BOAT WORKS

John O. Johnson immigrated from Norway in 1893 at the age of 16. He worked at Amundson Boat Works for his friend Ole Amundson. In 1900, John founded Johnson Boat Works. In 1900, he designed and built a 50-foot sailboat, "Minnezilka," which he called the "first true inland scow". His first boat design was the precursor to the Class A Scow, the world's fastest single-mast sailing craft.

John O. Johnson's inventive and creative mind led to his construction of and flight in 1930 of the first successful powered airplane in Minnesota. In 1923, he designed, built, and patented the first rotary airplane.

Milton, Iver, and Walter, the next generation of the Johnson family, guided the growth of the Inland Scow classes throughout the country. They were instrumental in the design and construction of the first competitive fiberglass scows.

Three and four generations of the John O. Johnson family undertook further expansion of the various scow classes and also developed and manufactured additional national one-design racing sailboats.

After 102 years of sailboat manufacturing, and the delivery of thousands of Johnson scows throughout the United States, the manufacturing business was sold in 1998. The following year, the City of White Bear Lake purchased the property and marina.