

# MERCURY

*Uncovered*



Interpretive Plan

California State Parks, Sierra District  
Lake Tahoe Sector, Sugar Pine Point  
South Boathouse  
7360 West Lake Blvd. Highway 89, Tahoe, CA 96142

William N. Lindemann  
District Interpretive Specialist



Mercury on exhibit, Sugar Pine Point State Park, South Boat House

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## **Operations:**

Please refer to accompanying document **Mercury Boat Operations Plan**

Funding for the operations come mainly from the Sierra State Parks Foundation (SSPF), a 501 (c) 3 non-profit, membership organization. The Foundation raises about \$55,000 annually at Sugar Pine primarily through retail sales. SSPF supports the parks interpretive programs with about \$60,000 each year. Mercury operational costs are augmented by grants from the Tahoe Yacht Club Foundation and private benefactors. The grant support ranges from \$1,000 to about \$2,500 every year or every other year. The annual operational cost of the boat is between about \$850 and \$2,500.

## **Purpose:**

Acquired in 1976, the vintage race boat Mercury is owned by California State Parks and is on display in the South Boat House at the Pine Lodge (Ehrman Mansion) historic estate at Sugar Pine Point State Park at Lake Tahoe. The purpose of interpreting the boat is to enrich the imaginations of visitors to Sugar Pine Point State Park with a sense of the wonderful diversity, excitement and global interconnectivity of maritime history at Lake Tahoe. The secondary motive is to share the beauty of the historic style and innovative design of the boat in the boat house and on the water, both as a static display and under power. The intent is to make the boat available and accessible to the public for Park's interpretive and promotional purposes, at historical, educational and interpretive venues, living histories and exhibitions, in and around the Lake Tahoe Basin, whenever possible. Under power the boat adds depth of historical significance to the public's sense of place at Lake Tahoe.

## **Sugar Pine Point State Park**

Sugar Pine Point State Park is located on a peninsula of land partially defining the west (California) shore of Lake Tahoe. The beautiful alpine lake is situated at 6,226 feet above sea level in the eastern Sierra Nevada Mountains of California and Nevada. Tahoe is 72 miles around, 12 miles across, 22 miles long and 1,645 feet deep. Sugar Pine Point provides public access to one mile of pristine Tahoe lakefront for hiking, biking, boating and swimming, though there is no boat launch at the park.

Along with the natural drama of Tahoe the park is home to historic Pine Lodge and its associated cultural complex. Pine Lodge was the rustically elegant summer home of a wealthy San Francisco financier named Isais W. Hellman and his extended family. The shingle-style Pine Lodge is 11,700 square feet. Built

between 1900 and 1903 the summer home is a fine example of organic and embrative Arts and Crafts sensibilities. Included in the complex of 15 buildings is the South Boat House, located at the southern-most point of Sugar Pine Point.

The 18'X60' South Boat House was built (fall,1903) originally to house a very large boat. The early boats of the estate were the first acquired Florence and later the Miduena. The Florence likely was kept in the North Boathouse, followed there by the Comet, a 1922, 26-foot, aft cabin sedan built by Fellows and Stewart in San Pedro, CA. kept by the family until 1965 (though not in use for twenty or so years). Comet is still in use on Lake Tahoe, as of this writing. The Miduena, owing to her size, would have only fit in the bigger South Boat House. *Lakers and Launchers*, Pages 64 and 65, Carol Van Etten, 1992, Carol Van Etten, Tahoe, CA.

Florence (named for Hellman's daughter) was a 30-foot, half-cabin, launch built by the Michigan Yacht and Power Company in 1902 and delivered in August of that year. The boat was outfitted with a 12 horsepower Sintz Gas Engine with a speed of 12 miles per hour. The Florence also featured a Sands Water Closet, wash basin, ice box, and room to sleep three. .Julia Costello, *Construction History of Auxiliary Buildings From The Pine Lodge Period, 1900-19026*, 2002

Miduena (my lady) was a showy 50 foot, double-ended, mid-ship cabin, sedan built by the Michigan Yacht and Power Boat Company. The boat was complete with galley, head and berth. She was owned and operated by the family from 1904 until 1928. Julia Costello, 2002; *The Saga of Lake Tahoe*, Page 436, E.B. Scott, 2000, Sierra Tahoe Publishing Co. Antioch, CA; *Lakers and Launchers*, Pages 45-47, Carol Van Etten.



Miduena

Sugar Pine Point has grown from the 1,000 acres originally purchased by Hellman to over 1,600 acres stretching far back into the General Creek drainage. The park natural, cultural and recreational interpretive opportunities are experienced by about 33,000 visitors each year. Approximately 24,500 people enjoy self-guided activities throughout the park and about 9,500 attend delivered interpretive programs. Among the programs visitors enjoy are the launching and retrieval of the boat Mercury, its operation on the lake, and its appearance at the annual Concours de'Elegance antique and classic boat show. Approximately 2,000 people visit the boat in the boat house each year, with the majority of visitors coming between late June and early September. Another 960 people enjoy the thematic interpretive delivery of volunteers and staff at the boat show. Incidentally, of the boat house visitors, about 250 are present when volunteer and staff interpreters are on-site working with the boat and offering thematic interpretive presentations.

Historical material is included to provide ready access to all interested parties.

## New York Boat History:

# MOTORBOAT

The Pioneer      Twenty-third Year      The Authority  
Established 1904  
Trade Mark Registered U. S. Patent Office

Vol. XXIII

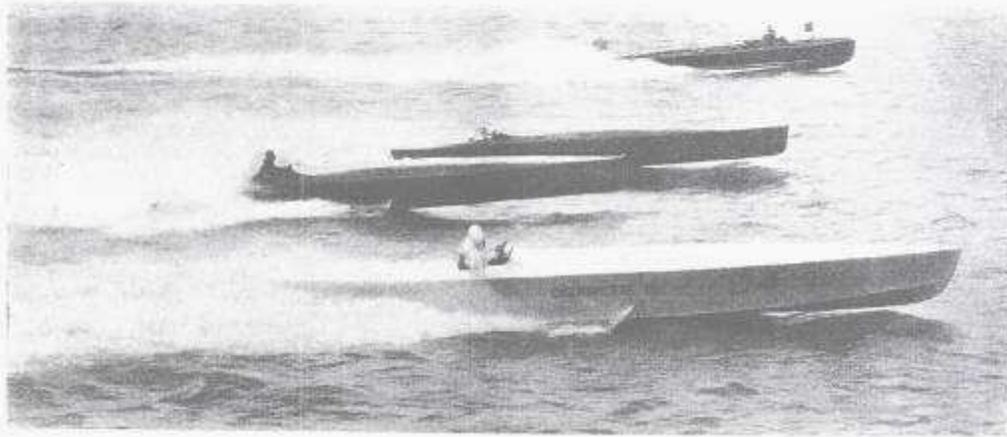
SEPTEMBER 25, 1926

No. 18

12

MOTOR BOAT

September 25, 1926



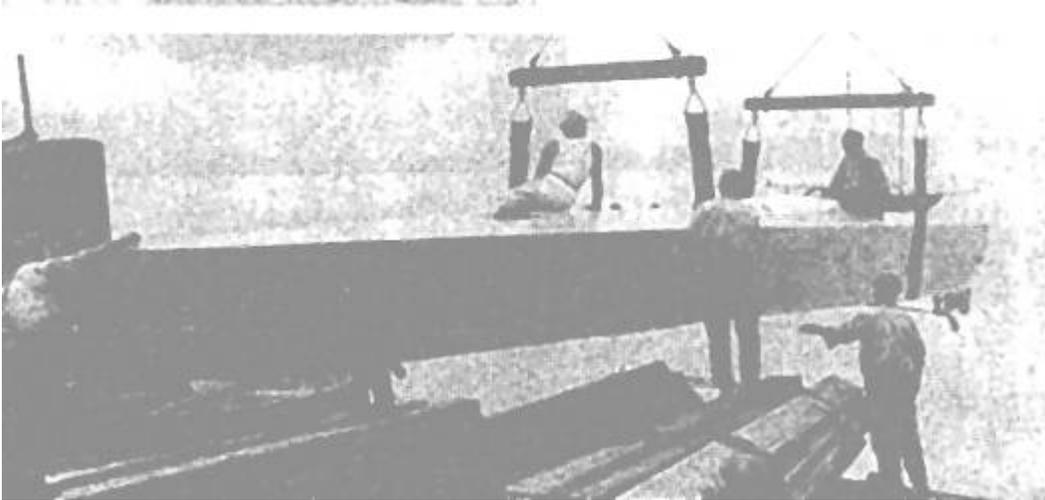
Starting Them Off in the Sweepstakes

Three fast ones just as the gun went. L. G. Hamersley's "Cigarette IV," the duralumin speedster designed by F. K. Lord, is in the foreground. Next to her are the two Purdy boats, C. S. Beag's "Rascal" and Carl G. Pitzer's "Rowdy," the winner of the race. The pace boat is seen beyond her.

The 35 foot long all aluminum speedboat "Mercury" was originally christened "Cigarette IV" and the boat's vintage race number was "D-4." Cigarette IV was built in 1926 by the Brewster Auto Body Corporation of Long Island City, Long Island, New York; designed by Frederick K. Lord of 120 Broadway Avenue, New York; for Louis Gordon Hamersley of Port Washington, Long Island and Manhattan.

**MYSTERY SPEED BOAT BUILT BY HAMERSLEY** - Yachtsman Experiments With Duralumin Craft Which May Prove Regatta Sensation – HOPES FOR 65 MILES AN HOUR – His Ambition Is To Have Racer Capture Dodge Trophy and Beat R.F. Hoyt's Teaser. A new type of speed boat which is expected to cause a sensation when she enters the racing lists in about six weeks is being constructed for Louis Gordon Hamersley, a member of the New York Yacht Club, who has been interested for some time in speed-boat racing.

Louis Gordon Hamersley was graduated from Harvard in 1916 and lives at 1030 Fifth Avenue, (New York, NY). **New York Times, June 19, 1926**



Cigarette IV, First Launch, June 1926, New York Times

**Kept His Boat A Mystery** The new Hamersley boat has been a mystery ship, as the yachtsman wished to keep his plans under cover until the time approached for racing. The duralumin craft, a pioneer in that kind of construction, will be thirty-two feet long, with a 6-foot beam. She will be of the displacement or runabout type, as opposed to the hydroplane, with which all extreme speeds have been made up to the present. Fred Lord, a master of the craft in speedboat planning, drew the lines of the new Hamersley flier. She will be driven by 600-horsepower marine engines being built by Curtiss Company of Buffalo. The hull is being built by the Brewster Company, constructors of automobile bodies.

### **NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR AERONAUTICS 1920 Technical Publication**

Duralumin is made in various compositions and has, with the exception of small particles of impurities, the following composition:

**Aluminum 93.2 %**

**Magnesium .5%**

**Copper 5.5%**

**Manganese .8%**

Lead, tin and zinc which, as is well known, have an unfavorable influence upon the permanence of aluminum alloys are not found in duralumin. The melting point is about 650° C.

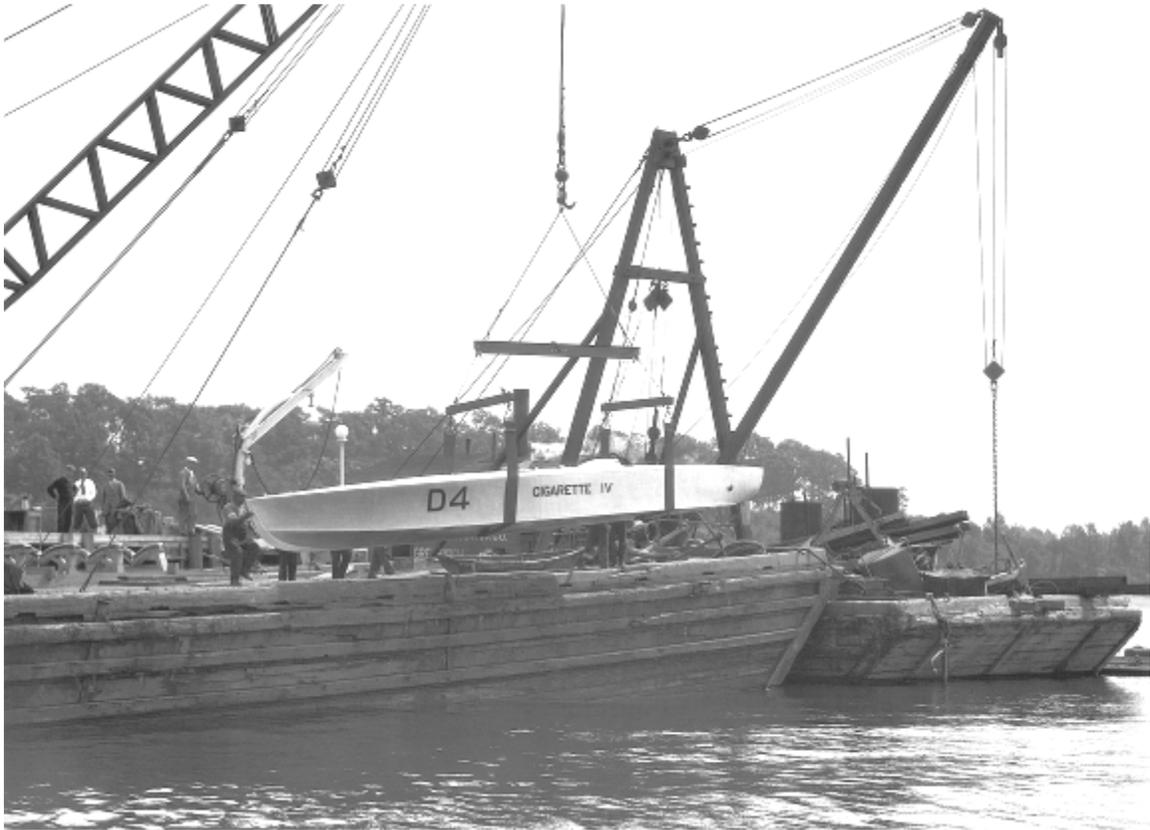
## Working of Duralumin

Like other metals, duralumin can be rolled into plates and shapes and behaves in a similar manner, in that the elongation decreases as the hardness of rolling increases. Tube blanks, however, can be made only by pressing and not by the oblique rolling method.

The increase in tensile strength and decrease in elongation of a duralumin plate as its thickness is reduced by cold rolling from 7 mm. to 2 mm. The strength increases from 41 kg, to about 54 kg. per sq. mm while the elongation falls from 22.7 to 2.3 percent. The elongation increases very rapidly with the very first reduction in thickness. However, duralumin can be worked hot at a temperature of about 400° C. very well.

## Tempering

Duralumin can be tempered, like steel, by heating and sudden cooling. For this purpose plates, tubes, and shapes are heated to between 400° and 510° and quenched, then aged; that is, the treated material is simply set aside. The original strength characteristics are very nearly restored after the quenching but the tensile strength continues to grow with the time of ageing, from 35 to 50 kgs. per 8 sq. mn. The elongation does not decrease but and usually increases slightly. In practice remains at least the same the greatest strength is reached after about 5 days of ageing. When heated to over 530° C. duralumin becomes unusable. Consequently the treating is carried on in a bath of nitrates whose temperature can be carefully regulated and watched. During the ageing of the metal, work cannot be done on it which would change the section as in that case the strength will not increase any more. After the completion of ageing, the material can be re-rolled in order to obtain a smooth surface. The strength is thereby increased at the expense of elongation.



©Mystic Seaport, Rosenfeld Collection #200011F CIGARETTE IV

Photo Courtesy The Rosenfeld Collection, Mystic Seaport

**METAL SPEED BOAT FAST IN FIRST TRIAL** - Hamersley's Cigarette IV Put Into Water of Manhasset Bay, Does a Half-Mile Burst. 70 MILE GAIT IS EXPECTED – First Craft of Kind Makes 40 to 45 Throttled Down, Owner Says – To Race on Sunday.

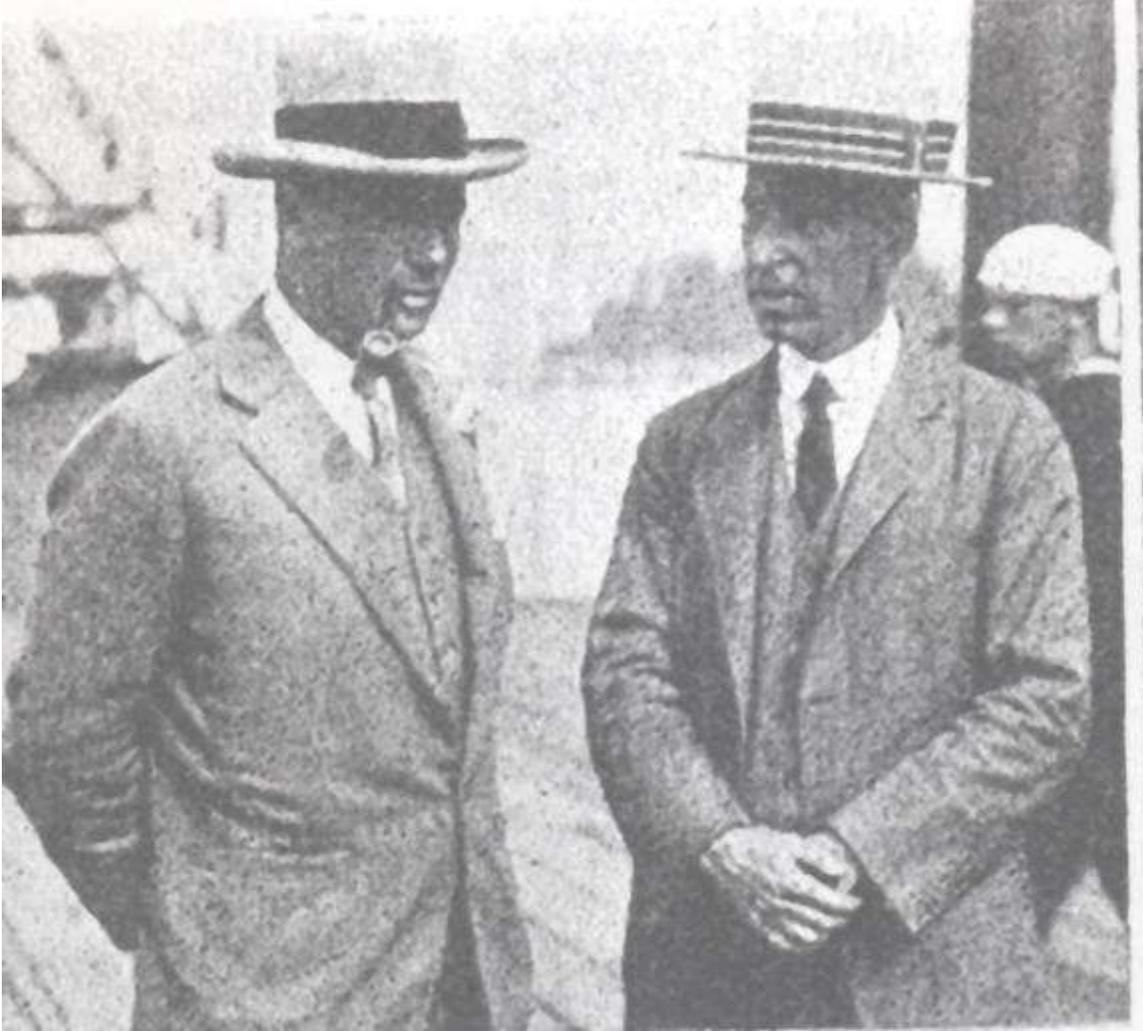


©Mystic Seaport Rosenfeld Collection #20860F CIGARETTE IV

Photo Courtesy The Rosenfeld Collection, Mystic Seaport

The first all metal speed boat, Cigarette IV, a 35-foot duralumin craft, designed by Frederick K. Lord and owned by L. Gordon Hamersley of 39 West Fifty-fifth Street and Port Washington, L. I., was launched at Port Washington yesterday. At a preliminary trial in the afternoon in Manhasset Bay she showed such a burst of speed that her owner and designer believe she will make more than 70 miles per hour when she races in the Dodge Memorial Trophy Race next Sunday.

With the throttle of her 600-horsepower Curtiss engine only half open, the Cigarette IV, the fourth speed boat built for Mr. Hamersley, developed between 40 and 45 miles an hour over a measured half-mile course. Mr. Hamersley, who was in the pilot's seat, was loath to open up his new boat to the full extent on the first day in the water, but will increase her speed gradually until Sunday. Then he expects to be able to demonstrate that his radical innovation in the building of speed boats has resulted in developing a speedier craft of her class than has ever before been in the water.



Louis Gordon Hamersley, left, and Frederick K. Lord right; from **Motorboat, October 10, 1926**

Work on the craft began last May in the yards of Brewster & Co., Long Island City, but it was not until a month later that the first news of the "mystery" boat, as she was styled, leaked out. The secret of her design build and motor was kept, and not until she was delivered to Mr. Hamersley on Monday were details of her construction known to more than a dozen persons.

The Cigarette IV is 35 feet over all, 33 feet on the water line and six feet six inches beam. The twelve-cylinder V.1400 Curtiss motor, built by the Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Company of Garden City, is similar to the motor used by Lieutenant Cy Bettis in the airplane with which he won the Pulitzer Trophy in the National Air Races at Mitchell Field last Fall.

The hull is of duralumin throughout, not a splinter of wood being used in the construction. More than 4,000 sheets of the metal were used in the hull, fastened by 38,000 rivets and 5,000 bolts. After the boat was taken from the water early last evening following her initial trial the mechanics could not find one rivet or bolt that had given, and there was not a drop of water leakage inside the hull.

The fuel tanks, one fore and one aft, have a capacity of 150 gallons of gasoline, and the fuel consumption is about forty-five gallons per hour. As the boat lay in the water after launching yesterday, she had cost her owner between \$50,000 and \$60,000.

Mr. Hamersley had the Cigarette IV specially built for the Dodge Memorial Trophy Race next Sunday, and the Sweepstakes Race at Detroit next month. Sunday's race is in four heats of twelve miles each over a half-mile course, while the Detroit race is over a course of 150 miles without stop. **New York Times, August 18, 1926**



©Mystic Seaport Rosenfeld Collection # 21256F L.Gordon Hamersley &Mechanic CIGARETTE IV

Photo Courtesy The Rosenfeld Collection, Mystic Seaport

**GOLD CUP ENTRIES – *Break Record*** – Fifteen of the fastest boats ever built, representing a cost in excess of \$200,000, are entered for the American

Power Boat Association Gold Cup, to be held on Manhasset Bay, Port Washington, Long Island Sound, August 21. Not only does this represent an enormous sum of money, but the craft are the result of the country's best naval architects and boat builders for a year's time.

...The Gold Cup events on Saturday will by no means overshadow the four or more heats which will be necessary to decide the winner of the Dodge Trophy on Sunday. In these races all of the Gold Cup boats are eligible to race. With these are three new craft: Roscoe, Rowdy and Cigarette IV, built especially for the Dodge Trophy race and not eligible to race for the Gold Cup due to the larger size of their power plants. The Gold Cup boats cannot have motors larger than 625 cubic inches, while there is no limit to the size of the motors in the Dodge Trophy boats, provided the hulls are correspondingly larger.

Little is known about Cigarette IV, owned by L. Gordon Hamersley of the Columbia Yacht Club as her plans have been kept very secret. She is a Lord designed boat, built by Brewster and powered with a 12-cylinder Curtiss motor of about 600 h.p. Her hull is built of metal and she is the first metal boat ever to be raced in a major event. Mr. Hamersley will be at the helm of his racer.



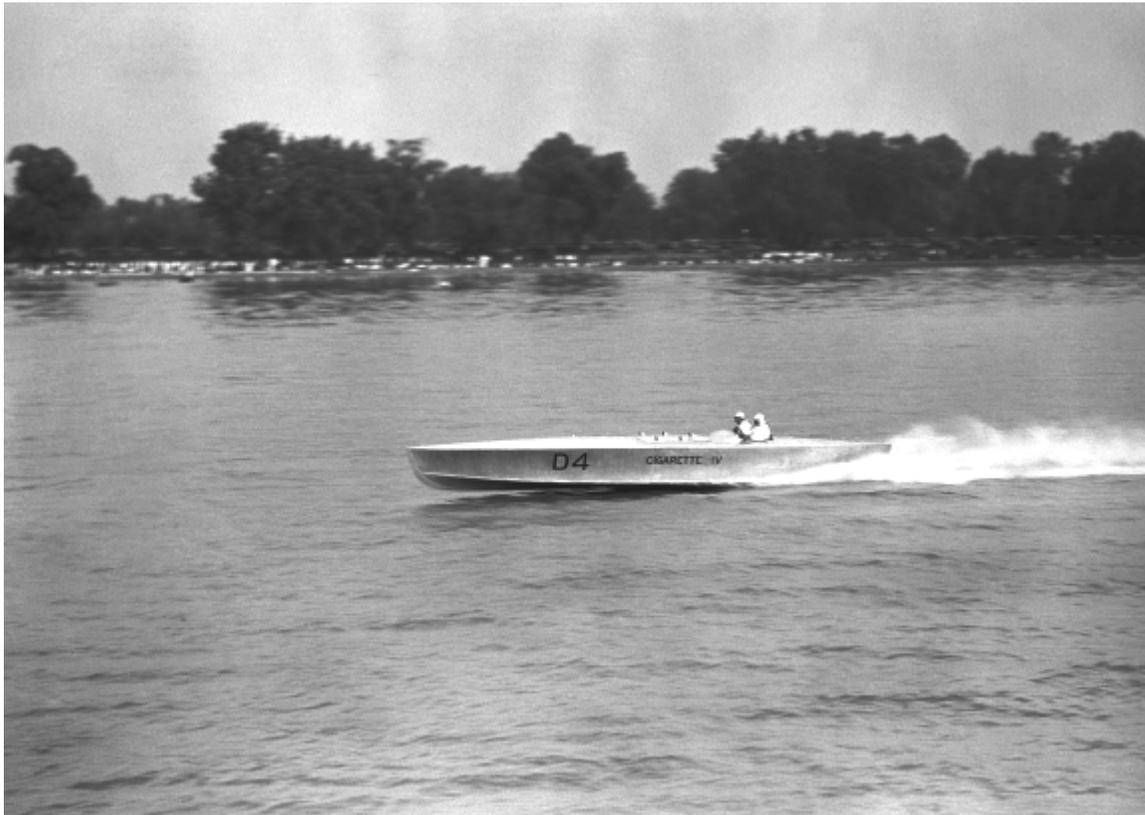
©Mystic Seaport Rosenfeld Collection #212381 CIGARETTE IV

Photo Courtesy The Rosenfeld Collection, Mystic Seaport

(In the list of ) Entries for Dodge Trophy Race – 4 – 12 Mile Heats, Sunday August 22, 1926. Events Nos. 6,8,11,13 (appears) D-4 Cigarette IV...L. Gordon Hamersley...Columbia Yacht Club...Builder: Brewster...Designer: Lord...Motor: Curtiss...Cylinders: 12. **Motor Boating, September 1926**

**DETROIT'S TENTH ANNUAL REGATTA** – Five Boats Hold Lead in 150-Mile Sweepstakes – Laps 1-9 Miles 1-27 Cigarette IV, Laps 13-17 Miles 39-51 Cigarette IV

Labor Day in Detroit dawned stormy. During the morning the wind increased and at noon there was half a gale blowing. To make matters worse the direction of the wind was directly against the current in the Detroit River. This resulted in a very sloppy sea, which had no definite direction but seemed to be both head and across the paths of the boats no matter how hard they tried to avoid them or how adept the drivers were.



©Mystic Seaport Rosenfeld Collection #20872F CIGARETTE IV

Photo Courtesy The Rosenfeld Collection, Mystic Seaport

Cigarette IV's first lap was made at a speed of 58.26 and Syndicate's at 56.94, a very remarkable performance. Both boats appeared to be running at full throttle and their handling was marvelous. They were making good weather of the seas and showed that both craft are the best sea boats which have ever

been produced. Neither showed any tendency to upset and made the turns wide open.

Summary of Results – Detroit Sweepstakes – September 4, 5 and 6, 1926  
- Lap No. 3, Cigarette IV Speed 58.87 mph. – Lap No. 31, Cigarette IV Out.

...Cigarette's gasoline tank began to leak after 30 laps so she withdrew.

### **Motor Boating, October, 1926**

**CIGARETTE IV WINS FIRST HEAT FOR CUP** – Hamersley's Duralumin Craft Gets Lead In Race for President's Trophy.

Washington, Sept. 17 (AP) – Skimming the water at a speed of 54.77 miles an hour, Cigarette IV, owned and piloted by L. Gordon Hamersley of the Columbia Yacht Club, New York, easily won the first heat for the President's \$5,000 gold cup in the first national regatta held today on the Potomac.

Leaping ahead at the start of the race like a greyhound, the duralumin speed boat, the first of her kind, gradually increased her advantage as she sped five times around the three mile course and won by nearly a mile over Miss Syndicate, which placed second. Cigarette's time was 16 minutes and 25 ¼ seconds.

The regatta will end tomorrow with the finals in the President's Cup Race, the race for a goblet given by the Secretary of the Navy... **New York Times, September 17, 1926**



©Mystic Seaport Rosenfeld Collection #206-9F CIGARETTE IV

Photo Courtesy The Rosenfeld Collection, Mystic Seaport

**CIGARETTE IV Wins PRESIDENT'S TROPHY** – L. Gordon Hamersley's New \$60,000 Racing Craft Wins in Three Straight Heats at Washington Regatta

Coming as the last important racing event of the summer season the Washington regatta was a sort of world's series in which the winners of the important races of the country during July and August, were brought together for a final test. The President of the United States by his sponsoring of the President's Trophy which was raced for, for the first time, showed his interest in the sport of motor boat racing and this cooperation went far toward making the races the successes which they were.

The Navy Department turned over to the race officials and the owners of the race boats, the entire facilities of the Washington Navy Yard.

Of the boats which raced, the country's fastest were all at Washington... In the President's Cup race such boats were entered as L. Gordon Hamersley's Cigarette IV, the \$60,000 craft built of duraluminum to defend the Dodge Trophy for the Columbia Yacht Club, Miss Syndicate, owned and raced by Horace E. Dodge of Detroit...

In the contest for the President's Trophy, Cigarette IV owned and driven by L. Gordon Hamersley, won in three straight heats. However, he was closely pushed by Horace E. Dodge driving Miss Syndicate...



©Mystic Seaport Rosenfeld Collection #20898F PRESIDENTS CUP RACE START 1926

Photo Courtesy The Rosenfeld Collection, Mystic Seaport

President's Cup Regatta, Washington, D.C., September 17 and 18, 1926,  
President's Cup, Three Heats, 15 Miles Each

First Heat: (first place) Boat: Cigarette IV, Owner: L.G. Hamersley,  
Elapsed Time: 16:25.4, Speed M.P.H.: 54.75

Second Heat: (first place) Boat: Cigarette IV, Elapsed Time: 16:18.4,  
Speed M.P.H.: 55.20

Third Heat: (first place) Boat: Cigarette IV, Elapsed Time: 17:02.6, Speed  
M.P.H.: 52.70 – **Motor Boating, November, 1926**



President Calvin Coolidge, right; Louis Gordon Hamersley, left

**THE PRESIDENT PRESENTS THE TROPHY HIMSELF:  
L. GORDON HAMERSLEY  
of New York, Who Won the Race at the National Speedboat  
Regatta With His All-Metal Boat Cigarette IV, Receives the Cup  
From President Coolidge at the White House.  
(Times Wide World Photos, Washington Bureau.)**

**Duralumin Speed Boat will Try To Set New York –Albany Mark**  
Hamersley's Novel Craft to Aim at Teaser's Record Next Week

It was learned yesterday that the new duralumin speed boat, Cigarette IV, owned by L. Gordon Hamersley of Columbia Yacht Club, will make an attempt on October 19 or 20 to lower the existing speed record by boat between this city and Albany. The record for the 135-mile run on the Hudson is now held by the Teaser owned by Richard F. Hoyt, which, in May, 1925, covered the distance in 2 hours 38 minutes.

According to present plans the Cigarette IV will make her run next Tuesday, but if weather conditions are not favorable on that day the attempt will be made on Wednesday. The start will be made off the Columbia Yacht Club, Hudson River and Eighty-sixth Street, at 9 a.m. Captain Hamersley will drive the

Cigarette IV and he will be accompanied by Charles F. Chapman Chairman of the Race Commission of the American Power Boat Association, who will act as official timer for the run. **New York Times, October 14, 1926**

No record of the challenge run ever having been made has been found.

**MOTOR BOAT SHOW DRAWS 20,000 FANS** – Record Throng at Grand Central Palace in 12-Hour Period at Annual Exhibition

Another big crowd of boating enthusiasts attended the National Motor Show at Grand Central Palace yesterday and last night, the officials estimating about 20,000 persons passed through the aisles during the twelve hours the show was open.

Louis Gordon Hamersley's duralumin speed boat Cigarette IV was again a centre of attraction, crowds lingering around the silver-sided craft through the day and evening sessions. Perched atop the Cigarette IV today was the gold cup given by President Coolidge and which was the principal prize captured by the all-metal flier during the 1926 season. **New York Times, January 23, 1927**

This is the last published information regarding Cigarette IV found in public domain materials. Louis Gordon Hamersley's papers, such as they are, apparently have been kept by the family. There is some speculation from family members, principally Grandson, Nick Hamersley that L. Gordon Hamersley may have ceased racing power boats and turned his attention to sailing, which he had been doing at the time. There may also have been family commitments that refocused his attention as he was married in October of 1926.

**HILLES MORRIS TO BE MRS. L.G. HAMERSLEY – Daughter of Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish Morris Is Engaged to Prominent Sportsman – TO BE WED IN OCTOBER – Her Fiancé Is a Member of One of the Oldest New York Families and He Served In The War.**

...Mr. Hamersley, who is a member of one of the oldest families in New York, has been interested in speed-boat racing for many years. His boats have been entered in the races at Palm Beach and Detroit. The Cigarette IV, the first all-metal boat, completed in time for the recent Gold Cup races at Port Washington (Long Island), through a mishap was withdrawn from the race. His yacht, the Countess, was sailed by the owner, with an all-amateur crew, in this year's Bermuda race. **New York Times, September 1, 1926**

**MISS MORRIS BRIDE OF L.G. HAMERSLEY** – Many Notables of Society Attend the Ceremony in Grace Church. **New York Times, November 2, 1926**

## **L.G. HAMERSLEY 49, HEIR TO \$7,000,000**

**Sportsman Who Fought in World War Dies in Hospital at Southampton, L.I.**

### **LARGE OWNER OF REALTY**

**Belonged to One of New York's Oldest Families - - Liberal Giver to Philanthropies**

### **SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES**

Southampton, L.I., June 2--

Lois Gordon Hamersley of this place, 1030 Fifth Avenue, New York, and Palm Beach, Fla., who had large real estate holdings, was well known as a sportsman and was the victor in a famous will case in which he inherited \$7,000,000, died today in Southampton Hospital after a brief illness. His age was 49.

Mr. Hamersley, a member of one of the oldest New York families, was a generous donor to charitable and religious institutions, an active civic worker in New York, a member of many clubs and a veteran of the First World War.

Born in Newport, R.I., on July 20, 1892, Mr. Hamersley was the son of the late James Hooker Hamersley and the late Mrs. Margaret Willing Chisholm Hamersley...

### **Won Will fight While Student**

He prepared at St. Mark's School and was graduated in 1916 from Harvard, where he was one of the editors of the Lampoon.

It was in 1913, while Mr. Hamersley was at Harvard, that the New York State Court of Appeals finally settled in his favor the much publicized will case...

...Mr. Hamersley had an office at 70 Pine Street, New York, where his large affairs were managed.

He was well known as a speedboat pilot. In 1925 piloting his speedboat Cigarette Jr. he made a record run from New York to Albany for a craft of its kind, the time being 2 hours, 38 minutes. In 1926 in his all-metal speedboat Cigarette IV he won the first national speedboat regatta on the Potomac River and received from President Coolidge the President's Cup.

He also raced his schooner Countess...

...He owned a four-square-mile estate, described at one time as the second largest in Dutchess County, which included Cruger's Island. He also bought an estate at Sands Point, L.I.

He was...a trustee of the Maritime Museum of the City of New York...a trustee of the New York Historical Society.

He belonged also to the...New York Yacht, Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht and Harvard Clubs.

He leaves a widow, Mrs. Hilles Morris Hamersley; a daughter, Miss Hilles Elizabeth Hamersley; three sons, Louis Gordon Hamersley Jr., and Stuvesant Morris and James Hooker Hamersley, and a sister Mrs. C. Whitney Carpenter of Ridgefield, Conn. **New York Times, June 3, 1942**

### **Lake Tahoe Boat History:**

#### **TAHOE POWER BOAT RACES ASSURE DAY OF THRILLS**

#### **Several New Entries Are Expected to Increase Field and Make Competition Tougher Than Ever**

...Latest in design is the "Cigarette" (Hamersley's Cigarette IV) Stan Dollar Jr.'s new super speedster. **Tahoe Tattler, Friday July 2, 1937**

#### **LAKE SPEEDSTERS TO RACE SUNDAY**

#### **Program of Exciting Events to Test Ability of New Contenders**

#### **Championship Event to Be Run Over Longer Course Than Was Used Formerly**

Cigarette IV is re-named Mercury by R. Stanley Dollar Jr. her new owner.

Last year's champion, Stanley Dollar Jr., will have two entries in the Championship. There will be the "Baby-Skip-Along" which he piloted to victory in '36, and his new boat, the "Mercury," formerly called the "Cigarette," makes her racing debut-a 35-ft streamline hull of dural with a 600-h.p.-Curtis D-12 motor. Although she promises a world of speed her performance is still uncertain.

**Tahoe Tattler, Friday, July 9, 1937**

## **FLEISHHACKER WINS LAKE TITLE**

### **Dollar's Mercury Takes Second Trailing By Three Seconds**

## **FIRE, SPILLS PROVIDE THRILLS**

(Sunday, July 11, 1937, Tahoe Tavern Lake Championship Race)

...Herbert Fleishhacker Jr.'s "Maybe Not II" again skimmed to victory against the close second of Stan Dollar Jr.'s "Mercury" in the annual Tahoe Power Boat Club races last Sunday. Leading all the way, the "Maybe Not II" sped by the checkered flag three seconds ahead of the Dollar entry in a thrilling meet marked by plenty of excitement and near tragedy.

Over a lengthened course the Championship Race soon saw these two contenders pulling away from the field. Driven by their respective owners, the "Maybe Not II," a specially designed hydroplane with a 510 HP Liberty motor, and the silver "Mercury," powered by a Curtis 600 HP D-12, took the turns at a terrific pace. Dollar, who captured last year's championship with his "Baby Skipalong," was unable to pull out from second place which brought him in ahead of Henry Kaiser's "Hornet II" and Mrs. John Metcalf's "Tecolote."

In the Handicap spectators were horrified to see the "Mercury," speeding across the finish line at the end of the first lap, suddenly leap sideways in the rough water. Apparently thrown out of control as it leaped the edge of a deep trough, the "Mercury threatened to turn completely over. With its gleaming hull bottom completely out of the water, Dollar and his companion were thrown completely out of the boat. The craft as suddenly righted itself and settled in the water directly in the path of other entrants. The two men were rescued quickly and the "Mercury" towed out of danger. **Tahoe Tattler, Friday, July 16, 1937**

## **Tahoe Power Boat Races Assure Day of Thrills**

### **Several New Entries Are Expected to Increase Field and Make Competition Tougher Than Ever**

Despite our having the glorious Fourth and the Reno Rodeo with which to contend over the weekend, we found interest in our own celebration, the annual Tahoe Power Boat Club's regatta scheduled for July 11<sup>th</sup>, growing by leaps and bounds. Yesterday we had only a few rowboats. Today racing enthusiasts are arriving with their entries faster than the old Tattler man can keep tab.

Latest in design is the "Cigarette," Stan Dollar Jr.'s new super speedster which will make its racing debut in this year's regatta.

Designed and built for its owner in New York, the "Cigarette" was sealed in Vaseline and shipped by boat to San Francisco. From the bay it was brought to Tahoe by truck,

The "Cigarette" is powered by a Curtis D-12 motor capable of developing 610 horsepower. The streamline hull is 35 feet in length and constructed of duraluminum.

The performance of the "Cigarette" will be strongly contested by Herbert Feishhacker Jr.'s "Maybe Not II," to be entered in the regatta after an absence of four years. **Tahoe Tattler, Friday, July 21, 1937**

### **JUNIOR III CAPTURES COMMODORE'S CUP**

#### **Broken Shaft Halts Dollar Entry; Kaiser's Hornet Wins.**

(Sunday, August 8, 1937, Chamber's Lodge Regatta)

...Another Kaiser entry took first place in the Free for All. Riding beautifully, the Hornet II followed the Mercury for the first lap, passed it on the second and pulled away from the field in the beginning of the third when the Dollar entry suddenly catapulted on the far turn and settled in the water with a broken shaft. **Tahoe Tattler, Friday, August 13, 1937**

#### **'Mercury' Streaks Home (1938)**

#### **Stan Dollar Jr. Wins Lake Racing Title**

Championship race – Mercury (Dollar) 8:16.5, So Long (Fageol) 8:19, Hornet II (Kaiser) 8:55

Stanley Dollar Jr., driving his silver-hulled "Mercury," recaptured the Lake Tahoe speedboat racing title on choppy Lake Tahoe waters last Sunday in what was described as the most thrilling championship race in many years.

It was the rough water that beat Lou Fageol and his 800 hp "So Long" boat, which has been clocked at 90 mph on the lake in smooth weather. Fageol, after getting off to a poor start, could never open his boat up for fear of tipping over, and he never quite caught Dollar after the first turn, came in second.

For Dollar, the victory brought him again the lake speedboat crown, which he won in 1936 with his "Baby Skip-Along" and lost in 1937 to Herbert Fleishhacker.

For the two thousand spectators, who milled out on two Tahoe Tavern piers and lined the shores of the lake for several miles, the championship race was a duel between Fageol and Dollar.

The "Mercury" took an early lead in the 5 lap race around three turns. But, Fageol, gunning his small boat hard, was right behind at the first turn.

Amid a swirl of flying spray the two came out of the turn neck and neck. But again the choppy waves were to the "Mercury's" advantage, and she pulled ahead in the race down the back stretch.

So the race sea-sawed back and forth for five laps. Fageol almost catching Dollar at every turn, but slipping behind again Dollar led the whole way.

Henry J. Kaiser Jr., driving the Hornet II, placed third in the championship event, while Ollie Meek, piloting Dollar's Baby Skip-Along wound up in fourth position after a bit of engine trouble. **Tahoe Tattler, Friday, July 15, 1938**

## **SECOND 1940 WIN GIVES DOLLAR TITLE**

...Dollar with co-pilot Jack Sweetland, raced the "BABY SKIP" With something of a heavy heart. After nightlong repair work Saturday on the faster, 600 hp silver hulled Mercury, its engine caught fire, burned up at 8 a.m. Sunday. Gasoline spilled (while) cleaning a clogged strainer fueled the blaze. Dollar said he must rewire the "Merc." Before it runs again... **Tahoe Tattler, Friday, August 16, 1940**

note - - Fire damage is visible as tarnish and oxidation on the starboard side amidships above the waterline and nearby on the deck. Bill Lindemann note

"Stan wanted more speed than the V-12 Curtiss, 'cause he wanted to run the Harwood Trophy Race around Manhattan Island, so I spent a year rebuilding the aluminum bottom, and all new beds for a World War II V-12 Allison aircraft engine. We never did iron all the wrinkles out of it as the 33' x 6' wanted to roll over if you had enough guts to push past 67 mph." Dick Clarke

However, by the time of Lake Tahoe's first Gold Cup race in 1953, though Mercury was entered, she was obviously second in importance to Dollar's newer boat, Short Snorter, which won that year. Mercury's final appearance in a race was in an exhibition heat in the Tahoe Yacht Club's 1958 regatta, taking a few laps alongside J.P. Murphy's BREATHLESS. (From "Mercury, Dollar's Duraluminum Dynamo, Written by Carol Van Etten, TahoeMariTimes, Special History Supplement, March 1997, Tahoe Maritime Museum).

Mercury was entered in Tahoe's first Gold Cup Race in 1953, Carol Van Etten, Tahoe MariTimes, March 1997, Tahoe Maritime Museum Special History Supplement.

### **Restoring The Mercury: World's Fastest Boat in 1926**

...Nine hundred seventy-nine pieces of duraluminum were fastened with 14,250 rivets, 7,087 bolts, 238 screws...

Dick Clarke, Dollar's mechanic, received the assignment in the late 1940's to drive more power from the old boat. The bottom and engine rails were rebuilt to accommodate an Allison V-12. At speeds of 67 mph the boat wanted to ride up on its chine and threatened to roll-over. Clarke determined the Allison was unsafe and a Curtiss was reinstalled. Mercury was back in the boathouse, not to race again. Dollar would occasionally order her out for a leisurely cruise around Carnelian Bay in front of his Tahoe home.

The boat was left to the League To Save Lake Tahoe by Stanley Dollar Jr.'s estate and his widow, the late Nancy Dollar, following his death in 1975. The League, finding the gift antithetical to its mission in turn re-gifted Mercury to the Sierra State Parks Foundation. Mercury was then moved to the Sugar Pine Point State Park South Boathouse for storage, sans engine, where she remained on view through the dusty windows. The Foundation transferred title for the boat to California Sate Parks in 1995. Parks with the aid of volunteers and funding from the Tahoe Yacht Club Foundation made the boathouse and the boat accessible for viewing.

Seventy-five years after her first victory, State Parks, then Director, Rusty Areias and Sierra District Superintendent John Knott determined the boat would go back in the water under her own power. After a thorough bilge cleaning, examination and float test for seaworthiness the process began. Due to operational safety and cost concerns modern power was the only considerable option. A Mercury Marine, V-8, 420 hp, gasoline engine was specified by Pat Bagan of Sierra Boat Company to do the job. In 2002 Mercury made the trip to a local boat shop via barge supplied by Tahoe Marine and Excavating. The new engine was installed with minimal retrofit under contract by Frank Casey with Western Runabouts.

Subsequent operation has proved the weight to power ratio of the new configuration to be the best ever. Running on Tahoe at 6,226 feet above sea-level, at about 90% of throttle, she was recently clocked by a follow boat at 55 mph.

August of 2003, Mercury made her debut at the Concours d'Elegance, Tahoe's annual classic boat show. Crowds of curious enthusiasts praised State Parks for their efforts at maintaining and interpreting maritime history at the lake. Excerpted from **California State Parks, Cultural Landscapes webpage**

### **Stanley Dollar and His Passion for Speed**

**by Leo Poppoff** - The following biography is included for its relevance to the level of competitive boat racing at Lake Tahoe and on the national/international circuit in which R. Stanley Dollar Jr. participated.

". . . spectators were horrified to see the Mercury, speeding across the finish line at the end of the first lap, suddenly leap sideways in the rough water. Apparently thrown out of control as it leaped the edge of a deep trough, the Mercury threatened to turn completely over. With its gleaming hull bottom entirely out of water, Dollar and his companion were thrown from the boat."

That was a description by a Tahoe Tattler reporter during the 1937 running of the annual July speedboat races offshore of the Tahoe Tavern pier. Stanley Dollar's companion was his close friend, copilot and riding mechanic, Ollie Meek.

...Stanley, Ollie and Phyllis (Jayred) grew up together in Piedmont, and Phyllis later married Ollie. Her recollections of Stanley were that he "was a wonderful person - very handsome - a darling from day one that I remember - and so full of fun. "I remember tagging after them, so wherever they went, they'd take me. They put me to work cleaning spark plugs and the bilge. My mother almost had a fit. They used to try the boats out on me. Because I was lighter than they were, they'd get me in a boat to see how fast I could go.

"Ollie was kind of the mechanic. They always raced together. They were very close and loved racing. At Tahoe, every year, people would just wait for Stanley's boat."

A large part of the anticipation was the classic rivalry between the Stanley Dollars and the Henry Kaisers.

Phyllis recalled that "the Kaisers and Dollars were good friends. The Kaisers had crews working on their boats. Ollie and Stanley and various friends - and girl friends - worked on Stanley's boat. They were the underdogs, and I remember that sometimes they weren't sure that they could get Stanley's boat over to the races.

"They'd get there just in time to race because they were still working on the darn thing. I remember one time it looked like they were holding the boat together with wires - and they beat Kaiser again.

"One of the reasons Stanley's father bought him the Baby Skip-A-Long (a beautiful mahogany speedboat) was to have something competitive to chase Kaiser," Dick Clarke recalled.

Dick worked for Stanley at the Sierra Boat Company, which he managed for many years.

"Skip-A-Long would usually win," according to Dick, "though Kaiser had a hopped-up Gar Wood and quite a few other boats.

"Stanley was very popular. His father was commodore of the Tahoe Yacht Club and Stan was (commodore) later. Those old Tahoe races were memorable," Dick remembers. "Rivalries were always exciting. Everyone had their engines tweaked. The racing was fun, a lot of fun. You could go to the races and run what you brought and have a big time. And if you bumped into somebody, you went home and patched your boat."

In a 1949 interview with Curley Grieve, sports editor of the San Francisco Examiner, Stanley Dollar recalled the beginnings of his racing career. "When I was 10, father got me a runabout, then an outboard and later a hydroplane. But what sold me on speedboats was a ride with Gar Wood. It was the first time I'd gone 100 miles per hour. I'll never forget it . . . the most thrilling moment of my life."

Yet Stanley Dollar had been bitten by the speed bug long before that memorable ride.

According to a 1949 article in the Philippine Republic Press, Dollar "started racing before he was old enough to drive an automobile. When Stanley was 17, he made a trip around the world with his father, R. Stanley Dollar Sr. (president of Dollar Steamship Lines), his mother and his sister. He took his 28-foot speedboat and raced it in various ports where the cruise ship stopped . . . in Manila, he won all the races of a regatta staged in his honor.

"In 1935," according to the article, "Dollar built a speedboat, named Uncle Sam, and took it to Paris for the Spreckels Trophy Race."

He was the only American in the race. The newspaper reported that Stanley was ahead for the first half, "but the steering gear jammed and the boat overturned twice at 70 mph." Luckily, he was unhurt. "Dollar has rolled up an

imposing string of victories. He won the Lake Tahoe championship 10 times," the reporter added.

World War II disrupted the fun at Tahoe, just as it did around the world. Stanley and his buddy, Ollie, enlisted in the 143rd Field Artillery unit and went to the Philippines. Through all the action of World War II in the South Pacific, Stanley Dollar and Ollie Meek dreamed of better and faster boats. By the time they returned home, Stanley had a major's commission, a bronze star and plans for a dream speedboat, the Skip-A-Long of California.

The Stanley and Ollie team set up shop in the East Bay... "It was a big part of my life," Phyllis Jayred (then Ollie's wife) recalls. "We all struggled over that darned thing for years. Of course, they had to work, too. They both worked for the Dollar Company."

In the fall of 1948, Stanley, Ollie and the sleek Skip-A-Long of California ran the fastest lap of the Silver Cup race at Detroit, with an average speed of 78.182 mph.

The Harnsworth was an international speedboat race that had been held in England. Gar Wood won it for the United States in 1920 and brought it to the Detroit Yacht Club. Because of a lack of foreign challengers and the war, the race hadn't been run since 1933.

But in 1949, Italy and Canada challenged the United States. Stanley and Ollie aimed to be on the defending team. They redesigned and rebuilt the Skip-A-Long. It was described as a 30-foot long, 12-foot wide aluminum hydroplane, equipped with a 2,000-horsepower Allison V-12 aircraft engine.

Before leaving for Detroit, Skip-A-Long had 1,000 miles of test runs on the Sacramento Delta, with speeds up to 119 mph in the straightaway and 85 mph in the turns. By comparison, Gar Wood's record was 124.915 mph and Sir Malcolm Campbell had hit 141 mph. By June 27, 1949, according to Detroit newspapers, 26 yacht clubs planned to compete for the fame and the honor of defending the Harnsworth Trophy.

Besides Stanley Dollar, the list included Stanley's longtime rival, the indomitable Henry Kaiser. Kaiser's boat, designed to go 160 to 180 mph, was to be piloted by the famous bandleader and speedboat racer, Guy Lombardo. After its extensive testing, the Skip-A-Long, was ready for Detroit.

...Bill Stroh, a veteran speedboat builder and pilot had been sent to California to evaluate the Skip-A-Long for the Detroit Yacht Club. He was

impressed and, in a Detroit News article, stated that the Skip-A-Long of California was the U.S. hope.

News articles described R. Stanley Dollar Jr. as quiet and reserved, 34-years-old, 6 feet tall, 165 lbs., with wavy brown hair and brown eyes. They also noted that he was vice president of the Dollar Company, belonged to many prestigious San Francisco clubs and was commodore of the Lake Tahoe Yacht Club. One reporter observed that Dollar was happiest "sitting around on a dock in coveralls."

...By July 2, there were only nine entrants left in the Gold Cup contest. A race record of 75.599 mph was set by the Skip-A-Long. But Stanley came in second, beaten by "Wild Bill" Cantrell (a former race car driver) in My Sweetie, designed by John Hacker. On July 4, 125,000 spectators watched Stanley win the Henry Ford Cup Memorial Races. Skip-A-Long of California set a race record for that 90-mile course at 78.098 mph. Skip-A-Long had battery trouble, but the other racers waited 20 minutes for Stanley to change batteries. That victory was followed by winning the Percy Jones Regatta (and setting a record of 86.127 mph) in Gull Lake. Three boats sank and two men were seriously injured during this grueling race.

...Their impressive performance in Detroit won Stanley Dollar and his Skip-A-Long first place on the defending U.S. team for the 1949 Harnsworth International Speed Boat Race. Stanley placed second in the first 42-mile heat of the Harnsworth, losing 12 minutes when Skip-A-Long shipped water while passing My Sweetie. The winner was Dan Arena with Such Crust I. But Stanley came back on July 30 and won the second heat with a new record of 94.285 mph. Such Crust was ahead but broke down a half-mile from the finish.

News articles noted that "Dollar was gracious in allowing a delay so Such Crust and Miss Canada could be repaired." The Skip-A-Long crew worked till 1 a.m. to help repair the Such Crust.

The Harnsworth Committee ruled that the trophy would be awarded to the winner of a 16-mile runoff on Aug. 1. In the meanwhile, Stanley entered the 100-mile marathon and won first prize, a four-door Chrysler sedan. He then won the runoff for the Harnsworth Trophy.

Stanley Dollar, Ollie Meek and the remarkable Skip-A-Long of California won 13 heats, the Ford Memorial Trophy Gull Lake Trophy, Harnsworth Trophy, and the Marathon. The 1949 Silver Cup was still to be won, but Stanley decided that he'd been away too long - it was time to get back to work.

...Skip-A-Long was entered in the Lake Tahoe unlimited races on August 14. Stanley consented to give the crowd an exhibition of Skip-A-Long's speed before the race. After two impressive laps at 100 mph, the boat began to take on water. Stanley cut the speed and tried to edge it toward shore. Three boats rushed out to help.

Dick Clarke, driving a customer's boat (the Zimmeru) that he had raced, saw the Skip-A-Long get lower and lower in the water. "I went out with this Chris Sportsman with a big Scripps-12 engine in it and said you guys need to get to shore, but quick. So I took them in tow and headed for the beach down near Homewood. She (the Skip-A-Long) went down - and it started to pull this 25-foot Sportsman down." According to news reports, Stanley dove into the lake and attempted to cut the rope on the Zimmeru's propeller.

"I was in back beating on the tow rope," Dick remembers. "The line finally broke just about the time the poop deck of the Sportsman was about to go under. We popped out of the water like a great big cork."

...Frantic attempts to salvage the Skip-A-Long continued into the fall. Ollie Meek fashioned special drag lines. The Navy helped. But they couldn't locate it. Finally, charges were dropped to rupture fuel tanks. Skip-A-Long was located by the sheen of released gasoline. The boat was hooked once, but was lost when the power winch started to pull the drag line.

For 35 years, Skip-A-Long of California rested under some 500 feet of water in Lake Tahoe. In 1984, it was located using an underwater video camera and then raised. It's now in storage at the Race Boat and Hydroplane Museum in Seattle.

Stanley Dollar, Ollie Meek and a partner bought the Sierra Boat Company in the fall of 1953. Dick Clarke, who had restored boats for Stanley, joined them. Stanley continued to race at Tahoe and once in Seattle.

Later years weren't kind to this gracious, fun-loving boat racer, who helped make the Tahoe racing scene so exciting. His two daughters and daughter-in-law died in tragic accidents. Stanley died of cancer in 1975, as did Ollie several years later.

The Dollar estate at Carnelian Bay became the Dollar Hill and Chinquapin developments. And the Dollar estate in Walnut Creek is now the Rossmoor retirement community.

But memories of golden days of roaring speedboats, pulling rooster tails and skipping along Tahoe's sparkling waters - and the fun of the Dollar-Kaiser rivalries - live on, as does the marvelous Skip-A-Long of California.

Phyllis Jayred, Dick Clarke, Herb Hall and Joe Meek were very gracious in sharing their memories with me a few years ago. Joe Meek generously allowed me to study his father's scrapbooks. Thanks to all.

Leo Poppoff is a retired atmospheric physicist with NASA and has been a member of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's advisory planning commission since 1983. He is also a former member of the Lahontan Water Quality Control Board. **Tahoe.com website October/November 1999**

Skip-Along is on view at the Tahoe Maritime Museum in Truckee, CA

### **Other Sources**

Nick Hamersley, grandson of Louis Gordon Hamersley,

Tahoe Maritime Museum: [www.tahoemaritimemuseum.org](http://www.tahoemaritimemuseum.org), video, **Mercury: The Legacy Lives**. The museum is located in Homewood, California several miles north of Sugar Pine Point State Park on the West Shore of Lake Tahoe. The TMM has "Teaser" in its collection a boat that "Cigarette IV" may have raced against in 1926.



Mystic Seaport, the Museum of America and the Sea, 75 Greenmanville Avenue, PO Box 6000, Mystic, CT 06355-0990, [www.mysticseaport.org](http://www.mysticseaport.org)

The following photographic images have been located in the Rosenfeld Collection at Mystic Seaport.

## Photographs

### ID Number Title Description

1984.187.20040F Cigarette IV, hydroplane, D4  
underway, starboard bow view, August 19, 1926

1984.187.20041F Cigarette IV, hydroplane, D4  
in a sling being hauled over the side of a barge by a crane to be put in the  
water, August 19, 1926

1984.187.20617F Cigarette IV, hydroplane, D4  
underway, starboard beam view, Detroit Races, 1926

1984.187.20618F Cigarette IV, hydroplane, D4  
underway, starboard beam view, Detroit Races, September 1926

1984.187.20649F Cigarette IV, hydroplane, D4 , and Miss Syndicate, D1  
underway, racing Miss Syndicate, starboard bow view  
Detroit Races, September, 1926

1984.187.20817F Cigarette IV, hydroplane, D4  
underway, port beam view, President's Cup, September 17, 1926

1984.187.20860F Cigarette IV, hydroplane, D4  
President's Cup Races, 1926 Handwritten negative sleeve info.: "Stern of  
Cigarette IV, D4." Stamped info.: "Washington 1926." Original Box 1630

1984.187.20866F Cigarette IV, hydroplane, D4  
President's Cup Races, 1926 Handwritten negative sleeve info.: "Stern of  
Cigarette IV, detail." Stamped info.: "Washington 1926." Original Box 1630

1984.187.20872F Cigarette IV, hydroplane, D4  
President's Cup Races, underway, port beam view, Washington, D.C., September  
17, 1926

1984.187.20873F Cigarette IV, hydroplane, D4  
President's Cup Races, underway, port beam view, Washington, D.C., September  
17, 1926

1984.187.20898F President's Cup Races, race start, View of race start, port beam  
view of Cigarette IV, hydroplane # D4, Handwritten neg. sleeve info.: "Start  
President's Cup." Stamped info.: "Washington 1926." Original box 1632

1984.187.20910F President's Cup Races, race start, View of race start, port bow view of Cigarette IV, hydroplane # D4, Handwritten neg. sleeve info.: "Start President's Cup." Stamped info.: "Washington 1926." Original box 1633

1984.187.21233F Cigarette IV, hydroplane, D1 underway, port beam view, October 21, 1926

1984.187.21234F Cigarette IV, hydroplane, D1, 1926 Cigarette IV, hydroplane underway, starboard bow view, October 21, 1926

1984.187.21235F Cigarette IV, hydroplane, D1, 1926 Cigarette IV, hydroplane. Underway, port beam view, October 21, 1926

1984.187.21236F Cigarette IV, Louis Gordon Hamersley and mechanic, October 21, 1926

1984.187.21237F Cigarette IV, Louis Gordon Hamersley and Mr. Newham, October 21, 1926

1984.187.21238F Cigarette IV, Louis Gordon Hamersley at the wheel, October 21, 1926

Mystic Seaport Museum Ships Library, Ships Plans (copies acquired)

CIGARETTE IV designed by F.K. Lord.

**Plans** identified as CIGARETTE (copies acquired)

catalog # 76.157 -- 1 sheet -- hoisting gear. Also shows the boat in profile and section.

catalog # 76.276 -- 1 sheet -- preliminary lines for a towing tank model. Has a good body plan.

catalog # 76.290 -- 1 sheet -- racing clutch

Plans for an unidentified 35' speed boat designed in March 1926  
catalog # 76.76 -- 3 sheets -- lines, offsets, arrangement (confirmed as Cigarette IV)

### **Significant Historical Interpretive Period(s)**

**1926** Louis Gordon Hamersley, New York, New York

**1937 – 1974** Robert Stanley Dollar Jr., Lake Tahoe, California

1975 – 2000 Sierra State Parks Foundation

1995 – Present California State Parks

### **Keywords/Names**

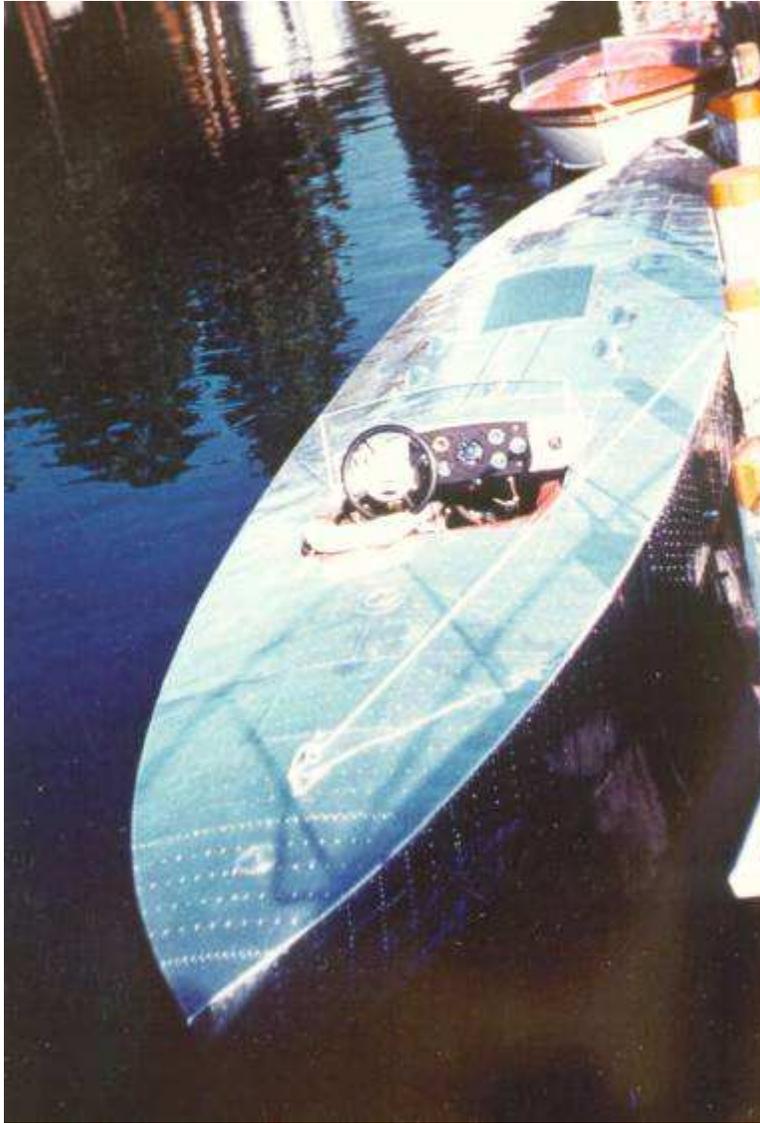
Cigarette IV, D-4, Mercury, Louis Gordon Hamersley, Frederick K. Lord, Robert Stanley Dollar Jr. (Stan), President Calvin Coolidge, Ollie Meek, Jack Sweetland, Henry J. Kaiser Sr., Herbert Fleishhacker, Horace E. Dodge, 1926 President's Gold Cup Race, 1938 Tahoe Lake Championship Race, Brewster Auto Body Works, Curtiss Aircraft, Allison aircraft, duraluminum, Columbia Yacht Club, Lake Tahoe Power Boat Club,

### **Primary and Secondary Interpretive Themes**

1. Cigarette IV, undoubtedly a maritime engineering marvel in 1926.
  - A. Cigarette IV is built for Louis Gordon Hamersley of Manhattan, New York.
  - B. Cigarette IV is designed by Frederick K. Lord a noted naval architect.
  - C. Cigarette IV is built under the veil of secrecy at the Brewster Auto Body manufacturing plant in Long Island City, New York.
  - D. The boat is built entirely of duraluminum, an alloy of aluminum and steel, heat treated for increased flexibility and stability.
  - E. The boat is the lightest craft of its kind, 34' long 6' beam single step hull weighs approximately 850 lbs.
  - F. Built to withstand tremendous torque and pressure the design uses z-bar ribs at every rivet line to stabilize hull.
  - G. The bottom is fastened with unslotted, flush, aluminum machine screws and is maintained water tight.

- H. The hull sides and deck are all riveted, chine and keel are bolted.
  - I. F.K. Lord a noted marine architect is the designer.
  - J. Incorporates new technology, built prior to aluminum skinned aircraft
2. Cigarette IV, racing number D-4, is one of the fastest boats on the water in 1926.
- A. Cigarette IV `s original powerplant was a Curtiss aircraft D-12, V-12 engine that developed 625 horsepower.
  - B. Cigarette IV places first in September 1926, first President's Gold Cup Race with an average speed of 58.8 miles per hour.
  - C. Cigarette IV often raced against Teaser, a boat on display at the Tahoe Maritime Museum building in Truckee, California.
  - D. Teaser set a speed record from Manhattan to Albany and back, Hamersley intended to beat that record with Mercury in October of 1926, but apparently he did not run the race.
  - E. Hamersley apparently did not race Cigarette IV again after the President's Cup win.
  - F. Hamersley showed the boat in the January, '27 Boat Show in Manhattan.
  - G. From 1927 to 1937 the boat was most likely in storage and apparently not used.
3. Cigarette IV comes to Lake Tahoe for good.
- A. Robert Stanley Dollar Junior acquires Cigarette IV from Hamersley in 1937, moves the boat to Tahoe and renames it Mercury.
  - B. Dollar races Mercury at Tahoe with his partner and mechanic Ollie Meek.

- C. Mercury's first showing is in the Lake Tahoe Power Boat Club's (Tahoe Yacht Club) 1937 Lake Championship Race. Dollar places second with Mercury behind Herbert Fleishhacker's May-Be-Not-II and ahead of Henry Kaiser's Hornet II.
- D. Dick Clarke repowers Mercury with a V-12 World War II Allison Aircraft engine.
- E. Overpowered and over-torqued the boat does not perform above 67 miles per hour.
- F. Mercury is the camera boat for filming "A Place in the Sun" on Tahoe in 1951, starring Montgomery Clift and Elizabeth Taylor.
- G. Mercury makes her final race appearance at an exhibition heat in 1958.
- H. Save for an occasional trip with Stanley around Carnelian Bay, Mercury is sent to the boat house



Mercury sports a windshield at Sierra Boat for filming.

4. Mercury afloat and adrift after Stan's passing, needs a good home.
  - A. The now late Nancy Dollar, Stanley's widow, gifts Mercury to the League To Save Lake Tahoe.
  - B. The board of the League determines owning a race boat is antithetical to their mission.
  - C. The boat must be re-gifted to another non-profit organization but who? Where?
  - D. The Tahoe Sierra State Parks Foundation, in league with the California Department of Parks and Recreation accepts the

gift and moves Mercury to the South Boat House at Sugar Pine Point State Park.

- E. The boat is almost entirely neglected, left uncovered and unprotected until 1988.
  - F. A new program to care for and exhibit the boat is carried out with the help of dedicated volunteers.
  - G. The South Boat House is opened to the public daily in summers beginning in 1997.
5. Mercury the legend lives on.
- H. Mercury crosses the lake, on a sling from a barge, a static exhibit at the 2000 Concours de'Elegance.
  - I. That year, polished for the first time since before 1975, it takes three people three days to hand rub the shiny boat's finish to full luster.
  - J. The bilge is cleaned after the show and exhibits no leaks, contrary to most opinions.
  - K. The boat is repowered for the fourth time with modern power, a 2001 MercCruiser 8.9 Litre V-8.
  - L. For the first time since 1975 (and since Stan Dollar's death that year), Mercury appears in the 2003 Concours de'Elegance, under her own power.
  - M. The program for interpretive use of the boat is carried out each summer and the boat is back in service.



Mercury Underway Sugar Pine Point 2005

### **Parallel Themes**

1. Boating was a necessity at Sugar Pine Point before 1913.
2. Boating was a family transportation and recreational activity for over 100 years at Pine Lodge.
1. Thrills of speed and challenge are enjoyed by spectators and racers for many decades at Lake Tahoe.
2. Several notable boat racers on Lake Tahoe enjoyed prominence internationally.
3. Keeping the past alive at Lake Tahoe is both a joy and a responsibility for those who participate in it.

### **Exhibit Recommendations**

Although the boat is on exhibit in the South Boat House and the boat house is generally, though inconsistently, open to the public during the days, during the summers; additional supporting interpretation may be considered. There are two venues for interpretation of the boat: 1) is in the boat house and two 2) portable exhibits for the boat away from the boat house (these would necessarily have to be small enough and durable enough to travel on-board the boat).

Exhibits could be historical from both periods of use and ownership as well as contemporary showing the boat in-use for various interpretive venues and

purposes. Many images and drawings should be used to illustrate the exhibit text.

The viewing area in the boat house should be routinely opened to the public daily, in summer, through the personnel door into the wire screened area where the interpretive panels are located. Visitors should not be permitted into the boat bay area, ever. The lakeside boat house doors should not be opened by anyone except designated boat launch crew members. The boat house should be secured every night. Volunteers could greatly strengthen all three program areas, maintenance, operation and interpretation. Damage to the boat bay doors of both boat houses has been done by untrained personnel improperly securing the closed doors.

The boats should be uncovered in the summertime and kept clean and free of dust. Weekly cleaning of the boats and the boat house will only be performed by trained curatorial designated staff or boat launch crew (Boat House and Mercury Only). The boats should be covered for the winter whenever it is feasible.

Blue polyethylene tarps are suspended from the rafters to catch bird and bat droppings to prevent the acidic droppings from coming into contact with the aluminum. These may need to be periodically inspected and cleaned or replaced when the boat is not in the boat house.

The historic Curtiss aircraft engine on the display stand does not have an artifact accession number and is in-use as an interpretive exhibit display. Rebuilding the Curtiss has been considered and may at some time be done. If it were made to be operable it would be for the display and probably not for use in the boat because of the unreliability of and safety issues for operating such an engine.

Some time in the future the restoration and operation of the original instrument cluster gauges on the historic dash may be considered.

## **Volunteers**

Volunteers may be used to augment staff for all phases of the program. This program will be maintained through the support of the District Superintendent and District Interpretive Specialist. Volunteers with special training will be known as docents.

Reporting location SPPSP South Boathouse

The Volunteer/Docent for the Mercury Boat program will be involved in all the activities of the Mercury Operation as stated in the Mercury Operational Plan

(see attached) and will be under the direct supervision of the Sierra District Interpretive Specialist (DIS).

A Volunteer will be considered to have attained Docent status after receiving 40 hours of instruction through participation in the Mercury Program and upon approval of the DIS. Volunteers will be exposed to and participate in most aspects of routine maintenance and operation.

A Docent may be considered for Operator status after one full season as a docent and having received extensive hands-on training in on the water operations including docking and retrieval in varying conditions and with the approval of the DIS and the District Superintendent.

Duties may include: lifting in excess of 75 lbs., bending, cranking a manual winch, pushing and pulling, navigating dangerous obstacles on a wet and slippery surface, climbing a ladder, operating electrical equipment, submerging to the waist in cold lake waters with uncertain footing, long hours, working with manual and power tools, working in high solar exposure, working near high decibel sound output, manual dexterity, visual acuity, problem solving.

Hazards include: gasoline, gas fumes, oil, carbon monoxide fumes, wet surfaces, boat operation, passenger loading/unloading, working in confined spaces, working in cold water, exposure, hypothermia, heat stroke, working in high solar gain conditions, electrical shock and loud sounds.

### **Applicable Education Content Standards**

Kindergarten Through Grade Five

Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills

The intellectual skills noted below are to be learned through, and applied to, the content standards for kindergarten through grade five. They are to be assessed only in conjunction with the content standards in kindergarten through grade five. In addition to the standards for kindergarten through grade five, students demonstrate the following intellectual, reasoning, reflection, and research skills:

Chronological and Spatial Thinking

1. Students place key events and people of the historical era they are studying in a chronological sequence and within a spatial context; they interpret time lines.

2. Students correctly apply terms related to time, including past, present, future, decade, century, and generation.

3. Students explain how the present is connected to the past, identifying both similarities and differences between the two, and how some things change over time and some things stay the same.

4. Students use map and globe skills to determine the absolute locations of places and interpret information available through a map's or globe's legend, scale, and symbolic representations.

5. Students judge the significance of the relative location of a place (e.g., proximity to a harbor, on trade routes) and analyze how relative advantages or disadvantages can change over time.

#### Research, Evidence, and Point of View

1. Students differentiate between primary and secondary sources.

2. Students pose relevant questions about events they encounter in historical documents, eyewitness accounts, oral histories, letters, diaries, artifacts, photographs, maps, artworks, and architecture.

3. Students distinguish fact from fiction by comparing documentary sources on historical figures and events with fictionalized characters and events.

#### Historical Interpretation

1. Students summarize the key events of the era they are studying and explain the historical contexts of those events.

2. Students identify the human and physical characteristics of the places they are studying and explain how those features form the unique character of those places.

3. Students identify and interpret the multiple causes and effects of historical events.

4. Students conduct cost-benefit analyses of historical and current events.

## **Grade Three**

### Continuity and Change

Students in grade three learn more about our connections to the past and the ways in which particularly local, but also regional and national, government and traditions have developed and left their marks on current society, providing common memories.

Emphasis is on the physical and cultural landscape of California, including the study of American Indians, the subsequent arrival of immigrants, and the impact they have had in forming the character of our contemporary society.

3.1 Students describe the physical and human geography and use maps, tables, graphs, photographs, and charts to organize information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context.

1. Identify geographical features in their local region (e.g., deserts, mountains, valleys, hills, coastal areas, oceans, lakes).

2. Trace the ways in which people have used the resources of the local region and modified the physical environment (e.g., a dam constructed upstream changed a river or coastline).

3.3 Students draw from historical and community resources to organize the sequence of local historical events and describe how each period of settlement left its mark on the land.

1. Research the explorers who visited here, the newcomers who settled here, and the people who continue to come to the region, including their cultural and religious traditions and contributions.

2. Describe the economies established by settlers and their influence on the present-day economy, with emphasis on the importance of private property and entrepreneurship.

3. Trace why their community was established, how individuals and families contributed to its founding and development, and how the community has changed over time, drawing on maps, photographs, oral histories, letters, newspapers, and other primary sources.