

Al Pack – The Man, the Myth and the Legend

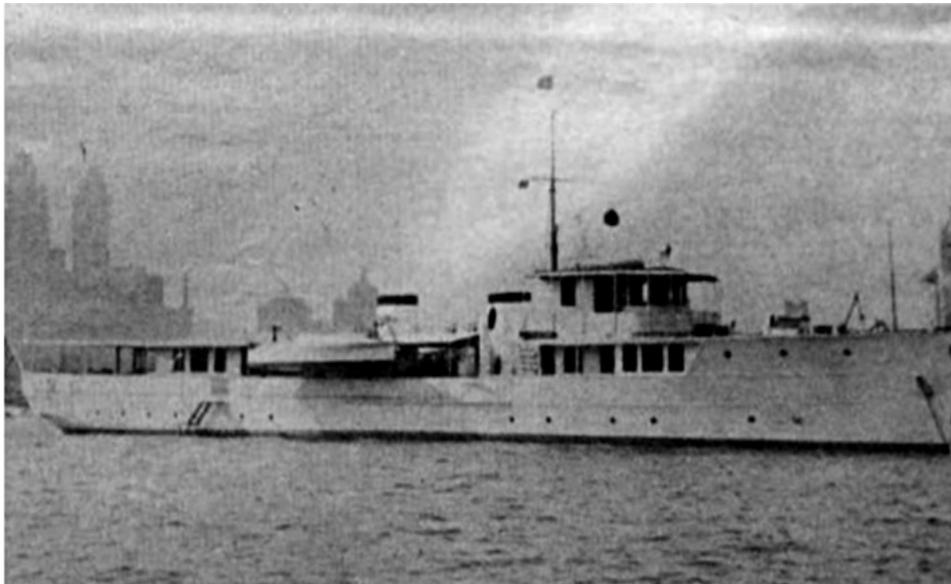
By Barbara Bedau Brow

White Lake Area Historical Society



The first mention of Al Pack's name in this area was an article that appeared in October 1920. It said that he was building a large home at the former Capt. Andrew Flagstad homestead which he had recently purchased. It was an elaborate building that included a 10-car garage and accommodation to launch his 7 or 8 assorted boats.

With this many boats, he soon realized the need for a well-trained, experienced marine mechanic to keep his fleet ship-shape. In 1925, he convinced Joseph "Ed" Barteau to sell his Chicago boat building business and establish a new one here on White Lake.



Breezin Thru

Probably the 2 most well-known of Al Pack's boats were the 140-foot yacht "Breezin Thru" which was purchased in 1925 and sold in 1935, and the 100 foot long schooner "Four Winds" which he purchased in 1936 and had until his death in 1941.

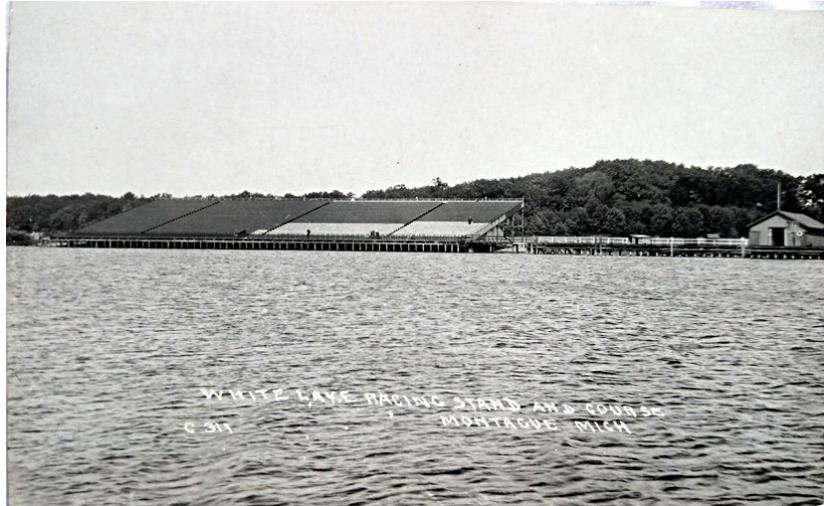


Four Winds

In 1931, he built one of the finest and most elaborate private club houses in the state. The building was 250 feet long by 32 feet wide. At one end of the structure was a two-story gymnasium, 60 feet long by 32 feet wide. The club room was equipped with a game room and included two bowling alleys, shooting galleries, and space for shuffleboard and other indoor games. Outside was a spacious 18-hole miniature golf course. Al Pack named his clubhouse "Painted Post".

He was intensely interested in the community's progress and while not a well-known figure in person in community activities, contributed financially to all promotional projects. Probably his greatest contribution to Montague's progress was made in 1937 when he took over the local foundry, reorganized it and built it into a business of unlimited value to the city.

Commodore Albert Pack of the White Lake Power Boat Association, along with Clarence E. Pitkin representing the Chamber of Commerce met and secured the 18th Annual Regatta of the Mississippi Valley Power Boat Association which was held the weekend of July 3-4-5, 1925. A huge grandstand that would hold 5,000 or more spectators was built in an area near the S.S. Carolina docks in the Maple Grove area on the Montague side of White Lake. While the races were a success, the crowds were less than expected resulting in financial losses for both towns and Commodore Pack, who guaranteed everything.



Grandstands for MVPBA Regatta

Albert Pack was born on 12 March 1890, in Alpena, MI to Albert Pack and Cora Eliza Maltz. His father, a well-known financier, lumberman and politician died when Al was just 8 years old. His mother married John Winslow Hubbard, a Philadelphia industrialist in 1900. As an adult, Al worked in many of his step-father's businesses. He married but was divorced after about 5 years. Al died on 14 November 1941, in Chicago while on a business. He is buried in the family mausoleum in Detroit. His entire estate was purchased by the former Hooker Chemical Company, now Occidental Chemical Company.



View of former Al Pack Estate from White Lake in 2020 (Courtesy of Laura Connell)