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For the historian, canoe enthusiast, or cottager

A new book by local author (and accountant and jazz aficionado) **Ken Brown*** was launched this October from the Canadian Canoe Museum. That's appropriate. The book, ***The Canadian Canoe Company and the Early Peterborough Canoe Factories***, is all about canoes and the people from the Peterborough region who designed, manufactured, and sold them around the globe.

Focussing on the history of Peterborough's **Canadian Canoe Company**, this beautifully illustrated and impeccably researched book takes readers from the pioneer days of canoe building in the Kawarthas through the glory days of the industry. As early as the 1860s, John Stephenson, William English, Thomas Gordon, and Dan Herald operated independent canoe-building businesses in and around Peterborough. In fact, the **William English Canoe Company**, a smaller competitor of both the Canadian Canoe Company and its main rival, the **Peterborough Canoe Company**, was one of the earliest canoe factories.

"What I like most about the book is the way Brown combines thoroughly researched business history with biographical information about those who founded and operated the canoe companies that put Peterborough on the map," says John Summers, General Manager of the Canadian Canoe Museum. "His research and writing offer a vivid sense of the challenges involved in pioneering industrial-scale canoe building in the early years of the 20th century, and the book is a fascinating case study in Canadian business history."

It tells a broader story too. From the 1880s through the first part of the 20th century, the fortunes of the canoe industry match the history of industrial growth and decline in the city. "That's one of the most interesting realizations I came to," says Brown, "just how many **downtown industries** there were in Peterborough in the early 1900s—and how many are gone now." "All but Quaker have vanished," he adds.

At the heart of the book, though, are the life stories of local entrepreneurs, like Canadian Canoe Company founder **Arthur Tebb** and his backer **Felix Brownscombe**. "They were upstarts, really," Brown explains, "not exactly part of the Peterborough establishment, and they went up against some heavy hitters ... Colonel James Z. Rogers, for one."

Tales and pictures illustrating the rivalries and destinies of local canoe manufacturers will undoubtedly appeal to the historian on your gift list, as will the titbits about local **canoe workshops** and glimpses into the lives of famous canoe builders like **Walter Walker**. But there is a lot here for cottagers and paddlers too, for example, photographs of postcards showing how central the canoe was in recreational and romantic pursuits. (One postcard reads, "I'd like to paddle your canoe!") And boat builders will like the reproduced catalogue pages and the information on popular canoe designs.

John Summers and author Ken Brown spoke briefly at the book launch, and various artefacts, including a **Canadian Canoe Company canoe** as well as maps and illustrations collected by the author, were be on display.

\$20.00 softcover – 154 pages – 200 illustrations, 43 colour

The book can be purchased at the following locations:

Peterborough: the Canadian Canoe Museum, the Trent Valley Archives, the Centennial Museum & Archives, Chapters, Titles, Lockside Trading, and at the Peterborough & District Farmer's Market (in October).

Lakefield: Happenstance and Adventure Outfitters.

Online: www.covertocover.ca; www.bearmountainboats.ca; and www.canoemuseum.ca

* **Photographs available to illustrate the material in coloured type. See details on the following page.**

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About the author

Ken Brown has practiced public accounting in Peterborough since 1974. To bring relief from his exciting life as an accountant he has, over the years, developed a number of other interests. He is the author of *The Peterborough Potteries* and *The Invention of the Board Canoe*; a former director of the Canadian Canoe Museum, the Peterborough Historical Society, and Showplace; a founding director and president of the Kawartha Jazz Society; and an avid cottager. Ken married into the Peterborough canoeing tradition. His wife, Kathleen, is the great granddaughter of Canadian Canoe Company secretary-treasurer Felix Brownscombe, who figures prominently in book.

For more information contact Karen or Louis Taylor at Cover to Cover (phone: 705 745-2868; email covertocover@covertocover.ca) or visit our website (www.covertocover.ca).

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Front Cover of The Canadian Canoe Company and the Early Peterborough Canoe Factories

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Author Ken Brown

File: Ken_Brown.jpg

No acknowledgment necessary; caption obvious

Aerial view showing the industries of downtown Peterborough, circa 1918

File name: aerial_view.jpg

Caption: One of the earliest aerial photos of Peterborough, taken before this Hunter Street bridge was demolished in 1920 to make way for the current structure. Downtown Peterborough before World War I was filled with industry. Of all the industries noted here, only Quaker Oats remains: 1) Quaker Oats Company of Canada, 2) Flour mill of the Peterborough Cereal Company, 3) Peterborough Gas Works, 4) Denne Warehouse (Dewart Mills), 5) First Peterborough Canoe Company factory, 6) Freight terminal, 7) J.J. Turner and Sons, 8) Peter Hamilton Company, 9) Former Peterborough Boating Club boathouse, 10) Ackerman Harness Company, 11) Campbell Flour Mills Company and Maple Leaf Mills, 12) Second Canadian Canoe Company Factory, 13) Central Bridge and Engineering Company, 14) CPR station, 15) Calcutt Brewing and Malting Company, 16) Otonabee grain mill, and 17) Site of the Ontario Canoe Company factory. (*Courtesy of the Trent Valley Archives – Stan McBride Collection*)

Canadian Company Canoe

File name: canoe.jpg

Caption: A Canadian Canoe Company canoe, 1918. (*Courtesy of Jack Brownscombe; Photo Trent Photographics*)

First Canadian Canoe Company factory & Felix Brownscombe

File: ccc_building.jpg

Caption: The first Canadian Canoe Company factory, 439 Water Street (south-west corner of Brock and Water now the parking lot behind Knock On Wood), 1892-1904. Secretary-Treasurer Felix Brownscombe has his arms crossed and wears a shirt and tie. (*Ken Brown Collection*)

Peterborough Canoe Company baseball team & canoe builder Walter Walker

File: Baseball_team.jpg

Caption: The Peterborough Canoe Company baseball team, circa 1943. Note the most famous of all the area's canoe builders, Walter Walker, is second from the left in the back row. He was 36 when this photo was taken. He was still building canoes in the 21st century and died just short of his 102nd birthday in 2009. Some PCC-sponsored teams had the word "Watercraft" across the chest of their uniforms. Here, the letters P, C, and W reference "Peterborough," "Canoe," and "Watercraft." (*Courtesy of Harry Stoffers*)

The William English Canoe Company

File: English.jpg

Caption: A smaller competitor of both the Canadian and Peterborough Canoe companies, the William English Canoe Company, was one of the earliest canoe factories. This picture was taken in front of the factory at 182 Charlotte Street where the company operated from 1861 to 1915. This manufacturer seldom employed more than 10 people, and most were family members. (*Courtesy of Jim English*)

Canadian Canoe Company factory workshop and Morley Lyle, circa 1890

File: workshop.jpg

Caption: Workers in Peterborough's canoe factories were skilled but not highly paid. In 1919, well after this photo was taken, workers were receiving \$3.00–\$4.00 per nine-hour day, about the average for this kind of work at the time. Keeping wages low was critical in running a profitable canoe business, as it was so labour intensive. Canoe workers were not unionized in Peterborough until the 1950s. Morley Lyle, the general manager of the Canadian Canoe Company, has both hands on the canoe's bow deck in this photo.