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Always NW 360

The Cincinnati Gardens has on exhibit the world's record-breaking "Hoosier Boy" for the 1966 Boat Show because of the unique place in boating history occupied by the Rising Sun, Indiana, racer.

J. W. (Row) Whitlock built and raced the boat. He and mechanic Harvey Bryam rode the Hoosier Boy on its most famous run—from Cincinnati to Louisville and back in the running time of 267 minutes and 49 seconds on October 9, 1924.

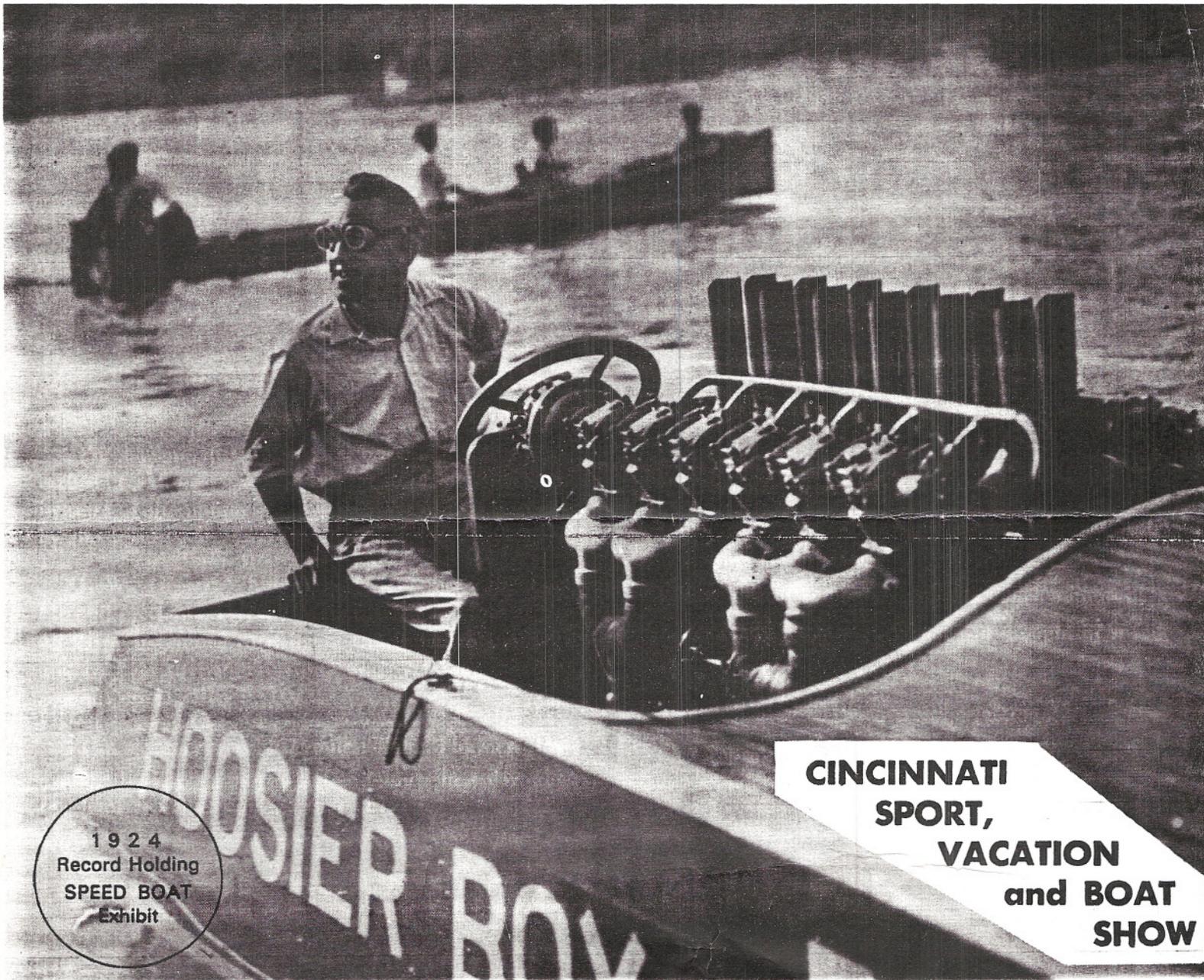
The distance was 267 miles. The Hoosier Boy's average time was almost a mile a minute in a day when few land vehicles could go that fast.

Capt. Fred Way, author and former pilot and master of the Steamer Betsy Ann, and something of a speed merchant himself in the days when the Betsy raced the Greene Line steamboats, said:

"The idea of somebody going a mile-a-minute back then was really something. When you thought of speed, you thought of Whitlock."

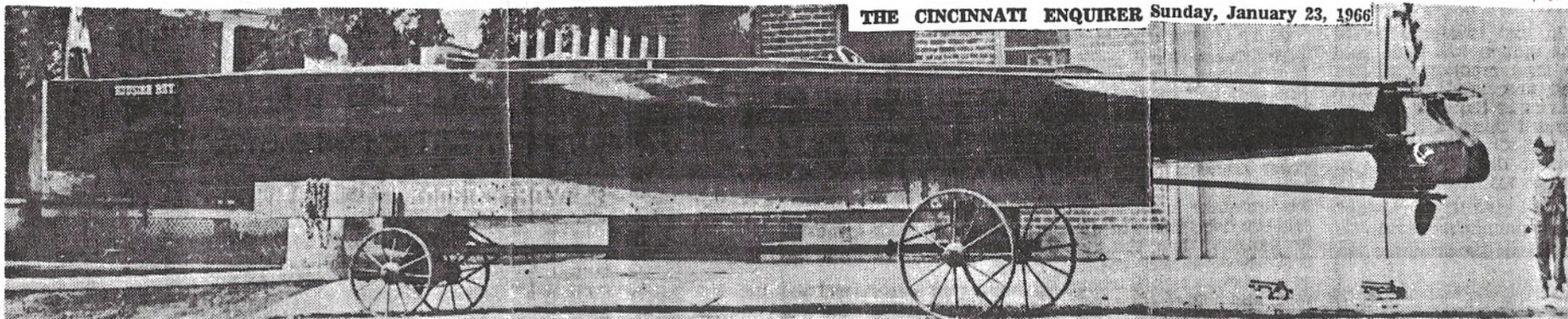
See reprint of Cincinnati Enquirer story inside.

CINCINNATI GARDENS Feb. 18-27



1924
Record Holding
SPEED BOAT
Exhibit

**CINCINNATI
SPORT,
VACATION
and BOAT
SHOW**



Hoosier Boy No. 1 Set A Record Still Unbeaten

... the boy pulling toy trucks is Mr. Whitlock's son, who now operates Rising Sun chair factory

To Mr. Whitlock's Ears

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Sweet Music: Hoosier Boy's Roar

BY JACK SIMCOX
Of The Enquirer Staff

RISING SUN, Ind.—Twelve-mile-an-hour packet boats were landing here regularly in 1907 when J. W. (Row) Whitlock set out on a project that would produce a boat to go a mile a minute.

But, then, they always did say Row Whitlock was 30 years ahead of his time.

The peak of this inventive man's career came October 9, 1924, when he drove his "Hoosier Boy" racer from Cincinnati to Louisville and back (267 miles) in 267 minutes and 49 seconds.

He had gone faster and he would do so again, but the challenge for him lay in the Ohio Valley and the river that runs past Rising Sun.

Whitlock did not stop at Cincinnati after his record run. He waved to the crowd on the bank and sped back to Rising Sun. There was a six-foot gash in the boat's hull where a board ripped loose. It meant if he stopped, he would sink.

The long run was a record—and a disappointment. A mile a minute in 1924 was equivalent in the minds of men to the speed of

sound today—and to miss it by 49 seconds . . .

BUT Row Whitlock was not a man to dwell for long on disappointment.

He said only once: "If we had not run into the wake of half a dozen tow-boats with barges, we would have made it in 60 flat or better."

The record he set, nevertheless, still stands. Whitlock made his run before the locks and dams were built on the Ohio in the late 1920s.

He died in 1935 at the age of 64, and like many champions today who remain active past the anticipated age, he was often reported to be much older—as old as 70—particularly after winning a big race.

Besides racing, Whitlock

had a zest for most other areas of life. A few seemingly insignificant things in his background appear to have given him tremendous incentive and many ideas. For instance:

- His close boyhood friendship with Harry Conner, a harp player who later became a well-known orchestra leader in Cincinnati.

- The "one-armed bandits" he saw as a youth while working in saw mills in Louisiana.

- And, of course, Rising Sun's close ties with the Ohio River.

THE VILLAGE was a stop for packets of the old Louisville & Cincinnati Packet Line.

"The City of Louisville" of that company once made the run from Cincinnati to Louisville (132 miles) in five hours and 59 minutes — also a record that still stands.

The record steam boat run was made in 1907. It seems more than coincidental that Row Whitlock first showed a deep interest

in boats and speed on the river the same year.

Whitlock spent the five years just before the turn of the century inventing an automatic harp that played a roll of music for a nickel. It was the forerunner of the juke box.

He sold the invention to the Rudolph Wurlitzer Co., of Cincinnati, then contracted to manufacture 1000 of the player harps for Wurlitzer.

From the player harp business, in 1914 he organized the J. W. Whitlock Furniture Co. at Rising Sun and made "Whitlock's Walnut Wonders," quality chairs.

With the furniture business, he operated probably the largest hardwood lumber business in Indiana. He also ran the ferry "Katie Whitlock" between Rising Sun and Rabbit Hash, Ky.

WHATEVER ELSE he was, Whitlock was an innovator and he sometimes worked in secrecy to avoid scoffers.

He invented the forerunner of the modern "swamp

buggy" in secrecy atop one of his factory buildings. The shallow draft vessel was driven through the water by an airplane propeller fanning the air.

And despite all his other activities, Whitlock and a succession of Hoosier Boys raced throughout the U. S. He was beaten only twice in 19 years.

Once he was disqualified for exceeding the speed limit—his boat was entered in a pleasure boat class. Another time, he hit a log and sank.

But at the same regatta, the boat was raised and repaired. It won the other events in which it was entered.

Whitlock usually entered his boat in the tough "free-for-all" class that would correspond to the unlimited class in today's hydroplane racing.

He won the Webb Trophy, symbol of racing superiority, three times—the first time at Louisville before a crowd of 75,000. The Rising Sun boat beat "The Fore,"

owned by W. D. Foreman of Chicago.

Row Whitlock undoubtedly was the greatest boat racer of his day and it is possible that he was the greatest of all time.

His son, Stewart Whitlock, runs the chair factory at Rising Sun now and a boat harbor just down the street where the ferry used to dock.

But prominent yet in an upstairs office at the family plant is Row Whitlock's trophy case, packed with the mementos of many victories.

Throughout his life, Whitlock flirted with sound and music. Besides inventing the player harp, he also developed a new kind of phonograph and still later manufactured early radio sets.

But there can be little doubt that the sweetest music to Row Whitlock's ear was the unmuffled clatter of the World War I airplane engine that drove the Hoosier Boy to its record run on the Ohio River.

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