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# STORY OF JASON GOULD; PIONEER UPPER OTTAWA

## Name Will Long be Remembered; Left His Name in Many Valley Towns

Was Man of Great Energy and Executive Ability—Village of Cobden Owe Existence to Him—Started Boat on Muskrat Lake—Fine Story as Told by Capt. J. P. Hayden, of Ottawa.



The story which follows was written by Capt. J. P. Hayden, in 1912, when he was editor of "The Cobden Sun." The manuscript and references were lost during the Cobden fire of 1913, but a few copies of a little booklet, containing the story of Jason Gould, had

firm name of Cowley and Craig for some years afterwards. After disposing of his business on the Ottawa, Gould returned to Smiths Falls and carried on more extensively his grist milling, foundry and other business for over three years and closing up the remainder of his mercantile af-

been published. One of these recently came into the hands of the author through the kindness of Mrs. Margaret K. Craymer, of Beachburg, Ontario. In a letter to the author she says: "This booklet has a history. It was sent to Mr. Craymer's mother in England, Christmas, 1912. She went to live in New Zealand with her daughter and took it with her. In 1920 she came to Canada via Vancouver and has since made her home with Jim and I. It has been round the world and has again returned within a few miles of Cobden and it gives us much pleasure to send it to you." The facts herein related were all verified at the time of writing, but the references have been lost.

### Capt. Hayden's Story.

One of the most interesting subjects to the traveller, as he glides over the glassy surface of beautiful Muskrat Lake, near Cobden, Ontario, on a summer's day and notes the wild and picturesque scenery which here and there presents itself, is a recital of the incidents connected with the early history of its navigation. In these days of rapid railway and air transportation, the lake and river is but little used as a route for the conveyance of freight and passengers. But away back in the 'fifties business fairly hummed in the steamboat line, a fleet of fine boats being run regu-

airs again left for the Ottawa river in 1845.

### First General Store.

He arrived in Portage du Fort about the time the village was surveyed and established and carried on the first general store opened in that village.

The business was started under the firm name of Gould and Lancaster, but the latter gentleman retired soon afterwards and Gould carried on the store on a more extensive scale in his own name. He also engaged in the lumbering business on his own account as well as supplying others in that vicinity.

### Got First P.O.

He also was instrumental in getting the first post office established there and was the first postmaster.

On commencing business at the Portage he repurchased an interest in the forwarding line and was identified therewith until the new iron steamer "Oregon" was placed on the route in 1847 when he with his partners Messrs. Cowley and Craig sold out all their interests in the forwarding business on Chats Lake to Messrs. Egan and Aumond who continued the same.

Late in the year 1847, having received a favorable offer that would enable him, if consummated, to carry out a pre-conceived determination of opening up and extending a public line from Portage du Fort to Pem-

### JASON GOULD

To whom Cobden, Ont., owes its existence. Ottawa river pioneer.

as rough a country as could well be imagined. Here again he was served with a notice from the same party not to trespass on his property as he had purchased it from the Crown and heavy damage would be rigidly exacted. The "land grabber" has sadly miscalculated the mettle of the man and the concealed force of the artillery he had to contend with for he had previously formed a company in conformity with an act then in force (as a safeguard) empowering any one to make at least two miles of a plank gravel or a split plank road, etc. which said road was made in due course without delay and remained the highway to the landing at Gould's Line during its operations or for upwards of 25 years.

### The First P.M.

In 1852 the village of Cobden received an addition to its population several mechanics having come in and started several branches of trade. A post office was opened, with Gould as the first postmaster. The business of the forwarding line was still increasing and he commenced the construction of a new steamer for the following season—one that would be commensurate with the increasing trade.

a fleet of fine boats being run regularly between the head of the Chats Rapids and Portage du Fort and Muskrat Lake and Pembroke to accommodate the large volume of trade which passed up and down the river.

#### Strong and Durable.

Some of the earliest of these craft were of primitive models, but strong and durable, and did excellent service in their day. In later years better boats were constructed and put upon the route, but all have now passed away, having outlived their usefulness.

In the year 1837 Jason Gould succeeded to the business of Messrs James Simpson and Co., of Arnprior and he, having acquired a controlling interest in the steamboat formerly owned by his predecessors and being anxious to facilitate and improve means of transit between the Chats and Deschene Lake built, in 1838, a large wharf and storehouse at the head of Chats Island, completed the portage road over the island and built two boats for use on the water stretches between the islands, which formed the connecting link from the lower to the upper lakes.

#### Changed the Route.

In the beginning of the year 1839 the owner of the privileges of Victoria Island (which was considered the key of the route) demanded a higher rate for drawing goods than before charged. This Gould would

broke, he sold his mercantile business to Messrs McLaren and White and was soon afterwards engaged in exploring and maturing his plans for future operations.

#### Via Muskrat Lake.

After examining both sides of the river for a public line of travel he decided on the Upper Canada (Ontario) side as having the most advantages, being about 25 miles shorter with less transshipments, greater tance and at much less expense of tance and at much less expense to all concerned. Consequently he adopted the route by way of Muskrat Lake to Pembroke Landing and purchased a large farm at the head of the lake, which was made the terminal of land carriage and the starting point of the inland water route.

#### Called Place Cobden.

A portion of the land was surveyed into village lots, which he named Cobden, after the great fur trader. He then commenced locating the roads between the Ottawa river and Muskrat Lake starting from where the interprovincial bridge crosses the Ottawa river in as direct line as practicable to Cobden.

After purchasing lots and obtaining rights of way, etc., he commenced work and that year made the roads available for portaging. In the early part of 1849 he constructed two large clinker-built row boats, 60 feet long

trade.

#### The "North Star."

In 1853 the new steamer—the "North Star"—was placed on the route and became near being destroyed on May 16 by the great fire that devastated the whole of that section of country. The "North Star" was on her downward trip from Pembroke to Cobden and it was only by the united efforts of the passengers and crew that she was enabled to run the gauntlet of fire in safety. On the arrival of the boat at Cobden the greater portion of the village was found in flames and her predecessor, the "Muskrat" burned to the water's edge. The inhabitants were fighting the fiery element to their utmost.

#### Fire Swept.

But despite their efforts still the fire flew, extending downwards to Gould's wharf, a distance of 13 miles, sweeping everything inflammable in the shape of buildings, bridges, etc. All of the buildings at the wharf, with a large quantity of merchandise then en transit, were destroyed.

This disaster, not only caused Gould great financial loss, but seriously injured his health through over-exertion and the inhalation of smoke which completely prostrated him for some length of time and from which he never fully recovered. Nothing dismayed, he at once gave orders, before the fires were out, to cut out and completely replace damages, and

not entertain. Both parties stood firm. No concessions would be made by either and with the usual energy and promptitude Gould at once changed the route and made Fitzroy Harbor the landing place. From there up merchandise was brought by the main road two miles, thence over a bush road one mile to the spy on the Mississippi thence by boat through the Mississippi to a point near its mouth, where the steamer on Chats Lake made her landing.

#### Changed the Line.

Within one week this enterprising man, rather than submit to monopoly, had changed the line of travel and traffic between the two lakes and carried the Ottawa trade his own way during the whole season. During the year 1839 Gould had curtailed to some extent his lumbering and sawmilling interests at Arnprior and had leased the property owned by Chief McNab after he had vacated Kennell Lodge. Here Gould carried on farming and made a temporary residence.

#### Owning the Boat.

In the spring of 1840 Gould purchased from Mr. Buchanan the remainder of the stock of the steamer and became sole proprietor of the boat. The line of travel was again changed to the islands, where it remained until the tram railway was completed from Pontiac to the head of Chats Rapids in 1847. In the fall

had buckboards, sines and wagons placed on the road, together with other requisites for the carriage of passengers and freight.

#### A Daily Trip.

In May the line was opened up for general traffic by stages connecting with the steamer at Portage du Fort or Bolton's Landing every evening and by row boats leaving the Cobden and Pembroke ends each morning thus making a daily trip between the two places. This mode of travel was continued during the year 1850 with a marked increase in patronage.

The roads were much improved, bridges constructed, a good hotel opened, dwelling houses, store-houses and wharves built at each end of the route and a general store business established.

In order to control the water in the river he also leased a mill at Pembroke Landing. During the season of 1850 he had at his own expense cut out and made a good winter road on the west side of Muskrat Lake from Cobden to Pembroke a distance of about 18 miles through the bush.

In the winter of 1851 he purchased a small engine and boiler, and in the spring the two large row boats were placed side by side fastened together and decked over a space being left open for the wheel behind.

#### Called the Muskrat.

The engine and boiler were placed

the line was kept open without a single day's interruption.

#### Quickly Rebuilt.

By the end of the season the buildings and other works had been reconstructed to suit the requirements of the increased trade.

This season he gave up the lease of his sawmill on the Pembroke end owing to the great opposition of parties owning lands through which the road had to pass, and moved up stream, where he purchased land on each side of the river, built a dam to control the water, and permanently made the landing there.

#### Sold Out.

During the year 1854 and to the end of the decade Gould remained in Cobden, devoting his time to the interests of the line as well as carrying on a large farm, both of which required his undivided attention.

At the close of the year 1859 he sold out his entire interest to Capt. D. K. Cowley.

Gould remained in Cobden for a year or two afterwards, working his farm and closing up his business. He returned to Smiths Falls and on October 25 1864 he passed away.

## Was In the Midnight Raid on the Cupboard

of 1840 Gould wound up his business in Arnprior and disposed of his effects.

#### Moved to Braeside.

In the winter of 1841 he purchased the right of lot 12, 13th concession of McNab, now known as Braeside, to where he removed from Arnprior such plant as was required for the furtherance of his forwarding business and where for a time he made his headquarters. He built a dwelling and store-house and a wharf for the use of the steamer, where she took in all her wood and other supplies. During this year he also, at considerable expense, built a road across a very rocky island at Snow Rapids, which is to this time in annual use by steamers during high water season.

#### To Smiths Falls.

In the early part of 1842 finding that his milling and other business at Smiths Falls required his personal supervision, he sold out the whole of his interests in the steamers and forwarding business, from Victoria Island to Portage du Fort to Capt D. K. Cowley and William Craig of Sand Point, who continued the forwarding business under the

the deck with a light deck over head covering all. Thus the two row boats were soon converted into a "stern wheeler" which was named the "Muskrat" and for two seasons this craft paddled up and down the lake and river bearing its name, affording to some extent better accommodation for passengers and more shelter and quicker despatch for goods. But "the best laid schemes of men and mice all gang aglee."

#### Notice Served.

At the time the above improvements were being made, Gould received notice from a man who had the previous year been employed by the company who operated the boats on Chats Lake at Bolton's Landing, stating he could no longer use the wharf as a place for landing goods unless he at once made arrangements, it being his property.

#### Changed Landing.

This notice Gould disregarded and decided to at once change the landing further down stream, which idea he carried out constructing a new wharf a mile below Bolton's. He then commenced to make a road for two miles to join the former one through