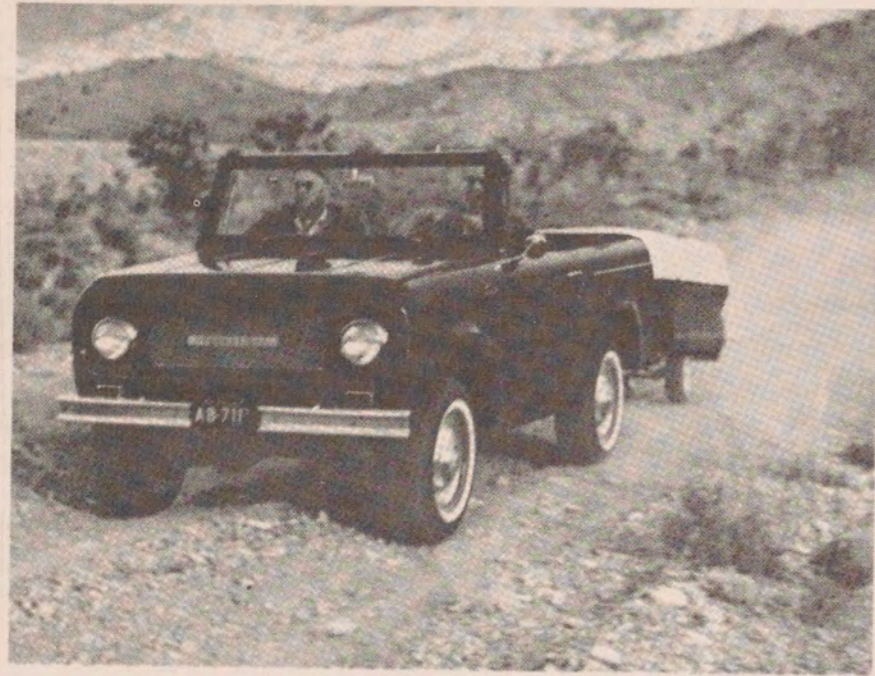
In 1967 the Club entered upon a

larger program designed not only for the benefit of its members but with the even more ambitious desire of affording the community with an improved facility in the field of sports and outdoors recreation. A tract of 65 acres was acquired from Ronald Sibbits on the old Nickerson farm two miles south of Canton on the Nickerson Road which connects with the Canton-North Russell Road. It is here that the Club already has its new 32 x 80 foot tamarack log clubhouse in process of construction. An elevation drawing of this new headquarters, with further information as to the Club's future plans, appears on the back cover of this program.

Over the years the Fish & Game Club has cooperated with the State Conservation Department in many ways. Its stocking of streams and populating nearby cover with pheasant chicks has been and will continue an annual, standard, undertaking.



Club Workers at Project Clubhouse



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Some understanding of what this annual project entails can be had from the record of the 1967 fish stocking program:

Into the waters of Boyd Pond, Little River, Dean Brook, Grass River, Plum Brook, Boyden Brook, Taylor Creek and VanRensselaer Creek went a total of 11,500 fingerlings and legal size trout ranging in size from 4½ inches to 8 inches. The species included speckled, rainbow and browns, distributed in the waters conducive as natural and established habitat. How many tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of fry, fingerlings and legal size trout have been planted over the years, no one now knows unless state records would show. This has been a continuing annual program over many years.

Each year the Club sponsors a Big Buck and Fish Contest, for which prizes are awarded. Another feature of the work is in sending deserving youths to the Conservation Camp at Raybrook. In order to keep our treasury solvent various fund raising events are held from time to time in the form of field days, raffles, shoots, sno-mobile races, auctions etc. Our

most successful membership drive to date was 1967 when 375 paid members were enrolled. It is hoped to increase the number in 1968.

Regular meetings, held on the last Wednesday of each month, provide a varied program including discussion of hunting, fishing, trapping, boating and shooting; pending state legislation on conservation laws; films; speakers from the State Department.

It was largely through their Club's efforts that the Boat Access Site on Grass River near Indian Creek was established. It is hoped that an overnight camp site will soon be provided near this location. The Club went on record in opposition to the proposed federalization of the Adirondack Preserve, and the gun legislation proposed in 1967. It sponsored the N.R.A. courses in instruction as to proper handling of fire arms as part of the hunter safety program and the club continues an active interest in the CLEAN WATER, anti-pollution issue. A proposal to reconstruct the fish weirs in three Grass River locations is up for consideration.

The increased public interest and

the keen competition among contestants in the Rushton Memorial Canoe Race, now being conducted under the Club's auspices for the third year, augurs well for the future. In this project, including the Souvenir Program issued herewith, is one more evidence of the splendid support and cooperation the Canton Fish & Game Club has received from the entire Canton community, merchants being generous supporters in this project with advertising and in many other ways. With the completion of our Clubhouse and its recreational area we hope that many people will join up and thus lend their support to our entire program. Both senior and junior members will be most welcome. In closing the officers and directors of the Club give a vote of thanks to all who are participating in the Seventh Annual Rushton Memorial Racing Regatta and to the large group of people who have worked for its success.

Robert Goolden,
 President

Bernard Riley,
 Secretary-Treasurer



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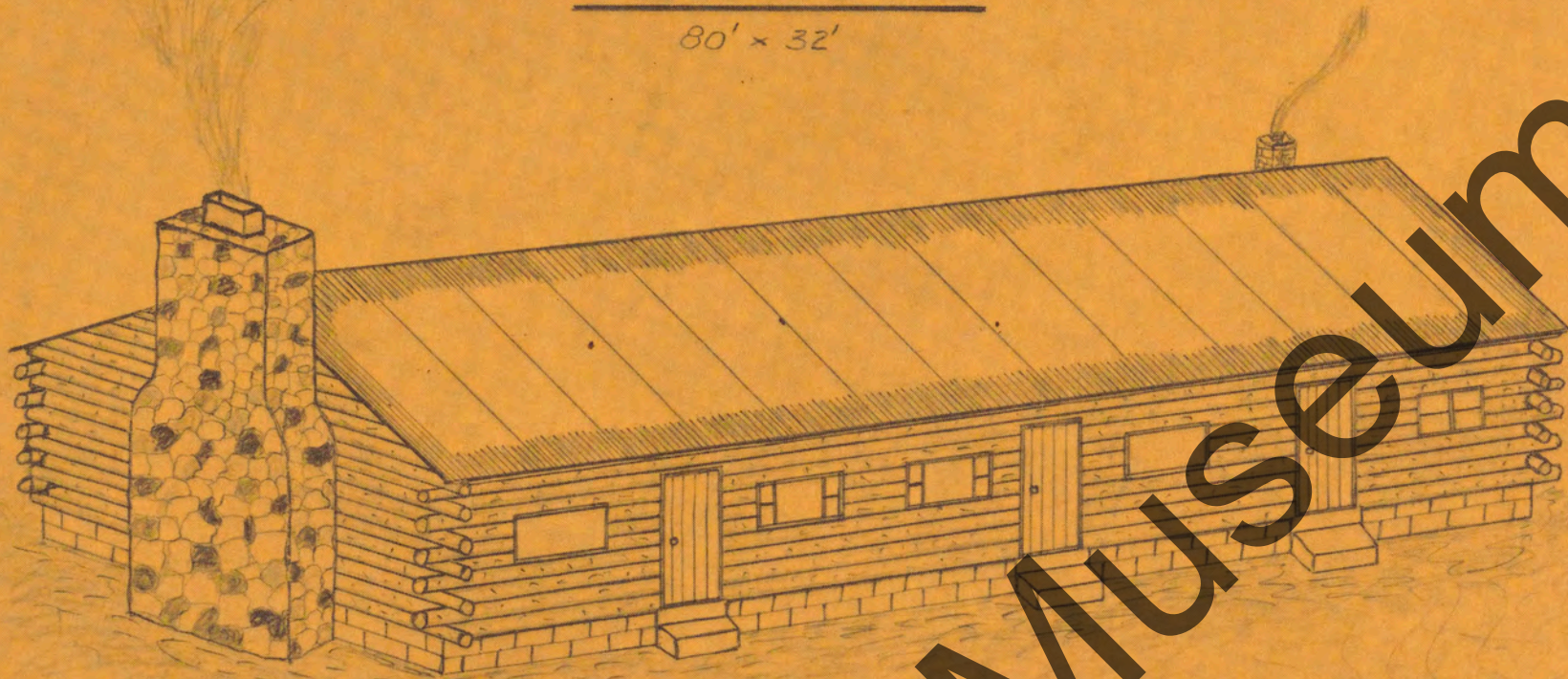
GUY ROCCA

Antique Boat Museum

CANTON FISH & GAME CLUB INC.

CLUBHOUSE

80' x 32'



R.W. MILLER
1968

In 1967 the Canton Fish & Game Club began the construction of its new home on its recently purchased 60 acres on the former Nickerson farm three miles from this village. Labor and materials have been donated. The walls are of tamarack, cut and hauled to the site free. Fishing ponds will be installed, fed from several excellent springs on the property. Skeet shooting facilities are present, and it is the intension of the Club to develop this property into a general recreational area for the community and for sportsmen's events. Provision will be made for its use by such local organizations as Boy and Girl Scout troops, for sno-mobile races, casting contests, picnics and other outings. When completed the clubhouse will be wired and lighted by electricity. This area will become the center of the Club's programs, both summer and winter. It is estimated that when completed this project will have cost \$5,000 in addition to all the work and materials being so generously donated.