

CHAPTER XII

DUCK BOATS FOR INLAND WATERS

PADDLE BOAT

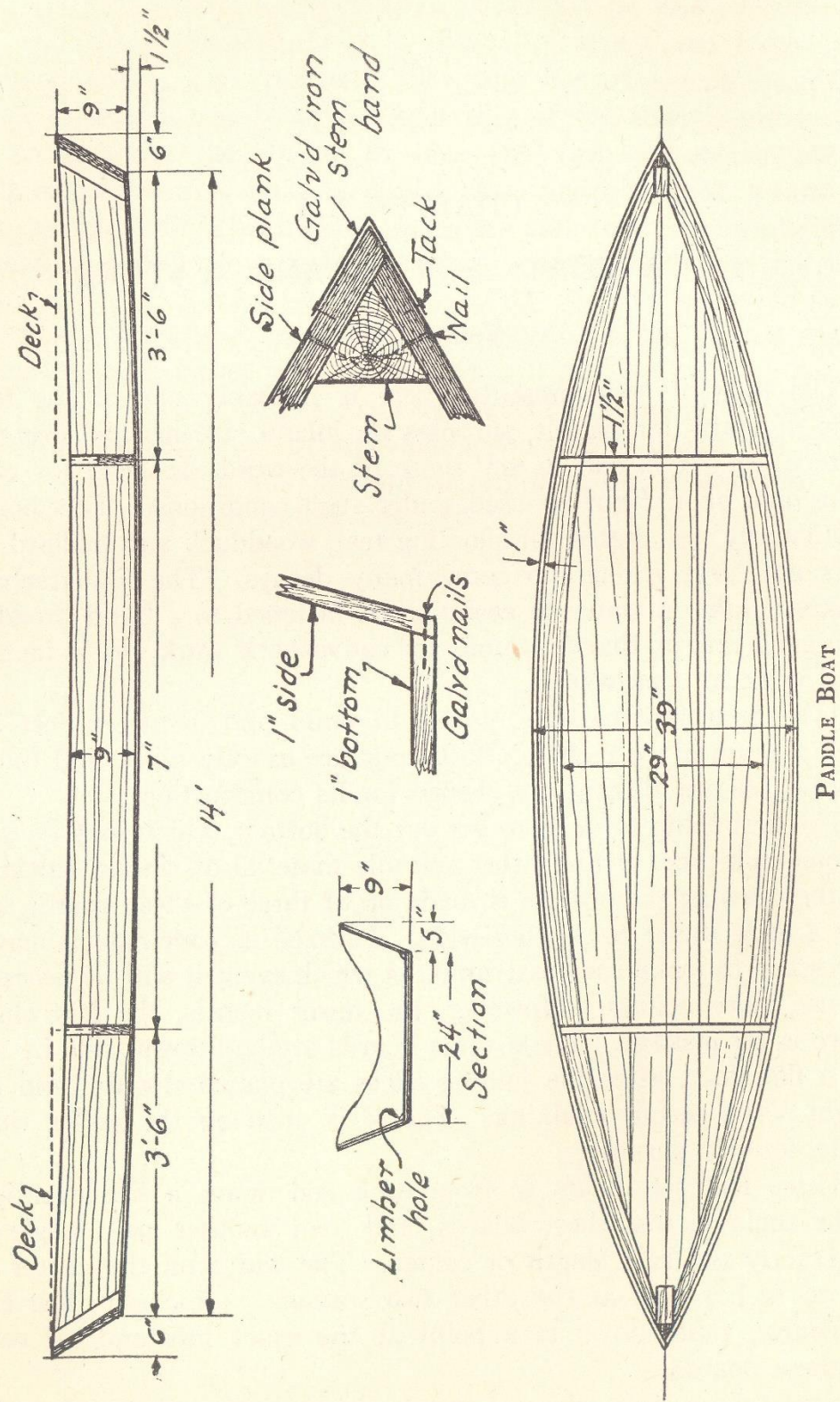
The type of boat presented here is probably one of the finest kind of crafts for paddle purposes on inland streams and protected waterways. It is not, in any sense of the word, designed for rough going and should not be used under such conditions. This boat is particularly well suited for shooting teal, woodduck and mallard, but it is not large enough to carry many decoys. The low freeboard makes it take in water so easily when fastened to a blind broadside to a good breeze, that it is unfit for canvasback work, or, in fact, for hard work in open waters.

The boat is extremely simple to build and is fifteen feet long with a beam of 39 inches. Both ends are exactly alike, and four or five boards are all that are needed for its construction.

The first thing to do is to get out the bottom, which may be made of one-inch pine, or any other suitable material of similar thickness. In the drawing the bottom is made up of three of these boards, each one a little under ten inches wide. Perhaps in your case it may be necessary to make them narrower, in which event it will be necessary to use more boards. However, the fewer boards, the less chance there is for leakage. These three boards are laid down, side by side, on a flat floor, after the joining edges are planed smooth, and to a slight V to permit caulking. The V is open on the under side a little, for this purpose.

Three feet six inches in from each end, mark a line exactly at right angles across these boards, and then another right angle line at exactly the half length or center. The width on the center will be 29 inches, and at the other two stations 24 inches. The ends, of course, taper down to a point at the exact fore and aft center of these boards.

Next take a light piece of wood, about three-quarters of an inch square, and nail it temporarily, so that it forms a fair curve through



these spots, and through the end marks. Mark this line in with a carpenter's pencil and then remove the light strip in order to repeat the process on the other side of the bottom boards. Next cut away the excess material, allowing a slight bevel to permit the side boards to lie up against these edges, fair and smooth. In other words, allow for the flare of the side planks.

The next step is to make the frames, located three feet six inches in from each end. These are made of one piece of material—each one and one-half inches thick. They are shaped somewhat as shown in the section drawing. Do not cut away too much material on the inside, or it will weaken the frame. Also cut away a little notch in each corner to form a limber hole, thus permitting any water that may come in to run to the center of the boat where it may be bailed and sponged out. These frames are nine inches high, and have a flair of five inches on each side, the bottom width being equal to the width of the bottom boards at the marks, three feet six inches, in from each end. The section drawing shows this, also.

The next thing to do is to erect the stem and stern posts, both exactly alike, nine inches high, and cut to a bevel that will give them an overhang of six inches. These are simply made of pine, such as a piece of two-inch by four-inch material, cut to a V, somewhat as shown in the detail drawing, through the stem.

The ends of the bottom thus far constructed should now be raised one and a half inches off the floor in order to give a little rocker to the bottom of the boat. Blocking up off the floor and nailing into position will do the trick.

When this is done the side planks, made of one-inch material, may be bent around from end to end. Fasten the stems firmly in place to prevent the side pull from bending them over out of shape. Fasten one side board to one of the stem pieces just as securely as possible, and then bend it around until it touches the one at the other end. Clamp it here and fasten to the two frames and then to the stem piece where it has been clamped. It should also be fastened at frequent intervals to the bottom boards. The excess wood should be cut away at the stems, and the other side board bent into place. The section drawing of the stem shows how these boards overlap each other at this place.

When both side boards are in place and fastened securely, the boat may be turned over, and the excess material that sticks down below the level of the bottom boards should be planed off, making a smooth joint. The same thing applies at the ends. When com-

plete a galvanized iron or brass plate may be bent around the ends and tacked in place to protect the wood.

With the boat upside down, each seam in the bottom should be painted with any old paint that is handy, and before this is dry, a single thread of cotton wicking should be lightly tapped into the seam. Do not pack it too tightly because this may make the plank buckle. When this is done, give it another coat of paint over the seams, and then putty carefully and thoroughly, finally winding up by painting the whole boat, inside and out. The idea of painting the seams before the caulking and the putty goes into place is to make these materials stick in place better.

If the boat is built during the winter in a room that is heated, remember that the wood is dried out considerably by this, and make allowance by leaving the seams open a little. As soon as the boat is in the water it will start in to swell, and if you will put a few buckets of water in her before she is launched, she will swell up overnight almost enough to make a perfectly tight job. All wooden boats, kept on land, should be kept moist in this way, except in winter, when the water might freeze and push the planks off.

The inside of the boat may be finished off in any way you may wish. There are no seats or thwarts, and a grating should be arranged to go on the bottom in order to keep your seat dry. Small, light decks of canvas may be made at each end as indicated by the dotted lines, but these are not essential. However, they will add considerably to the seaworthiness of the boat.

It sometimes happens that boards of sufficient width to build the boat, as first described, cannot be easily procured. In such cases, strips of weather boarding or "siding," as it is called, may be made to take their place. The operation of building is then quite different.

The first thing to be done is to prepare the bottom, fasten the ribs and stems in position. Then the siding is put on, commencing at the bottom, in lap-streaks, that is one board lapping over the edge of the next, using copper or clout nails to fasten the laps together.

Additional ribs may be made and added if desired, but these are not absolutely necessary. In some cases a triangular piece of wood is fastened into the angle formed by the bottom and side boards and a light, steam bent frame of oak may be bent from gunwale to gunwale, in one piece. Such construction will call for at least six frames, equally spaced throughout the length of the boat. Of course, seats may be added if desirable, but it would seem that far greater stability

and seaworthiness could be secured by having the "crew" sit on slightly raised gratings or slat seats directly on the bottom of the boat.

This boat may be made smaller or larger, provided the proportions are worked out about as shown in these drawings. She will be easy to paddle, and will sneak in and out through shallow water with the utmost ease. Almost anyone ought to be able to make a boat of this type.