



# American Powerboats: The Great Lakes Golden Years

*James P. Barry*

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This look back at the great boatbuilders that sprung up on the shores of the Great Lakes stretches from the first use of internal combustion for marine applications in the late nineteenth century to the early-1960s, when wooden construction was increasingly replaced by fiberglass and aluminum, and on to the early 1980s. More than covering lovely mahogany runabouts, this work also includes chapters on racers and cruisers/commuters. In addition to familiar names like Chris-Craft, Hacker, Century, and Lyman, there are also less frequently covered boats from names like Richards, Matthews, Burger, and Tiara. The final chapters explore the use of non-wood materials. Detroit was the epicenter of early-20th century boat-makers using engines from the nation's nascent automotive industry. Boat-makers, however, did not cluster as tightly around that city as did auto manufacturers; they were found from the Thousand Islands of Lake Ontario to Chicago and Duluth. Despite this regionalism the Great Lakes builders, more than any others, influenced the entire world's powerboating community.

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