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## Bay City, Michigan - 1908

### **The Home of the Speed Boat**

At Bay City they not only make boats and engines but race them, too  
On the day of a motor boat race, excitement in the Michigan lake port is at fever heat  
Sailboats fitted with engines are also popular

#### **Plans for next season**

A number of new power craft are being built and several of them promise to be record  
breakers

*General, Wonder, Arrow and Buzz Saw will make great racing*

by Glenn L. Hiller

Few rivers or harbors on the Great Lakes present such natural advantages for motor boating and sailing as Saginaw River and Saginaw bay, with Bay City, Mich., conveniently located near the mouth of the river and numerous summer resorts lining the shores of the bay for miles.

Yachting has been the legitimate sport of Bay City pleasure seekers for many years past, and few cities of sixty thousand inhabitants can boast of as many boats with "kickers" as can the "Queen City of Lake Huron," with its three hundred motor boats.

Conveniently located, numerous boat-building concerns have established a growing business, justly giving Bay City its well-earned title of "The home of the boat pattern business." A dozen firms are now sending boat patterns, knock-down frames, besides complete boats, to all points of the globe. They are also able to fit the boats ready for shipment with a local engine, which has demonstrated its ability in many of the fast boats and which has a well-established reputation.

In close proximity to the extensive pine and oak forests which supply the principal woods for launch making, Bay City is destined to become one of the leading boat manufacturing cities of the world. The sport is being furthered and kept up by the earnest efforts of the members of the Bay City Boat Club, an organization composed of about two hundred and fifty members, with a beautiful club house on the Saginaw River, but a short distance from the bay and at one end of the city. For many years the Club has advanced the sport, and interest has always been at fever heat regarding yachting, the races, its hardships and its pleasures.

Besides being enthusiastic sailors, the majority of the club members have become owners of launches, cruising yachts, hunting cabin cruisers, and last but not least, speed boats of no mean ability, whose demonstrations have set their mark well towards the records and performances of top-notchers. Interested in speed boats, the Club and other associations of the like kind claim the distinction of having promoters of the sport whose efforts have thus far been so successful that with the summer season again approaching, interest has so far been promoted that a large fleet of racing boats will be in evidence for 1908 honors. Hidden away up in one corner of the map, few realize the fact that Bay City is producing some of the

fastest motor boats that ever contested for records, and when the warm sun again shines on the waters of Saginaw Bay, some of them at least will demand attention from record breakers in other locations.

*Arrow*, the 26 miles an hour flyer, winner of the Put-In-Bay Regatta, will again be entered against all comers. Several minor changes will be made during the winter that may possibly increase the already high speed which it has attained. *Secret*, its old rival for speed honors, has been sold to Indiana parties, who will use her to conquer other foes on Lake Michigan. A new engine was installed prior to shipment. It is of the same make and horsepower as the former engine that drove her to many victories, so that there is little probability of the boat doing much better than her record of the middle of the summer--making a mile in 2 minutes and 18 seconds.

*Wonder*, a new model and different from the rest, will be launched in the spring. The boat is built of steel plates, one-sixteenth of an inch in thickness, and though the boat is 27 feet in length and 3 feet 6 inches beam, its total weight is but 420 pounds. Satisfied that their ideas (which, by the way, were original) were correct and that great speed could be attained by a boat built after this fashion, the builders first constructed a rough model, without even taking the pains to smooth out the lines (so eager were they to give the boat a trial). It was completed and equipped with the old *Secret* engine, a 15 to 20 horsepower affair that has suffered two years wear and has been sunk several times. Even at this disadvantage, the result were more than equal to the builders' expectations, the boat making a mile in 2:19.

After a careful series of trials, this time was the fastest made, but it incited the builders to construct more carefully another steel boat of the same model, but with better lines, construction and finish. The boat will not be completed ready for the water till the first part of next season, but will be one of the first boats for use this spring and will be equipped with the same type of engine that drives *Arrow*, *Secret* and others.

What lovers of the racing game declare is the record breaker, was driven over a mile course, November 24th, at a remarkable time of 2 minutes and four seconds, which figured out at a speed of 29½ miles an hour. This boat is named *General* and is 39 feet in length, the beam being 4 feet 3 inches. Its trial had been looked forward to by sportsmen for many months, and the speed developed gives her beyond question the title of the fastest boat on the Lakes and with a few exceptions, the world's championship for boats under 40 feet in length. It has been under construction for the past eight months, the builder, George Miskin, sparing no expense or pains in finishing the boat. Every detail was given his personal attention, and when the boat was finally ready for the water it was conceded to be the best-constructed boat ever built in this locality. The boat is of peculiar model, being totally different from any of the others. The beam measurement is taken at the stern, and from this point forward the hull gradually tapers to the bow, wedge shape. Many original ideas are wrapped up in *General*. The wide construction of the stern renders it impossible to overturn the boat. From the stern forward, for a distance of twelve feet, the boat merely rests on the water, even though a tank holding fifty gallons of gasoline is placed therein with the calculation of raising the bow out of water to a certain extent, leaving only about twenty feet in the forward center of the boat that draws any water to speak of. The hull is of clear selected white pine, the interior is of red cedar, and the finishing in oak. Copper nails and screws are used entirely in the hull. The double construction of the hull renders it possible to install almost any weight of engine with safety. The hull weighs but 520 pounds.

The interior is divided into four cockpits. The first or forward cockpit contains the engine. The second is occupied by the engineer, the third for the helmsman, who handles the boat by an automobile steering device, and the stern pit is for passengers, of whom the space permits

three or four. The boat is painted with copper bronze. The engine has six cylinders, forty to sixty horsepower, and in many respects is different from any engine yet constructed. a peculiar feature of the engine is, that it requires but a light and very small flywheel, and, in fact, on the testing stand ran like a sewing machine with the flywheel detached, and, with the wheel attached, turned up a 17-inch Key West propeller 1,650 revolutions per minute. it develops its horsepower at 600 to 900 revolutions per minute. Installed in *General*, the flywheel is but fourteen inches in diameter and weighs less than four pounds and is made almost entirely of aluminum. The six cylinders are strapped together by strips of steel to avoid shaking. The base is of aluminum. The stroke and bore are 4½ inches.

The simplicity with which the boat is handled is one of the best features. A steel standard is placed aft of the engine, in the second cockpit of the boat. Here the engineer controls the whole engine, the timer being conveniently placed thereon, also an oiling device, from which individual tiny brass tubes lead to all parts of the engine, and as no grease is used whatever, the exterior of the engine is always in a cleanly condition. Three electric push buttons are placed on the standard. No. 1 works cylinders 1 and 4, No. 2, cylinders 2 and 5, and No. 3, cylinders 3 and 6. No matter where the crank stops, one of the three buttons will start the engine without the customary trouble of using a crank.

The wonderful speed attained, that of 29½ miles an hour, was only what enthusiasts predicted of the *General*, some prophesying a speed of 35 to 40 miles an hour. More than 30 miles an hour is expected of the boat, as several changes have been found necessary before she will be perfect. When this record was made, the engine was somewhat stiff, being new, and proper adjustment of the carburetors was out of the question because of the coldness of the weather. E. R. Walker of Detroit has entered *General* in the races at Palm beach, Fla., which start February 21st. There the boat will buck up against some of the fastest boats in the world and will have an opportunity to show what is in her. Mr. Walker is the owner of several fast boats, some of them of the *Secret* design.

Another 1908 "speeder," *Mystery*, will be a contestant for speed honors among the others. This is the smallest boat of the racers, being but 26 feet long, with a 3-foot beam. A 20 horsepower Ferro engine furnished the power. Chas. Trudell, former owner and builder of *Secret*, promises to turn out another flyer after the *Secret* model, but with many changes for the better. During the past season he has built and distributed ten *Secret* hulls to sportsmen on the Great Lakes, Hudson River and the South.

Henry and Joseph Fournica are working on a boat of one-sixteenth of an inch steel plates that will be the exact duplicate of C. L. Seabury's *Speedway*, with the exception of the material of which the hull is constructed. A 60 horsepower six-cylinder two-cycle engine will be installed. Few, if any, speed boats of any note in the West are equipped with four-cycle engines, which seem to be the favorite in the East. Several others are constructing steel boats, the accomplishments of *Wonder* encouraging them to own boats built of the same material, which is stronger and lighter than wood.

All in all, regatta officials will have all the racing entries they want for next season if bay City is not overlooked. Every owner of the fast boats has promised to enter the big regattas.

Yachtsmen are planning to include another regatta in the string of events that follow each other so closely throughout the summer, with Wenona beach, Saginaw Bay, as the objective point, either preceding or immediately following the Tawas Beach event.