

I would appreciate help in identifying a wood and canvas canoe that I recently bought. The previous owner purchased it from Ralph Frese at the Chicagoland Canoe Base in 1986. After many years of service, it was refurbished by Ralph in 2012 for the same owner. It may have been Ralph's last restoration. The previous owner has documentation for the restoration, which he will send to me when he finds it. That will certainly provide additional information that could help identify the origin. It was the previous owner's understanding that Ralph thought this was a Chestnut Prospector. Normally, that would settle the issue for me, but the dimensions of this canoe are not consistent with the dimensions of the Prospector as described in several WCHA forum discussions. In particular, the beam is only 33 ½ inches vs an expected 36 inches for the 16 ft. model, and the depth is 13 inches, vs the expected 14 inches for the Prospector. After considerable searching, I have not found a Chestnut, Peterborough, or CCC craft that matches these basic dimensions. I understand that some change in dimensions is expected over the years and with two restorations (1986 and 2012). Perhaps the original depth was 12 inches and beam 34 inches, which is consistent with the Cruiser, but the rib dimensions and spacing are not consistent with the catalog specifications I have seen for that model.

Here is a top overview my canoe and two side views, the first with the bow closest to the camera and the second with the stern closest to the camera. I could not zoom out enough to get a direct side view.





The length measured from tip to tip at the farthest points is 16 ft 2 in. By the way, is there a proper name for the rounded extensions at the front and back?

Next are two details of the stern showing the deck and the stem, respectively. Note the number on the stem, 9025. I understand that Chestnut serial numbers were not consistently applied but that some number series were four digit.



The following photos show details of the stern seat, the yoke, and the bow seat, respectively. The seats were recaned by Ralph. As is clear from the overview photo, there are no additional thwarts. The yoke is nicely carved and appears to be stamped "TEAL". I suspect this is an aftermarket modification.





Following are three views of the bow deck. The first shows the construction detail. The second and third show the dimensions. The length of 13 inches is from the tip of the top surface where the curved “nose” meets that surface. The rear deck shares these same dimensions and construction.

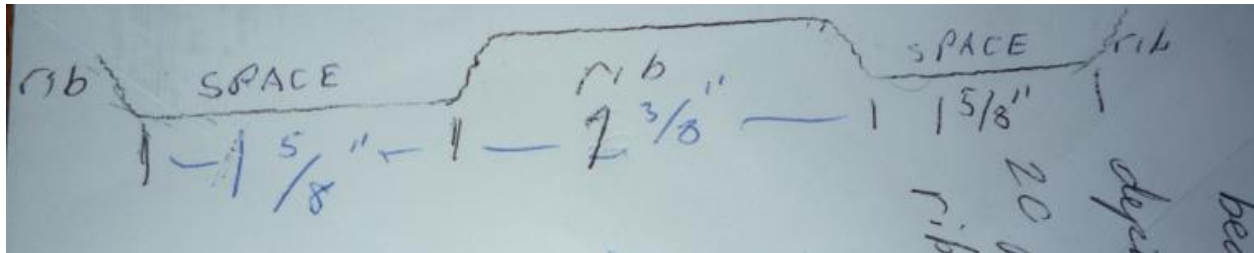




Since the rib dimensions, spacing, and chamfering seem to be important for model identification and dating, I took several photos with a ruler overlayed and did an averaging calculation. The first photo shows 9 ribs from near the center of the canoe. Rib width at the center is consistently $2 \frac{3}{8}$ inches. The spacing between ribs varies from $1 \frac{1}{4}$ inches to 2 inches, with most spaces being close to $1 \frac{5}{8}$ inches. The second photo shows a closeup of a few ribs with the ruler overlayed.



The following is a tracing of an actual rib and the adjacent spaces made with a contour gauge.



Because of the variation in rib spacing, I determined the average spacing by measuring the full length over 29 central ribs and the 29 adjacent spaces. That length was 117 inches. Given the consistent rib width of $2 \frac{3}{8}$ inches, the average space can be calculated. It is 1.66 inches, very close to 1.625 inches, the dimension shown in the sketch above. Note that at the extreme ends the final ribs are much wider and thinner than the others.

The planks are consistently $2 \frac{1}{2}$ inches in width as shown in the following photo. There are 20 planks at the center of the hull.



Correctly measuring the beam and the depth presents some challenges. The width at the center between the inner edges of the outwales is $32 \frac{1}{8}$ inches. Due to a subtle tumblehome, this is not the

beam. To measure the depth I leveled the canoe on sawhorses and laid a drywall t-square across the outwales so that the cross member of the t hung along the edge snug to the outwale. I then used a level under the canoe from the lowest point of the hull to the calibrated cross member of the t-square. Using this method, I obtained 13 inches. I repeated the measurement along the other outwale and got the same result. To measure the beam, I used the same setup, but read the distance between the outer edges of the outwales, which was $33 \frac{3}{4}$ inches. The tumblehome does not extend beyond the outer edge of the outwale. Rather, the outermost edge of the canvas surface is $\frac{1}{8}$ inch shy of the outer edge of the outwales. So the beam is a net of $33 \frac{1}{2}$ inches.



Finally, the weight is 72 lb. When the boat is set on the floor, its weight causes some distortion of the hull. With the boat sitting on the floor, the measured depth was approximately $12 \frac{1}{2}$ inches. The beam was not discernably different with the tools I had available.

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