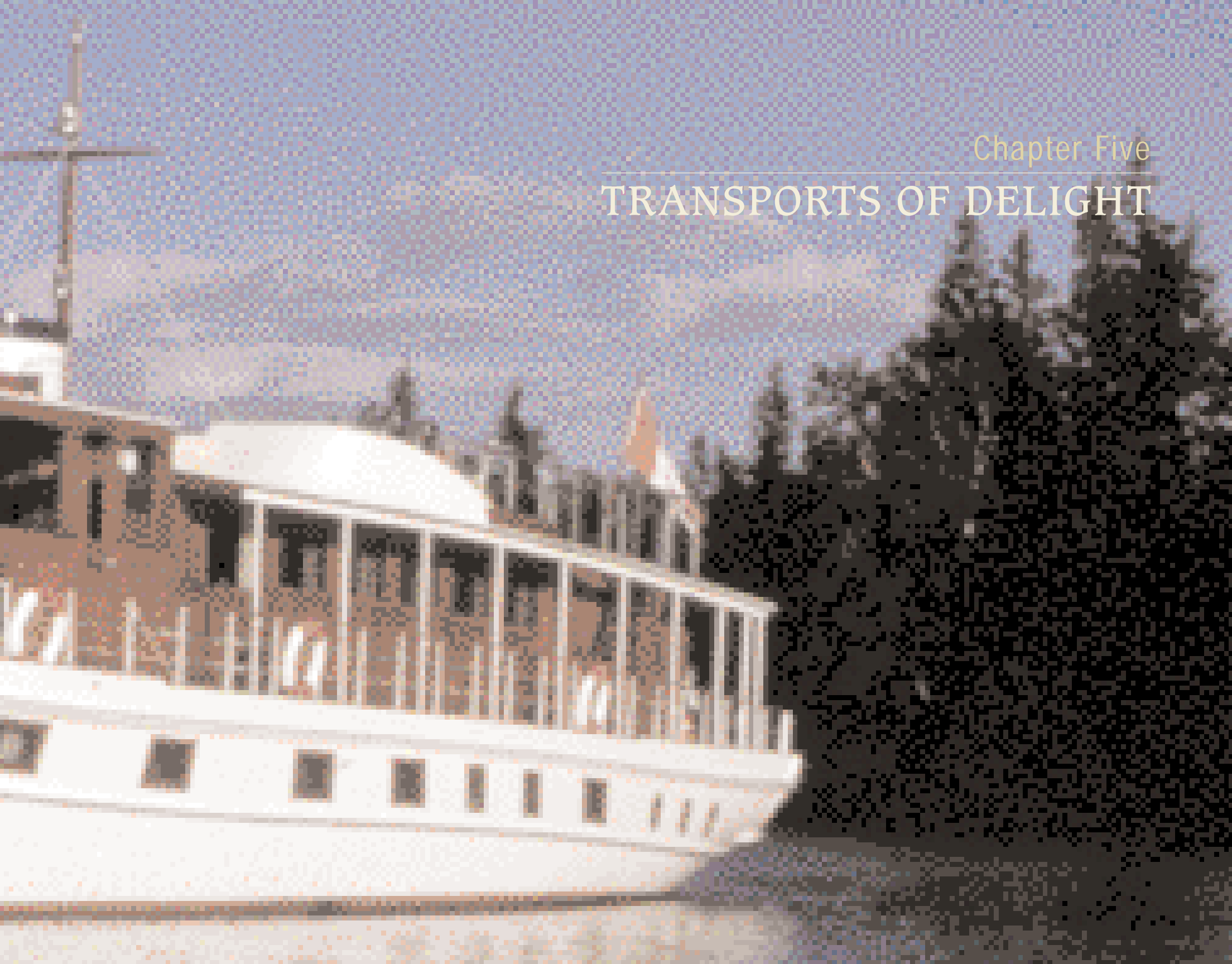




Chapter Five

## TRANSPORTS OF DELIGHT



**I**t is a story of success from the start, and so much of the success consists of something born in the blood and the breed, something instinctive and unteachable, like the ability to sing supremely—the gift of making planks and metal blossom into ships.

—*Toronto Star Weekly*, January 1928

The growing reputation of the Ditchburn Boat Co., the stunning success of the two vessels for the Eaton family, the surprising achievements in racing, and the growing population of wealthy summer residents combined to overwhelm the work force, which had almost doubled in 1923 and now needed larger facilities if greater annual production was to be achieved. Orders for larger vessels were appearing from satisfied previous owners, and now orders were coming from much farther afield—Montréal, New York, and western Canada.

On December 4, 1924, the Orillia Times carried the exciting news that the Ditchburn Pleasure Boat Co. Ltd. of Gravenhurst had decided to build a new boat factory on the waterfront of Lake Couchiching. This location was a natural choice, as the Orillia waterfront is on the Trent-Severn Canal System, with access to both Georgian Bay to the northwest and Lake Ontario to the southeast. The possibility of orders from Montréal and New York now became a certainty for sales manager Tom Greavette.

“Operations will commence next week, so that the factory may be ready by February 1 for the building of a large pleasure launch which the company has secured the contract to turn out. The boat must be delivered in Montréal in the early spring,” stated Greavette.

This new order for a vessel 100 feet in length, with 6 feet of draught, expected to require over \$35,000 in labour alone, was hardly a “boat.” It would be more properly described as a magnificent yacht, incorporating all the latest mechanical advances, and built to uncompromising standards of craftsmanship and luxury. The yacht *Gannet*, in addition to being Ditchburn’s largest project to date, was being commissioned by a prominent Canadian yachtsman, businessman and sportsman, Comm. J. K. L. Ross of Montréal.

Mayor McLean and other City of Orillia officials moved quickly to secure the land lease and institute dredging operations to provide 15-foot water depth for a distance of 200 feet out into the lake. A contractor promptly erected the steel-truss factory building, measuring 40

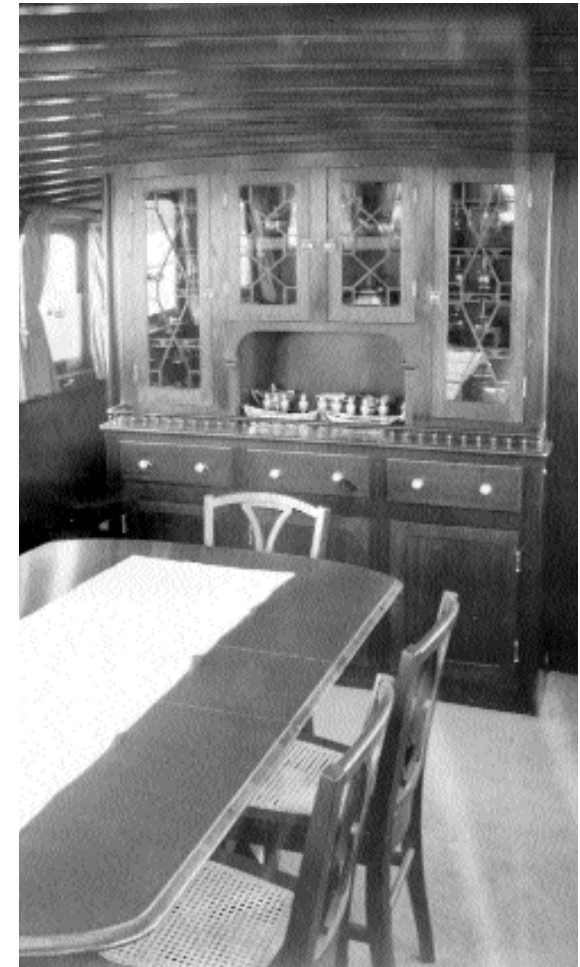


feet by 120 feet, a local work force was recruited, and work commenced. A marine railroad was added later to accomplish launchings from the twin production lines, and the entire waterfront end of the building could be removed for access to the railway.

The added capacity of the new Orillia plant produced a handful of orders for larger cruisers, while production in Gravenhurst continued at a record pace. Over the next seven years a succession of spectacular vessels were launched, each representing some owner's dream of the perfect

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1928 boat made for C. Kilgore Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam voluptue.



1925 Gannet interior Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur  
adipis cing elit, sed diam zu mnonnumy ei.

Interior Dining: don't know boat. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,  
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pleasure craft. The customer list was equally spectacular, representing a veritable “who’s who” of wealthy Canadian and American owners.

In addition to Commander Ross, Canadian owners included Sir Joseph Flavelle, Lady Eaton, Sir Edward Kemp, Sir Thomas White, Sam and George McLaughlin, H. M. Tucker, Barry Hayes, E. R. Wood, George T. Fulford, C. S. Coryell, Hon. Wallace Nesbitt, Walter Cole, Col. Le Grand Reed, Harry Hatch, Norman Gooderham, Col. Albert Gooderham, John Forlong, and many others.

The American owners’ list was equally impressive, and included John Ringling (of circus fame); Gordon Lefebvre, vice-president of General Motors; Fred W. Haines of Detroit; Wharton Sinckler of Maine and Mrs. Delphine Dodge Cromwell; P. D. Saylor, president of Canada Dry; Commodore Austin Perry; and John C. Hageman, all of New York, plus many others.

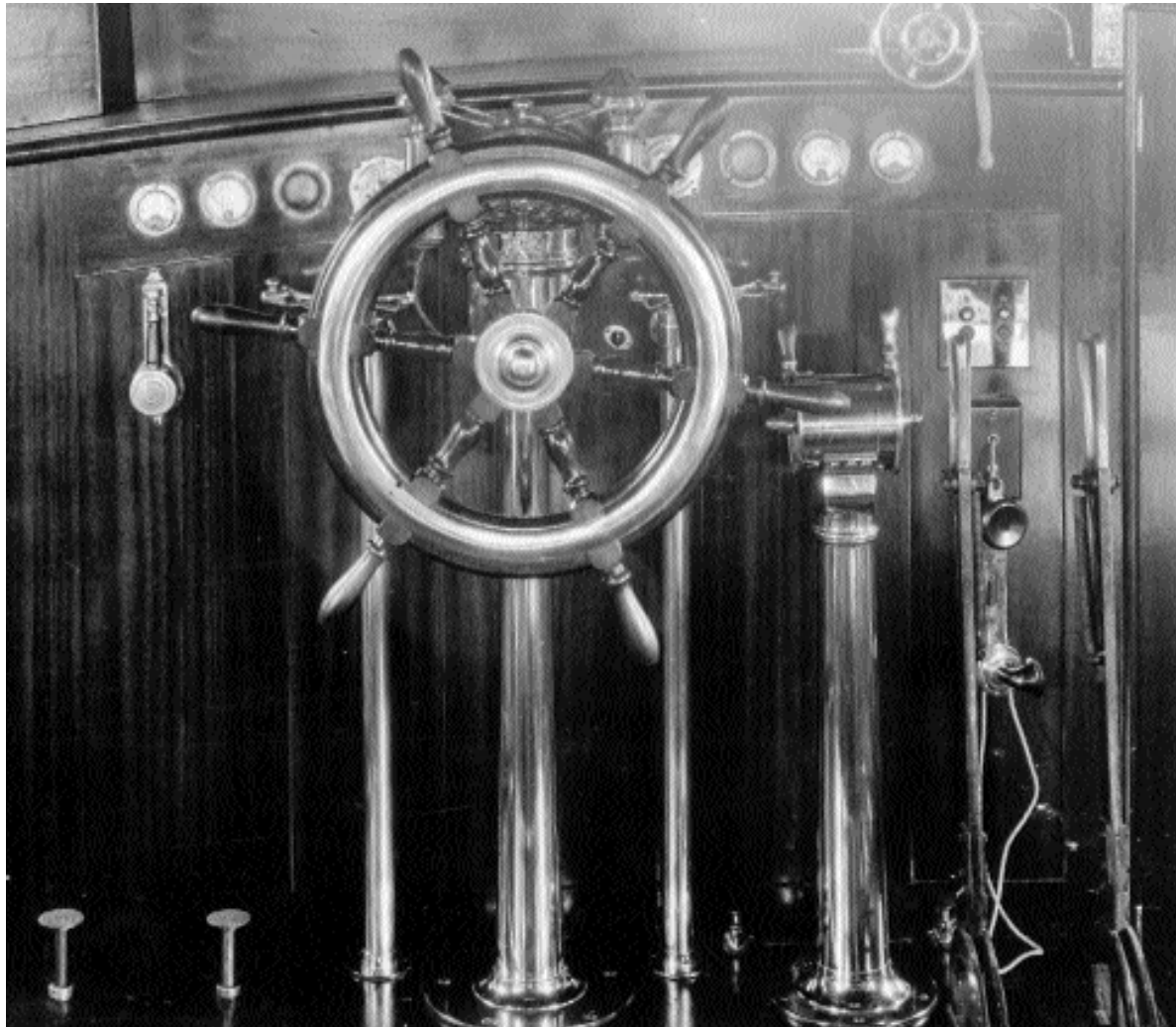
This clientele coming to a Canadian yacht builder was unprecedented, constituting an accolade never extended to a Canadian builder



before or since. Herbert Ditchburn, with no technical training in architecture or design, with no schooling outside of Muskoka, now dominated the Canadian production of pleasure craft. His reputation for beauty and integrity had secured American commissions from owners who could have bought from any of the famous U.S. builders.

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1925 Cruiser made for G Cooper. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit, sed diam zu mnonnumy ei ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit, sed diam zu.



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1915 Eaton Wheelhouse. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam zu mnonnumy ei ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam zu.

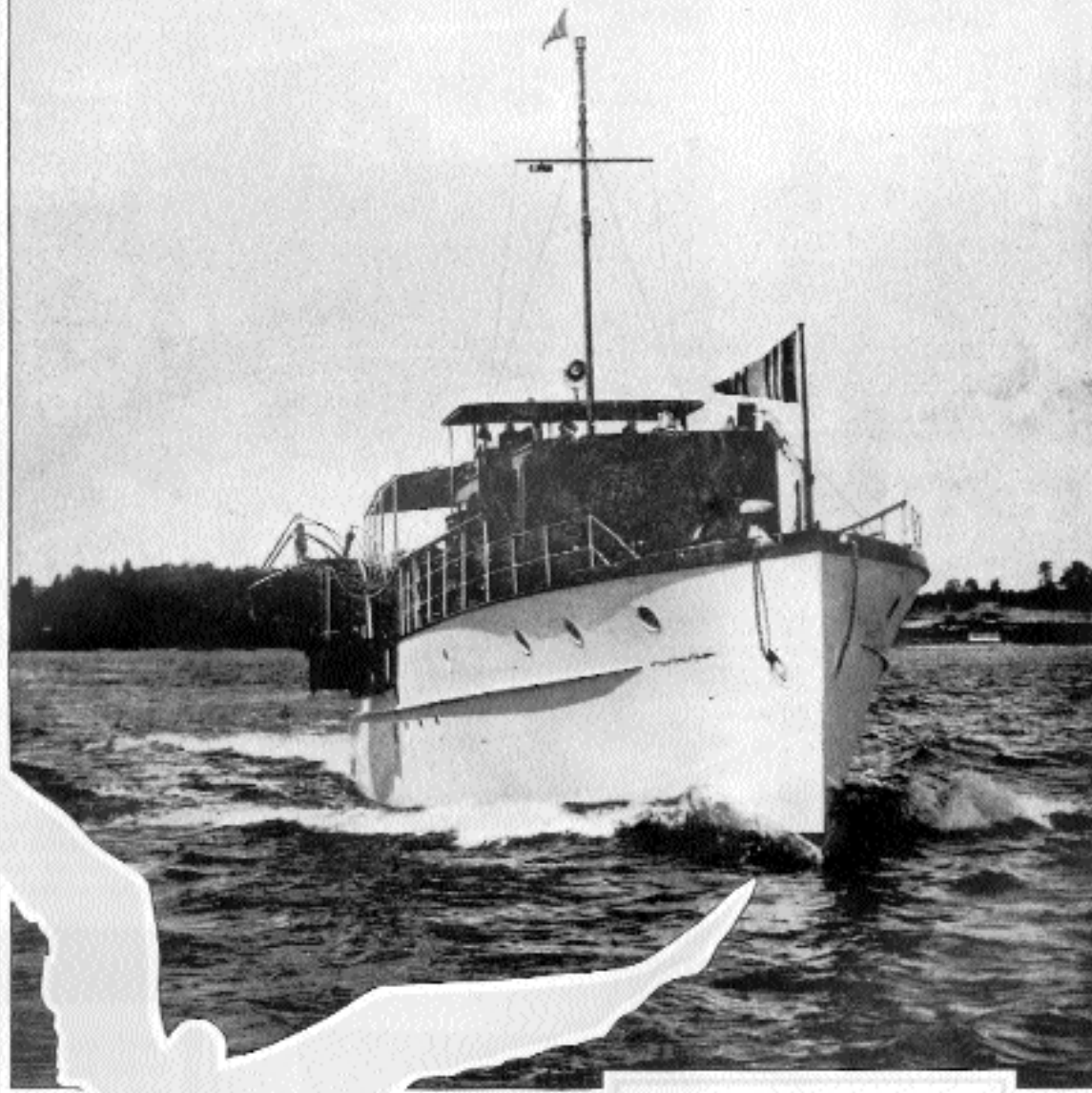
Duchess. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam zu mnonnumy ei ipsum.

The *Toronto Star Weekly* in January, 1928, carried a two-page tribute written by its famous feature writer, Gregory Clark, tracing the astounding success of the small-town company, now the most potent force in Canadian boat building, and profiling the driving force behind its success. “He is reserved, even shy. He has a navy look—short, ruddy-faced and blue-eyed. He stands alone. His great enterprise is all his own. His original shop at Muskoka Wharf is vastly enlarged. He has built a subsidiary plant at Orillia so that his larger vessels such as the hundred foot cruisers can have access to the sea via the Trent Canal. He will do this coming year \$300,000 business, one cruiser alone to cost \$60,000.”

The *Star Weekly* story ended, “It is a story of success from the start, and so much of the success consists of something born in the blood and the breed, something instinctive and unteachable, like the ability to sing supremely—the gift of making planks and metal blossom into ships.”



# DITCHBURN



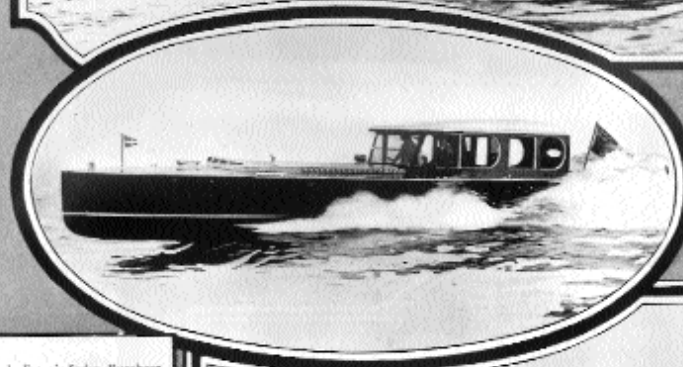
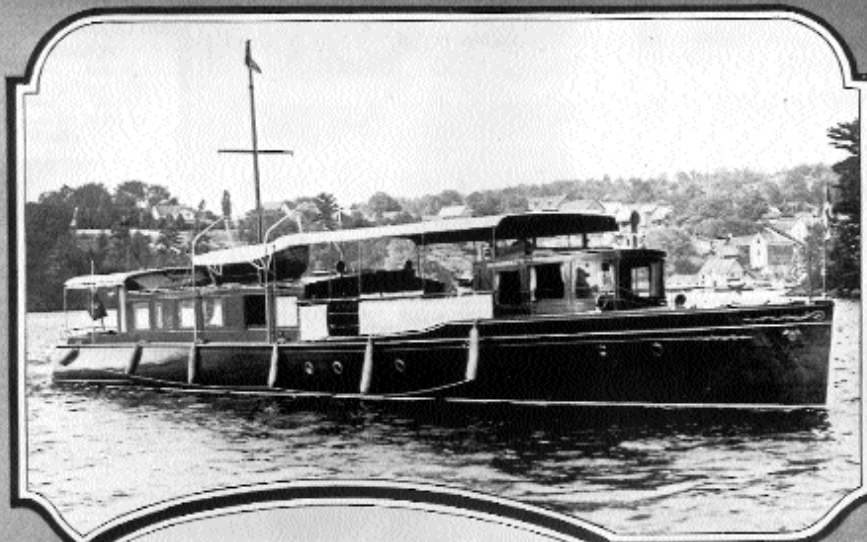
70' x 14' Cruiser built for John C. Hageman of New York, for use on Long Island Sound.

## Ditchburn Boats Catalogue

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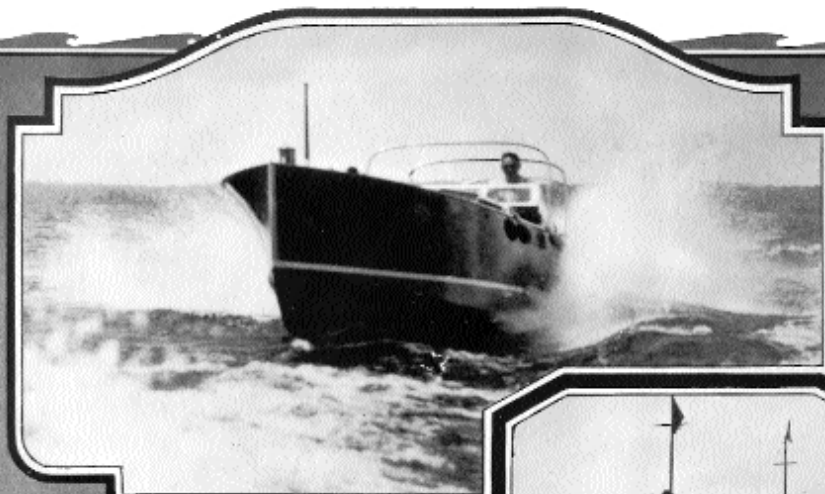
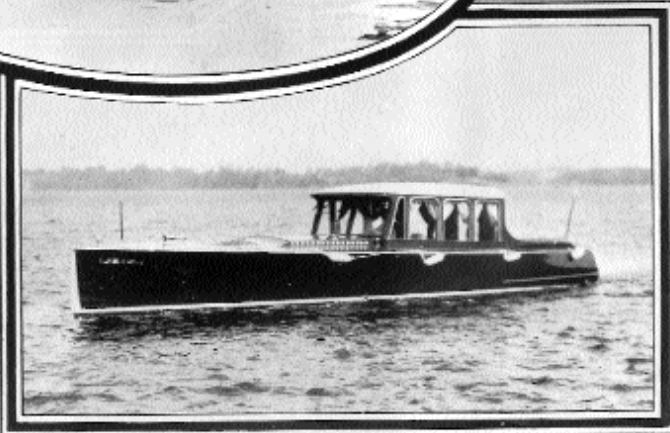
# CUSTOM BUILT BOATS



73' x 15' Day Express Cruiser built for Lady Eaton of Toronto, used at her Muskoka summer home.

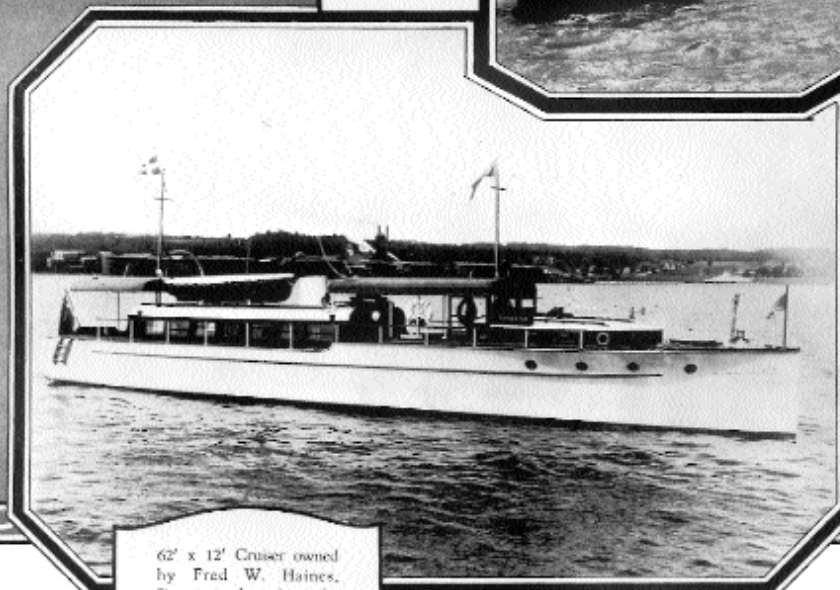
Lady Eaton's Sedan Runabout "DOLLY DURKIN," 38' x 7'6" with 500 h.p. motor, making 35 miles per hour.

A Special Sedan Runabout built of East India Vermilion Wood for Mr. George McLaughlin of Oshawa, Ont.



Walter Cole's Fast Runabout Ben-Hur powered with 200 h.p. Sterling motor.

62' x 12' Cruiser owned by Fred W. Haines, Detroit, and used on the Great Lakes.

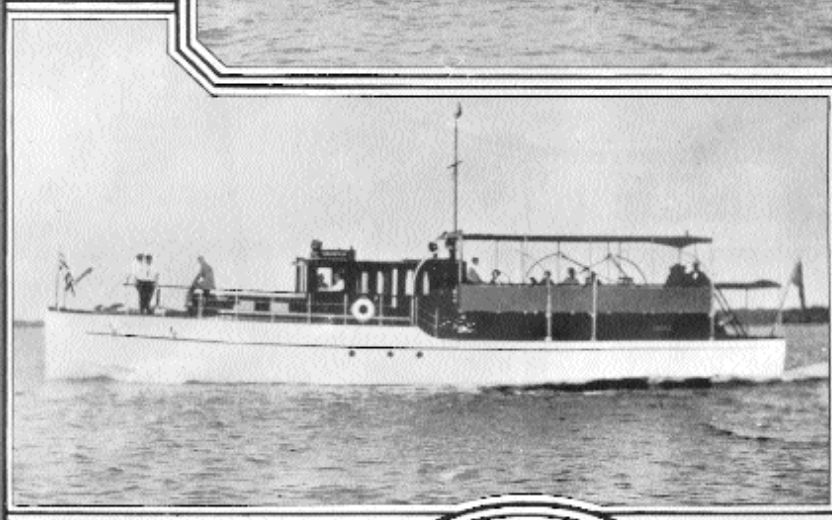
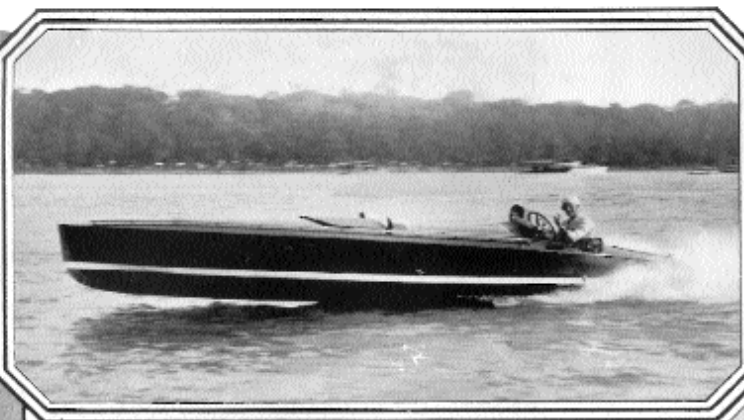


62' x 12' Cruiser owned by Fred W. Haines, Detroit, and used on the Great Lakes.

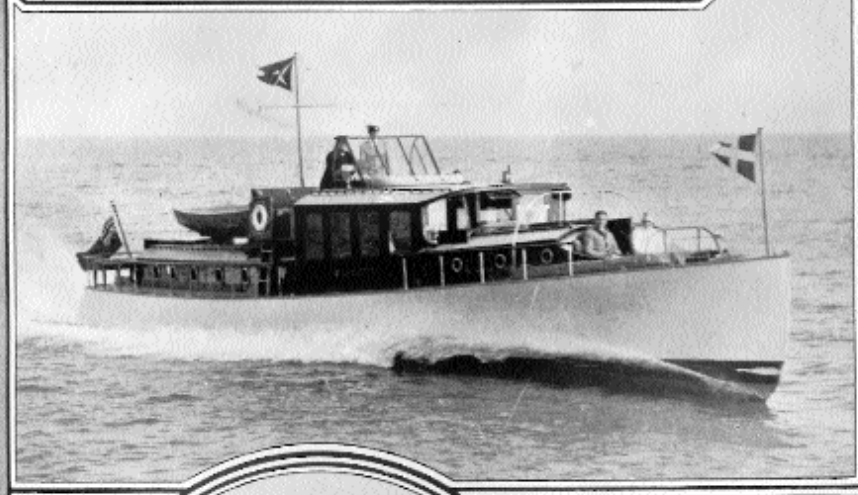
Rainbow IV.  
Winner American  
Gold Cup Race 1924.  
Holder of World's  
record for 24 hr. run  
1218 miles.



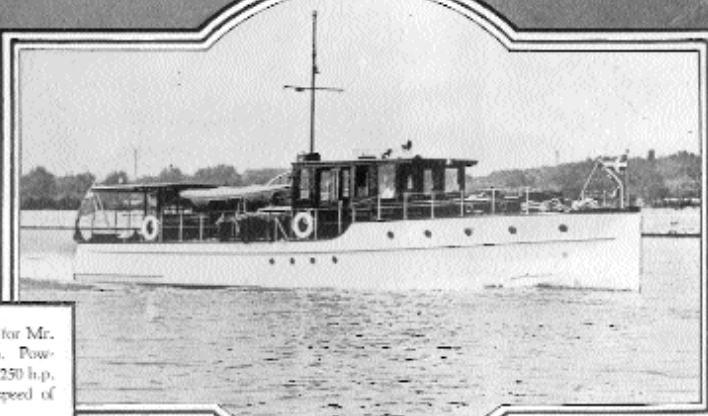
Mr. H. B. Green-  
ing's Rainbow III.  
Fastest boat in  
America Gold Cup  
Race 1923. Broke  
world's record for  
24 hour run in  
year now called  
Falm Beach Days  
and named race  
more than any  
other boat in  
America.



66' x 12' Twin  
Screw Cruiser  
built for P. D.  
Saylor, New  
York, President of  
Canada Dry  
Ginger Ale Co.



56' x 11' Fast Day  
Cruiser, built for Mr.  
J. Shonemaker, of  
Cobourg, Ont. This  
boat is powered with  
two 300 h.p. motors  
and makes 30 m.p.h.  
This splendid racing  
cruiser.



65' x 13' Cruiser built for Mr.  
Harry Hatch of Toronto. Pow-  
ered with two Sterling 250 h.p.  
motors this boat has a speed of  
21 m.p.h.

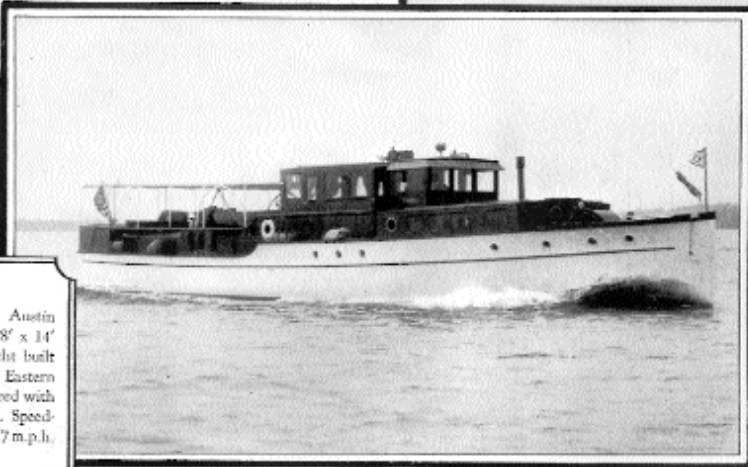


Dr. Geo. Cooper's 34' x  
9' Cruiser a very suc-  
cessful standardized  
model.

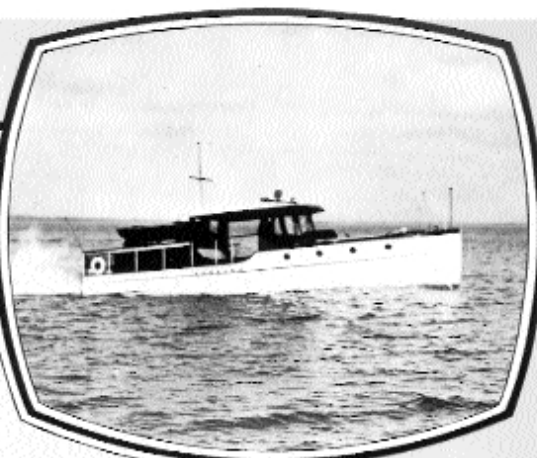


Mr. J. H. Hewison of Brampton,  
42' Cruiser used on Georgian Bay.

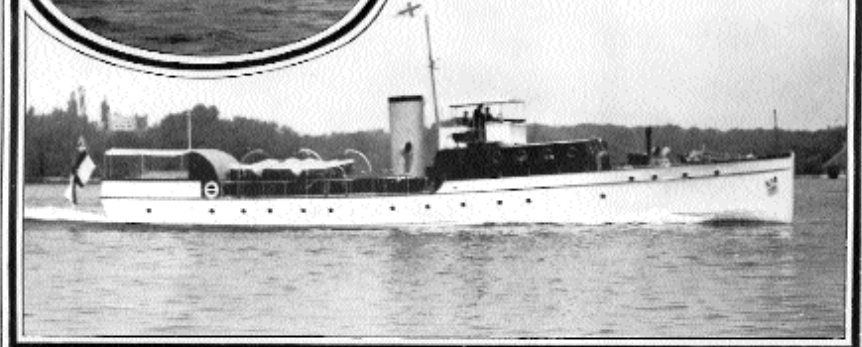
"Nayada" a Class R, Racer  
built for Royal Canadian  
Yacht Club Syndicate.  
Winner of George Cup  
and many other champion-  
ship races.



Commodore Austin  
H. Perry's 78' x 14'  
Seagoing Yacht built  
for use on Eastern  
seaboard. Speed with  
two 150 h.p. Speed-  
way motors 17 m.p.h.



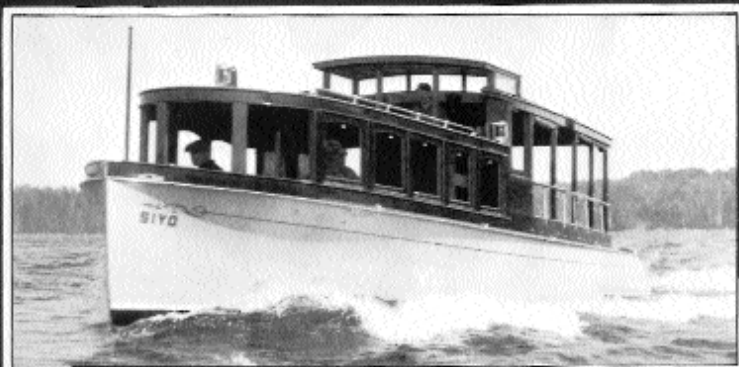
Yacht "GANNET" plough-  
ing through waters of the  
Atlantic.



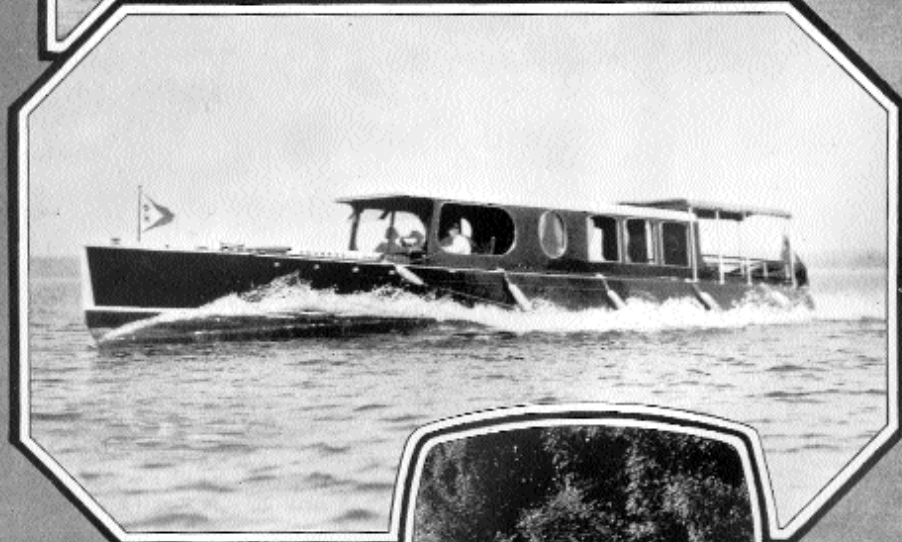
Yacht "GANNET" built for  
Commander J. K. L. Ross, Mon-  
treal, 100' x 19' powered with  
two 150 h.p. Diesel engines.

"Canadian Customs Patrol Boat  
"BEHAVE," one of a fleet of  
six developed for duty on the  
rough waters of the Atlantic  
Coast. Armed with machine  
guns and with full load and  
equipment these boats travel at  
33 m.p.h. with 300 h.p.





45' x 10' Special Day Cruiser built for the Hon. Wallace Nesbitt for use on Georgian Bay waters.

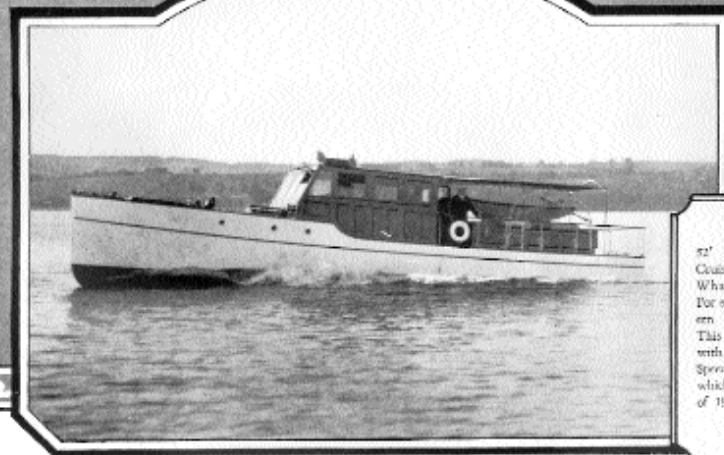


45' x 9' Day Cruiser, built for J. J. Grafton. Speed 21 miles, with 280 h.p. Sterling.

Robt. H. Combs Speedy 31 foot Mahogany Runabout.



65' x 14' Auxiliary Schooner Yacht built for Norman Gooderham of Toronto. Winner of many Great Lakes Trophies.

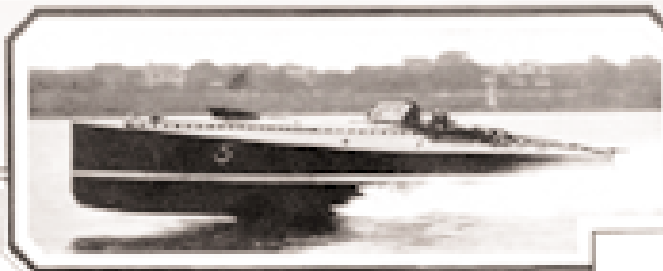


52' x 11' Express Cruiser, built for Wharton Stockler. For service in Northern Maine waters. This boat is powered with two 150 h.p. Speedway motors which give a speed of 19 miles per hour.



40' x 12' — Bridge deck 14"  
Seven Engine Outboard, built  
for Harry B. Gossing.

*Sailing the Haven of Happiness,  
Where's Boats of Welcome Gleams,  
Down the Seas of the Canaries,  
Man Sails the Ship of his Dreams.*



Rainbow II, a  
world record  
holder photo  
graph taken at  
10 mph.

This boat  
powered with  
200 h.p. high  
speed light  
weight motor.  
Makes 52  
mph.



47' x 12' powered with 150 h.p.  
Four-cylinder built for Mr. Fred  
Smith, a Member, Port Commission  
of West St. Lawrence Yacht Club.



Mr. H. A.  
Brown's 47' x  
12' Outboard  
powered with  
two 100 h.p.  
Kumiko motors.



Rainbow I, owned by Seymour Egan of  
Buffalo. Three winner of Fisher Gold  
Cup Race.



40' x 12' Rainbow, built for  
Mrs. William Underwood,  
New York. Spans 10 miles  
with one 100 h.p. Wauquie.

40' x 12' Outboard built for Mrs.  
J. J. Buchanan, Toronto. An  
owner three in Lake Huron.

