

ELLIOTT BROTHERS SKIS

In 1915 Carmen (1885-1965) and Warner (1890-1960) Elliott came to Sioux Lookout to work in the Canadian National Railway roundhouse but soon decided to go into business for themselves. They opened a workshop, built and repaired boats, canoes, paddles, toboggans, snowshoes or anything made of wood for trappers, miners, and adventurers heading into the bush.

In 1927 Harold (Doc) Oaks had become the first managing Director of Western Canada Airways Ltd. That year he approached Warner and Carmen about manufacturing skis for his airplanes. The Elliott brothers designed and built a ski that would handle the rugged conditions encountered in Canada's bush during winter flying.

Over the next twenty years their business and reputation for grew along with the expansion of air travel. The quality of their workmanship soon made them famous as their skis were used by Admiral Richard Byrd for Antarctic explorations in the 1930s.

During World War II the British Commonwealth Air Training Program trained pilots for the war. Much of the flying was done in the winter necessitating ski equipped airplanes. When asked to supply planes for this program, de Havilland placed an order for 400 hundred skis for their trainers. To help fill this order, the Elliott brothers talked Bill Fuller into converting the service bays in his gas station into workshops to manufacture skis. At the height of the war, Elliott Bros. employed up to 25 men.



Elliott boards, as they became commonly known, were constructed of three layers of seasoned white ash, each layer smaller than the one below. A center runner and one on each edge was

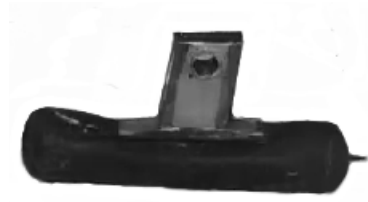


attached to the bottom board. Flat brass sheeting covered the entire bottom and was formed over the runners then rolled up around the edges of the lower board and secured with copper rivets. The boards were not glued to each other, rather they remained separate allowing them to act like a giant spring. This not only gave the ski added strength but also greatly aided flexibility to give a smoother ride and the ability to absorb severe punishment in rough snow and ice. Their only drawback to this design was the weight.

What really made Elliott boards one of the best skis for bush use was the addition of M&C pedestals.

“M & C pedestals were originally designed, tested, and manufactured in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan by Mason and Campbell Aviation. In 1947 the government took over the company, renaming it Saskatchewan Government Airways. SGA continued to manufacture these pedestals for the aviation market.

M & C pedestals were simply a steel housing attached to the ski capturing an air bag. Landing forces were absorbed by this heavy rubber, cylindrical, bladder, ranging from sixteen to eighteen inches long, eight inches in diameter. This was manufactured much like a tire with cord reinforcements. Inside was a sausage-shaped tube inflated to 30 psi. The weight of the aircraft was transferred to the air bag by a metal foot resting on it which cushioned the landing forces placed on the skis. Both the P4D and P4E pedestals were used in conjunction with Elliott skis on Norseman aircraft. The E series had a larger bad area.”



Rubber bladder and metal foot from M&C pedestal

From- Ontario Central Airlines - The Kenora years

The following photo came to me from Ron Bell. We had some discussion about how the brass sheeting attached to the wooden ski. This picture of a blueprint clearly shows that the copper nails are driven down from the top and burred over on the underside.

