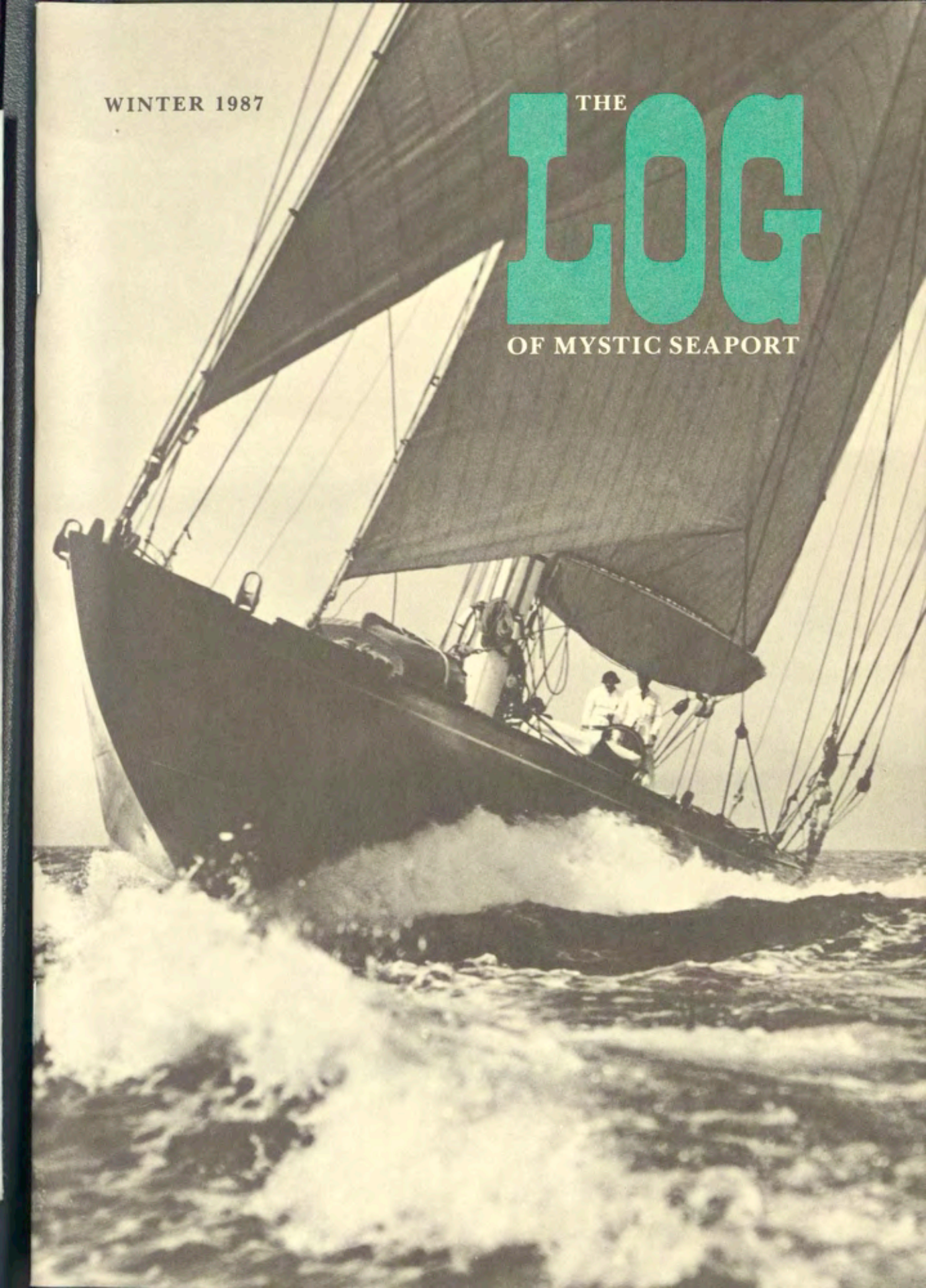
WINTER 1987

THE LOG OF MYSTIC SEAPORT



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FRONT COVER: *"Under* Endeavour*" was taken from the Rosenfelds' boat,* Foto, *during a photo session in 1934. Mr. and Mrs. Sopwith pose at the wheel of the J Boat Sopwith built to challenge for the America's Cup in 1934.*

BACK COVER: *The Rosenfelds caught* Enterprise *going to windward off Glen Cove, Long Island, in 1930. That year Harold S. Vanderbilt, shown here at the helm, steered her to victory in the first America's Cup series sailed in J-Class sloops.*

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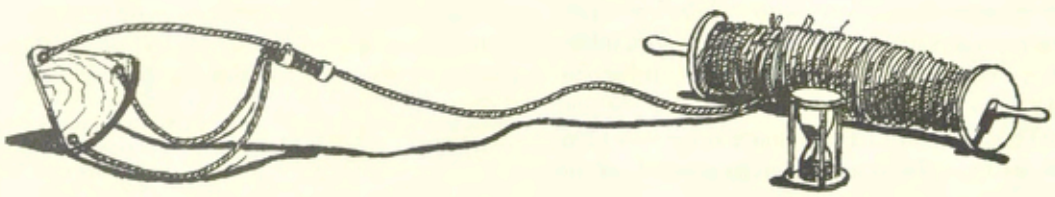
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SIGHTINGS



The preservation field is one in which we witness extraordinary efforts by heroes and heroines. These people work unselfishly to establish historical and preservation organizations or fight to save threatened structures that reflect our past. This issue of *The Log*, and particularly the J-Boat material, draws attention to the preservation issue and to two of those extraordinary people.

When we think of the preservation movement in this country, we usually think of historic buildings. While many of the most significant are preserved by government or preservation groups, the majority of historic buildings, particularly private residences, are preserved by private owners. These people make an enormous contribution by saving structures that sustain the character of our communities and allow us to glimpse a way of life from the past.

In maritime preservation there is, of course, another kind of structure that presents equal, if not greater, preservation challenges. Historic vessels both attract interest and pose enormous problems for those who care for them. Some ships, usually larger commercial and naval vessels, have the potential to interest and accommodate large numbers of visitors and are, therefore, attractive candidates for preservation by groups or organizations. The maritime equivalent of the private residence is the yacht, and it is here that we see the essential need for a partnership of preservation organizations and private owners. The Seaport's Antique and Classic Boat Rendezvous bears witness to the dedication of these preservationists. Without this effort, additional evidence of our technological and social history will be lost.

The legendary J Boats, those America's Cup giants from the 1930s, stand as symbols of an era. While none of the American J Boats have survived, many of us were impressed to see Sir Thomas Lipton's J Boat, *Shamrock V*, at the Statue of Liberty celebration last summer. Derek Carroll of Thomas J. Lipton, Inc., perceived her significance and worked to generate the corporation's support for *Shamrock*'s acquisition by the Museum of Yachting. Although she has been changed significantly from her racing configuration, her J-Boat heritage makes her well worth preserving.

There is another remarkable J-Boat preservation effort underway, and in this case a true heroine is in charge. The boat is *Endeavour*, the 1934 America's Cup challenger, and the person is Elizabeth Meyer, a knowledgeable, dedicated individual. Certainly, earlier owners must be credited with keeping the vessel alive until she could be taken over by someone with the courage, imagination, resources, and spirit to restore her. Under Elizabeth Meyer the staggering task is progressing well. Down river from Southampton, England, on a spit of land at Calshot, *Endeavour*'s hull was meticulously restored, and she was launched last August after years of work. When I went aboard at Cowes in September, it was apparent that the job on the hull had been done thoroughly. Judging from the stacks of teak and other equipment below, plans were taking shape for the next phase of restoration.

With the spectacular J Boats a true endangered maritime species, Elizabeth Meyer is not just symbolic of the individuals who have struggled to preserve the evidence of the past. She is a singular heroine in the present battle to save a priceless historic vessel.

J. Revell Carr

The Days of the Js

"The Js were larger than life then, and in retrospect they seem even more so. . . . In the world of yachting the J class dominated the era."

Stanley Rosenfeld

Lasting only seven years, the J-Boat era left an indelible impression on the America's Cup and on the memory of yachting as a sport. The days of the Js officially began on 20 May 1929, when the New York Yacht Club accepted Sir Thomas Lipton's fifth challenge for the America's Cup. Nine years before, his *Shamrock IV* had been defeated by *Resolute* in the most recent Cup series, the last in which gaff rigs or handicaps would be seen. This time, the Club determined that equally-rated class yachts would compete. Under the strictures of the Universal Rule, which governed the club's class ratings, the Cup Committee specified that the challenge would be sailed in sloops of the J Class. Nathanael G. Herreshoff had devised the Universal Rule and the New York Yacht Club had accepted it in 1902. Classes were given alphabetical designations, A through H for schooners (and ketches) and I through Q for sloops (and yawls), in decreasing size. Sloops of the J Class could vary from seventy to eighty-seven feet on the waterline.

Within this range, the J, or seventy-six-foot rating, Class was defined by the formula: $76 = .18$ of waterline length (in feet), multiplied by the square root of the sail area (in square feet), divided by the cube root of displacement (in cubic feet). It eventually became apparent that the largest Js, with eighty-seven-foot waterline, fifteen-foot draft, and 163-ton displacement, performed best, despite the limitation on measured sail area to 7,550 square feet.

The triangular mainsail of the Marconi rig was only then replacing the gaff-headed mainsail in large racing yachts, and the J-Class formula encouraged a particularly high-aspect form of it, with sail plans averaging about 150 feet in height. In addition, actual sail area greatly exceeded the measured sail area used to compute the rating. With mainsail, balloon staysail, and parachute spinnaker set, *Ranger*, the most successful J Boat, had nearly 23,000 square feet of sail aloft, 18,000 in the spinnaker alone!

Such dimensions required a revolution in rigging. Duralumin and steel masts generally replaced glued wooden masts. The triangular, flat-topped, "Park Avenue" boom (wide enough for two to walk abreast on) appeared in 1930. Tracks on its broad surface allowed the foot of the mainsail to set with the proper aerodynamic curve. Later, a bending boom allowed the same adjustment. Bar shrouds (steel rod rather than wire rope) were introduced in 1934. The triple-headsail cutter rig evolved into a more efficient double headsail rig introduced by *Whirlwind* in 1930, and the quadrilateral, two-sheeted jib was introduced in 1934. In 1937 a synthetic rayon sail appeared.

A crew of about twenty-six professional seamen was required to handle a J Boat. The mates were also professionals, but the skippers during the Cup races (except aboard *Shamrock V*) were the amateur owners of the boats. The three American Cup defenders were commanded by Harold S. "Mike" Vanderbilt, who assembled an "afterguard" of noted yachtsmen and designers to advise on navigation, tactics, and sail trim, and to assist at the helm. This collaborative approach, together with the efficiency of his

Contributions in support of the production of this article were provided by the friends and family of G.R.D. Williams, in his memory.



Designer W. Starling Burgess (1878–1947) (left) and skipper Harold S. "Mike" Vanderbilt (1884–1970) collaborated on all three of the America's Cup defending Js. Photo by Morris Rosenfeld, aboard *Rainbow*, 18 May 1934. (67348F)

professional crews, was instrumental in each of his Cup victories.

The J Boats were the first Cup boats required to be built to Lloyd's classification standard A-1, which ensured that construction was of high quality. After 1930 it was also required that the American boats be fitted with accommodations, so that British boats, which had to make the transatlantic passage to compete, were not at a disadvantage.

Sir Thomas Lipton commissioned his last America's Cup challenger and the first English J Boat, *Shamrock V*, in the fall of 1929. Along the English Channel there was a strong tradition of racing "Big Boats" akin to the J Class. The King's yacht *Britannia*; the schooner *Westward*; *Nyria*, the first large Marconi-rigged sloop; the International Rule sloops *Astra* and *Cambria*; and the Twenty-Three-Meter sloop *Candida* were all competitive with the new J Class.

In America, the J Class was actually introduced in 1928, when the gaff-rigged sloops *Resolute* and *Vanitie*, both built in 1914, were converted by rerigging them as Marconi sloops. The European International-Rule Twenty-One-Meter sloop *Blackshear*, ex-*Katoura*, also raced in the J Class that year.

In response to Lipton's challenge, four new American Js were launched in the spring of 1930: *Enterprise*, *Whirlwind*, *Weetamoe*, and *Yankee*. They quickly outclassed the converted Js (which were ineligible for Cup competition due to their light construction) as they raced to determine the Cup defender. Though the J. P. Morgan syndicate's *Weetamoe* was excellent, and the Boston syndicate's *Yankee* was the most versatile, *Enterprise* (sponsored by the Aldrich syndicate and skippered by Vanderbilt) won the honor, largely due to her duralumin mast and well-organized crew. This combination was even more telling when *Enterprise* met *Shamrock V* in the first Cup series sailed off Newport, Rhode Island, and defeated her in four straight races, retaining the Cup for America. So once again, Sir Thomas Lipton, the sentimental favorite, was disappointed. He died in 1931, but not before receiving a special loving cup from the citizens of America to honor his sportsmanship.

In 1933, a new J Boat, *Velsheda*, was added to the Big Boat fleet in Britain, and she compiled the best record during the forty-three races that year. (By contrast, most of the American J Boats except *Weetamoe* and *Vanitie* had been laid up since 1930.) *Shamrock V*'s new owner, aircraft manufacturer T. O. M. Sopwith, had no previous experience with J Boats, but he was a skilled yachtsman. At the end of the 1933 season he ordered a new J Boat and challenged the New York Yacht Club for the America's Cup.

Sopwith's new boat, *Endeavour*, was tuned up in races against the other Big Boats before being towed across the Atlantic in August 1934 for the Cup series. She was fast; in fact, she was probably faster than the defender, Vanderbilt's *Rainbow*. *Yankee* had outclassed the new American J *Rainbow* for most of the trial season, but lost in a very close series to select the defender. *Endeavour* defeated *Rainbow* in the first two Cup races,

but lost the next four (and the chance to take the Cup) due to mishap and poor management.

Although 1935 was not a Cup race year, it was an active one for J Boats. The American fleet was cut back with the scrapping of *Enterprise* and the innovative but unsuccessful *Whirlwind*. Then, Gerard Lambert sailed *Yankee* across the Atlantic to compete with the seven British Big Boats (including three J Boats) in a summer series along the English Channel. These races were sailed for spectators, usually in constricted waters with strong tides and light, fluky winds. In thirty-two races that summer, the leader, *Endeavour*, won nine while *Yankee* won eight, losing her mast on the last day while trying to even the score with *Endeavour*.

Already there was increasing opposition to the J Class. In the middle of the Depression their great cost prohibited participation by all but a handful of yachtsmen. They were also gaining a reputation as over-designed boats, that could not stand up to the expected range of wind and sea conditions. Despite improving technology, dismastings were frequent. The yachting press called for a more economical class, but the New York Yacht Club wished to remain with the largest and fastest racing class rather than going to the great expense of developing a new racing class.

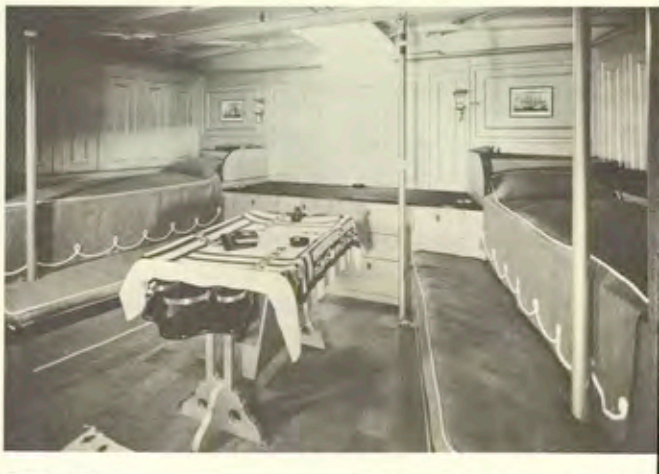
T. O. M. Sopwith presented another challenge to the New York Yacht Club, which accepted it for 1937. In 1936 *Yankee*, *Rainbow*, and *Weetamoe* practiced for the defense in America while Sopwith launched *Endeavour II* in Britain. By now it was clear that maximum allowable waterline length gave optimum performance. *Endeavour II* was designed with an eighty-seven-foot waterline, as was a new American J Boat. Vanderbilt asked W. Starling Burgess, designer of the two previous Cup defenders, and talented young Olin Stephens II to collaborate, and they produced a new model that displayed excellent tank test characteristics.

Acknowledging the Depression, the new J Boat *Ranger* was built at cost by the Bath Iron Works, and was launched in May 1937. Even though she began the season with a borrowed mast after losing hers while under tow, she



The 1930 American J Boats had no interior accommodations, so *Shamrock V* was stripped for the Cup races. Looking forward in *Shamrock V*, one can see the main halyard winch amidships, mainmast forward, and sail bins on either side. Note her composite construction, mahogany planking on steel frames. Photo by Morris Rosenfeld. (42526F)

Interior accommodations were required for J Boats after 1931. *Ranger* had a comfortable, though not ornate, after cabin (above), and a functionally spacious forecastle with pipe berths for her crew (below). To port is the aluminum headsail chute, up which the heavy headsails, tied in stops, could be fed to a small hatch just aft of the jibstays. Photos by Morris Rosenfeld, 22 July 1937. (cabin 82350F, forecastle 82352F)





immediately showed herself to be the "Super J." Perfectly balanced and faster on nearly all points of sailing, she outclassed both her American sisters and Sopwith's *Endeavour* and *Endeavour II*. She won the America's Cup series four straight. Then, when *Yankee*, *Rainbow*, and the two *Endeavours* joined her for spectacular class racing during the New York Yacht Club cruise, she led the way again. In all, she won thirty-two of the thirty-four completed races that year!

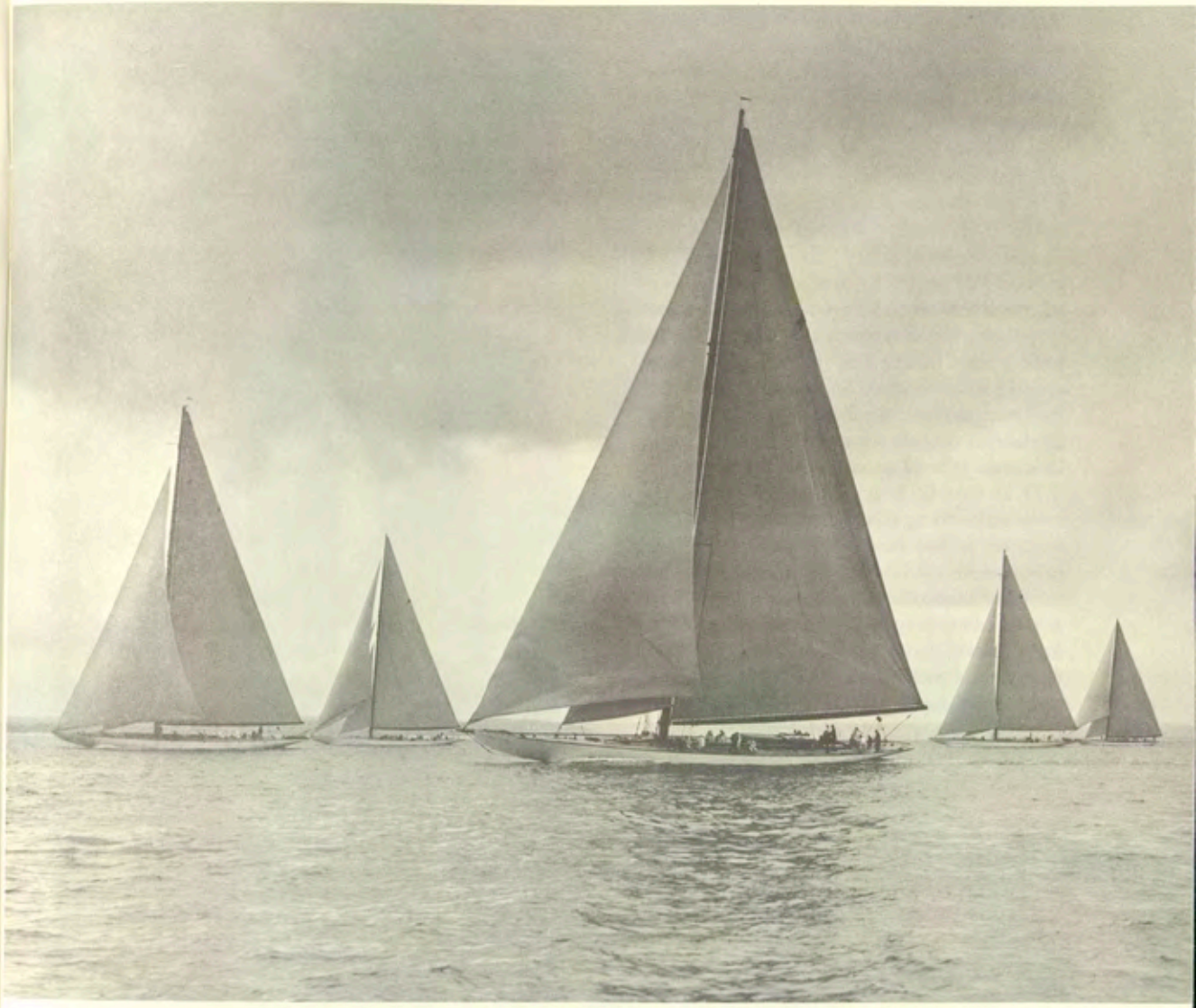
But 1937 was both the pinnacle and the precipice for J-Class racing. Even as the other five were racing, *Weetamoe* was headed for scrapping. With the political situation in Europe rapidly moving toward war, Big Boat racing was at an end in Britain, and America's Cup racing was part of a more complacent world. It would be twenty years before the next challenge for the Cup was issued. By 1958, boats of the European International Rule Twelve-Meter Class (established in 1906 and also introduced with Marconi rig in 1928, but only about half the size of a J Boat) were considered the largest and fastest, and the Twelve Meters have remained the America's Cup class boats for nearly thirty years.

Though larger sloops have raced, and though only ten J Boats were built, the technology and showmanship of J-Class racing won for the J Boats an aura of size and speed that has outlived most of the boats themselves. Four of the Js, as victims of their time, were sacrificed to the war effort: *Rainbow* and *Endeavour II* in 1940, and *Yankee* and the "Super J" *Ranger* in 1941. Only three remain: *Velsheda*, sailing in Europe; *Endeavour*, under restoration in Great Britain; and Sir Thomas Lipton's own *Shamrock V*, now at the Museum of Yachting in Newport, Rhode Island. The days of the Js lasted less than a decade, but what spectacular days they were for yacht racing.

The most useful sources on the J Boats are: Ian Dear, *Enterprise to Endeavour* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1977); Sir Fisher Dilke, *Observer on Ranger* (London: Herbert Jenkins Ltd., 1938); Uffa Fox, *Uffa Fox's Second Book* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), and *Sail and Power* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937); Gerard B. Lambert, *Yankee in England* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937); Elizabeth Meyer, "Powerful in Every Way," *Nautical Quarterly* 31 (Autumn 1985):5–25; John Parkinson, Jr., *The History of the New York Yacht Club*, 2 vols., (New York: New York Yacht Club, 1975); Morris Rosenfeld, *The Story of American Yachting* (New York: Bramhall House, 1958); Stanley Rosenfeld, *A Century Under Sail* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison Wesley Publishing Company, 1984); Harold S. Vanderbilt, *Enterprise* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), and *On the Wind's Highway* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939); and *Yachting* magazine throughout the 1930s.

The following gallery of J Boats was prepared with the technical advice of Roderick Stephens, Jr., and Kenneth E. Mahler. Dimensions and tonnage figures came from Lloyd's *Register of Yachts*. Measurements have been rounded off to the nearest foot or ton. Sail numbers (in parentheses) are those assigned to the boats. However, photographic evidence indicates that sail numbers must be used with caution when identifying J Boats because of exchange of sails and duplication of numbers.

Text by Andrew W. German
Photo selection by John MacFayden



American J Boats, 17 June 1930. From left they are *Enterprise*, *Weetamoe*, *Vanitie*, *Yankee*, and *Resolute*. *Vanitie* and *Resolute* were built as gaff-rigged sloops for America's Cup competition in 1914. *Resolute* was designed and built by Herreshoff, while *Vanitie* was designed by William Gardner and built by George Lawley. *Resolute* successfully defended the Cup against Sir Thomas Lipton's *Shamrock IV* in 1920. In 1928 both *Vanitie*, owned by Gerard Lambert, and *Resolute* were rerigged as Marconi sloops, and became the first American J-Class sloops. Both measured 99 tons gross; the bronze *Resolute* was 77 feet on the waterline, 109 overall, while the steel and bronze *Vanitie* was 75 feet on the waterline, 118 overall. They raced with the J Boats, but were ineligible for Cup competition because their light construction did not meet Lloyd's specifications. *Resolute* was laid up after the 1931 season, and was broken up in 1939. *Vanitie* came out with an influential new double headsail rig (like *Whirlwind*'s original design) in 1931. Rerated at the bottom of the I Class, she continued to compete through the 1934 America's Cup season, when Lambert offered her as a trial horse for Sopwith's *Endeavour*. *Vanitie* was broken up in 1939. Photo by Morris Rosenfeld. (40011F)

Shamrock V (J–K1) was the first true J-Class sloop launched. Sir Thomas Lipton had Charles Nicholson design her for his fifth challenge for the America's Cup. Built by Camper and Nicholson at Gosport, England, she was launched on 14 April 1930. She was of composite construction, with elm keel, teak stem and stern post, steel frames, mahogany planking, and yellow pine decking. She was relatively small at 104 gross tons, with a waterline length of 81 feet, 120 overall, and a measured sail area of 7,529 square feet. After very successful trial races in England, she sailed across the Atlantic for the America's Cup series. Her heavy wooden mast, inferior sails and rigging, and weak crew organization made her a poor second to *Enterprise*, and she did not win a race. Back in England in 1931 she remained at the top of the Big Boat class. When Lipton died in October 1931, T. O. M. Sopwith bought *Shamrock V* for his introduction to big boat racing. When he built *Endeavour*, he sold *Shamrock V* to Richard Fairey, who called her simply *Shamrock*. Fairey sold her to Italian publisher Mario Crespi in 1937, and Pietro Scanu purchased her in 1962. He maintained her as the ketch *Quadrifoglio* (Italian for *Shamrock*). Restored by Camper and Nicholson in the 1970s, *Shamrock V* was given to the Museum of Yachting, Newport, Rhode Island, in 1986. Photo by Morris Rosenfeld, 13 September 1930. (42522F)

Shamrock V





Weetamoe

Weetamoe (J–1) was commissioned by J. P. Morgan's New York Yacht Club syndicate. Clinton Crane designed her and the Herreshoff yard launched her on 10 May 1930. Her bronze hull was 85 feet on the waterline, 126 overall, with a gross tonnage of 123. Her measured sail area was 7,550 square feet. *Weetamoe* was at her best in light air, under ten knots. Under the conditions off Newport in 1930 she gave a good showing, but *Enterprise* was chosen for the defense. *Weetamoe* was then purchased by Frederick Prince, who installed accommodations to conform with the new J-Class rule and kept her sailing when the other American Js were laid up. For the 1934 Cup series her underwater profile was altered to increase her stability, but her performance was disappointing. *Weetamoe*'s new owner, Chandler Hovey, put her back into commission in 1936. In an excellent series of races that summer she was outclassed by *Rainbow* and *Yankee*. She went to be broken up in 1937. Photo by Morris Rosenfeld, 16 June 1930. (39956F)

Yankee (J–2), launched 10 May 1930, had the longest career of the American Js. She was financed by John Lawrence's Boston syndicate, and designed by Frank Paine. The Lawley yard built her alongside *Whirlwind*. She was of bronze construction, 126 feet overall, with a waterline length of 85 feet and gross tonnage of 137. Her measured sail area was 7,550 square feet. She was perhaps the most versatile sailer of the 1930 American Js, but was inferior to *Enterprise* in light air and was not selected for the Cup defense. In heavy wind she was very fast, setting the speed record for sailing a thirty-mile triangular course. After being laid up for several years, *Yankee* was given a longer waterline and sharper bow, which changed her rating and allowed her to carry more sail. She then became fast in light air as well, and under skipper Charles Francis Adams nearly defeated *Rainbow* to defend the Cup in 1934. Purchased by Gerard Lambert, she was sailed to England in 1935. During the British "Big Boat" series her eight wins placed her second only to *Endeavour*, which won nine. When *Yankee* lost her 156-foot mast in the last race, *Endeavour*, *Shamrock*, and *Velsheda* withdrew in a fine act of sportsmanship. Lambert altered *Yankee* for the 1937 America's Cup with ballast to give her a longer waterline and make her stand up to a new rig with larger main and single headsail. Like the other Js, *Yankee* was outclassed by *Ranger*, though she beat her once during the New York Yacht Club cruise. *Yankee* was scrapped in 1941, and Lambert sent the proceeds to Queen Mary for the London Hospital, in recognition of England's cordial reception for *Yankee* in 1935. Photo by Morris Rosenfeld, 17 June 1930. (40020F)



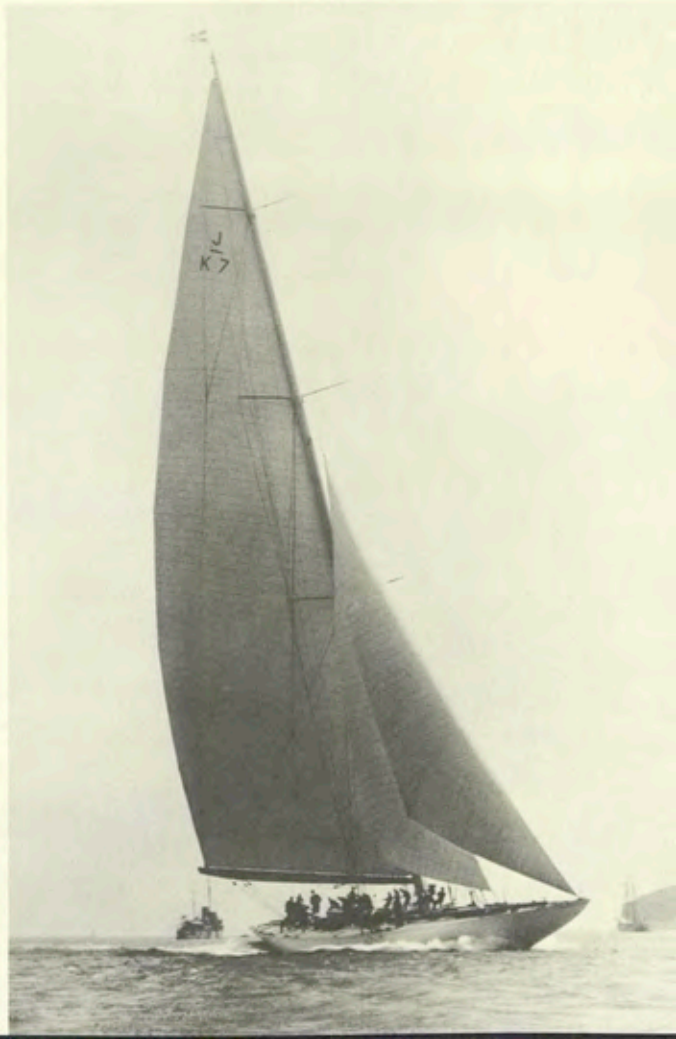


Whirlwind (J–3), launched 7 May 1930, was the most innovative of the Js. Financed by a New York syndicate headed by Landon K. Thorne, she was designed by L. Francis Herreshoff, son of the legendary Nathanael, and built at the Lawley yard in Neponset, south of Boston. Planked with mahogany over steel frames, she was the only wooden American J. Modeled on Herreshoff's M-Class sloop *Istelana*, *Whirlwind* was the only double-ended ("canoe stern") J. The longest of the early Js at 130 feet overall, 86 on the waterline, she had a gross tonnage of 127, and a measured sail area of 7,600 square feet. She had numerous highly engineered and unique features, but her intricate steering system was unsuccessful. *Whirlwind* came out with a double headsail rig. Though she was soon altered to the prevailing triple head rig (shown in this photo), later boats would adopt the simpler, more efficient double headsails. Though fast off the wind, *Whirlwind* was slow to weather and difficult to steer, so she was soon eliminated as a Cup defender. She was broken up at City Island, New York, in 1935. Photo by Morris Rosenfeld, 16 June 1930. (39953F)

Enterprise (J–4), the first American J Boat, was also launched on 14 April 1930. Financed by the New York Yacht Club's Aldrich syndicate, which included her skipper Harold "Mike" Vanderbilt, she was designed by W. Starling Burgess and built by the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company at Bristol, Rhode Island. Her bronze hull, 121 feet overall, had an 80-foot waterline, with a gross tonnage of 122 and displacement of 128 tons. Her measured sail area was 7,583 square feet. Designed for maximum performance at just under eleven knots of wind, she was fast to windward in medium breezes. She introduced the triangular "Park Avenue" boom to large racing craft. *Enterprise*'s success was largely due to her light duralumin mast (installed just before the selection trials) and to Vanderbilt's skillful organization of her crew. She defeated *Shamrock V* in four straight races off Newport in 1930. Laid up thereafter, she was excluded from future Cup competition by the 1931 rule requiring internal accommodations. She was broken up at the Herreshoff yard in 1935. Photo by Morris Rosenfeld, 9 July 1930. (40857F)



Velsheda (J–K7) was the only J-Class sloop that never sailed in American waters. She was owned by W. F. Stephenson, who named her for his daughters Velma, Sheila, and Daphne. Charles Nicholson designed her to incorporate the keel and mast from Stephenson's Big Boat *White Heather II*. Camper and Nicholson built her of steel and launched her in 1933. She was a handsome boat, 83 feet on the waterline, 127 overall, with a gross tonnage of 123. Her measured sail area was 7,542 square feet. She had a bendable "plank-on-edge" boom rather than the Park Avenue design. *Velsheda* was an able competitor in the British Big Boat races through 1936. After a long lay-up, she has recently been restored to sailing condition. (86.67.41)



Endeavour (J–K4) heralded T. O. M. Sopwith's entry into America's Cup competition. Designed by Charles Nicholson and built at his Camper and Nicholson yard, she was launched in May 1934. Her steel hull measured 83 feet on the waterline, 130 overall. As an aircraft manufacturer, Sopwith believed in the benefits of technology. Unlike *Shamrock V*, *Endeavour* was fitted with a welded steel mast, modern wind speed and direction gauges, modern rigging, and even better winches than the American Js. She introduced the very efficient quadrilateral jib with two clews (sometimes called a Greta Garbo), which can be seen in this photo. *Endeavour* was tuned up against the British Big Boats before departing for America, and proved to be extremely fast. Unfortunately, her professional crew struck before she left, so she came to race with a patched together amateur crew. *Endeavour* was acknowledged to be superior to the Cup defender, *Rainbow*, but Sopwith did not sail her to her potential. She won only two races. Back in England, she led *Yankee* and the Big Boats through the exceptional racing summer of 1935. Hermann Andreae bought her at the end of the season, and raced her in 1936. Sopwith's business partner chartered her and brought her back to America in 1937 as a possible substitute for *Endeavour II* in the Cup races. *Endeavour* beat the "Super J" *Ranger* once during the Eastern Yacht Club cruise. The two *Endeavours* remained to sail on the New York Yacht Club cruise following the Cup series. After this last gathering of J Boats, *Endeavour* returned to England and a forty-year lay up, losing her lead keel to the war effort and serving as a houseboat for many years. Elizabeth Meyer is now restoring her. Photo by Morris Rosenfeld, 17 September 1934. (69631F)



Rainbow (J–5, later J–4) was Vanderbilt's answer to Sopwith's *Endeavour*. W. Starling Burgess designed her with a powerful double headsail rig, and innovative bar (rather than wire) shrouds to stay her duralumin mast. Launched in May 1934, *Rainbow* was built in only 100 days by the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company. Her bronze hull was 82 feet on the waterline, 128 overall, with a gross tonnage of 119. Her measured sail area was 7,572 square feet. Burgess replaced her Park Avenue boom with an improved bending boom. *Rainbow* narrowly defeated *Yankee* for the honor of defending the America's Cup in 1934. As a boat she was outclassed by *Endeavour*, but Vanderbilt's organization and steady sailing prevailed, and *Rainbow* won four races to two. Back in commission again in 1936, *Rainbow* raced with *Yankee* in preparation for the 1937 Cup challenge. Chandler Hovey, owner of *Weetamoe*, owned her in 1937. Like the other Js, *Rainbow* was outclassed by *Ranger*, but she sailed with them through the 1937 New York Yacht Club cruise. *Rainbow* was scrapped in 1940. Photo by Morris Rosenfeld, 1934. (67783F)



Endeavour II (J–K6) was Sopwith's second America's Cup challenger. He had Charles Nicholson design her in 1935, and Camper and Nicholson launched her in June 1936. To support the increasingly powerful J-Boat headsails, her steel hull was built to the class's 87-foot waterline limit. At 136 feet overall, she had a gross tonnage of 136. She spent 1936 racing the British Big Boats, twice losing her mast. In consequence of numerous J-Boat dismastings, the rules for the 1937 America's Cup challenge were changed to correlate mast dimensions with waterline length. The challenger was also given the right to substitute another boat for the named challenger, given prior notification. Sopwith brought both *Endeavours* to America in May 1937. At Sopwith's request, the Cup races began in July rather than September. Despite the preparation, *Endeavour II* was no match for the new *Ranger*, which swept the series. After the New York Yacht Club cruise *Endeavour II* returned to England. She was scrapped about 1940. Photo by Morris Rosenfeld. (81820)




J
S



Opposite: Ranger (also J–5), the "Super J," was the tenth and last J Boat built. Vanderbilt asked W. Starling Burgess and young Olin Stephens to collaborate on the design. With extensive tank testing of numerous models at the Stevens Institute of Technology, this skillful team devised an extremely fast hull. Stephens verified that Burgess was principally responsible for the model, though Stephens influenced the stern design. Above the waterline, her bow was shortened to save weight, and her flattened stern, on which she could "squat," made her very fast to windward, while her ample forefoot made her very stable. In *Ranger*, scientific testing of design theory produced a boat far more advanced than the challenger, *Endeavour II*. Unable to organize a syndicate, Vanderbilt financed the $200,000 boat himself. The Bath Iron Works of Bath, Maine, agreed to build *Ranger* at cost. They launched her on 11 May 1937. *Ranger*'s steel hull was 87 feet on the waterline, 135 overall, with a gross tonnage of 128. Her measured sail area was 7,546 square feet, though she could set over three times that, her spinnaker alone measuring 18,000 square feet. Though she lost her duralumin mast while under tow, before she ever set a sail, she was unbeatable even with *Rainbow*'s 1934 mast. Properly rigged, and with an efficient assortment of headsails, including a rayon quadrilateral genoa jib, she beat *Yankee*'s old speed record. Between her sailing ability and her expert handling by the afterguard Vanderbilt assembled, including Olin and Rod Stephens, Arthur Knapp, and Professor Zenas Bliss, she walked away from *Endeavour II* in four straight races. She continued her winning performance on the New York Yacht Club cruise. By the end of the season she had lost only two of the thirty-seven races she had entered (losing once to *Endeavour* and once to *Yankee*; three races were unfinished due to light air). But her remarkable performance marked the end of the brief J-Boat era. She did not race again, and went to the ship breakers in 1941. Photo by Morris Rosenfeld, 4 June 1937. (80457F)

Above: The last gathering of J Boats took place on the New York Yacht Club cruise following the 1937 America's Cup series. Here at the starting line in Buzzard's Bay off Mattapoisett are, left to right, *Rainbow*, *Endeavour*, *Ranger*, *Endeavour II*, and *Yankee*. *Ranger* won ten of the eleven races, *Yankee* won once, and *Endeavour II* took second seven times. Photo by Morris Rosenfeld, August 1937. (83429F)

Screening the Thirties: The J Boats Sail Again!

KENNETH E. MAHLER

The Film & Video Division has been a very busy place during the past two years. The America's Cup activities in Perth, Australia, during the fall of 1986 and winter of 1987, created heavy demands for footage from Mystic Seaport's Film-Video Archives. Containing nearly 860,000 feet of film, the Archives is rich in yachting material given to the Seaport over the years, some of it quite rare, such as the 16-millimeter films shot by the late Alfred F. Loomis, prolific author and editor of *Yachting* magazine. The Loomis films cover the yachting scene from 1929 to 1962.

By far the largest single collection of yachting film was presented to the Seaport by the Thomas J. Lipton Company in 1982 and 1984. This priceless assemblage records all nine America's Cup Race series at Newport from 1958 (beginning of the Twelve-Meter races) to the 1983 loss of the Cup recorded in the Emmy Award winning 1983 program, *25th Defense: The End of an Era*. Shot by professionals, several complete with outtakes, the Lipton films amount to approximately 300,000 feet of film. It is the Lipton collection that has been the focus of attention as the international media covered the America's Cup series in Australia. Activity has been intense with Eastern Sports Program Network (ESPN) in the United States and Network 10 in Australia.

When we hand delivered our master videotapes of the Lipton collection to our broadcast agent in Sydney, Australia, (for conversion to their TV format) we also brought along a written sampling of some of our pre-1958 J-Boat material. This aroused their immediate interest and they wanted everything they could get. ESPN later joined Network 10, Australia, in requesting all the footage featuring the revered J Boats that we could supply.

The Js offer an excitement in the boating community that no other class yacht has been able to match. Perhaps it is the stark contrast the opulent Js represented against the dark background of the Great Depression. One merely needs to stand with a few boating enthusiasts over fifty years of age to note the mystique created by the Js. Though there were only ten of them, and they sailed for only a decade, their influence lives on in the generations that knew them.

Except for fourteen minutes, all of our films about the famous J Boats are the products of amateur lensmen, varying in quality, quite unlike the professionally produced films in the Lipton collection. This meant that a master tape had to be specially compiled and corrected by us from various film collections in our Archives. Between request and a finished, custom-made tape, lie many hours of work and the invention of solutions to problems both technical and reportorial. For example, all boats had to be identified for the network editors, which posed some complex mysteries. Hull forms can be deceptively similar; rigging changes occur; you cannot even depend upon the highly visible sail numbers as final evidence, since it was not at all unusual for different boats to share or swap sails several times during the season. We were dealing with three Cup series—1930, 1934, and 1937—in which nine J Boats participated, and we

Kenneth E. Mahler, an avid yachtsman and yachting historian, has worked at the Seaport since 1974, first as Supervisor of Photo and Audio-Visual Services, and now as head of the Museum's new Film & Video Division.

The photos in this article were taken directly from the one-inch videotape master using a special electronic Polaroid Freeze Frame Camera.

learned not to rely too heavily upon labeling furnished by amateur filmmakers.

On the technical side, exposures tend to vary widely within a single film, resulting in washouts and sudden blackouts. This must be corrected. One of the effects most obvious to the viewer of early films is the "quaint" Charlie Chaplin effect—jerky motions in rapid time—that can turn a state funeral into a foot race. This, of course, results from the difference in the number of frames-per-second used for silent pictures compared with the ratio in use today. To make corrections acceptable for network television requires some very sophisticated telecine and videotape equipment, much of which we have assembled right here in the Film & Video Division.

Though slow, painstaking work, compiling this custom-made tape about J Boats proved to be far more enjoyable than I had anticipated. The most efficient way to identify boats, people, places, and events was to create a voice-over track—that is, I provided an audio narration that accompanied, in synchronization, the scenes being screened. This narration was not intended to be aired, but to provide network editors with precise, correct, information. In this endeavor, I was joined at times by Roderick Stephens, Jr., of the prestigious yacht design firm Sparkman & Stephens of New York. Not only had he lived through those prewar days, Rod was an active participant, sailing aboard J Boats, even shooting some of the footage that constitutes a valuable portion of Mystic Seaport's collection. He was certainly the obvious and best choice to help me out in the film's narration, which, as a matter of fact, was not unlike creating an oral history tape.

As I sat comfortably on my tall chair at the control rack in our editing room, microphone in hand, with the one-inch video whining contentedly in the background, the great boats, their false jerky motion slowed to real time, began streaming across the color TV monitor screen. I was transported at once to the 1930s, as was Rod Stephens when he joined me later. We could not help but wonder aloud where all of those great boats had gone.



Rod Stephens (left) and Dr. Zenas Bliss, navigator, aboard *Ranger*, 1937. Rod was an active participant, sailing aboard J Boats, even shooting some of the footage that constitutes a valuable portion of Mystic Seaport's collection.



From the deck of an overnight steamer from New York is seen a dazzling spectator fleet going out to the scene of the 1930 America's Cup races.

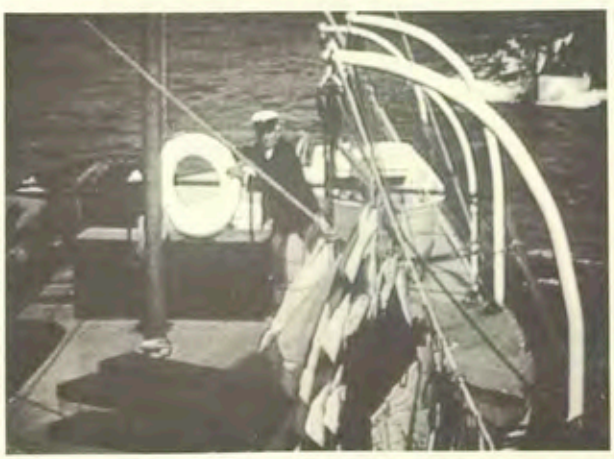
The first roll of film screened was a brief one selected from the Stoddard Collection, donated to the Museum by Johnson Stoddard of Southport, Connecticut, in 1983. Taken by his father during the 1930 and '34 Cup races, they show nothing of the races; but from the deck of an overnight steamer from New York is seen a dazzling spectator fleet going out to the scene of the 1930 races. *Aloha*, the great Arthur Curtiss James steam bark yacht, passes the camera, steady, magnificent, billowing smoke from her stack amidships. *Corsair*, J. P. Morgan's sleek

steam yacht, is passed by the old passenger steamer, which itself would succumb to the onslaught of progress in a few more years. Of the boats that made the trip regularly from New York to Boston, Providence, and other points, the Fall River Line was the best known. This steamer had come up from New York City overnight for the race between Sir Thomas Lipton's *Shamrock V* and Harold S. "Mike" Vanderbilt's *Enterprise*. This was an exciting race, the first to be held in waters off Newport, Rhode Island. All of the previous America's Cup Races had been held off Sandy Hook, at the mouth of New York Bay. The Great Depression was only a year old, but the size and scope of the yachts must have made one wonder about the validity of the headlines. The Stoddard film takes another sweeping look at the spectator fleet in 1934, still astonishing in size and elegance with sloops, schooners, launches, and great yachts, some over two hundred feet. If one thinks Newport Harbor looked crowded for the Australian triumph in 1983, witness the pictures of Newport during the 1934 races—there was hardly a spot to drop a hook!

The next group of films to be screened were shot by Edmund Lang and Edward Becker, and were presented to Mystic Seaport by Becker's daughter, Mrs. Carol Hutchinson of Southport, Connecticut, in 1983. Edmund Lang was the New York Yacht Club Race Committee Chairman for the 1937 America's Cup contest and for the Club cruise that followed. These films were taken in color, and the KodaColor has stood up nicely, needing only slight color correction (in contrast to today's color films, which transform everything into a sickly magenta within ten or fifteen years). What a great scene is presented to the camera as five J Boats cross the starting line as the New York Yacht Club cruise to Marblehead begins. Even though he had just been defeated in the America's Cup series, T. O. M. Sopwith brought his British Js, *Endeavour* and *Endeavour II*, along to race with the American *Ranger*, *Rainbow*, and *Yankee*. The rattling of war could be heard in Europe, and the English Js were not sailed that summer in home waters. Our pictures show the very last gathering of these magnificent vessels.

The Lang films demonstrate that the Race Committee was, perhaps, less stuffy than we have been led to believe. One period newsreel pronounced them "the Omnipotent Race Committee . . . ruling roost over the seas." But the Lang pictures reveal the after deck of the Committee Boat, flags flying, staysail set, steaming along with one of the Committee members pretending to be at the helm with the assistance of a life ring to simulate the wheel! At dockside in Newport, with the Committee Boat, *Wilhelmina*, tied alongside New York Yacht Club Station 6, the Race Committee Chairman is joined by two very attractive young women who cavort about and poke fun at the camera—a carefree image studiously avoided by professional photographers. By way of contrast, the amateur photographer spots a paid hand on the *Wilhelmina*, his foot on a varnished rail, taking a last drag from

One of the Committee members pretending to be at the helm with the assistance of a life ring to simulate the wheel.



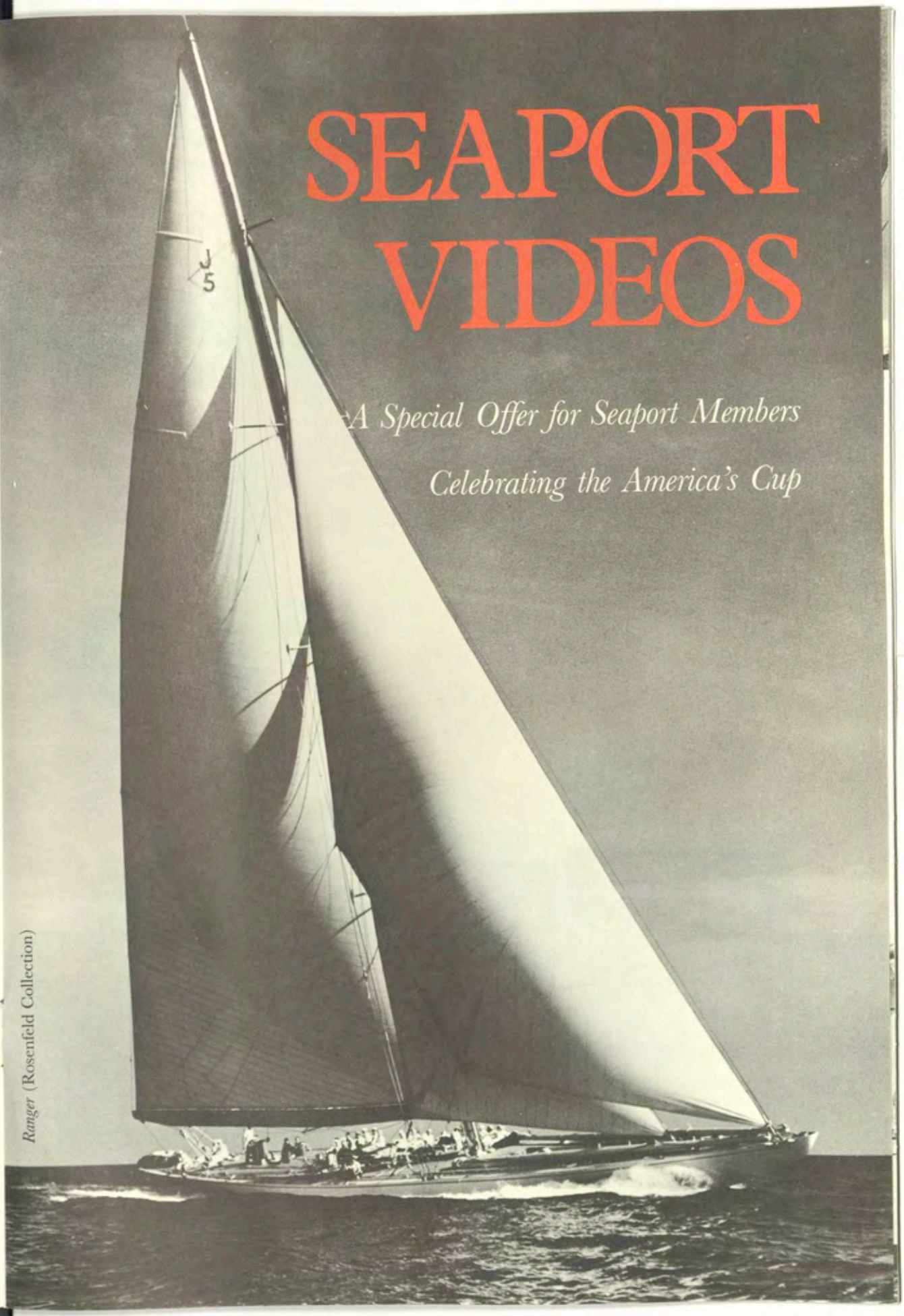
The *Joseph Conrad* during her use as a yacht by Huntington Hartford.



SEAPORT VIDEOS

A Special Offer for Seaport Members

Celebrating the America's Cup



Ranger (Rosenfeld Collection)



TO WIN AT ALL COSTS: THE STORY OF THE AMERICA'S CUP (56:00)

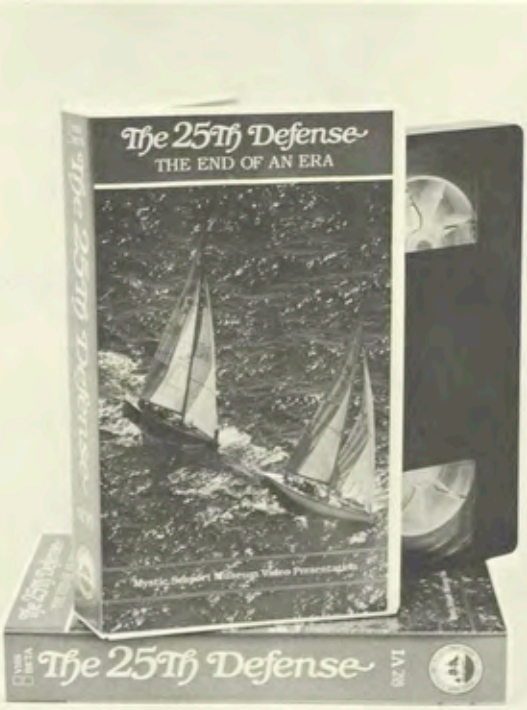
This is a lively, informative, and often amusing look at the yacht race which has found clubs, men, and countries challenging for the most prestigious trophy in yachting: the America's Cup. This fascinating program traces the boats from schooners to 12 Meter boats. Beginning with a reenactment of the first race at Cowes in 1851, it follows through to the lifting of the Cup from American grasp in 1983. Rare archival footage, paintings, stills, and drawings illustrate the extraordinary men, yachts, materials, and effort that has surrounded this premiere, and often controversial, yachting event! Program # YS-8.

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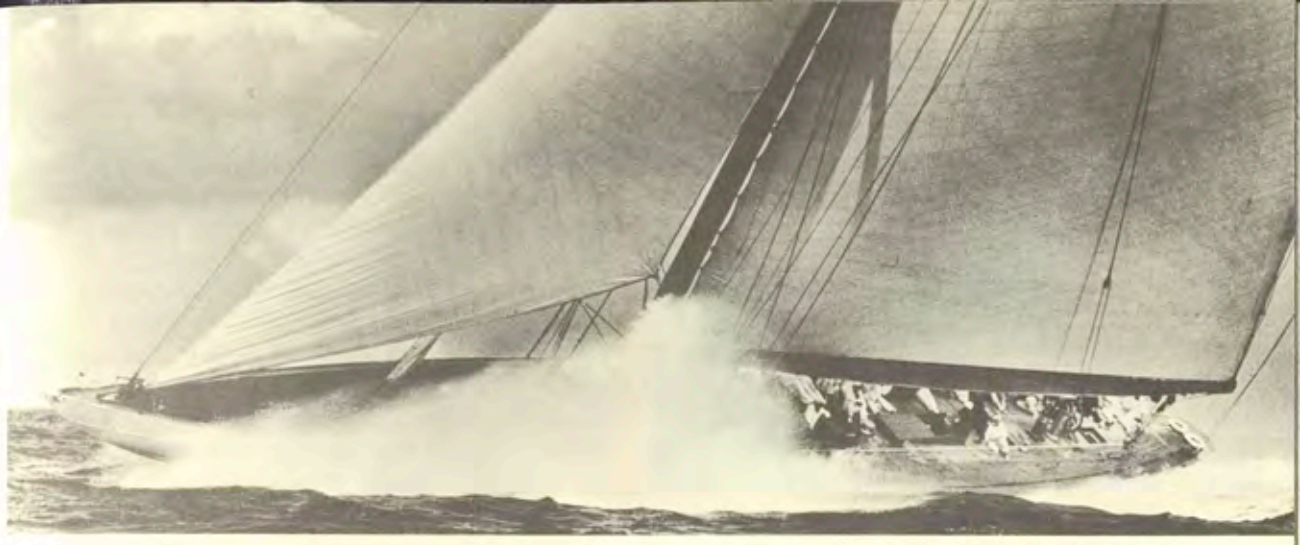


THE 25TH DEFENSE: THE END OF AN ERA (59:00)

A 132-year winning streak, the longest in sporting history, has come to an end. This fascinating video documents the battle between John Bertrand on AUSTRALIA II and Dennis Conner aboard LIBERTY as the series goes to an unprecedented seventh race. The program follows the elimination trials, the stormy controversy over the Australian keel, and each race with the drama and excitement that was the America's Cup summer of '83. Numerous camera locations, including the Goodyear blimp, provide the best view possible.

A perfectly written script, excellent narration, combined with a producer who is no stranger to 12 Meter sailing, result in a finely paced yachting gem! Program # YS-6.

Special Price $30.00 (Regularly $44.95)



Weetamoe (Rosenfeld Collection)

YACHTING IN THE '30S

Treasured film footage for yachting enthusiasts. 45 minutes of newsreels and home movies including J-Boats, ocean passages, and record-breaking yacht racers filmed in the 1930s. The following programs are on this one tape. Program # YS-7C.

Weetamoe (12:00)
A fantastic sail aboard the Clinton Crane designed, Herreshoff built J-Boat WEETAMOE. Narrated by Rod Stephens, Jr., in 1986. This is a 1930 film filled with highlights on sail and boat handling and insights into sailing the great Js.

Yachting in the Thirties (20:00)
These four short narrated programs were developed from unique footage in our film archives for the new exhibit in the Mallory Building at Mystic Seaport Museum. The programs, of about five minutes each, are: "DORADE: A Most Significant Yacht" which covers this trendsetter in the 1931 transatlantic and Fastnet; "YANKEE Cruise to England," a capsule of the famous passage of that J Boat in 1935 and her racing in England with other Js; "BRILLIANT in the Thirties," showing this fine schooner during her transatlantic passage in 1933; and finally "The Last J-Boat Race," which details RANGER's construction, launching, and the fantastic racing record she compiled during 1937.

Sails and Sailors: J Boats '37 (14:00)
A period newsreel film in color has been preserved and improved to show us a glimpse of the famous race of 1937 between the J-Boats RANGER and ENDEAVOUR II. Vessels of the day and Newport in the '30s allow us to step back in time.
Special Price $20.00 (Regularly $24.95)

Hoisting *Ranger*'s Main (Rosenfeld Collection)



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his cigarette, sharing not at all in the fun the other young people are enjoying. A vessel is sighted that we can identify as the *Joseph Conrad* during her use as a yacht by Huntington Hartford, who had purchased her from Alan Villiers following his famous round-the-world cruise. Next we see *Seven Seas*, a square-rigged vessel similar to the *Conrad*, owned by Walter Guberman. She sailed in races with the *Conrad* at times, making the passages more interesting. The Lang film is, all in all, a great social document.

Next up on the TV monitor are films from the Rod Stephens Collection. They begin in Hoboken, New Jersey, at the Stevens Institute, late in 1936, with the tank testing of models for *Ranger*. Though other J Boats were tank tested, *Ranger* was the first to be so thoroughly and scientifically tested.

At this point, I paused in my narration to share an interesting note Rod Stephens had sent to me. Although it was generally known that *Ranger* was designed jointly by young Olin Stephens and the elder Starling Burgess, everyone wondered who was primarily responsible for the hull design of that enormously successful J Boat. This was to remain a secret, since neither yacht designer wished to disclose the information. Upon the death of Burgess, however, the yacht's proud owner, Harold Vanderbilt, succumbing to pressure, announced that Olin Stephens had been responsible for *Ranger*'s hull form. Horrified that the secret had been so well kept that even the owner held an incorrect assumption, Olin Stephens attempted to set the record straight by ascribing the brilliant hull form to Starling Burgess. But, to this day, serious publications repeat the error. Disclaimers are easily ignored!

Ranger was built at Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine. Her launching did not appear terribly dramatic; however it was observed by Rod Stephens that she traveled astern down the ways at about 14.8 knots, whereas the fastest she sailed forward was never more than 14.3 or 14.4! The story of her tow from Maine to Newport was dramatic enough. It was marred by the loss of her 165-foot mast in swells just off Marblehead. This made even more remarkable *Ranger*'s success in the trials to select a defender, which she sailed with a borrowed mast. Then, with a new mast, she swept the America's Cup series four straight against *Endeavour II*. *Ranger* was truly the "Super J."

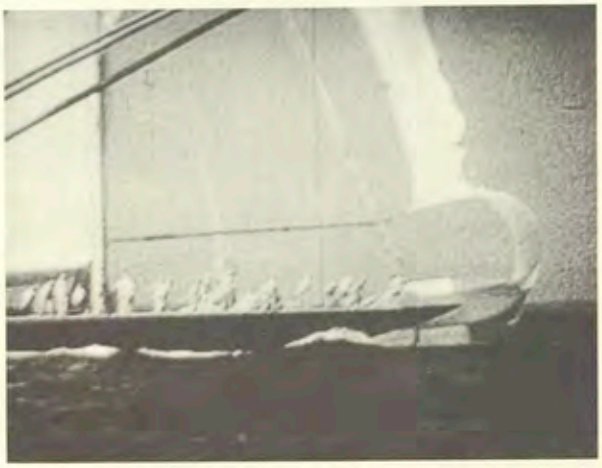


Ranger was designed jointly by young Olin Stephens (shown at her launch) and the elder Starling Burgess.

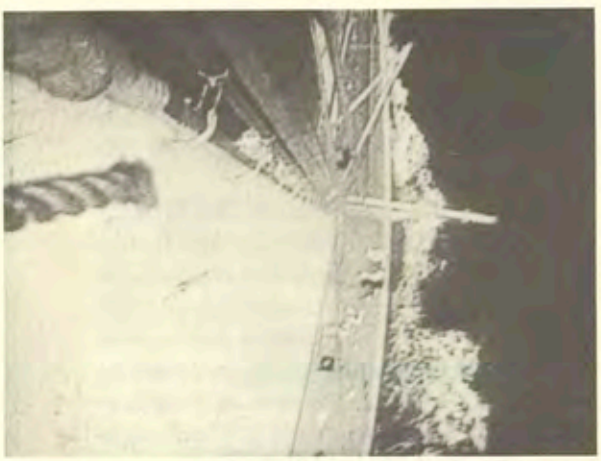
Mrs. Gertrude Vanderbilt and Mrs. Sopwith were very enthusiastic America's Cup followers and good sailors. Mrs. Vanderbilt is pictured in several of our films, christening *Ranger* and sailing onboard. The Cup Committee made special dispensation allowing for one extra person on board each boat during the races. Although not permitted to participate in deck or wheel assignments, they nevertheless took their stations and helped in small ways, adding to the enjoyment of the sail. How different was the attitude from

Mrs. Vanderbilt is pictured in several of our films, christening *Ranger* and sailing onboard. The Cup Committee made special dispensation for one extra person (the owner's wife) on board each boat during the 1937 races.





Endeavour II is storming downwind in Buzzards Bay when, suddenly, the spinnaker simply explodes and tears away.



Rod Stephens shot one exceptionally fascinating scene from aloft, aboard *Ranger* in 1937.

that aboard the racing machines of the 1980s! During the cruise that followed the Cup races, one scene is unforgettable: *Endeavour II* is storming downwind in Buzzards Bay when, suddenly, the spinnaker simply explodes and tears away, to be pulled aboard by a shocked crew. Though shot by amateurs, with nothing more than a 16mm eye, these pictures provide a priceless record.

One exceptionally fascinating film, given by Rod Stephens, was actually shot from the deck of *Weetamoe* in 1930. Rod was spending much of his time assisting the NBC radio sports commentator, Graham McNamee, and this gave him the opportunity to record this crew-eye view of sailing a J Boat. Exactly fifty years later, in 1980, Rod narrated the *Weetamoe* film, and it ultimately became a part of one of the videotapes we offer to the public.

A recurring image in these films is the Brenton Reef Lightship. The trials and cruise races all started or ended near her anchorage. In the 1930s big Moran tugs were used to place the turning marks for the race course. These marks were not the tasteless orange things we see today, fostering the sale of your favorite ale. In the '30s they were thin spires, perhaps fifteen feet high, sporting a New York Yacht Club burgee at the truck. The Moran tugs stood by the marks as the boats approached, but were well clear when the big J Boats rounded. Rod Stephens said that he would pay close attention at the beginning of the races because the tugs would always give away the position of the marks. Although you could not see the marks from a distance, you could always tell where they were set because the tugs would backdown hard, leaving a telltale trail of smoke marking the spot neatly.

The next tape screened was from film taken by yachting writer Alfred F. Loomis on *Yankee*'s cruise to England in 1935. A book written by *Yankee*'s owner, Gerard Lambert, about that famous cruise is quick reading and a classic. The original film was transferred some time ago to a reference videotape, with Loomis's comments added posthumously from audiotapes made to accompany the films prior to his death in 1968.

In the 1930s, big Moran tugs were used to place and stand by the turning marks for the America's Cup race course. At the fantail is one of the marks, a thin spire, perhaps fifteen feet high, sporting a New York Yacht Club burgee at the truck.





In 1935, Gerard Lambert decided to take *Yankee* to England to race with the English Js, which was a grand gesture since T. O. M. Sopwith was none too happy about the 1934 Cup contest.



In the cruise across the Atlantic, with winds reaching force nine, the camera work of Alfred Loomis aboard *Yankee* was quite spectacular.

What a great aid this was. However, I could not easily reuse his narration because his voice was synchronized with a videotape that captured the faster projection speed of the silent film. Our new gear has restored the pictures to their original (actual) speed, so new narration was required.

Yankee was a remarkable boat. She was the longest lived and most traveled of the American Js. Built in 1930 as J-2, she retained that number throughout her life. She was designed by Frank Paine (who was on the cruise to England in 1935) and was built at the Lawley yard just south of Boston. In 1935, Gerard Lambert decided to take her to England to race with the English Js, which was a grand gesture since T. O. M. Sopwith was none too happy about the 1934 Cup contest. In this instance, it would be the Americans who would have to take a large sailing vessel across the Atlantic, see to her logistics, and sail in stiff competition with the British J-Boat fleet. Sailing in consort, in fact racing with *Yankee* in the cruise across the Atlantic, was Lambert's other great yacht, the wonderful schooner *Atlantic*. They were separated by a series of storms, with winds reaching force nine, during which the camera work of Alfred Loomis was quite spectacular. The two yachts met again briefly before arriving off Portsmouth where *Yankee* was greeted by T. O. M. Sopwith's motor yacht *Vita*, which offered the engineless *Yankee* a tow into port. The camera captures this gracious gesture. *Yankee* made a good record that summer, winning eight firsts, four seconds, and three thirds during the thirty-two races she entered.

Alfred F. Loomis was once called the most welcome yachtsman on any boat. He wrote a regular column and edited *Yachting* magazine for many years. His films were taken at numerous races and aboard many historic yachts and offered entertainment for yacht owners during the winter months at club dinners or awards celebrations. Loomis was also there on *Ranger*'s launching day, so we have yet another view of that important occasion, and here we are treated to views of John Hay Whitney's beautiful *Aphrodite*, a boat that still gives pleasure in Mystic's

Off Portsmouth, *Yankee* was greeted by T. O. M. Sopwith's motor yacht *Vita*, in a gracious gesture offering the engineless *Yankee* a tow into port.





Loomis captured the great designer of the three Cup-winning American Js, Starling Burgess, speaking with an unidentified man (right) and Elizabeth Hovey, daughter of the owner of *Rainbow* in 1937.



An unidentified woman sights through a sextant aboard *Yankee* during her 1935 summer in England. Amateurs sought and revealed an intimate view of the sights and atmosphere that was yacht racing in the 1930s.

Antique and Classic Boat Rendezvous, with her black hull, highly varnished trunk, and unusual torpedo stern. Loomis was at the 1937 Cup races filming boats coming in past the beacon on the point at Fort Adams, where are seen hundreds of military well-wishers. Shooting astern from a powerboat leaving Newport, Loomis captured the great designer of the three Cup-winning American Js, Starling Burgess, speaking with Elizabeth Hovey, daughter of the 1937 owner of *Rainbow*.

Loomis showed up at the Herreshoff yard in Bristol to film the J Boats hauled there. That remarkable yard built *Enterprise*, *Weetamoe*, and *Rainbow*. *Yankee*, as we have mentioned, was built at the Lawley yard, along with the distinctive *Whirlwind* (which, incidentally, had been designed by L. Francis Herreshoff, son of N. G. Herreshoff); and *Ranger* was built at Bath Iron Works. Those were the American Js. *Resolute* and *Vanitie* were not built as Js, but their sail plans were modified so they could sail with the J Class.

So where have all those great boats gone: the J Boats, steam yachts, and other spectator craft of the 1930s? The war took many of them for their precious metals. Other yachts were turned over for service in coastal patrol duty, sometimes called the Hooligan Navy. The hurricanes of 1938 and 1954 took an astonishing number of great yachts. But for the most part, they simply slipped out of time in the same way the yachtsmen pictured in these films have gone, one by one.

The element that makes these films so intriguing is their lack of planned or staged scenes. The newsreel pictures of the period offer a wonderful overview. Their scenes are well composed and technically perfect, but they lack the all-around candid view most of our collections offer. Amateur cameramen were not after one story. They were free agents, panning their cameras to the people, the places, the craft. Amateurs were present at times and for events at which no public camera was available or permitted. They sought and revealed an intimate view of the sights and atmosphere that was yacht racing in the 1930s. With the care, protection, and responsible duplication the original films will receive in our Archives, they can continue to carry their picture of yachting in the '30s to generations to come.

The Best Way to Work

Commuting by Water Before the War

ROBERT B. MacKAY

Legend holds that one morning in 1910 two elegant saltwater thoroughbreds, *Little Sovereign*, M. C. D. Borden's sleek, three-funneled 137-foot express steamer, and *Winchester*, Peter W. Rouss's 165-foot oil-fired "flier," engaged in a race from the Jersey shore to Manhattan. The twenty-five-knot *Winchester* overhauled and passed her slightly slower competitor, so infuriating Borden that he did not debark at the New York Yacht Club's 26th-Street landing as was his custom, but ordered his captain to proceed up to the Harlem River docks of Charles L. Seabury's Gas Engine and Power Company, where the textile magnate placed an order for a larger yacht.

The 1911 *Sovereign*, capable of thirty knots and boasting five funnels, was 166 feet overall, with a one-to-six beam ratio. Not to be outdone, Rouss, the department store heir, countered with his third *Winchester* in 1912, a 205-foot destroyer look-alike that generated an awesome 7,000 horsepower. Before this commuter mania subsided, there would be a fourth *Winchester* and a re-engined *Sovereign*. Yet neither of these could compete with Charles R. Flint's 130-foot *Arrow*, the Hudson River commuter that, in 1901, had set a world speed record of 45.6 miles per hour (a speed previously thought unattainable after the British destroyer *Cobra* had jackknifed at 40 miles per hour).[1]

Rouss and Borden, however, had helped to popularize commuting by water, an alternative to the monotony of the railroad that was to appeal not only to yachtsmen, but to dozens of well-heeled country house owners whose places were beyond easy reach of the city. At the peak of the phenomenon between the two world wars, businessmen were commuting by water seasonally to and from most of the nation's waterfront cities, but nowhere was the practice more in vogue than in New York, where the East River was literally jammed with sleek craft during rush hour. From late March to early November, commuters sped to and from Manhattan, often engaging in high-jinks races in which the faster boat would attempt to circle the slower competitor. Close contests were often decided by whatever advantage could be gained by passing on opposite sides of Roosevelt Island in the East River.

The progenitor of these outrageous toys had been N. G. Herreshoff's *Stilletto*. Generally considered to be the first high-speed steam yacht, *Stilletto* had captured the public's interest in the 1880s, and enhanced the reputation of her owner-builder when she won a much-publicized speed trial against the Hudson River steamboat *Mary Powell*, averaging an unheard-of twenty-five knots.[2] By the 1890s, express steamers in the ninety-foot range, driven by triple-expansion steam engines, were a common sight in metropolitan yacht basins during business hours. Indeed, other than transportation, there was little that could be done with these craft for, despite their length, the "screw schooners" or "launches," as they were classed, typically had only one deck house, doubling as the dining room, with a small saloon and a few cramped cabins below deck. Most of the space on these day boats was reserved for the steam plant, which was composed of a boiler, condenser,

Robert B. MacKay clearly prefers varnishing to golf. He is co-owner of *Red Witch*, a 1929 all-bright Chris Craft commuter, which is a frequent participant in the Seaport's Antique and Classic Boat Rendezvous. Bob also serves on the Seaport's Curatorial Committee, and in his professional life he is Director of the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities.



Peter W. Rouss's 204-foot *Winchester IV,* built by Yarrow & Company of Glasgow, Scotland, in 1912, was the department store heir's final speedster. The destroyer look alike was later sold to Cornelius Vanderbilt. Photo by Morris Rosenfeld. (76998F)

blowers, pumps, coal bunker, and ash scow, not to mention the crew's quarters forward. Besides a captain and deckhands, these labor-intensive steamers required engineers and firemen. The craft were also subject to noise and vibration, needed time to get up steam, and were often covered with a dusting of coal and soot. Above all, they were expensive to build and maintain—incredible extravagances for the very few.

World War I was to change all this, however, in an unexpected way. The development of the high-horsepower gasoline engine for aviation also offered new possibilities afloat. Clean, compact, and quick-starting, the combustion engine afloat was easy to maintain and relatively inexpensive. The 250-horsepower, twelve-cylinder Liberty motor, developed for wartime aircraft, was the first gasoline engine to be used in commuters. Michigan racing-boat builder Gar Wood stuffed five Libertys into *Cigarette*, the seventy-foot commuter he built in 1923 for Gordon Hamersley. Those five engines could move her at fifty miles per hour! Soon the Liberty motors were joined by other legendary petrol consumers, including the Sterling Petrol, Wright-Typhoon, Hall-Scott, Speedway, Packard, Kermath, and Winton.

The high-speed combustion engine also ushered in other changes. Speeds of thirty knots or more could be achieved in smaller boats, and the new economics now made stock commuters practical. Writing in *Yachting* in 1933, Carl L. Weagant thrilled to the new possibilities: "even the smallest of stock cruisers or runabouts with a fair turn of speed can supply a means of commuting. Furthermore, with the feasibility of commuting by water so well established by the larger boats and the congestion of cities becoming increasingly irksome in summer, more people have become aware of and are taking

Opposite: John W. Kiser's morning commute from Glen Cove to New York aboard *Fillette*, an 80-footer built by Consolidated in 1920, was documented in the July 1922 issue of *Country Life in America.*

COMMUTING by MOTOR YACHT

Mr. John W. Kiser commutes from Glen Cove, Long Island to New York daily in his yacht "Fillette"



8.30. PUTTING OFF FROM SHORE



8.35. THE OWNER COMES ABOARD



8.40. THE NEWS BEFORE BREAKFAST

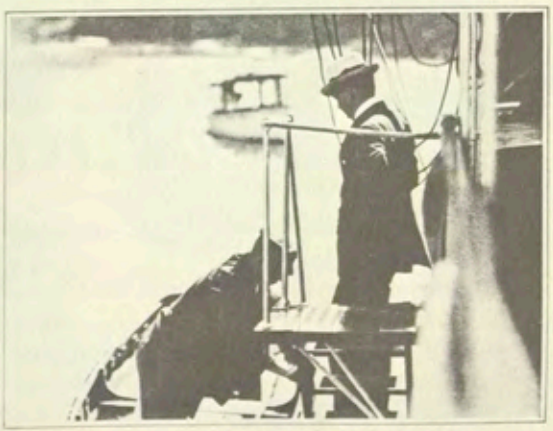




8.45. AL FRESCO BREAKFAST



9.20. A GLIMPSE OF THE CITY



9.30. ASHORE FOR THE DAY'S WORK

advantage of commuting which the stock boat offers."[3]

Chris Craft, "World's Largest Builders of Mahogany Motor Boats," introduced the first widely owned stock commuter in 1929, reportedly selling a year's production on the first day of the New York Boat Show. Model 122, the thirty-eight-foot commuting cruiser, was "so nimble and fast," its promotional brochure claimed, "that it will take you in a few minutes completely away from feverish business, boresome folk and congested highways."[4] A V-bottom design with a marked flare forward and tumblehome aft, the 122 was a state-of-the-art speed cruiser with dual controls so the boat could be steered from either the bridge deck or the forward cockpit. H. A. Jackson, an executive of the Chicago Pneumatic Tool Company, and the other new owners who paid $15,000 for the twenty-two-passenger craft were not only buying thirty-miles-per-hour performance, but a fully found yacht that came with a complete complement of linen, china, crystal, and even silver in a felt-lined drawer. Windows that operated by spring-loaded automobile cranks, car seat upholstery, and an electric cigar lighter were an indication of Detroit's influence on Chris Craft's nearby Algonac plant. Judging from the serial numbers on surviving hulls, the company built approximately sixty Model 122s before the Depression ended production prematurely.

The popularity of the Chris Craft commuter not only helped popularize the type, but also cast a design hegemony over its competitors. Gar Wood's forty-foot commuting cruiser of the Cheboygan type, the Robinson Seagull forty-foot speed cruiser, and the American Car and Foundry (A.C.F.) thirty-eight-foot express cruiser were virtual copies, differing in only small features and engine options. The timing of the competing models, which all made their debuts in the early thirties, was even more inopportune than that of the short-lived Chris Craft commuter.

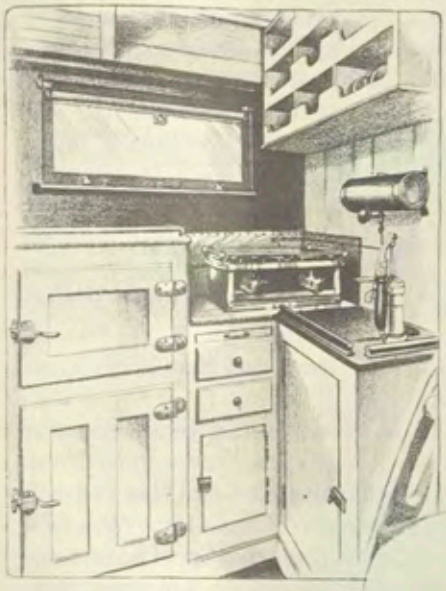
By the mid-thirties the market for stock commuters had completely dried up. *Lady Lou*, a Model 122, was still being hauled around by Chris Craft to boat shows two or three years after production of the thirty-eight-footers had been terminated. She appeared at Chicago's "Century of Progress Exposition" in 1933 as the flagship of a fleet of sixty Chris Craft runabouts.

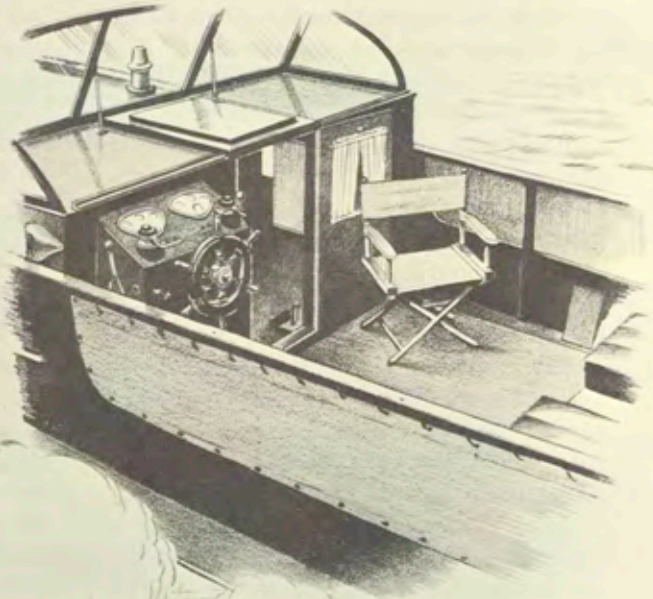
The impact of the Depression on stock commuter production was probably best dramatized by the fate of the A.C.F. thirty-eight-footers. Introduced in 1930, the model received good reviews and was the subject of a full page of sketch vignettes in the May 1930 issue of *Yachting*, while appearing on the cover of that magazine three years later. Among the pleased owners of the first boats to be delivered was a Commodore of the New York Yacht Club, John Nicholas Brown of Newport, Rhode Island. However, even at the reasonable post-crash price of $9,800, A.C.F. was unable to make a market, slashing the price to $8,750 in 1936 and offering a further discount of $1,120 in 1938, until the price was less than the cost of production. In 1940 the company still had two available for $6,500 each.

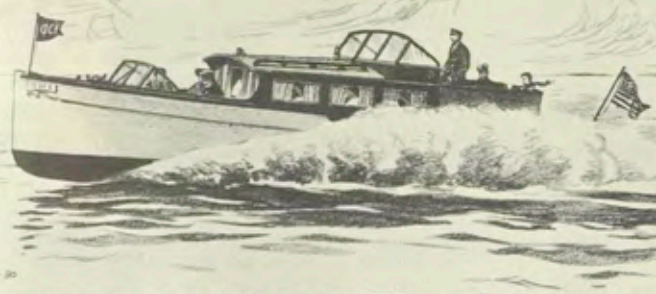
The stock commuters were only part of the phenomenon that gripped the nation's waterways between the world wars as city-bound businessmen in such divergent places as Long Island Sound and Detroit's Lake St. Clair searched for a better way of getting to work. People commuted in all sorts of craft. Charles S. Payson traveled to Manhattan on a yacht tender that had proved too heavy for davit use, until he ran into a submerged mattress in the East River at speed.[6] J. P. Morgan used his twin-screw steam yacht *Corsair* to go to work until 1917, the year he launched *Navette*, a 114-foot steam commuter. Morgan still had *Navette* in commission in the thirties, apparently preferring the sound of steam propulsion to the roar of combustion engines. *Yachting* noted in 1931 that: "there seems to be no one type of commuter. One will be a big 70 or 80 footer, good for 40 miles or better. . . . Then, there are some

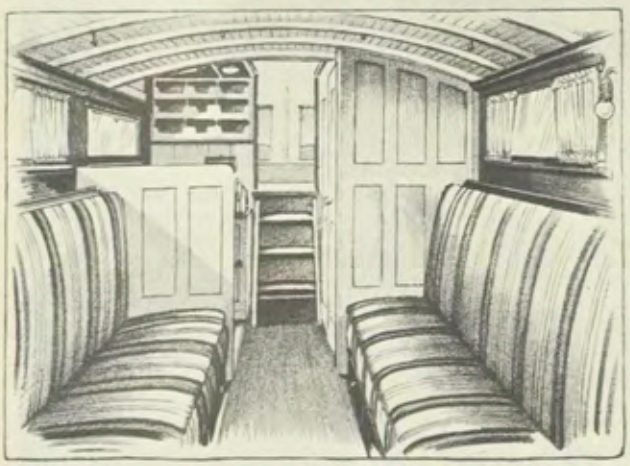
Opposite: The American Car and Foundry (A.C.F.) 38-foot twin screw express cruiser, with a top speed of thirty-one miles per hour, was heralded in the May 1930 issue of *Yachting*.

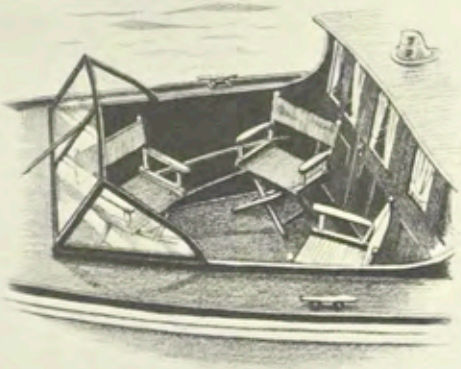
A Handsome 38-Foot Twin Screw Express Cruiser











Speed upon the water is now in as much demand as it is upon land. Here is the new A. C. F. 38-foot twin screw express cruiser or commuter that steps out at 26 or 31 miles per hour, depending on the power, a pair of Gray or Scripps motors being optional equipment. The drawings show the attractive and comfortable cabin, a corner of the galley and the bridge deck and forward cockpit.

which are hardly more than a fast runabout, both in size and accommodations."[7]

The terminology was equally vague. A commuter could also be called a launch, cabin runabout, cruiser, speed cruiser, express cruiser, express yacht, and even "business boat." The larger variety, generally known as express cruisers, were usually custom built, although Chris Craft's top production model in the early thirties was a forty-eight-foot speedster called The Yacht.

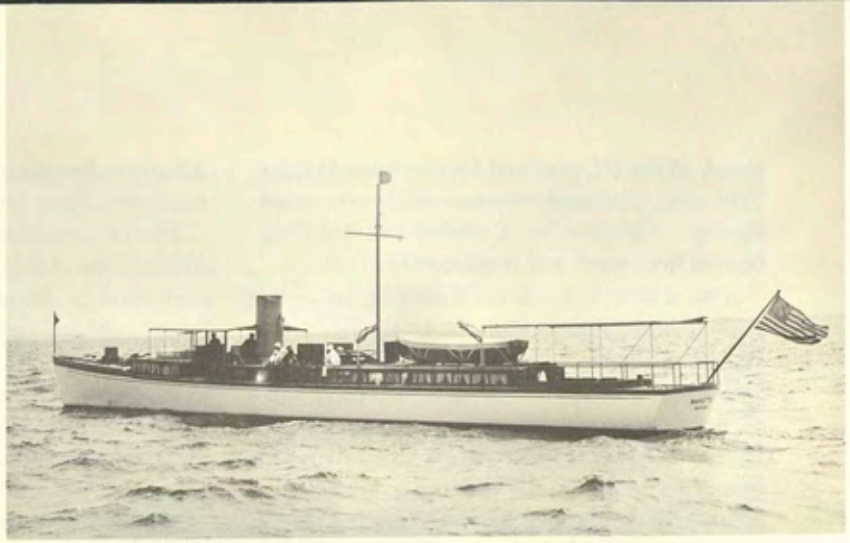
Among the premier shipyards for custom commuter construction between the wars were two Michigan firms, the Huskins Shipyard of Bay City and John Hacker of Mt. Clements. On the East Coast there was the Massachusetts firm George Lawley & Sons of South Boston and a number of yards in the New York area, including Purdy Boat Company of Manhasset Bay, Long Island, Luder's Marine Construction Company of Stamford, Connecticut, Henry B. Nevins of City Island, and, above all, the Consolidated Shipbuilding Corporation of Morris Heights, New York.

Consolidated built so many express cruisers for Manhattan's captains of industry and finance that they usually constituted a majority of the boats tied up on a weekday at the New York Yacht Club's East River basin. Among the Morris Heights yard's famous commuters was George F. Baker's *Little Viking*, William H. Harkness's *Ardee*, Harvey P. Gibson's *Mystery*, F. B. Ryan's *Bidgee*, and a number of boats built for the Standard Oil heirs Harold and John T. Pratt. Gar Wood and John Hacker also designed these larger boats, as did a number of large naval architecture firms, such as Boston's Eldridge and McInnes and New York's Tams and King.

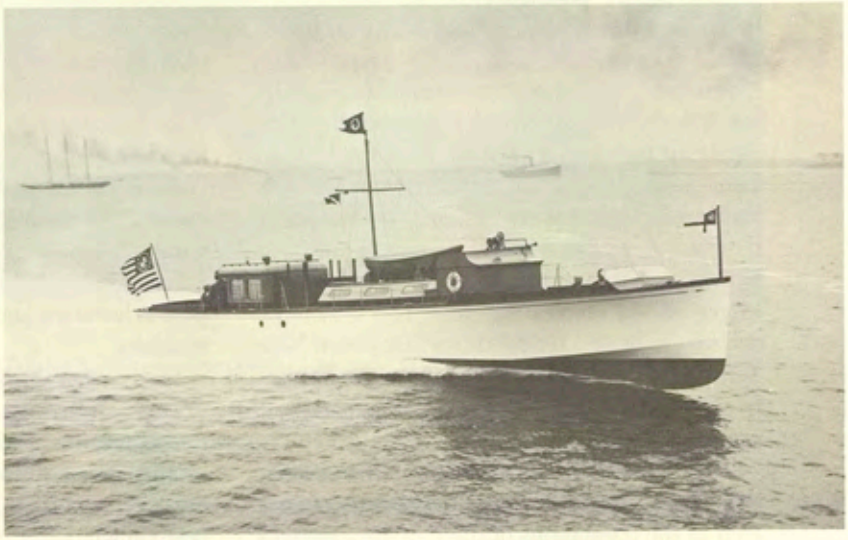
Two of the most beautiful commuters ever built were conceived by the last-mentioned firm. *Phantom*, owned by Patrick Grant II of Philadelphia, and Harrison Williams's *Whim III*, a fifty-six-foot step hydroplane that operated on Long Island Sound, possessed the low-slung, lean-hulled look that was a design hallmark of Tams and King, whose commuters were characterized by their minimal deck houses and their great

The New York Yacht Club's East River landing at 26th Street was jammed with "business boats" at the height of the season. Larger yachts, some of which also served as commuters, were moored in the stream. Photo by Morris Rosenfeld, ca. 1929. (34866F)





Not all commuters were in a rush. J. P. Morgan still had *Navette*, his 1917 steam yacht designed and built by Herreshoff, in commission in the 1930s, apparently preferring the sound of steam propulsion to the roar of combustion engines. Photo by Morris Rosenfeld. (2180F)



Phantom, a 66-foot Tams and King design, was built by Henry B. Nevins for Patrick Grant II of Philadelphia in 1927. Photo by Morris Rosenfeld. (23071F)



Whim III, Harrison Williams's 56-foot step hydroplane, roars down Long Island Sound with a "bone in her teeth." Powered by huge Wright Typhoons, she averaged fifty-two miles per hour during the trials after Consolidated launched her in 1928. Photo by Morris Rosenfeld. (32969F)

speed. *Whim III*, powered by two huge Wright Typhoons, averaged fifty-two miles per hour during her trials in 1928, setting a record for a boat of her length and displacement.

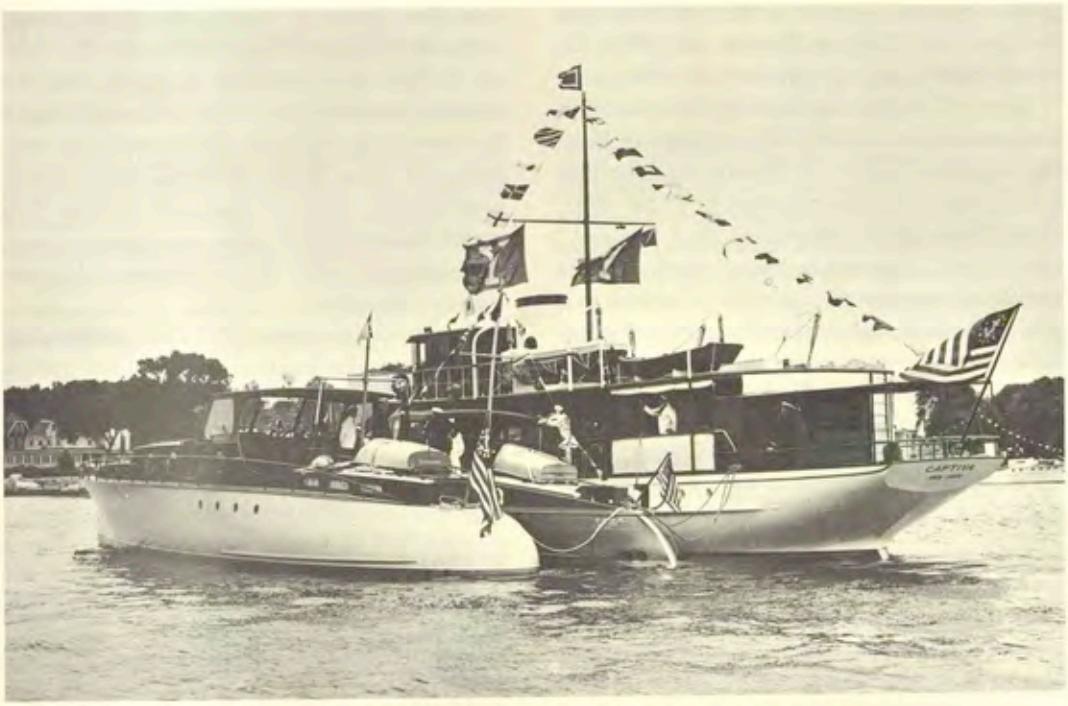
Argo, a sixty-foot express cruiser of the same period, built from designs of J. H. Wells for Henry P. Davidson and Wilton Lloyd-Smith, was a good example of the more common type of large commuter. Her two six-cylinder Sterlings could only achieve twenty-five miles per hour; however, from the look of the generously appointed deckhouses furnished with chintz-covered wicker settees, her co-owners could not have cared less. Carl Weagant had noted that the owner of such an express cruiser possesses "the ultimate in commuting luxury," but to Wilton Lloyd-Smith it was also a necessity. The surviving building records for his Lloyd Neck, Long Island, mansion are interspersed with invoices for *Argo*, which was being laid up simultaneously.[8] The $900,000 country house and $31,788.23 commuter appear on the same ledger sheets, indicating that Lloyd-Smith's decision to build a retreat thirty miles from New York City was linked to his ability to commute by water. (His co-owner, Davidson, was picked up at his dock on the way in.)

The dependability of this mode of transportation was as important to these wealthy businessmen as the reputations of traction lines were to their employees seeking homes in the suburbs. To Lloyd-Smith's Cold Spring Harbor neighbor, investment banker Otto Kahn, that meant German engineering. *Oheka*, a seventy-three-footer built at the Friedrichshafen plant of the Maybach-Zeppelin Company, was powered by three VL-3-type 480-horsepower engines, identical to those used in the great airships. She whizzed the Kuhn Loeb partner to and from Manhattan each day at speeds up to thirty-seven miles per hour. Built in 1926, the year Maybach had completed *Charming Polly* for Col. H. H. Rogers, the big commuter contained such innovations as a noise insulation system and duralumin frames inside her double-planked mahogany hull. Shipped by steamer to Montreal, *Oheka II* made her maiden voyage down the Hudson, setting a record for a boat of her class on the run from Albany to Poughkeepsie, which she reeled off in two hours, three minutes, and twelve seconds.

The Depression had the same effect on the construction of big commuters as it did on the stock models. Many devotees of the "business boats" laid up their express cruisers as they sought to economize. Nevertheless, a smaller number of new boats was built. John Hacker's designs of the thirties were particularly noteworthy. *Vamoose*, a forty-five-footer built by Fitzgerald and Lee of Alexandria Bay, New York, in 1936, was a streamlined speedster that was as striking an example of Machine Age styling as was any automobile. *Thunderbird*, perhaps the ultimate Hacker commuter, built in 1941 in accordance with the ideas of George Whitte, her Lake Tahoe owner, looks like something streamline-designer Raymond Lowey might have crafted. The barrel-bow commuter, which is still extant, had such futuristic features as electric faucets, telephone circuit communications, and a chrome-plated anchor that fitted into a hawsepipe in her stern and was operated by an electric windlass.

In the New York area, Charles S. Payson's *Saga*, a seventy-foot Wheeler built for $88,000, then a record cost for a boat of its size, and his brother-in-law John Hay Whitney's *Aphrodite*, designed and built by Purdy in 1937, were the best-known large commuters of their period. The all-varnished *Saga*, with elliptical portholes and an aerodynamic superstructure, was an unforgettable sight when underway.

Whitney's *Aphrodite*, perhaps the most beautiful commuter ever built, was an Art Deco design expression with round torpedo stern, tempered with a touch of historicism in the form of a clipper bow and brass fittings. Many of those who attended Harvard-Yale crew races at New London in the late thirties can't recall much about the collegiate contest, but clearly recall the roar of *Aphrodite*'s huge engines and the speed with which she disappeared over the horizon at the end of the day. John Pannel, who has recently restored the sleek beauty, discovered that she has had at least eight sets of engines and was capable of sixty knots while in Coast Guard service during World War II. Among the



Aphrodite and *Saga*, machine-age expressions of streamlining afloat, were owned by brothers-in-law John Hay Whitney and Charles S. Payson, respectively. The 70-foot *Saga* was built by Wheeler in 1935, while the 74-foot *Aphrodite* was built by Purdy in 1937. They are seen here at the Harvard-Yale boat race in 1937, rafted up to Mrs. Payne Whitney's 111-foot *Captiva*, built by Mathis in 1931. Photo by Morris Rosenfeld. (81273F)

memorabilia he has collected are two pictures, one showing Shirley Temple sitting in the forward cockpit during the Whitney period, and another taken during the war, when *Aphrodite* was used to transport a V.I.P.—FDR—from Manhattan to Hyde Park.

High-speed commuters were not for everyone, however. Numbered among their critics was no less a yachting authority of these times than L. Francis Herreshoff. "Speed itself is the greatest obstacle to comfortable seaworthiness" the great designer wrote.[9] Boats with flat planes, generous sterns, and full deck lines forward, when going over a wave "will land the next one nearly at right angles."[10]

What was this obsession with speed all about? A twenty-six-miles-per-hour launch designed by Herreshoff had passed a thirty-five-miles-per-hour Detroit-built launch. Herreshoff warned that young designers should realize "Detroit miles are not much good to use for navigation." He noted:

> I remember one time I had a ride in a special Gar Wood launch which had a four hundred horsepower engine, supercharger and all. It was a perfectly calm day but there was a slight old ground swell running in, maybe, only a foot high and two or three hundred feet between crests. Well the launch was said to go nearly sixty miles an hour and I well believe it, but when we got back to the mooring if the tender had not been handy—I believe I would have climbed right overboard, for I was in such a hurry to get out of that launch. No, it is my opinion that if you really want to go fast it is much better to take to the air.[11]

Equally disconcerting to Herreshoff was the use of glass windshields on many of the commuters that were operated on salt water. "The glass windshield is nearly useless and impossible when the spray starts to fly, and no windshield wiper helps," he wrote.[12] Herreshoff favored a

metal windshield similar to the type employed by Tams and King on *Phantom* and *Whim III*, which threw spray up and over the helmsman.

Keene Richards was warning about another and more ominous failing of commuters in *Yachting* as early as 1931. The forward cockpits that were practically synonymous with the type, while "a wonderful place to sit on a fine day," constituted "a hazard in heavy weather unless certain precautions are taken! It is obvious that a large forward cockpit might ship a lot of water in a head sea, resulting in the craft becoming practically unmanageable."[13] In 1949 several lives were lost when the A.C.F. thirty-eight-footer *Constance* sank during a squall in Nantucket Sound. The following March *Rudder* published a detailed account by one of the survivors of the foundering of a thirty-four-foot forward-cockpit cruiser in eastern Long Island Sound. The public learned that, despite self-bailing cockpits, all but the largest commuters were at risk, even in relatively protected water.

Ultimately, World War II did to commuting by water what even the Depression and other concerns could not. Gas rationing left idle any business boats that were not pressed into government service. Shipyards switched over to building military craft, many of which bore a remarkable resemblance to the commuters. The Navy's Chris Craft picket boat appeared to be just a beamier version of the company's thirty-four-foot commuter.

After the war, inflation, increasing pollution of urban waters (Huntington, Long Island, octogenarian Franklin "Douggie" Ellis, skipper of several commuters in the thirties, remembers losing twenty-seven propellers to debris in the East River during a single season), the loss of harbor facilities (the New York Yacht Club gave up its East River landing in 1938), and the appearance of freeways such as Long Island's Northern State Parkway (built across the very estates of some of the business boat owners) were among the long litany of changes that ended commuting by water as a phenomenon, although "Douggie" Ellis dismisses all but one cause—"Roosevelt!"

Could it all happen again? That is appealing food for thought for those who find themselves on sweltering summer days, backed up in front of Manhattan's Midtown Tunnel or along Chicago's Lake Shore Drive.

NOTES

[1] L. Francis Herreshoff, "N. G. Herreshoff and Some of the Yachts He Designed: Part VI, Partnership with Brother John," *The Rudder* 65 (June 1949):25.

[2] Edward Carroll, "Steam Yachts," *Yachting* 86 (December 1949):26.

[3] Carl L. Weagant, "Commuting by Water," *Yachting* 53 (May 1933):37.

[4] *Waterways are Happy Ways* (Algonac, Michigan: Chris Smith and Sons Boat Company, 1930).

[5] See *Yachting* 54 (September 1933):73; 60 (December 1936); 67 (April 1940).

[6] Payson to author, 1 October 1985.

[7] *Yachting* 50 (November 1931).

[8] "Residence of Mr. and Mrs. Wilton Lloyd-Smith, Lloyd's Neck, Long Island, Construction Accounts, Barrow, Wade, Godroe & Company, Accountants and Auditors," in files of Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, Setauket, New York.

[9] L. Francis Herreshoff, "The Common Sense of Yacht Design: Chapter XIV, Power Boat Models," part II, *The Rudder* 63 (February 1947):36.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] *Ibid.*

BOOK REVIEWS

James C. Bradford, editor. *Command Under Sail: Makers of the American Naval Tradition, 1775–1850.* Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1985. 333 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index. $24.95.

Over the past century and a half, enough has been written about the early American navy—explaining the mythology or contributing to it—to fill a small library. This collection of essays examines once again the nature of the navy under sail, and the men who led it. We learn much. Yet much remains to be learned.

Editor James Bradford has gathered together "interpretive essays" on twelve naval leaders: Esek Hopkins (by William M. Fowler, Jr.), John Paul Jones (by Bradford), John Barry (by William James Morgan), Edward Preble (by Christopher McKee), William S. Bainbridge (by Craig Symonds), Oliver Hazard Perry (by John K. Mahon), Thomas Macdonough (by Edward K. Eckert), David Porter (by David F. Long), Stephen Decatur (by John H. Schroeder), John Rodgers (by K. Jack Bauer), Isaac Hull (by Linda M. Maloney), and Robert F. Stockton (by Harold D. Langley). Some of the choices are obvious, others less so. Bradford admits that they are not necessarily "average," "representative," or "great" naval personalities, that their lives reveal a multiplicity of themes, and that their characters have both positive and negative features.

The authors, on the other hand, have been selected from the top ranks of the profession—a "who's who" of naval historians. It is not surprising, therefore, that each of these essays is, in its own way, a gem. Each neatly summarizes major issues relating to the personality under construction, and each does a good job in fitting the details of the individual career into a larger historical matrix. Each essay concludes with a valuable brief survey of the relevant primary and secondary literature. These surveys remind us of the need for a complete and accurate edition of the John Paul Jones papers, and for good, full, modern biographies of Hopkins, Barry, Stockton, Macdonough, Decatur, and Rodgers. Surely there is enough work to keep American naval historians busy for many decades!

Although Bradford prefers to avoid the term "great," each author strives to make a case for the *importance* of the officer under consideration. Certainly, many of these naval men can take credit for some "first." Esek Hopkins, however marginal he might have been in the larger context of American history—or even American naval history—was, to be sure, the first Commander in Chief of the Continental Navy. John Paul Jones received the first foreign salute of the American flag, in 1778. William Bainbridge was the first American to have his vessel captured in the Quasi-War with France in 1798. Thomas Macdonough was involved with the first steam naval vessel, *Fulton First*. David Porter commanded the first American warship in the Pacific and was perhaps (David Long argues) the first American naval imperialist. Robert F. Stockton, an early convert to steam, ordered one of John Ericsson's vessels—the first commercially successful screw steamer *Robert F. Stockton*.

In addition, the authors of these essays search for traits and traditions that either were hallmarks of the early navy or helped, by example, to shape the service in later years. Many of these characteristics and traditions are almost cliches: adaptability, resourcefulness, superior seamanship, leadership, professionalism, heroism and daring, egotism, temper, ambition, and self-sacrifice. Anyone who has studied nineteenth century American naval history will also recognize one of the perennial problems of the service: the manner in which the promotion system frustrated those for whom rank never caught up with personal exploit or accomplishment. These essays also reinforce our understanding of the close relationship that traditionally existed between the nation's mercantile and naval families. Most of the seamen profiled here either joined the service at an early age, or began in the merchant marine, or came from long-established seafaring stock.

This volume implicitly raises some broader methodological and historiographical questions. Most fundamental is the issue of why these particular naval officers are worthy of the profiles, and what their lives do or do not reveal. The essays unwittingly suggest that we perhaps need to redefine our conceptions of "greatness" and "importance" in naval history. Many of these officers rose to a challenge—admittedly in a most heroic manner. But might not many another lesser-known figure have done the same if only presented with the opportunity? Are we, in other words, confusing "greatness" with fortune (or, in Bainbridge's case, "misfortune")? Perry was first and

foremost a combat officer—but does that make him great? Indeed, were not many of these officers famous because of their exploits in just one battle?

John Schroeder's explanation of Decatur's stature typifies the problem. Schroeder admits that Decatur has been only a "secondary figure"—because of the limited long-range impact of his battle victories or other activities and because of some of his own character flaws. Yet Schroeder concludes that, by comparison with his contemporaries, "Decatur's shortcomings appear minor. . . . Decatur stands as the most exemplary naval hero of his time, and that, in and of itself, remains a considerable historical legacy." But does it? These essays, for the most part, assert a legacy without attempting to measure the extent to which it was historically significant.

The most useful essays in this volume examine the careers of Rodgers, Stockton, and Porter—officers whose careers go beyond symbolic importance. They were not "one battle" sailors; their work and influence embraced a multitude of activities and causes. (These three essays also provide a most revealing portrait of social conditions in the navy.) An outsider considering for the first time the stature of the American navy under sail would be ill-advised to measure the service by the yardstick of a dozen of its most famous officers. The navy was more than the sum of its parts: its importance (if it had any) went beyond individual heroics or dramatic squadron maneuvers. But as these essays unintentionally suggest, neither the importance of the navy prior to the Civil War nor the quality of the men who wore the naval uniform should be taken for granted. For 150 years, however, both assumptions have been "givens" of naval historiography. *Command Under Sail*, accepts those traditional assumptions.

Nevertheless, these authors do superb jobs working within the traditional framework. The essays are up-to-date, and the volume (if it comes out in paperback) would provide informative collateral reading for a survey of American naval history. Above all, the book points the way for future research. It is heartening indeed to be reminded that so much remains to be learned about the American navy under sail—and that so much talent exists today to help us learn.

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Honore Forster. *The South Sea Whaler: An Annotated Bibliography of Published Historical, Literary and Art Material Relating to Whaling in the Pacific Ocean in the Nineteenth Century.* Sharon, Massachusetts: The Kendall Whaling Museum, and Fairhaven, Massachusetts: Edward J. Lefkowicz, Inc., 1985. ix, 157 pp. $25.00.

This splendid bibliography, written by a Research Associate in the Department of Pacific and Southeast Asian History at the Australian National University, Canberra, resulted from the author's perceived lack of an adequate bibliography of whaling for the Pacific. And, indeed, there never has been a bibliography so broad in its view of whaling in the Pacific, including, in addition to history, works of fiction, both adult and juvenile, and artistic by-products of whaling. Geographically, the context of the bibliography extends to, and includes, the Auckland Islands in the south, the islands of Hawaii in the north, the Galapagos and Juan Fernandez Islands in the east, and New Guinea, the Palau, Marianas, and Bonin Islands in the west. Chronologically, Forster covers the subject between 1800 and 1900.

Entries are a model of how a bibliography should be presented; and one is rewarded with illuminating comments, when, but only when, comment is genuinely helpful. Typefaces and page layout are extremely well done, relaxed, unambiguous, and quite agreeable to the eye. The paper is permalife.

The subject arrangement is admirable and indexes are generous—for vessels, islands and places names, and for whaling captains—but, curiously, none for authors. Perversely, this was the first index I tried to find.

From now on, writers will not dare, nor will they wish to touch upon South Sea whaling without first consulting Honore Forster's indispensable, reader friendly guide book.

Plum Gut

ACQUISITIONS

The objects that find their way to museums like Mystic Seaport have all managed to survive the passage of time, but even those that are in perfect physical condition are rarely "intact." Though the original colors and details may remain, most have lost a most important feature: the special significance they once had to their makers or users. All too often, it is left up to historians and curators to reconstruct an item's original use or importance. Through examination and research, objects may ultimately reveal to us some new insight into the lives of our predecessors or

broaden and reinforce our understanding of a former time. But the specific, particular value that an item once held in its own setting and time is the most difficult quality to recapture.

Luckily, the "personal" histories of some objects have survived with them, thanks to their owners' careful record keeping or long memory. Two important acquisitions of the last few months have come to us well-documented, which would be a happy coincidence if each did not have such a tragic story to tell.

The bright blue velvet sailor suit looks as fresh today as it must have when actor John Drew brought it back from London, near the end of the nineteenth century. It was a gift for his young cousin, Charles Hitchins of New York. The suit's remarkable state of preservation is surprising—children's clothing is most often passed on and on until it is worn out—until we learn from the donor's account that Master Hitchins died in 1890 at the age of five. It is not known for certain whether the boy ever got to wear the suit at all. [86.6]



Nineteenth-century histories are filled with accounts of sailors lost at sea—faceless, sometimes nameless, men swept away with little trace. While memorial paintings like this one may have been common a century ago, those that we see in museums today are generally tributes to national leaders and heroes, not merchant mariners. For this reason alone, this elaborate dedication to twenty-nine-year-old Captain Daniel Carew of Stonington, Connecticut, would be noteworthy. But this is more than a work of historical interest, it is also a labor of love. This scene was painted in 1843, seven years after the tragedy, by Sarah Elizabeth Carew, who was only five when she lost her father. Her inscription reads: "Inscribed to / The Memory of Capt Daniel Carew, / who died at sea Aug 19th 1837. Aged 29 yrs. / sleep on loved one and quietly rest. / The cares of earth no more shall molest / Thy body returns to its mother earth / But thy soul ascends to a brighter world. / Thou liest embedded in the ocean's depth / Encircl'd by others who here've slept. / Thy dirge is the mighty ocean's roar, / That sounds the knell time is no more. / Fond wife, and children, kindred and all, / In the prime of life, ye too may fall, / And a voice echoes back from the tomb, / Arouse, prepare for thy final doom." Sight dimension 14½" x 11½" [86.13]



HISTORIC SHIPS AFLOAT

Shamrock V

Sir Thomas Lipton was certainly history's most persistent yachtsman and best sport. For thirty-one years he pursued the America's Cup, challenging the New York Yacht Club for it five times in various sloops named *Shamrock*. Although he was never able to "lift that Auld Mug," he won world-wide admiration for his continued good sportsmanship in the face of defeat.

For his last run at the Cup, at the age of eighty, Lipton commissioned Britain's first sloop of the J Class, which had been selected by the New York Yacht Club for America's Cup competition. Modeled by England's leading designer, Charles E. Nicholson, and built at the Camper and Nicholson yard in Gosport, near Portsmouth, this first J Boat was launched in April 1930. She was of composite construction, with elm keel, teak stem and stern post, steel frames, floors, and beams, and mahogany planking. In a class that could vary from 70 to 87 feet on the waterline, she measured 80 feet (120 feet overall). Her 162-foot mast contained about fifty pieces of spruce glued together.

Shamrock V. (Courtesy Museum of Yachting, Newport, Rhode Island)



Despite her potential, *Shamrock V* lost the 1930 America's Cup series to the American J *Enterprise* in four straight races. Nevertheless, she helped focus public attention on these massive toys of the very wealthy in a world heading rapidly toward the bottom of economic depression. In 1931 she was the most successful of the large yachts that continued to race in Great Britain.

Upon Lipton's death late in 1931, *Shamrock V* was purchased by aircraft manufacturer T. O. M. Sopwith. He raced her for two years, and then built a new J Boat, *Endeavour,* to challenge for the America's Cup. Another British aircraft manufacturer, Richard Fairey, then bought her.

The end of J Class racing came in 1937, the year *Shamrock V* was purchased by Italian publisher and senator Mario Crespi. World War II took most of the J Boats for scrap, but Crespi preserved his J until his death in 1962. After fifteen years as Pietro Scanu's ketch *Quadrifoglio,* during which she was rebuilt by Camper and Nicholson with bulwarks and a large deckhouse, she was restored to her sloop rig. In 1986 the Lipton Tea Company, Sir Thomas's own enterprise, presented her to the Museum of Yachting in Newport, Rhode Island. Between promotional tours, *Shamrock V* will be available for viewing at her Museum of Yachting berth in Newport. There she serves as a memorial to Sir Thomas Lipton and his creed of sportsmanship, and to the magnificent J Boats of the 1930s.

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