



Missing Poppy

This name tells a double story. Let's start with the second story. I was contacted one day from a customer who was wishing to rent a wood boat for a one week vacation here on torch Lake. Well times have changed a lot since I was a kid and renting a wood boat has come and gone quite a long time ago. The request for a wood boat only came also with a story. The customer and his family more or less grew up vacationing at their cottage on torch Lake and they had their own wooden boat. The boat is long gone but the memories survive. Now he lives in another country with his wife who has never been in a wood boat or seen torch Lake. He told me his name and filled me in on where his family's cottage was located as well as their names. In this world that continues to get smaller as I get older I again found myself in a all too familiar situation so I said, " I know who you are". I used to mow the grass at your cottage when I was younger and when I was older I would work on your dad's wood boat. When I went to my file cabinets I found the timesheets that I retained from the previous work. Since I was 18 years old I have kept the records I have made on every boat I have ever repaired. It's a wonderful way to keep track of everything I do on my customers boats. It speaks for itself especially the older I get and the less I can remember. Well now it turns out that this fellow isn't a stranger even though we have never met. I wanted to help but there are no wood boats to rent anymore. The only thing I could do is rent him a boat that I have in inventory currently for sale. I drew up a contract we both agreed to and the adventure begins.

The boat their family had was the same make and model I was offering, a Chris-Craft u – 22. The next thing he asked of me was to put a special name on the transom for his mother. His father has passed on to the glory of heaven, so getting mom back in a wood boat on Torch Lake was to be a memorable last hurrah. I thought this was great but the boat is for sale and it already has a neat name with a history. I thought about it and came up with this... How about putting your name on a thin piece of vinyl and lettering it with gold leaf to try and cover the other name but to make it look like it was meant to be that way? He agreed and it was put into motion. The next step was to summarize the boat and engine, top off the fuel tank and put it in the water to soak up. I explained to him that before I turned over the keys to him he would have to pass the water test I give all of my customers. Everyone gets a firsthand lesson as to how to launch and reload their boat onto their trailer if that applies. They learn how to cold start their engine, how to dock, how to maneuver in tight areas, how not to pound the hull, how to use the instruments. I don't miss many boating safety practices and boating etiquette are also expressed. It has been many years since he drove a wood boat but I was impressed that he did very well. His maneuvering needed practicing but when it was all said and done no docking damage was done to the hull. So this story is winding down, the week was filled with memories, they traveled to the ends of the lake several times with a full week of perfect weather. The last hurrah with mom was everything he wanted it to be, naturally everyone wished the head of the house was there in person but they knew his spirit certainly was. They told me his nickname

was "Poppy" so explains The Name... Missing Poppy.

