



ERIC MORTEINSON / MHS

Collection of boating catalogs, 1956–2005

ST. PAUL FRIENDS and business competitors Dick Schroer, owner of Highland Marine on Snelling Avenue, and Jack Dolan, owner of Dolan’s Marine on West Seventh Street, recently donated the boat and outboard-motor company catalogs they had been saving for the past 50 years. This generous gift documents one quintessential part of state history and culture.

It makes perfect sense in this land of 10,000 lakes that a vibrant boat-manufacturing industry would grow and become a part of the postwar tourist and leisure industry. Until now, the MHS has had little to docu-

ment these businesses. Among the Minnesota companies represented are Alumacraft Boat Company, St. Peter; Crestliner, Glastron, and Larson Industries, all of Little Falls; Ercoa Industries, Braham; Forester Boats, Wyoming; Lund America, New York Mills; Mariner Boats, Red Wing; Pipestone Boat Company, Pipestone; and the Weeres Pontoon Boat Company, St. Cloud.

While many of the catalogs are not from Minnesota companies, the products they advertise are nevertheless very familiar statewide: for example, outboard engines by the two largest manufacturers, Mercury and

Johnson. The collection also contains other water-related material. A 1973 catalog from Lake Region Products (Victoria, Minnesota) advertises some surprisingly expensive water skis, costing more than \$460 in 2008 dollars.

One quick look through the collection suggests that there must have been no better way to sell a boat than by showing pretty women in bikinis. This observation only points to another potential scholarly use of this material: It is an excellent source for researching summer fashion in the postwar period. —Patrick Coleman, acquisitions librarian



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