

Five Burned as Conesus Lake Speed Boat Blazes

by Unknown Author - The Lima Recorder

August 14, 1936



The Speedboat Gar Wood Burning at Conesus Lake

Mother and Three Children in Hospital from Burns

DeGarmo's "Gar-Wood" Catches Fire Near Long Point Dock

A Rochester woman, her three children, and the pilot of H. E. DeGarmo's 28 foot 210 horse power speedboat were burned between 4 and 5 o'clock Wednesday afternoon when a blanket of flame shot from the motor just as the boat was leaving Long

Point pier at Conesus Lake.

Mrs. Vina O'Connor of Rochester and her children, Jean 7, Mary Lou 5 and Ann 2, were taken to Strong Memorial hospital. They were reported yesterday afternoon to be out of danger from burns, but still suffering from shock. The pilot, Maynard Dowdle, 30, of Rush was able to be around yesterday.

The craft containing the pilot and the other four members of the party had just been pushed away from the pier, and the ignition switch turned on, it is stated, when an explosion was heard in the engine pit and a blanket of flame shot over the passengers. The boat blazed at once, and Dowdle got his passengers into the water, whereupon they were taken from the water and to the hospital. Stanley Bartlett of Livonia assisted.

Mr. DeGarmo states that the boat, which had made a trip only a short time before, seemed to be working properly. He says this is the only accident he has had over a period of twenty-four years. He estimates his loss at nearly \$3,000, and had no insurance on the boat. He has two other boats, "Flash", a speedboat, and "Islander", an excursion boat.

Four Injured in Boat Explosion

by Unknown Author - The Dansville Breeze

August 13, 1936

Woman, Three Children, Pilot are Burned

Speedboat Bursts into Flames at Long Point

A woman, three children and the pilot were burned seriously yesterday afternoon when a speedboat exploded and burned at Long Point, Conesus Lake NY.

The mother and children were taken to Strong Memorial Hospital. The pilot was taken home.

The injured are: Mrs. Vina O'Connor, 35, wife of Frank P. O'Connor, chauffeur for the City Department of Public Works, 204 Thurston Road, Rochester, first, second and third degree burns to head, arms and legs. Her condition is regarded as serious.

Her children, Jean 7, Mary Lou 5, and Ann 2, first and second degree burns to arms, legs and face. Their condition is serious.

Maynard Dowdle, 30, Rush, pilot, said to be a cousin of Mrs. O'Connor, second and third degree burns to hands, arms, face and legs. His condition is not as serious as the others, it was reported.

Witnesses said Mrs. O'Connor, who is partially deaf, and her children climbed aboard the speedboat at the park pier. Dowdle pushed the 28-foot Garwood runabout away from the dock and turned on the ignition switch. The purr of the motor was closely followed by the explosion. The hatches over the motor were blown open and a blanket of flame shot over the passengers. The craft blazed immediately.

Swimmers and pilots of other boats nearby moved closer and picked the children out of the water as Dowdle pushed them from the flaming craft. The water into which they were thrown was about four feet deep. Mrs. O'Connor, apparently confused and unable to hear the cries of "jump", hesitated until Dowdle pushed her overboard, witnesses said. Then the pilot jumped.

As the boat was shoved away from others moored at the pier, the five were rushed to the office of Dr. Homer Bull, Geneseo, who treated their injuries and summoned two ambulances to take the O'Connors to Rochester. Dowdle, after treatment, returned to the scene of the accident and then went to his cottage.

The blazing speedboat was pulled to shore but firemen from Geneseo were called too late to save much of the craft. Herbert De Garmo of Livonia Road, owner, estimated the damage at \$5,000. The run-about sells for about \$6,500 new.

It was said that the craft had been in operation all day on lake excursions but had given no trouble. The accident was seen by a number of Livingston County officials attending the annual supervisor's picnic.

The O'Connor family has been spending the summer at the Long Point cottage of Mrs. O'Connor's father, John Maynard, 100 Kenwood Avenue.

The Lima Recorder

The Dansville Breeze

Editor's note: The mother in this accident, Vina Maynard O'Connor, was born 1901. She died 17 August 1936, five days after the accident.

*Use of all photos and/or text in this article have been approved and granted use courtesy of
www.HemlockandCanadiceLakes.com and www.ConesusLakeNY.org.*