

After Michigan became a state in 1837, Holland's boat building tradition took root in the 1840s, as Dutch immigrants crafted flatboats and watercraft for residents. Just a century later, the city's commercial boat building industry flourished. The innovation of fiberglass reinforced plastic changed the traditional structure of boats, revamped the industry and re-created the blueprint for U.S. pleasure boats following World War II. The Roamer Boat Company's masterfully welded sheet steel cabin cruisers led to the 1955 purchase by the Chris-Craft Corporation to create the Roamer Boat Corporation. Local craftsmen, like the Jesiek brothers, found the transition from furniture building to boat building seamless. But with the success of larger manufacturers, smaller boat shops declined.

Geoffrey Reynolds explores the story of Holland's unique legacy of maritime craftsmanship. He will kick off this summer's Live Speaker program in the Pump House Museum and Learning Center at 7pm on July 3rd with a program titled : **Boats Made in Holland: A Michigan Tradition.**

In the Introduction to his book, Mr. Reynolds wrote: "I have for a long time been interested in the long standing and vibrant industry which had largely been forgotten by the Holland area history community. As a historian new to the Holland area in 1997, I soon discovered a whole new set of resources not typically found in archival collections - or used by other researchers and historians. Together, these new sources helped me understand relationships within this local industry and how important they were for its success, both locally and nationwide."



Launch *Knickerbocker* on Black Lake, circa 1900. *Sears Riepma Collection.*

