



1900 Rushton wood canvas Indian 'Chingachgook'



Owner & Restorer: Paul Miller
Home Port: Elburn, IL

Chingachgook is one of the first wood canvas canoes built by Henry Rushton of Canton, NY. The Indian was originally built in all wood and became the first canoe that Rushton built as a "rag boat" as he called them. The Indian was only available in a length of 15'. The canoe is 15' long, 32" wide 12" deep with stems rising to 24", weight 68 lbs. Ribs and plank are White Cedar, inwales and outwales of White Oak with Cherry trim.

The following year of 1901 Rushton began building the famous Indian Girl canoe in lengths of 15', 16', and 17'.

While 7 or 8 of the all wood Indian canoes are currently known to exist, this appears to be the only surviving wood canvas Indian. During restoration the number "4" was written in pencil on all four side of the bow and stern of the canoe.

This canoe was originally purchased by Robert C. Pruyn (1847-1934) an influential American inventor, banker, businessman, and politician. His father, Robert H. Pruyn, served as Minister to Japan under Abraham Lincoln.

Robert C. Pruyn built the 13,000 acre Adirondack Great Camp Santanoni in Upstate New York, which is today a New York State Park and National Historic Landmark.

Santanoni was completed in 1892 and was the summer retreat of Robert and his prominent friends and captains of industry. The canoe was at the camp when then Governor Teddy Roosevelt visited and possibly paddled this canoe. The picture attached shows the grand and great-grandchildren of the author James Fennimore Cooper paddling the canoe at Santanoni in the 1920's. The Indian is the canoe in the foreground; the canoe in the background is a 17' Indian Girl built in 1901, both acquired from a descendant of Robert C. Pruyn.