

Along with these I also built a good many Interlakes, a couple of 24 foot Challengers, International 21's for Mentor Harbor and a Star for Bob.

The 14's were beautiful but expensive. In 1939 I learned of the new Vidal process for building molded mahogany plywood hulls which seemed to solve the problem of cost, and in conjunction with the International 13 Association we commissioned the U.S. Plywood Corporation to mold hulls for the Int. 14. To my knowledge these were the first molded sailboats ever built, at least by modern methods.

The War put an end to boat building and I went to work for American Shipbuilding in Lorain and also joined the Coast Guard Auxiliary. But this interlude gave me time to plan ahead. I was not content with the existing family-type one-designs. The Int. 14 was a grand little boat but too small. With the ideal in mind of a boat with the performance of the 14 but more room inside, I designed the Thistle in 1944 and built a prototype in my spare time. Her debut at Put-in-Bay in 1945 is history, and soon I had a bunch of orders for Thistles to be built as soon as the war ended. I am happy to say that the Thistle has become one of our most successful national classes.

The Thistle made me leave Vermilion. We were sorry to leave because it had become our home. But I knew that the Horton building did not have adequate space for the building program which lay ahead and other space was not available at the time.

THE VERMILION YEARS

One day, 'way back in 1937, a young man walked into my boat shop at Turkeyfoot Lake and introduced himself as Bob Laughlin, a Star sailor from Vermilion. Being a sailor, he was interested in the sailboats I was building; and he also talked about Vermilion and the Vermilion Boat Club. In 1936 I had started in partnership with Rich MacFarlane to build Turkeyfoot Scows and Sailing Canoes. Our mutual attraction had been that as American Champion of the International Decked Sailing Canoe I could help him with knowledge and reputation, whereas he could offer me gainful (?) employment. At the time, the Depression still was very depressing, as I had discovered in pursuing the career of portrait painter. Our first efforts at boat building also proving to be very little gainful, we separated as partners and I was left to follow the career alone.

Soon after this, in October of 1938, Bob Laughlin came busting in one day with the information that Bill Daniels had left Vermilion, that Bill's shop in the Horton building was vacant, and that he thought I should move right into it! It did not take me long to decide that almost anything was preferable to Turkeyfoot Lake, and a visit to Vermilion did the rest. The Vermilion Chamber of Commerce offered to move me; Bob Laughlin very kindly offered us the use of his house in the Lagoons for the winter; Fred Harpley was sent by Jake Berk to do the moving; and soon we were established in Vermilion. I suspect that Al Wakefield had more than a finger in this matter too.

At Turkeyfoot I had commenced building the International 14, the beautiful and expensive double-planked mahogany little jewels, and these were my first boats in the new location.

After an interlude of ten years at Mentor and Painesville we now are established in Oakland, Maryland, with beautiful Deep Creek Lake nearby in the midst of some of the most beautiful scenery east of the Mississippi, now building the fiberglass FLYING SCOTS which also seems destined to become one of the great classes.

Among our happiest memories are those of our Vermilion years and our many friends in the Vermilion Boat Club.