

Ontario Canoe Company

From 1861 the Peterborough area was Canada's major centre for production of the wood strip canoe. Pioneer canoe designer and builder John Stephenson (1831-1920) operated businesses in three Ashburnham locations, including this site. In 1833 James Z. Rogers and four partners founded the Ontario Canoe Co., and purchased the Stephenson patents and molds. Rogers then built a new 725 square metre four-storey canoe factory here on the grounds of the Ashburnham station, with a separate office building fronting on Elizabeth Street, now Hunter Street east. The factory burned in 1892, on May 9. Rogers subsequently joined, as manager, investors who were founding the Peterborough Canoe Co., which manufactured its world-famous canoes until 1961.