

## If Boats Could Talk

If your boat could talk what would it say?  
Would it tell you how happy it has been?  
Would it tell you the adventures it's had?  
Would it tell you the famous people who rode inside?

The questions about its past are endless and if you only get a few answers back then doesn't it sorta put you a little closer to your boat's soul? What is it about your boat that draws you to it? What draws you to feel that it's part of you and it speaks to everyone who listens that it belongs to you for this time? Isn't that the truth, really? Aren't we just the caretakers of this old girl?

Let's look at the big picture and start with a train engineer, a bomber pilot, a stagecoach driver, a crew man on a boat or ship, and the examples are endless. How many stories have been written about different types of transportation occupations where at the beginning it meant very little but as the years went by and it still kept doing its job and building memories? It has created a soul that touches the people who helped create it or died trying. That soul is what has saved many boats, ships, trains, you name it all around our country we have objects of transportation that are decommissioned and outdated but not all of them were destroyed because the people who lived aboard them that still remain helped to educate the public it needed to be saved. As for the motorized vehicles and boats available to the general public that still captures your attention enough to want to become the owner of it restored or not, it's original from the factory look captured your attention so badly you had to have it, then once you own it why would you think to change it? It has lasted all these years through countless owners building memories and then you buy it and change it. I have always felt if you don't like it the way that it is then sell it and buy one that fits your fancy. Most of my career has been that person selected to care for our (baby) the wood boat. I have been fortunate to care for many different manufacturers of boats in power, paddle and sail. Many of these people had bought the boat when it was new. Over the years I would hear stories of the boats past and some of the people that were part of it. I never put pen to paper to record it, who would think to do that? What I have done is I have kept the timesheets from the work done on the boat so I would have that history if the boat were to come back with another problem. Almost 40 years of stories. To watch the life and sometimes the death of a boat is one thing, but to watch the life and death of a customer that you have had for over 30 years is something I never thought about.

I started working on wood boats when I was 18 years old it was just a job and now it's a sickness. Whatever you choose to do for a living if it doesn't bring out a passion then you will never be any good at it and you will never stay with it. As for these wood boats not all of them are worth a lot of money and there are many that will require more money to repair than the boat is worth. Now what does that mean? There is a personality out there for every kind of wood boat built, it's just a matter of finding that person before the boat is destroyed. Originality is a big part of my beliefs. Making changes to a boat for safety, structural integrity or simply because the factory was too cheap to do it right is my thought process. Making changes to a boat to fit your

lifestyle should only be done to a homemade boat or a low-cost factory built boat where hundreds or thousands of them were built and sold to the owners for them to finish. Altering any major companies boat will give a false pretense about its furnishings forever to the next perspective caretaker. If it is going to be altered then its original manufacturer's name should be removed because it no longer represents the methods of that company. This would then help the next caretaker buy what is properly advertised, a restored original or a modified boat. Personally I find it exciting to see people taking the time to restore a given item correctly whether it's a boat, truck, house, airplane and on and on. In this day and age to witness the dedication and discipline that is required to finish such a project is a reflection of yet another part of a dying breed of people who enjoy working with their hands and using their heads to get the job finished.