

35th Anniversary

1929-1964



**SENECA
YACHT CLUB**

Brief History
of the early days
of the
Seneca Yacht Club



Material Compiled By
OLIVER A. WOOD

CHARTER MEMBERS

Hallet J. Burrall	Lansing S. Hoskins	T. Schuyler Smith
Leon Currey	R. Richard Roenke	Mrs. Chester A. Suppes
E. Thayles Emmons	Mrs. Roy H. Rogers	Mrs. E. Granger Wilson
D. Max Henry	Marshall J. Root, Jr.	Oliver A. Wood
	Perry M. Shepard	

OLD TIMERS — 1930-1944

Gordon H. Bennett	H. Newton Hubbs	T. Raymond Rice
Carlton A. Blaine	Z. I. Kertesz	William N. Robson
Karl D. Brase	E. C. Lautenslager	Dr. Phillip W. Skinner
Thomas C. Carson	Cebern L. Lee	Fred T. Sholes
Dr. Albert M. Crance	Charles R. Mellen	William T. Tapley
Mrs. Wm. H. de Lancey	Leo J. Mulvey	Mrs. H. H. Trotter
Dr. Robert E. Doran	Harry R. McConnell	Thomas H. Truslow, Jr.
Paul R. Dove	Theodore T. Odell	Edward W. Vick
Mrs. Arthur D. Elliot	Mrs. T. E. Quigley	John E. Wood
	Daniel P. Quigley	

COMMODORES

Harry D. Marshall, '27	Cebern L. Lee, '43-'44-'45
R. Richard Roenke, '28	Edward W. Vick, '46-'47
Chester C. Hawley, '29	Robert E. Doran, '48
William D. Kitchell, '30	T. Fred Sholes, '49
Lansing S. Hoskins, 31	Arthur D. Elliot, '50
Allan W. Hawley, '32	T. Raymond Rice, '51
Roy H. Rogers, '33-'34	E. Granger Wilson Jr., '52-'53
T. Schuyler Smith, '35-'36	E. C. Lautenslager, '54-'55
Abram A. Post, '37	Frederick W. Shepard, '56-'57
H. Newton Hubbs, '37	Daniel P. Quigley, '58-'59
Robert E. Doran, '38-'39	E. Granger Wilson Jr., '60
Oliver A. Wood, '40-'41	J. Robert Morrow, '61-'62
Marshall J. Root, Jr., '42	William H. Mulvey, '63-'64



THE GENEVA DAILY TIMES of February 10, 1927 carried a paragraph reading “A meeting to organize a Geneva Yacht Club has been called for tomorrow night at 8:00 O’Clock at the Chamber of Commerce rooms by E. R. Snelgrove, secretary of the Organization Committee.”

“The association has for its sponsors, Harry B. Marshall, secretary of the Geneva Trust Company, Chester C. Hawley of the Hawley Motor Co. and William deLancey of Seneca Garage.”

On Saturday, February 12th, the paper stated “New Yacht Club to be known as the Seneca Yacht Club organized at meeting last evening.” The officers elected were: Harry D. Marshall, Commodore; R. Richard Roenke, Vice-Commodore; Erle R. Snelgrove, Secretary and Treasurer. The Board of Directors are Dr. John Parmenter, Castner E. Rapalee, Carlton A. Blaine, G. A. Springstead, and C. C. Hawley. A constitution and by-laws were adopted. -

Thus was launched our well beloved Seneca Yacht Club, which in 1929 built our present club house. At that meeting a committee was appointed to look into a one design class of sail boats.

There was also discussion of a club house. Vice-Commodore, R. Richard Roenke offered the use of the second floor of his boat house on the Long Pier for temporary quarters. This had been the clubhouse of the old Geneva Yacht Club, Inc., which was long defunct.

A considerable contingent of the club at that time was interested only in motor boats, outboards, cruisers or fishing.

Several meetings were held that winter and after much discussion, Granger Wilson consummated the purchase of 6-17 foot sloops from Buffalo Canoe Club. These were the 17' One Designs which formed the nucleus of the small boat fleet in the early days of the club. They were round bottomed, gaff rigged and decked. They had very sweet lines, but had an ugly gaff rig with a short hoist and a very long gaff.

These six boats raced thru the summers of 1927 and 1928 and several races were held for outboards, runabouts under 20 MPH and runabouts over 20 MPH.

There was also a Handicap Class of 4 boats:

Teresa, a beautiful 35' deep keel gaff rigged sloop owned by L. Hoskins and M. Root.

Lotus, a 35' yawl owned by Max Wheat.

Alyce, later *Audacious*, a 28' C.B. sloop owned by Harry Marshall.

Bat, a 26' C.B. sloop owned by Erle Snelgrove.

The race committee had great difficulty in trying to establish handicaps which would enable them to race together in this class. The time allowances based on *Teresa's* elapsed time were: *Alyce* 35% *Bat* 40%, *Lotus* 50%, but *Teresa* won most of the races in spite of these large handicaps.

The boats were anchored in the Geneva Harbor north of the Long Pier and started from a buoy off Dance Inn. There was much bitter comment in the 1927 minutes over the long sail to and from the starting line.

At a meeting in the winter of 1928 a collection was taken up to meet a bill of \$18.75 for pennants for the previous years winners because the treasury was depleted.

At the annual meeting February 23, 1928, the dues and initiation fees were increased to \$5.00 each. There was much discussion of a site for a new club house. The inevitable committee was appointed and reports and discussions were long at every meeting and many weird ideas were advanced and discarded.

At a dinner meeting at the Geneva Rod & Gun Club on December 8, 1928, it was decided to purchase Boody Point — the present site of the club — and a committee was appointed to make plans for a club house.

This committee was headed by Joe Plumb and consisted of Harry Marshall, Chet Hawley, L. S. Hoskins, H. O. Palmer, W. D. Kitchell. They met often and worked hard and effectively.

A permit was secured from the State Canal Commission for the rental of the pier and the 25' of ground south of the harbor which is owned by the state.

In the discussion of the size of the house and the necessary accommodations, it was thought that “the house should accommodate about 50 members with room for 25 large lockers, space for one design boats and a large meeting room. Also, room for caretaker porch around club house. Suggest electric lights, chemical toilet, club ice box and small stove.” At the Annual Meeting February 15, 1929, Chet Hawley was elected Commodore and Joe Plumb Vice-Commodore. It is to them and to Harry Marshall who was largely instrumental in raising the money and Lans Hoskins who did the legal work, that we owe the present club. Lans is still doing it, gratis.

It was decided by them to have the land and building held by the Geneva Trust Company as Trustee and to give to donors “Certificates of Participation” in the amount of their contributions so that in case the club should break up or its character should deteriorate undesirably, the property could be sold and the pro-rata share of the proceeds be refunded to the contributors.

In 1930, the Boody’s Point Property Company was incorporated to own the property which is leased to the Seneca Yacht Club. A large proportion of the stock of this corporation is now owned by the Seneca Yacht Club.

Harry Marshall was Secretary of the Geneva Trust Company and had his desk to the right of the door as you entered the bank. He had a figure in his mind as to what members and others should contribute — and was in a strategic position to see that they did. Joe Plumb bought the land for \$500.00 and donated it, and generous amounts were contributed by public spirited citizens who had no direct interest in the club. A total of \$3665.00 was raised to build the club.

At the annual meeting, sketches for the proposed Club House met with several criticisms. They showed a building approximately the size of the original building, but built on a concrete slab with a low pitched roof and no ceiling or attic. Joe Plumb was delegated to appoint a sub-committee to revise the plans to meet the criticisms and report back to a later meeting. He appointed Harry Teeple, a draftsman at the Empire Gas & Electric Company and son of Merrit Teeple who was a fabulous character in early days of the Yacht Club, almost as versatile and ever helpful as Tom Parkman is today and the writer. We sketched, discussed and discarded and finally came up with the plans of the present Club House minus the ladiesroom.

Joe Plumb, who was no craftsman, with infinite pains and labor built a scale model about three feet long which was exhibited at a Club Meeting on March 13th with a cost estimate of \$3000.00 including “possibly a fireplace and plumbing.” This was approved and the special committee authorized to proceed with the construction. Joe’s final report dated June 10, 1929 recites with satisfaction “the committee undertook to build a house similar in design to the model approved, to have a rough unfinished interior and one coat of paint on the outside; the interior to consist of a living room with possibly a fireplace, a locker room equipped with lockers and possibly a toilet; a small ladies dressing room. The committee estimated the above might be accomplished for a sum not to exceed

\$3000.00.”

“May the Committee now bring to your attention that the completed building includes all of the above and in addition there is a roomy loft with ample headroom for storage and other purposes; a sink in the locker room; a toilet in the ladies dressing room and a porch at the north end. Also, the building is finished outside with two coats of paint and blinds and a moulding has been added to the edge of the roof to make the architectural effect more pleasing.”

“Attached hereto is a memorandum of the amount received from subscribers to date and of all expenditures authorized or made by the Committee, from which you will be pleased to note:

1. The total amount received from subscribers is \$3665.00.
2. The total cost of the completed building is \$2937.85.
3. The total of further expenditures authorized, and made or being made, consisting of: a fence, a flagstaff, three wooden docks, four “No Trespass” signs, some grading and planting about the grounds, and prepaid full insurance on the building amounts to \$648.54.
4. Deducting all expenditures now leaves a balance in the hands of the Committee of \$78.58. Doubtless you will be pleased to instruct us regarding the disposition of this amount.”

The item of fence deserves comment. It cost \$390.00. The committee desired to put the fence about 3 feet off the edge of the concrete road on state highway land to have as much room inside as possible — much closer to the road than was proper. This required a special dispensation from a state official who shall be nameless.

H. O. Palmer arranged for Mr. X to come to Geneva to view the situation. At one o’clock one cold March day, Mr. X arrived in Geneva and a half dozen members were hastily summoned to help sell the proposition and we went to the site. A cold north wind was blowing and it didn’t take Mr. X over 2 minutes to assess the situation. He said, “It’s O.K. to put the fence there — where can we get a drink.”

This brings us to an important adjunct of the Yacht Club in those prohibition days — Jimmy Higgins Speakeasy. It was in a run down house on Wadsworth Street back of the Gas Holder. We took Mr. X there. He was a large florid man with hollow legs. We thought that a few belts and an hour or so would serve to celebrate the location of the fence, but Mr. X had apparently had salt mackerel for

lunch and didn't dally over his drinks. At 7:00 P.M. he announced that he had to get home and left on steady legs for his Cadillac with chauffeur. There were some fairly accomplished drinkers in the entertaining committee, but they had to drink in relays and we afterwards figured it cost the committee about \$100.00 to locate the fence.

The grand opening was on Decoration Day 1929, and it was a gala occasion. Races were held in the morning and lunch was served. Each member was permitted to invite two friends — and they all did.

Concurrent with the building of the Club House came the start of the Star Class here. Joe Plumb bought and contributed the frames and material for three Stars. Harry Bourne built two of them, the *Helldiver* for Joe and the *Whistler* for Chet and Alan Hawley. M. H. Teeple built his own. In addition, Lans Hoskins and Granger Wilson acquired *Vagabond* while Charles O'Malley and Jack Shurtlef bought *Rambler*. A fleet charter was secured in the name of the "Finger Lakes" Fleet with "Territory and Jurisdiction Limited to the Waters of the Finger Lakes of Central New York dated January 2nd, 1929.

As if these two projects were not enough to employ the energy of the members in the spring of 1929, the club sponsored an Outboard Marathon Race to Watkins and back which after great preparations was held on June 22nd. In the minutes of the club meeting of June 10th, is a familiar sentence, "Mr. Root requested that all members possible be on hand at Marathon Headquarters at Fay & Bowen's to help him."

Elaborate preparations were made to patrol the course to Watkins with runabouts and cruisers and there was a check point at Watkins to see that everyone rounded the pier there. Palmer's dock at Long Point was one of the patrol cruiser's headquarters. Sky Smith was one of the entrants in the races. He had a 16' Fay & Bowen Middie with a 25 H.P. engine. She was a fine seaworthy craft but when last seen after the start of the large fleet, Sky was lagging behind a number of the specially built racers.

Imagine the thrill of the local club members after about 2 1/2 hours had elapsed to see Sky roaring down the lake with none of the foreign flyers yet in sight. It was much later that it was learned that Sky, well behind the leaders when he reached Long Point, had decided "What the Hell," tied up to the *Aljo* there, had a few quick ones, made some mental calculations as to the probable time of the winner and started home well ahead of the pack.

The next outstanding event of 1929 was a dual race with the Owasco Yacht Club on July 28th. The minutes for July 24th read, “Mr. Wilson moved that a luncheon be served for the guests from Owasco and all of the members who could be present; that the members having luncheon pay a nominal sum; that the expenses for the guests be carried by the club; that the families of the club members be allowed to be at the club but not to be included in the luncheon.” It is not recorded how the families were fed. There is no record of the outcome of the race, but I believe that Owasco won in the One Designs and Seneca in the Stars. Several incidents enlivened the day. A young man from Auburn stood on the end of the dock carrying the spring board looking down into the finder of his camera. Apparently, the scene was not quite clear because he edged forward a half step and then another — and overstood the end of the dock.

Next, Harry Marshall came into the Harbor in his 28’ sloop with a fine west wind and rounded up into the wind to anchor in the NE corner of the harbor. Mit Harman was sent forward to throw out the anchor. Unfortunately, there was a turn of line around Mit’s foot and after a fine heave, Mit followed the anchor. Also, the end of the line had not been secured and the boat drifted ashore while Mit was freeing himself from the anchor. Two other crew members went overside to hold her off in the good sea which was rolling in. Two eager beavers from Auburn jumped into a four oared rowboat which had been rented from Bourne to ferry the visitors to the sail boats. They pulled manfully to the stricken sloop, got a line from the bow and struggled hard to tow the wide *Audacious* to a nearby buoy. One of the waterlogged crew was hanging over the bow and grabbed the ring on the buoy.

The Auburn boys turned for shore, exhausted but content with a rescue well performed. A shout went up from the *Audacious*. The act of passing a line thru the buoy ring, the holder-on had lost his grip and *Audacious* was ashore again. Our heroes from Auburn dashed back and painfully, like a pair of fighters in the 15th round, inched the *Audacious* back to the buoy. This time they didn’t trust the Seneca Landlubbers, but kept a strain on their tow line, till she was secured.

After the race, Perry & Stuart Shepard invited the cream of the Auburn visitors aboard their yacht *Skylark* for cocktails. The *Skylark* was quite a ship, 65’ long and narrow, with a glass cabin extending well above the deck most of her length. That day she was anchored well outside of where the Stars now moor.

The *Skylark's* dinghy came ashore to pick up the guests — male and female. The dinghy was a fine seaworthy craft about 14 feet long with a small outboard motor. She would easily hold 8 people — but 14 guests were invited. When they were aboard, the dinghy had about 4" of freeboard and the fine west wind was still blowing. As she progressed toward the *Skylark* the bow dipped under an occasional wave and shipped a gallon or two of water. It soon became apparent from shore that it would be touch and go. At 100' from *Skylark*, the free board was down to 1" and 10' from the gangway, she settled slowly under the waves. For a few moments, the passengers sat apparently unsupported in the water. Then someone made a move and only 14 heads were visible.

The Hauling Out Party (stag) was held at the Yacht Club on Oct. 26, 1929 with D. Max Henry as chairman of the Entertainment Committee. It was a very hilarious occasion and set a pattern which continued through the thirties.

It can be seen that the year 1929 was a very full one for the Seneca Yacht Club. Through the years 1927 and 1928, it had lead a rather sketchy existence, concerned chiefly with holding races, with a hybrid membership. In 1929, many precedents were set and traditions started which are accepted as routine today. Many of these were hammered out after much discussion and wide differences of opinion.

In May, 1930, Sky Smith, Chairman of House, Grounds & Docks Committees reported that “the painting of the Club House, installation of eve troughs, the gravel walks and new grading is progressing and the House Committee is attempting to obtain proper rope for the flag pole halyards.” Sky did great work in the grading and planting of the grounds.

Bill Kitchell was Commodore that year. The club suffered a great loss that winter in the death of Chet Hawley who as Commodore, had worked long and hard in the year 1929 on the activities which have been covered above and many more. Also, Joe Plumb who had worked so hard on the building of the Clubhouse, donated the land and financed the first three Stars moved away from Geneva. He continued to take great interest in the club and made several other gifts to the club.

The present pattern of racing Saturday afternoons and Sunday Mornings with series for Memorial Day, the 4th of July and Labor day began to emerge. Another Outboard Regatta was held under the Auspices of the club August 22, 23, & 24, 1930.

A Regatta for Star Boats was held at the Syracuse Yacht &

Country Club on Oneida Lake on September 6th & 7th, with the home club, Cooperstown, Owego, and Seneca participating. *Helldiver* and *Whistler* were trucked to Oneida Lake and the *Whistler* sailed by Alan Hawley won and *Helldiver* sailed by Roy Rogers was second. A team championship was also won by these boats for the Seneca Yacht Club.

That fall, Commodore Kitchell read a letter from Mr. Lithgow Osborne of Auburn asking that representatives be present at his home for dinner on October 6th, to discuss the formation of a Yacht Racing Association for Central New York. Dick Roenke explained that the idea had arisen at a meeting of boating interests held by the Finger Lakes Association and moved that we invite the first Regatta of the new association to be held at the S. Y. C. next year. Messrs. L. S. Hoskins and Alan W. Hawley were appointed representatives of the Club for the meeting at Osborne's and were instructed to issue such an invitation for the first regatta.

At the Hauling Out Party at the Rod & Gun Club October 13, 1930, the Messrs. Hawley & Root (Lans apparently didn't go) explained the action taken at Auburn in forming the Central New York Yacht Racing Association and this was ratified. The minutes of that meeting include one of the world's masterpieces of understatement — "about thirty members were present and were very enthusiastic about the dinner and entertainment arranged by Mr. Henry." The 2.75% Volstead beer of the period was uninspiring so the dinner committee added 2 gallons of vintage alcohol to the barrel of beer provided—and didn't give adequate notice that the mixture should be treated with respect. It was one of the liveliest meetings in our rather outstanding history. One staid member resigned the next day because he had been hit in the eye by the business side of a well buttered bun.

At the Annual Meeting February 13, 1931, Lans Hoskins was elected Commodore. It was reported that the International Star Assn. had created a new District — the 12th — to include all of Central New York and Lake Ontario and that Mr. Sampson Smith of Cooperstown had been appointed Secretary of the District. He was very active in this post for a number of years and did a lot to promote Star racing in this area.

At this meeting action was started which resulted in the building of the present west dock and the question of financing it was discussed at length because the Depression was beginning to take its toll and the Club Treasury was "greatly depleted." Later in the year, the building of "a permanent dock on cribbing 6' wide and 66' long

for \$758.42, to be paid half in cash and half by a note to be paid next year was authorized. Several cruiser owners contributed generously before the dock was paid for.

August 27, 28, & 29, 1931 the combined first annual regatta of the CNYRRA and of the new 12th District of the Star Class was held concurrently at the Seneca Yacht Club. A 75' Coast Guard Cutter from Oswego was present to serve as Committee Boat. It was a strenuous regatta for the Stars as they raced at 10:00 A.M. in the C.N.Y.Y.R.A. and 2:15 PM. in the 12th District Championships. A strong south wind ended in a terrific thunderstorm during the Star Race the afternoon of the second day and a heavy North wester Saturday enlivened the occasion and inspired a healthy respect for Seneca Lake in the visiting sailors.

The regatta was a great success thanks to weeks of preparation and long hours of work by most of the members—launching and hauling visiting boats, putting on lunches, dinners, cocktail parties, etc. Many new problems had to be solved and precedents were set which are now routine items of putting on regattas. There were no one design classes: except the Stars which included boats from Cooperstown and the Syracuse Yacht & Country Club. The race committee had great difficulty in grouping boats from local one design classes to give good racing. Seneca's 17' One Designs proved to be well matched with Owasco's 10' Catboats.

The Seneca Yacht Club today should be proud of the part its members of that era played in giving a rousing start to the regattas of the C.N.Y.Y.R.A. which are still the highlight of the sailing season in New York State. They are particularly enjoyable by bringing together 400 or 500 sailors from distant points of the state and in furnishing a relaxed weekend for the majority of average sailors who have little chance of doing well in the regional championship races of the various one-design classes.

Transportation of boats between lakes for regattas was a serious problem. There were many regattas on Long Island Sound and elsewhere along the coast where boats could be sailed or towed to the scene of the regatta but this was the first known attempt to assemble a large fleet from distant land-locked lakes.

Light trucks and a few home made trailers were used for the centerboard boats but the Stars, weighing nearly a ton, offered a major problem. If a marine railway was available as at the old Fay & Bowen Boat Co. in Geneva, the boat could be floated onto a cradle, hauled out and skidded up on a truck and gingerly driven

to the launching site where another marine railway was required for the reverse process.

Some geniuses at the Syracuse Yacht & Country Club, aided by a blacksmith, built a trailer from a 4 wheel Hudson chassis with a 6 inch gap in the rear thru which the keel could be coaxed. The trailer was backed down a sharply shelving beach into 4 1/2' of water, where the launching crew in bathing suits struggled to hold the boat in exact position while the trailer was dragged out till the boat settled solidly in position. It was harder to back the 1 1/2 ton trailer plus boat out into 4 1/2 feet of water to launch and both operations were tricky if there were waves of any size. However the center of gravity was low and boats could be towed at good speed. Copies of these trailers were built here and at other clubs having Star fleets, and quickly spread all over the country.

Makeshift trailers were built to move the centerboard boats. Ford Model T. front axles with the spindles welded were the favorite foundations and some weird and wonderful designs seemed to deliver the boats.

The Seneca Yacht Club can take credit for the second innovation. This was our 'Old' hoist by which Stars and smaller boats could be lifted out of water and placed on trailers or vice versa. This eliminated the need for the right kind of a sharply shelving beach and for four men in the water at the haul out and launching ends of the trip.

In the autumn of 1935 when the water was low, a large power shovel went out into 3' of water where it could reach to the deeper water of the harbor. It scooped out the clay bottom and deposited it in a mound on the road side of the slip, backing toward shore until the present slip was excavated. This left a huge pile of clay on the east side of the slip.

Lans Hoskins had won the 12th District races that summer and was chairman of arrangements for the 1936 regatta at Seneca the following year. He bought a blacksnake whip and drove every ablebodied member he could commandeer every Saturday and Sunday that fall to load that stubborn clay pile onto wheelbarrows and move it north of the club to form the present patio and lawn. Enough was left to form a peninsula 12' wide on the east side of the slip onto which trailers could be backed. An L-shaped dock was built on the lake side of the slip where the present wall is, with a pole to set the 70 pound masts of that day.

The location of the mast of the derrick was a very precise job so that it could pick Stars off the trailers and drop them into the

slip and still be within about 12 feet of two trees which were used to anchor the outer ends of the supporting braces. A hand operated winch with two handles did the lifting. To lift a Star 8 feet from the water to swing it over its trailer could exhaust two strong men and take about 5 minutes with two breathing spells. Similar hoists were soon built at other clubs.

These two inventions, the trailer and the derrick, did a lot to promote interclub sailing and encourage the many one design classes of today. By 1935, our 17' One-Designs were getting old and infirm. They were fine boats but built with 3/8" planking and light ribs. For several years Max Wheat had sailed a 15' Barnagat sloop and Doc Hubbs a 15 foot Penn Yan dinghy with the 17 footers. For 2 or 3 years committees had investigated national one-design classes which were beginning to appear.

The Skaneateles Boat Co. started to build Comets and they were adopted as the small one design class here and at other nearby Clubs. They cost about \$250 with sails. In 1931, Abe Post and Fred Keyes bought new Stars. Karl Brace and Cort Henning bought the old *Rambler* and after two years of pumping had a new hull built by Fay & Bowen to put between the mast and keel. Hoskins and Wilson sold their *Vagabond* which also leaked badly. Fred Sholes was club steward in summer vacation about 1932. He rowed a prospect out to inspect *Vagabond* when she was very low in the water. Fred stepped out of the dinghy onto the deck at which *Vagabond* gave a sudden lurch—and sank.

As the depression of the Thirties deepened, Seneca along with most other clubs, had a hard time keeping afloat. The annual income was only \$800 or \$900 and the remaining members had to be cajoled into paying their \$15.00 dues. Work parties finished off the living and locker rooms, graded and planted the grounds, built docks and the slip and painted.

The Star fleet remained at 7 or 8 boats. Comets soon built their fleet up to 6 or 7 boats and were up to 11 or 12 by 1941. Star 12th District Regattas were held here in 1936 and 1938. The C.N.Y.Y.R.A. grew year by year and included 18 Yacht Clubs in 1936. There were over 100 boats in the regatta that year and this increased to 150 before 1941.

One of the pleasant memories of the early thirties which helped popularize the club with non-sailing members were the Sunday smorgasbords. Sam Nester owned the Seneca Hotel. About one o'clock a truck with two waiters appeared loaded with a large rare roast of beef, turkey, ham, salad and fixins. The ladies greatly

appreciated the solution of Sunday Dinner in the summer. The cost was 85 cents. After two or three years Sam gave it up because on cold, rainy days only 15 or 20 showed up and the food prepared for 100 had to be hauled back to the hotel and there was a large loss for the season. Two other restaurant owners were persuaded to try it but soon gave up. The present custom of bring your own picnic emerged which satisfies everyone but Mom.

In the early years various cruiser owners took turns acting as the Race Committee. While the sailors appreciated their generosity in devoting their boats and time to the job, their choice of courses and weather was not always the best. Providentially, Bill Tapley who had started his sailing Down East was induced to take on the job of Fleet Captain. He made a study of weather and racing rules and was a wonderful Race Committee all by himself. He devoted fifteen years of Saturdays, Sundays and holidays to the job. He was soon drafted on the C.N.Y.R.A. Race Committee and was its Chairman from 1942 to 1957. His judgment of impending weather was uncanny. He nursed our old committee boat *Ishkooda* from the early thirties till 1950. She was a 26' double ended St. Lawrence River fishing boat with a small cabin and cost \$200 fifth hand. Fred Sholes took over when Tap quit. He has been Tap's equal in knowledge and devotion for fifteen years. Non sailors and even sailors seldom give a thought to this important job. On many days the biblical prophets would guess wrong as to whether the wind will shift so as to wash out the windward leg, come up to make the last round dangerous for the small boats or fade out and leave the fleet in a flat calm. We have been fortunate indeed to have had Bill Tapley and Fred Sholes as Fleet Captains for thirty years.

Home and home races were held with the Rochester Yacht Club in Stars and with Auburn and other clubs in Comets. In these, the home fleet was divided into two groups as nearly equal in speed as possible. In the first race Group A was sailed by the visitors and Group B by the home team. After the last boat finished, the visitors scrambled into Group B and vice-versa. In some cases, the results were embarrassing to a boat's owner when his "dog" won both races. A dinner and beaucoup cocktails followed the races and they were very enjoyable occasions.

Then came the war. Bob Doran, Fred Sholes, Tom Truslow, Jack Wood and 22 sons of members got into it sooner or later. This left a great shortage of crews. Marshall Root was Commodore in 1942 and struggled with the problems produced but managed to keep races and other club activities going.

Cebe Lee was Commodore in 1943, 44 and 45. He worked valiantly to keep the Club operating. Gasoline rationing made it very difficult to get to the club and members who had C Cards or a gallon or two left were very generous in taking a carfull to the club. One Fourth of July a carryall and team was engaged to leave from in front of the Armory.

One very fine job Cebe did was to send a news letter periodically to the last known address of all the boys in the services about the races and other club activities.

In 1943, after Sampson was opened, New York State proposed to build a new road past the Yacht Club to the base. It condemned the land on either side of the road up to the corner of the ladies room and did considerable grading. Cebe built the present bulk head and by some means obtained hundreds of loads of dirt to create our present lawn in front of the Club. Previously it had sloped down to a low bulkhead 10 feet outside of the willow trees. The trees were part way down the bank and there was much discussion whether the 3' fill at that point would kill them but they have prospered. This was a great improvement to the club, more than doubling our lawn area.

In 1946, the club's activities returned to normal. It was enjoyed almost as much by the stay-at-homes as by the service men, most of whom had gone to the four corners of the earth as boys. The C.N.Y.Y.R.A. held its regatta in Canandaigua in 1946 and it was larger than ever.

In 1947 Cebe Lee again did a wonderful thing for the club. He built, at his own expense, the east haul out area and the docks extending out into the harbor from it. Previously the Stars were anchored out in the lake south of the breakwater and the smaller boats in the harbor.

The 1948 C.N.Y.Y.R.A. regatta was held by the Seneca Yacht Club. There were grave doubts whether we had enough space to accommodate this regatta which had grown into a large affair. However it proved to be a very successful regatta and the new east haulout was a great aid to it. Stars were launched by the 'Old' hoist, while centerboard boats were launched just west of the hoist, where the ground sloped smoothly into the bottom. The south lot accommodated all of the trailers. The previous winter the Club had borrowed \$2000 with many misgivings and bought the 7 acre field across from the Club. It proved a Godsend to park the 200 or so cars. A large dining and beer tent was put up south of the ladies room, a lunch and beer tent on the new haulout area and the bar north of the

Club on a 10' porch where the patio is now. The fence at that time was 3' inside the road pavement, giving some 4' of width where cars are now parked and on the Saturday and Sunday after the races at least 500 people found room to mill around. The weather was warm and fair so that the bar and beer tents did a good business and the profit on the regatta more than paid off the \$2000 mortgage.

A demand for a larger class of boats than Comets culminated in the adoption of the new Thistles. Five of these were purchased and they and the sailors attracted to them have been a great addition to the Club ever since.

The International Comet Championship races were held by us in 1950. This attracted some 50 boats and some of the country's' finest small boat sailors. The winds were very light until Sunday when a full gale blew so that only 4 of the 5 scheduled races could be held. Writers from the yachting magazines spoke highly of the Club and its facilities and were surprised at the seas an inland lake like Seneca could produce with a strong south wind.

In December 1949 a committee including Tom Parkman journeyed to the Thousand Islands to inspect two possible boats for a committee boat. The owner of the boat shop at Fishers Landing insisted that every member of the committee take a ride in his boat in a 10 degree temperature with a vicious north wind blowing. After thawing out in his ship, the committee headed for Cape Vincent to see the other boat. After going 10 miles in an increasing snow storm, a motion to accept our present committee boat was hastily passed. The committee headed south at full speed and read in the Monday papers that 30 inches of snow had fallen in Watertown. Tom Parkman built the cabin on the boat and she has proven a fine choice. The cost of the boat was raised by voluntary subscriptions.

After the winners' cocktails had been drunk at the end of the 1951 long distance race at Quigley's Cottage, Ray Rice made an impassioned speech on the need for money to buy Penguins and start a Junior Sailing program. \$950 was subscribed almost instantly and Sally Burrall Suppes, who had climbed to the porch roof to view the presentation of prizes, had the foresight to record the pledges on the back of a paper plate. Four Penguins were bought and the program started in 1952.

In the same year the Star 12th District championship races were held. Pete Burrall had won the championship in 1952. Cebe Lee was chairman of the event and put on a series of fine parties for the occasion.

By 1955 the need for more room in the club house crystallized in

a drive for funds and \$5500 was subscribed. The addition on the east side of the club, including kitchen and mens' and women's locker rooms, was built that fall and winter, largely by the labors of some twenty members. The north patios and septic tank and drainage system were also included. This is the last time that the members have turned to on a major project by which means so many of the club's facilities had been built in the past.

With the increased number of Thistles, the east haulout area was proving inadequate. In the fall of 1955 Cebe Lee was again called on for help. He laid out our west haulout area. When he was told we had only \$3000 in the treasury, he said give me \$3000 and I'll build it. It undoubtedly cost much over twice that but he not only shouldered the balance but contributed the "New" hoist which has proven such a boon.

A major program of rebuilding the docks and other facilities was completed in 1957 in time for the 1957 Thistle National Championship races. Despite a thunder squall at the end of Friday morning's race a fine series was sailed and the visitors left praising the clubs hospitality.

The Comet class had been decreasing in numbers for two or three years and the need for a new small class was increasing. In the winter of 1959 a meeting of interested prospects was held at which it was disclosed that a 20% discount could be obtained if 20 Rhodes Bantams were ordered. Two or three public spirited members had to buy boats which they soon, sold, to complete the quota. They have turned out to be a fine class, roomier and less expensive than Comets. Like the Thistles they have attracted some of our valuable members. A regional regatta for the class was held here in 1962.

By 1962, the expenses of the club had increased so much that deficits had occurred for three years. Dues for family members had been \$15.00 a year from 1929 to 1949 when they were increased to \$20.00 or \$10.00 for a single membership. The Directors were reluctant to increase them as a 20% Excise tax had to be paid if club dues are over \$10.00. After much consideration, it was recommended to the 1963 Annual Meeting that family dues be increased to \$33.33 which with tax made the cost \$40.00 with \$23.00 for single members and \$10.00 for Non Resident Membership. In spite of the increase, the dues are much below those of any other known Yacht Club with comparable facilities.

Two members suggested a Social Membership with lower dues as in most Country Clubs, but the cases are not similar. Country Clubs

spend a great part of their income on golfing facilities so it is equitable that the golfers pay much greater dues. The Seneca Yacht Club spends only about \$500 for sailing expenses and prizes and the balance of expenses are for taxes, insurance, utilities, steward, entertainment, etc. which are chargeable to all members. In 1958, the sail and power boat owners agreed to make a \$10.00 annual contribution for Capital Improvements— known as the Dock Fund. This is not taxable but can only be used for new construction and additions. This largely offsets the expenses directly for the boat owners.

1964 marks the 35th Anniversary of the founding of the Seneca Yacht Club [2002 Editor's note: anniversary of the club's first season at Boody Point]. It seems fitting that we should celebrate this milestone by paying tribute to the 13 remaining 1929 Charter Members and to the 28 Old Timers who joined the Club between 1930 and 1944. A great many of them besides those who have been mentioned in these glimpses of the Club's history worked hard and contributed greatly to building the Club to its present state.

Seniority does not imply merit in the Seneca Yacht Club any more than in the Congress or elsewhere, except to the extent that these long time members have supported the Club with their dues and contributions to club projects for a long time. It is the younger members who are carrying on the club traditions ably. There are 52 members who joined the club between 1946 and 1954 and 87 who have joined since 1954. It is a matter of interest that the above figures include 38 Non Resident Members who apparently cherish the memories of their association with the Seneca Yacht Club enough to continue paying their dues.

Most of us who have seen other yacht clubs in New York State and elsewhere would not trade our membership in the Seneca Yacht Club for one anywhere else. The natural beauty and convenience of our location is unexcelled. The relocation of Route 96A gives us almost complete privacy and makes possible a fine parking lot across the old road and moving the fence close to the road will double our lawn. To those unfortunate enough to have had to move away from Geneva, we say—recall a bunch of spinnakers approaching the finish line, the breeze under our shade trees on hot summer afternoons, swimming, cocktail parties and picnics, sunsets and the moon and lights of Geneva after dark. Best of all, the fellowship of the finest group of people anywhere.

Please forgive errors and omissions in this yarn because our early records are sketchy and memory is faulty.