Frank Maynard Fairbanks liked to win. Since taking up the sport of powerboat racing in the late 20’s, competing throughout the Pacific Northwest, he had done OK. The New Westminster Regatta up in Vancouver, BC, over the Labor Day weekend of ’29 had been a real success. But it was time for a new boat, and who better to build it than the master of fast boats, George Y. Pocock.

Mention the name George Pocock and the rowing community will knowingly nod their heads. Even those who have never put oar to water, at least in the Pacific Northwest, are usually familiar with his name. He’s recognized as the preeminent ‘artist’ of collegiate rowing shells during the 20th Century. But he also knew a thing or two about building fast boats with engines. George had worked for Bill Boeing from 1917 until 1922, as rowing shell construction happens to translates quite nicely to seaplane pontoons. Yes, George also knew airplane construction but, after WWI was over, orders for aircraft dried up. To keep his workforce together, Boeing took on the building of the Hickman “Sea Sled” in the summer of 1919 with George in charge of construction. He would remain at Boeing until December of 1922, when he was convinced to return to the UW and full-time shell building by rowing coach Rusty Callow. For the next twenty-six years, he would turn out dozens of the finest shells and boats from his shop in the UW Shell House. Including, two power boats.

In the Spring of 1930 Frank Fairbanks, wealthy Seattle mill owner, purchased a set of plans for a John Hacker designed “151-Class” racing powerboat, and George Pocock agreed to build it. Construction of the “Miss Washington” was started in May but, due to a delay in obtaining the engine, she was not launched on her maiden run until August. Engine trouble forced Fairbanks to drop out of that Lake Sammamish competition. The races remaining that year did not produce the results Fairbanks had hoped for, deciding the boat was too heavy for the engine in use. This had been a $5000 project, nearly $80,000 in today’s dollars. What should he do for the 1931 season?
The answer would be the *Miss Washington II*, and George Pocock would once again build it there at the Shell House.

Late in the Spring of 1931 George and his crew set to work again in building a 151-Class racing inboard. But unlike 1930, other than the construction of this second boat, it does not appear to have received the
same level of coverage in the local papers. An August 23rd article describes Fairbanks showing up on Lake Sammamish in the new Miss Washington II. Unfortunately, there are no other ‘151-Class’ boats for him to race. He also attends the annual Labor Day regatta up in Vancouver, but only as an official. It’s unknown why this may be, although it appears from ads and articles that he may have become involved in the “wine and champagne” business which may have taken up his time.

Seattle P. I. June 8, 1930
So, what became of the Pocock boats “Miss Washington” and “Miss Washington II”?

The first hint comes out in the Spring of 1932 that Fairbanks has sold the original Miss Washington, minus the engine, to two other members of the local racing community. She returns to the racing circuit the following season under the command of Don Underwood and Gordon Stewart, at one point even being renamed Demo. That name did not stick, as Miss
Washington competes in the 1934 season. After that she disappears until 1937, renamed Miss Fleet Wings and under the pilotage of Roy Smythe, owner of the Seattle Boat Works. From there, the trail goes cold. Between name and ownership changes, her heritage may have been forgotten despite George Pocock being at the top of his game in boat building during this time.

Miss Washington II is a different story.

On July 30th, 1936, an ad appears in the Seattle P. I. The “Miss Washington II” is for sale at Vick Frank’s Boathouse on Portage Bay in Seattle, and described as “never beaten”. That may be because it was never raced, at least not in any reported competitions. A slightly different ad, this time for the “Miss Washington 2”, is repeated for five days in August with just a phone number.
The ad may have caught the attention of Henry L. Freymueller, Jr., as he is reported as the owner in a July 1st, 1937, article of the boat sinking in Lake Washington off of Laurelhurst. In all likelihood, Miss Washington II still rests on the bottom.