

## Chris Smith Dead

Christopher C. Smith, founder and chairman of the board of the Chris-Craft Corporation, died recently in St. Joseph's hospital, Mt. Clemens.

He was born in Cottrellville Township, St. Clair County, May 20, 1861, and his parents moved to Algonac when he was seven. He went through eight years of public school, grew to young manhood, married Anna M. Rattray of Harsens Island, and raised seven children: Jay W., Mrs. Leigh Merrill, Bernard, Owen, Hamilton, all of Algonac, Mrs. Catherine Wetzel of Lansing, and John who died several years ago.

Sport and a love for duck hunting directed Smith into the business of building boats, but in his life he was more than a river man, more than a small boat builder—he designed and built the boat that brought the Gold Cup to Detroit for the first time. For ten consecutive years, up to 1923, when he left the racing game, a Chris-Smith-built boat won the Gold Cup. He designed and built the first *Miss America* for Gar Wood. The boat that brought the British International Trophy known as the Harmsworth to Detroit where it still remains.

His son, Jay W. Smith, now the head of the Corporation, got him into racing after watching some speedboat races at Peoria, Illinois. The Smith boats began to make their appearances as contenders in national regattas back in 1912 when Commodore J. Stuart Blackton's *Baby Reliance* finished second to Alfred C. Miles' racer.

After 1924 Chris Smith gave most of his attention to the design and construction of motorboat building. As

a personality he was a quiet, kind type of man that neither fame nor fortune changed, but he could flash fire when his views were strong, and when



*Chris Smith*

pressed, he never hesitated to speak his mind. Smith was a good conversationalist on any subject but himself, though he would talk of the achievements of his boats as though they were creations apart from himself and for which he would take no credit.

Algonac was proud of him and throughout his life he was plain "Chris Smith" to everyone.

