

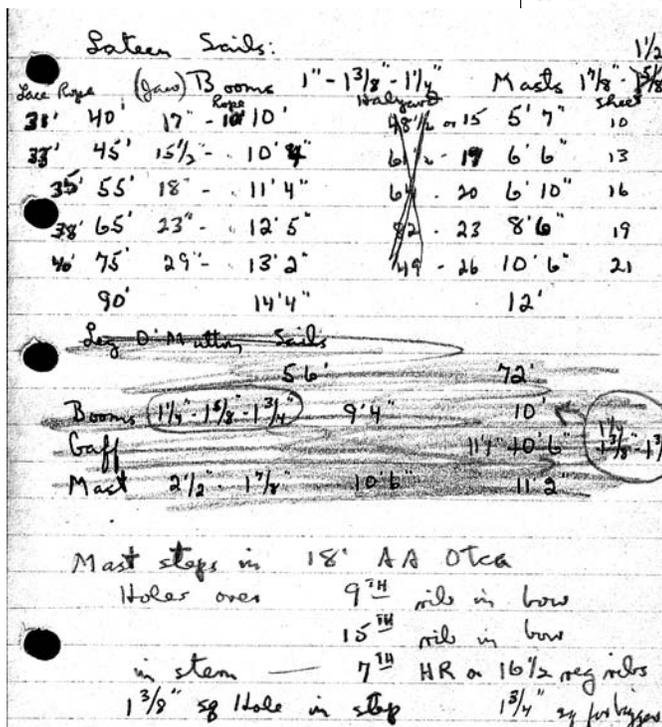
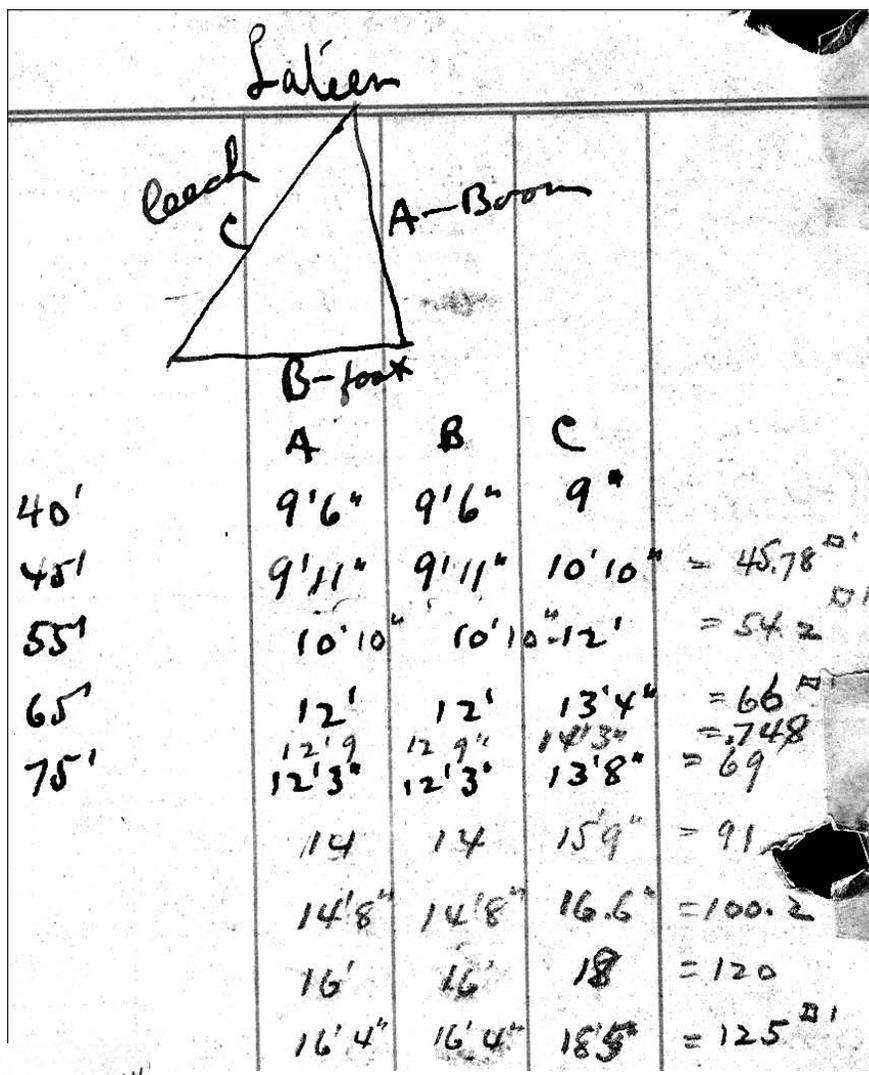
Notes from the Sail Loft

by Benson Gray

The last issue of *Wooden Canoe* had a description of how the Old Town catalogs could be used to trace the evolution of sailing canoes. Some notes from the factory have the original sizes of the Old Town Canoe sails and might interest anyone who plans to recreate one. There is a short glossary of rigging terms

Figure 1 (right). A note from the Old Town factory, complete with a rudimentary sketch of a sail, showing the measurements for the lengths of the sides of the sail (A, B, and C) and the resulting overall size of the sail. The bottom line lists the measurements for a 125-square-foot sail! The note probably dates from 1941.

Figure 2 (below). A factory note listing sizes of "Lateen Sails" followed by some leg o' mutton dimensions and a bit of dual sail information.



on the following page to help people who are not familiar with sailing nomenclature.

The first note from the factory lists sail sizes (Figure 1). This note, with its small sketch of a sail, provides the measurements for the lengths of the sides of the sail (A, B, and C), and the resulting overall size of the sail. The named sizes for some of the sails are in the left column and in the far right the results of the calculations. The last one is a 125-square-foot monster that was probably a challenge to handle in anything more than a gentle breeze. On the back side of this page are sail prices, which indicate that these notes were probably made in 1941, and the boom size which was listed as one and a quarter inches in diameter.

The sheet with "Lateen Sails" at the top (Figure 2) lists yet another collection of sail sizes with rig dimensions followed by some leg o' mutton sail dimensions and a bit

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Sails: A Brief Glossary

This is a brief glossary of common sail terms as they apply to an Old Town sailing canoe with a lateen rig. It may help make sense of the notes on rigging that came from the sail loft at the factory.

Batten: a thin strip of wood that supports the leach (and roach) of a sail.

Boom: round horizontal wooden piece that is attached to the bottom of the sail.

Foot: bottom edge of the sail above the boom.

Halyard: a thick line attached to the yard that runs through the top of the mast to raise the sail.

Jaw: bronze brace that holds the boom to the mast.

Lace: a thin line used to attach the sail to the boom and yard.

Leech: diagonal trailing edge of the sail that runs from the end of the yard to the end of the boom.

Line: called rope on land but given this name when on a boat. (Note that the factory notes refer to rope, although this is not technically correct.)



The sides of a sail—the luff, the leech and the foot—and the battens.

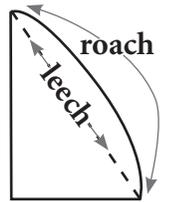
Luff: diagonal leading edge of the sail that is attached to the yard.

Mast: large round vertical wooden piece that holds up the yard, sail, boom, etc.



Rig details showing the boom, the yard, the step and the mast and the lines—lace, halyard and sheet.

Roach: a curved extension of the leech. The size of a sail can be increased by extending the leech in a broad curve and supporting it with battens. The measurement is the difference between the widest part of the curve and a straight line leech.



S-hook: a bronze hook to attach the leading edge of the boom to the leading edge of the yard.

Sheet: a thick line attached to the boom that is held by the sailor and used to control the sail.

Step: the block of wood that holds the bottom of the mast. The early ones had round holes, and the later ones had square holes. The size of the hole would vary depending on the size of the sail.

Yard: the round diagonal wooden piece that is attached to the front edge of the sail. (Note that the factory notes don't distinguish between yard and a boom since they are usually identical in shape, diameter, and length.)

Benson Gray

	Luff	Leach	Foot	Roach
Wahoo	15'	x 15'	x 10'	3' Roach
40'	9'6"	Foot 9'6"	Leach 9'	2'
45'	9'11"		10'10"	2
55'	10'10"		12'	2
65'	11'11"		13'3"	2
75'	12'9"		14'3"	2
			15'	of 5-12"

Figure 3 (above). An Old Town factory note from the late 1960s listing sail measurements and in the far right column, the size of the roach.

Figure 4 (below). A typewritten sheet with dimensions and handwritten additions from 1964.

7/17/64 SAIL SIZE	MAST	BOOM	Measure to outer end of Jaws FROM S HOOK	LACE ROPE	HALYARD (MAST ROPE) FROM S HOOK		SHEET ROPE TIED 18" FROM END OF Beam Boom
					LENGTH	HOOK	
40 Ft.	5' 7"	10'	20"	31'	15'	44"	10'
45 Ft.	6' 6"	10' 4"	19"	32½'	17'	54"	13'
55 Ft.	6' 10"	11' 4"	18"	35½'	20'	58"	17'
65 Ft.	8' 6"	12' 5"	21½"	38'	23'	80"	19'
75 Ft.	10' 6"	13' 2"	23 3/4"	40'	26'	108"	21'

BATTEN 2 - 12"
1 - 15"

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of dual sail information for an 18-foot Otca on the bottom.

Another handwritten note (Figure 3) gives the sail sizes in square feet and the luff, leach, foot, and roach measurements. Because this summary includes the 75 square foot Wahoo sail, these notes must date from the late 1960s.

The last note (Figure 4) is a typewritten chart with additional handwritten notes dated July 17, 1964. This one gives the lengths of the mast, boom/yard, rope/line, and battens for a similar collection of sail sizes. An Old Town sailing batten is a thin strip of wood that supports the sail's leach and roach.

Assembly 2009 at Keuka College will focus on sailing canoes, and Keuka Lake should provide plenty of opportunities for fine sailing. Join us there to learn more about canoe sailing, try your hand at sailing, or simply to admire a fleet of canoes sailing across the lake.

Benson Gray is a member of the Board of Directors of the WCHA. He is a frequent contributor to Wooden Canoe and will be happy to explain the details of rigging in greater detail at Assembly.