

CHAPTER ONE

Beginnings, 1865–95

Introduction

There they are in many of the earliest paintings of Michigan lake and river scenes—small boats scurrying around larger ships, out fishing, or even taking their passengers for leisurely cruises. For the most part, they are anonymous, perhaps drawn in by the artist mostly to make his or her scene come alive. Nevertheless these representations show a presence on Michigan waters that very likely existed in real life, by the hundreds at first and by the thousands just a century later.

In the book *Frontier Metropolis*, Brian Leigh Dunnigan has collected scenes and maps of early Detroit, and the number of small boats in the paintings is larger than one might have thought possible for the time.¹ Certainly the rest of the state's infant villages had similar fleets of small craft plying their waterways. Many of the earliest Michigan boat builders were anonymous or assembled their boats as part of another job as a soldier or fisherman. Still, the products of their efforts capture the imagination. Who were these people, and where did they acquire their skills? Where did they come from? Who were their customers?

Workboats

The origins of recreational boating cannot be accurately determined. It probably dates back to an occasion when two fishermen decided to end their workday early and take a leisurely cruise back home. In the early and mid-nineteenth century, workboats served a variety of industries such as

Great Lakes shipping, the fur trade, commercial fishing, and lumbering, and in its infancy recreational boating emerged out of this world. As the need for boats built specifically for pleasure increased, the recreational boat industry evolved, slowly overtaking the building of workboats and eventually becoming one of the significant manufacturing industries in the state.

Native American canoes, the earliest small craft built in Michigan, existed long before the fur trade and the military establishment that sustained it for the Europeans. Birchbark canoes carried loads of furs and trade goods between the western collection points on the Great Lakes and Montreal. Already a large business by the end of the fur trade era, multiple generations of families engaged in building the craft, continuing the specialties and skills learned since time immemorial. Canoes of the fur trade era were refined to a number of standardized types based on where and how they were used. Some had high ends for handling the large swells of open-water lakes and rapids. For river work others featured low sides so as not to snag overhanging tree branches.² Timothy J. Kent, in *Birchbark Canoes of the Fur Trade*, notes that all the major settlement sites in Michigan shared by Europeans and Native Americans, such as Michilimackinac, Fort Pontchartrain (later Detroit), Fort St. Joseph, and others, served as Native American canoe production centers for trading with the French. Jacques Sabrevois de Bleury, the commandant of Fort Pontchartrain between 1714 and 1717, referring to the villages established nearby by the Hurons, Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Potawatomes, noted, "All these nations make a great many bark canoes, which Are very profitable for Them. They do this Sort of work in the summer. The women sew these canoes with Roots, the men cut and shape the bark and make the gunwales, cross-pieces and ribs; the women gum Them. It is no small labor to make a canoe, in which there is much symmetry and measurement; and it is a curious sight."³

Europeans brought the bateau to the region, a flat-bottomed, double-end craft with longitudinal planking, similar to a dory, commonly used for hauling cargo. French versions tended to be more heavily built, while British ones were slightly larger. Generally the French name applied to all varieties of the craft of the type.⁴ One interesting type of boat merged both New World and Old World designs. Unique lapstrake canoes, presumably constructed by Native Americans in the St. Marys River, were used both for fishing and for taking tourists on a run through the river's rapids in the early twentieth century.

Michigan's Vernacular Watercraft

Mackinaw boats evolved as a unique regional type of small craft used for commerce, primarily in commercial fishing, but also for general transportation on the Great Lakes. James W. Milner, in his report to the U.S. Fish Commission on commercial fishing on the Great Lakes in 1871-72, described the Mackinaw boat.

The famous "Mackinaw" of the lakes has bow and stern sharp, a great deal of sheer, the greatest beam forward of amidships and tapers with little curve to the stern. She is either schooner-rig, or with a lug-sail forward, is fairly fast, the greatest surf-boat known, and with an experienced boatman will ride out any storm, or, if necessary, beach with greater safety than any other boat. She is comparatively dry, and her sharp stern prevents the shipment of water aft, when running with the sea. They have been longer and more extensively used on the upper lakes than any other boats, and with less loss of life or accident . . .⁵

Based on the design of the Drontheim boats of Northern Ireland, in turn derived from Norwegian craft, these ubiquitous marine versions of pickup trucks of the nineteenth century in the Great Lakes region hauled cargoes and delivered passengers from place to place. The Mackinaw boat's double-end design made it an excellent compromise of sturdy construction, cargo capacity, and maneuverability for the Lakes.

One of the earlier builders of Mackinaw boats, Hyacinthe Chenier of St. Ignace, listed his occupation as boat builder in the 1850 U.S. Census, one of the few individuals to identify himself in the profession.⁶ Jesse Wells Church, of Sugar Island near Sault Ste. Marie in the St. Marys River, likewise built several of the Mackinaw boats in the mid-nineteenth century.⁷ Roy Ranger of Charlevoix, credited as being the last of the Mackinaw builders, began building Mackinaw boats in the 1890s and continued the tradition of producing these amazingly seaworthy craft until shortly after World War I.⁸

Another important form of transportation crucial to the settlement of the state's interior consisted of the first crude pole boats on the inland rivers, quickly followed by river steamers.

Michigan's impressive population surge, encouraged by inexpensive,



Fig. 2. Mackinaw boats at Leland, Michigan. The Mackinaw boat earned a good reputation as a workboat in commercial fishing and general cargo carrying in the Great Lakes region, paving the way for the recreational watercraft of the future. (Historical Collections of the Great Lakes, Bowling Green State University.)

readily available land for sale to encourage settlement, lured over 212,000 people to the state by 1840. The southern tiers of counties filled first, as well as lakeshore communities near the river mouths. Pole boats carried people and their possessions upstream into the south-central areas of the state and hauled their harvested crops and goods back to the river port villages. Literally propelled by pushing long poles against the river bottom, pole boats such as the *Young Napoleon* and the *Davy Crockett* made early commerce possible in the state's interior.⁹

Steamboats plied the rivers to carry on the business as soon as steam engines became available, quickly replacing the pole boats. Sandbars and snags challenged all river navigators, and passengers occasionally were called upon to help pull the boats off the obstacles. Plans for canals to be dug across the southern tiers of counties to avoid the long trip by lake around the Lower Peninsula were proposed early in the settlement era, with stock companies formed to build them. All quickly came to a halt with

the financial Panic of 1837. On the proposed 216-mile Clinton-Kalamazoo Canal, intended to connect Lake St. Clair and Lake Michigan, workers only excavated 12 miles before the money ran out, and the completed portion quickly fell into disrepair.¹⁰

Michigan's burgeoning lumber industry also required large numbers of boats, ranging from crude homemade dugouts to large steam-driven tugs, to move logs on the rivers and lakes. Although the builders of the smaller boats are seldom identified, these boats played an important role in transporting the logs to sawmills and working around the sorting booms at their destinations.

Creating the Market

Many separate trends and contributing factors led to the emergence of the recreational boat-building industry after the Civil War. Increased amounts of leisure time and wealth, the growth of rowing and yachting as competitive sports, the creation of the resorts with hunting and fishing opportunities, and advances in marketing and advertising all played important roles in the transition of the industry from strictly building workboats to building recreational watercraft.

Finding the Time: The Emergence of Leisure

In the 1860s and 1870s, boat builders began to find a few new customers with sufficient time and money to devote to recreational boating. When the twelve-hour workday started to give way to the ten-hour day, workers found more time for recreation. Donna R. Braden, in *Leisure and Entertainment in America*, suggests that leisure time was linked directly to growing industrialization and the need to balance it with time off.

- For centuries, leisure was primarily identified with a "leisured" class, a group free of any obligation to work. The changed meaning of leisure to relate to everyone rather than to a privileged few is integrally connected with economic, technological, and social changes; above all, it relates to changes in the nature of work and the workplace.
- In America this shift was set in motion in the 19th century with urbanization and industrialization. As rapid technological innovation and the spread of the factory system made workers' tasks more routine, they tried to find new forms of relief from the monotony of re-

petitive work. Inherent in the factory system was a strict adherence to the clock. By the mid-19th century, the intrusion of “clock time” separated “work” from “not work” more clearly than ever before.

- Mechanization, the more efficient use of time, and the growing demand for better working conditions eventually led to the reduction of hours in the workday and workweek . . . By the end of the 19th century, social reformers of the Progressive era, building on earlier attempts to breach the stern Calvinist work ethic, were trying to persuade Americans of the value—indeed the necessity—of leisure time. They recommended this as the way for workers to renew their physical energy, attain mental health, and solidify family relationships.¹¹

Increased Wealth

The boat-building industry grew substantially because new customers with better paying jobs also had the money to afford the boats. Most of the larger boats built for recreational purposes could only be purchased by salaried professionals, managers, or owners of companies. Occasionally a group of men would join together to invest in a yacht on which they would share the expenses. Working-class laborers saw increases in their wages to over a \$1.50 a day by the late nineteenth century, not enough to buy much more than a rowboat but enough to rent a boat from a livery on occasion for a fishing trip or sailing excursion. For skilled trades, even \$2.50 or more a day was feasible, but unless their skill sets included the necessary talents to build their own boats, the chance of owning one outright remained marginal.

By the 1880s and 1890s, a small skiff or rowboat might retail for about \$15 to \$35, or well over half of a workingman's monthly wages depending on the amount of decorative woods, finishes, and hardware desired. A fast sailing sloop could run from \$800 to \$1,500, a steam launch about \$3,500. The 135-foot wooden steam yacht *Sigma*, built by John Craig of Trenton, cost owner Martin Smith about \$45,000 when it was built in 1883.¹² An elegant steel steam yacht such as Merrill B. Mills's *Cynthia*, built in 1895 by the Detroit Boat Works at a cost of \$70,000, represented the high end of recreational yachts built in the state in the late nineteenth century.

The Growth of Resorts

For a growing number of people in the middle class, the number of forms of recreation began to increase, and many found solace in the great out-

doors. For decades businessmen traveled to the far reaches of the state and discovered the wonders of the natural environment. Looking for ways to merge their business with pleasure, they would frequently do a little exploring at nearby natural attractions and points of interest. Artists and writers soon followed, describing the beauties of their surroundings in widely read journals and books, which in turn led to further travel to the places mentioned.

As the cities grew and industries supporting them flourished, the desire to get away from the crowds and noise, the foul smoke of the factories, and disease in the big cities to a place of relaxation and quiet led to a seasonal migration to the great outdoors. Michigan offered scenic beauty, with beaches on the Great Lakes, quiet inland lakeshores, mountains in the Upper Peninsula, rivers and streams, and abundant opportunities for hiking, hunting, and fishing. Sailing ships, passenger steamers, and railroads conveyed the tourists to their destinations. The middle-class residents followed in the footsteps of the wealthy when they could. Working-class families forced to stay closer to home because of the costs of travel or lack of time found recreational resources nearby, such as picnic groves on a lakeshore, an island, or a park setting, appealing. A family outing to a nearby scenic location served as enough of a change of pace in the daily routine to make the experience valuable for a small sum of money.

By 1880 railroad trunk and connecting lines crisscrossed in a slowly sprawling web in the Lower Peninsula below a line connecting Saginaw and Ludington. Two railroads under construction raced northward to the Straits of Mackinac, the Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad, known as "The Fishing Line," and the Michigan Central, both arriving at the Straits in 1881-82.¹³ The Detroit & Mackinac, "The Turtle Line," traversed the Lake Huron shore by the mid-1890s. The now familiar patterns of Chicago area residents flooding northward in summer up the west shore and Ohio and Indiana residents joining Detroiters to head up the east and central routes by boat or train were well-established by the 1890s. As the railroads spread their steel tentacles across the state, they launched impressive marketing campaigns to encourage passenger traffic. In their literature they stressed the outstanding natural beauty of the region and the health benefits of visiting the resorts. The railroads connected with Great Lakes passenger steamer lines to help the travelers get to their preferred vacation spots.

In their symbiotic relationship, railroads, resorts, and boat builders all fed on the desire of the traveler to visit the great outdoors. The railroads needed new and larger markets to support their growing passenger traf-

fic and complement their freight trade. The resort owners and developers provided the destinations for the railroads in the form of hotels and amusement parks, and the boat builders provided part of the entertainment needed to keep the tourists at the resorts by supplying watercraft for fishing, hunting, or pleasure boating. A leisurely day on a lake or river made for a good deal of repeat visitation, which in turn kept the resort owners and railroads in business.

The resorts provided boat builders with the opportunity to prosper in smaller communities. In many late nineteenth-century photographs showing a resort, one can see a small fleet of skiffs and sailboats tied to the dock, most presumably made by a local builder or purchased from one of the larger factories. Sometimes a builder would associate with a particular hotel or resort, either as the local boat livery operator or as the owner or manager of the resort who built boats during the off-season.

Gone Fishing and Hunting

The growing numbers of waterfowl hunters and sport fishermen gathering at the resorts and sportsmen's clubs along the Great Lakes, inland lakes, and rivers needed specialized watercraft for their particular interests, and a cottage industry grew to fill that need. Christopher Columbus Smith and his brother Henry Smith of Algonac worked as boat builders, fishing guides, and market hunters to serve the boating needs of the resorts along the lower St. Clair River, with Chris later settling down to operate a boat-house and livery.¹⁴ Nate Quillen, a guide and boat builder at the Pointe Mouillee Shooting Club, built shallow draft punt boats and monitor boats for navigating the estuary waters of Lake Erie where the Huron River flows in. Guides used his long, narrow punt boats to set out the decoys and floating blinds and to assist the hunters in retrieving their catch. Quillen's monitor boats were custom made to the size and weight of the individual club members. He carefully selected tamarack stumps to carve into frames and clear white pine for planking his boats.¹⁵

Specialized boats for inland river fishing also emerged such as the Au Sable River boats, a type of guide boat indigenous to Michigan, used for trout fishing. A long, double-end drift boat with a rockered flat bottom, the boats are propelled by poles and the river current while chains of different weights are dragged behind the boat to control the speed. Thaddeus Norris described an early example in *Scribner's Monthly* in 1879:

The boat used on my first trip is worth description. It was built of white pine; bottom, 1 inch thick; sides, 5/8; 16 feet long, 2.10 wide on top, 2.4 at bottom, and with a sheer of three inches on each side. The bottom was nearly level for eight feet in the center, with a sheer of five inches to the bow and seven inches to stern. The live-box was six feet from bow, extending back two feet. The sides were nailed to the bottom. Its weight was eighty pounds, and it carried two men—the angler and the pusher—with 200 pounds of luggage. With two coats of paint it cost about fifteen dollars. The angler sits on the moveable cover of the live-box, which is water-tight from other portions of the boat, and has holes bored in sides and bottom to admit of the circulation of the water to keep the fish alive, and as he captures his fish he slips them into holes on the right and left sides. An ax was always taken along to clear the river of fallen logs and sweepers.¹⁶

One of the earlier known Au Sable boat builders, Edwin D. Alger, was born in 1830 in New York, the son of David Alger and Merilla Brown Alger. The family may have moved to Oakland County, at Algerville, now Holly, Michigan. During the Civil War, Alger served in the Twenty-Sixth Michigan Infantry. After his discharge from the army, he worked as a carpenter in Cohoctah. He moved north to Crawford County in 1881, living in the vicinity of Burton's Landing, building boats for fishermen and their guides.¹⁷ He passed his knowledge on building the boats to Arthur E. Wakeley, who started building boats in about 1900. Alger moved to Bay City in 1908, where he died in 1914.¹⁸ The Peter Stephan and Reuben Babbitt families built Au Sable boats for several generations in the Grayling area. These boats were often customized to the owner's individual taste with beautifully crafted decks and functional yet decorative elements such as rod holders. These unique boats are still produced to this day by several contemporary builders.

Folding and Collapsible Boats

Hunting and fishing also led to the growth of a regional center for the folding and collapsible boat industry in the Kalamazoo and Battle Creek area that lasted for close to a hundred years. Most of the activity took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The lightweight boats,

made with a waterproofed canvas skin and a collapsible wooden frame stuffed into a box or bag, could be carried by packhorse along with camping gear to remote lakes or streams. While by no means a large industry, the folding canvas boats represent one of the first geographic concentrations in Michigan of a particular type of boat manufacturing. The knock-down boat industry in the Saginaw Valley and the building of mahogany-planked runabouts in the Detroit and St. Clair River districts constituted other concentrations in decades to come.

Nathaniel A. Osgood

A jeweler by trade in Battle Creek, Nathaniel A. Osgood must have appreciated the outdoor sporting life. He invented a folding canvas boat for hunting and fishing, patented on February 26, 1878. The canoe-style boat, a two-seat, 12-foot-long craft with oars located approximately amidships and ribs spaced approximately twelve inches apart, was made in four different weights depending on the user's needs. A version for trout fishing with stretcher, sideboards, and paddle weighed only twenty-five pounds, and the heaviest, a boat equipped with bottom board, sideboards, gunwale, stools, and oars, weighed fifty pounds. Jointed oars and paddles could be packed in a wooden chest with the boat. Osgood set up sewing machines in the back of his jewelry store to stitch the heavy canvas skins.¹⁹

By 1893 Osgood had sold the Osgood Portable Boat Company to Samuel A. Howes, who moved the company to his father's wholesale fruit and coal business on Canal Street. The Osgood Portable Boat Company was acquired and merged into the Michigan Consolidated Boat Company, Ltd., in 1903. Harry P. Lewis, himself of M. M. Lewis & Sons Company, general construction contractors and builders of both the Bullard steel and Osgood canvas boats, managed the firm.²⁰ The Michigan Consolidated Boat Company closed sometime after 1910.

King Folding Canvas Boat Company

A short distance away, in nearby Kalamazoo, Charles W. King developed a folding canvas boat of his own, obtaining the first of several patents for a sectional boat frame in 1882 and later ones for a portable boat. King started his business building the boats in about 1885, working out of his home on Rose Street. He eventually decided to get out of the business, selling out around 1898 to George Winans, a carriage manufacturer. Winans acquired

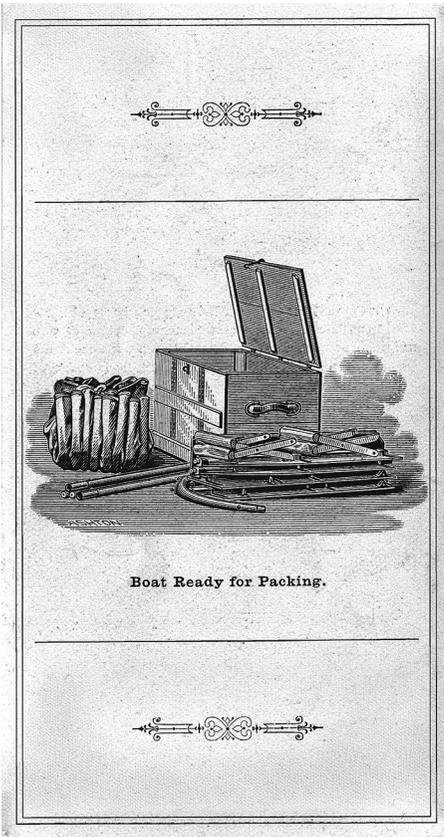
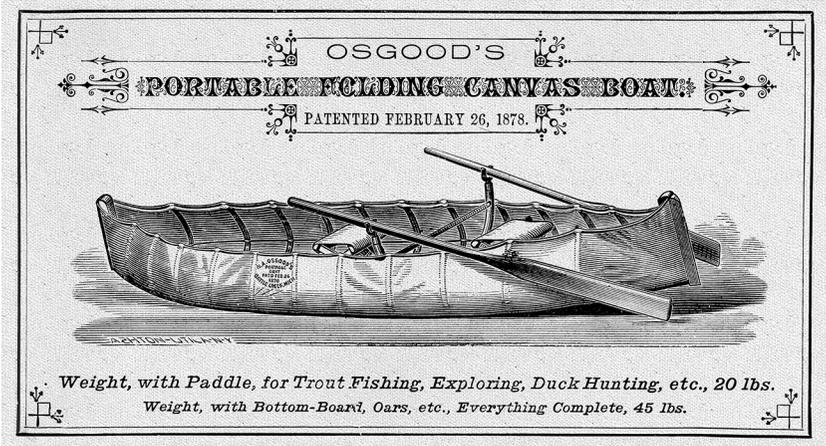


Fig. 3. Nathaniel A. Osgood patented a folding canvas boat in 1878 that could be carried in a box by hunters or fishermen to remote lakes and streams. Other builders in the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo area created similar collapsible boats to form the state's first boat-building niche industry. (Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.)

the patents and construction rights and began producing the boats, keeping the name as the King Folding Canvas Boat Company in Kalamazoo. Winans advertised the company widely in national periodicals such as *Recreation*, *Cosmopolitan*, and others with small runner ads. One early ad promoted three boats used by Lt. Frederick Schwatka for his exploration of the Yukon River in 1891. The Yukon gold rush of the late 1890s popularized the boats as easy-to-assemble, durable but lightweight craft that could provide ready transportation to the mining districts. The boat also received first-prize awards at the Columbian and St. Louis expositions in 1893 and 1904. The King Folding Canvas Boat Company employed ten men in 1898 at an average daily wage of \$1.25. By 1905 the company's workforce consisted of five men and four women, with the women sewing the canvas hulls.²¹ Winans married Pauline S. Peterson, and after his death in 1927 she managed the firm, renaming it the Kalamazoo Canvas Boat Company. The company survived under her guidance for decades afterward, lasting until the 1970s.

Life Saving Folding Canvas Boat Company

The Life Saving Folding Canvas Boat Company, one of the later short-lived folding boat manufacturers, was formed in 1903 and incorporated in Kalamazoo on September 6, 1906. The company built a boat patented by its founder, Ira O. Perring. The craft included air chambers at the bow and stern to keep it afloat even if it was full of water. Perring managed the company at first but was later replaced by John D. Schell, the secretary and treasurer.²² The Life Saving Folding Canvas Boat Company tried hard to set itself apart in the small market, disparaging its unnamed competitors' faulty or inadequate designs and claiming its own as superior. Perring pointed out in the company's catalog some of the faults in the "old time ponderous canvas boats that required a guide to set up or knock down . . ." The catalog went on, "The inventor of our boat with his long experience in manufacturing and selling, thus being in a position to learn all the faults found with the old time boat, which was the bolted keel running through the center of the boat, rising 5 or 6 inches above the rest of the bottom, making the bottom of the boat very rough and unhandy, also the pounding out of bolts in a tensioned keel is very hard and difficult, and the loose bottom boards not having sufficient strength and firmness to give satisfaction to stand and shoot or cast from. Another great fault was the sorting out of cross ribs which made it very difficult in setting up the boat."²³ All the

complaining turned out to be for naught as the Life Saving Folding Canvas Boat Company failed and forfeited its Michigan charter in 1912.²⁴

Rowing and Yachting

Boat and yacht clubs sprang up around Michigan in the late nineteenth century, driven not only by an interest in competitive rowing and sailing but also out of the desire to create social organizations for people of common interests and economic status.

Membership in the yacht and boat clubs gave the builders links to potential new customers and often supplied them with the capital to demonstrate their talents when individual members or small groups wanted a fast boat. The competitive aspect of the clubs judged a boat's performance against that of others, as much testing the work of builder against builder as sailor against sailor. Word-of-mouth advertising of a builder's boats and their performance could reach all over the region. The mostly genial club atmosphere served as an important forum for presenting ideas about design and experimentation with hulls and rigging forms. Occasionally the debates pitted older traditions against new. Captain William J. Partridge, a member and boat builder with the Detroit Yacht Club, protested when the ideas seemed impractical. "Take those plans to a box factory; don't insult a boat builder by asking him to carry them out," he once commented.²⁵

The sport of rowing began in Michigan in the late 1830s and eventually became an essential element in the formation of the boat-building industry in the state. The Detroit Boat Club achieved distinction as the oldest continually active boat club in the nation from the time of its formation in 1839 to the present day.²⁶ A reflection of the positive use of leisure time for the physical improvement of its participants, rowing on a competitive basis caught on gradually throughout the nation. Michigan's wide rivers and inland lakes made it a natural location for the sport to survive and prosper. Regattas pitted club against club in a rich tradition that carries on to this day. Several Michigan boat clubs achieved a bit of special fame in the late nineteenth century. The Sho-wae-cae-mette Boat Club crew of four from Monroe nearly won their event at the Henley Regatta in England in 1878 but failed when Joe Nadeau collapsed because of illness.²⁷ Periodic swells in the popularity of rowing, followed by dormant periods, marked the first half century of the sport. Twenty-one rowing clubs existed in Michigan in 1892, and a number of the early-twentieth-century boat builders in Michigan, such as Carl Schweikart of Detroit and Edward Bryan of Wyandotte,

discovered their interest in constructing watercraft while members of rowing crews for the clubs.²⁸ Lightweight rowing shells evolved, demanding exceptional skill from the boat builder, who had to find the best compromise among minimal weight, structural integrity, and speed.

Competitive sail racing and steam yachting for leisurely cruising also played a significant role in the growth of the boat-building industry.

Competitive sailing was well established and growing as an organized sport in Michigan by the 1880s. Small groups of yachtsmen would bring together sailboats of several different types, rigs, and lengths to compete in any way that seemed fair, sometimes for simple prizes or money. While the activity was still confined primarily to the larger Great Lakes port cities, with their substantial rivers, and inland lake resort communities, the number of boat and yacht clubs statewide grew significantly between 1870 and 1895 to encompass over forty organizations of variable duration. By 1900 most yacht clubs had joined larger regional organizations, which provided the competitive structures for racing with a myriad of rules that could assess one boat's success compared to another's on the basis of hull form and sail area. In the Great Lakes, one of the largest such organizations was the Inter-Lake Yachting Association, formed in 1895 for the purpose of fostering yachting on the Detroit River, Lake St. Clair, and Lake Erie. On the western side of the state, several clubs belonged to the Lake Michigan Yachting Association.

As the racing game became more sophisticated, Michigan boat builders competed, usually unsuccessfully, with East Coast builders to obtain contracts for racing yachts. Yachtsmen would often buy a used boat that had been successful on the eastern racing circuit after a season or two and bring it to the Great Lakes to clean up on the competition. Overall, however, the local yacht and boat clubs provided important relationships between builders and owners that nurtured the infant recreational boat industry both economically and socially in a way that no other form of organization could.

Marketing

In order to maintain a customer base or increase the size of the business, boat builders needed to attract or retain a number of new or repeat customers seeking newer or larger boats. After the Civil War, boat builders around the state began to advertise their profession and products. The first to advertise were those builders in the cities who had access to newspapers and city directories. D. G. Cunningham of Detroit and Wilfred S.

Campbell of East Saginaw, among the earliest boat builders to advertise statewide, appeared in the *Michigan State Gazetteer and Business Directory* in 1860, followed by John Jenkins and David Perrault, both of Detroit, in 1863. In 1870, Alcott Caldwell of Grand Rapids and Elliott & Jacobs of Saugatuck started advertising statewide. One of the earlier Upper Peninsula boat builders, Louis Grenier, lived in Escanaba on Ludington Street in 1875.²⁹ Boat builders' advertisements frequently mixed with those of shipbuilders, especially in the earlier directories, as shipbuilders also built some smaller recreational craft. Moreover, most builders produced working craft such as yawl boats and rowboats for larger vessels. John Oades of Detroit, a well-known shipbuilder, also advertised as a boat builder in 1873. Oades had built rowing shells or barges while living in Clayton, New York, and continued to build small craft once he moved to Michigan.³⁰

Print advertising passed through three gradual stages. Initially, most builders advertised in their local newspapers and city directories or the *Michigan State Gazetteer and Business Directory*. When national general-interest periodicals started accepting advertising and the press began focusing on outdoor interests with *Outing*, *Forest and Stream*, and other magazines, Michigan boat builders could get their products before the eyes of a much larger national audience. Catalogs offered in the advertisements in national periodicals could be purchased for the cost of postage or a small fee. Once the prospective customer saw something of interest in the magazine advertisement, he might then order the catalog for a more detailed examination of the builder's product line. Then as now, advertising subjects generally revolved around speed, quality of materials and craftsmanship, comfort, and safety. Having stock boats on hand and readily available also served as a selling point. In a third form, the gradual emergence of the regional and national yachting press with *The Rudder* after 1890, followed later by *Sail and Sweep* and *Fore N' Aft*, offered a better opportunity for builders to target their advertising to those who desired it most. Nathaniel Osgood advertised his portable canvas boat in the first issue of *The Rudder* in May 1890, as did Edgar Davis of the Davis Boat & Oar Company.³¹

Builders also took their boats to fairs and expositions as exhibits for additional exposure. James Dean & Company and the Davis Boat & Oar Company of Detroit exhibited their boats at the nearby Michigan State Fair. Davis Boat & Oar Company even set up a working exhibit at the Detroit International Exposition in 1892 with twenty men demonstrating their prowess in building rowboats, steam launches, and canoes from the keel up.³²