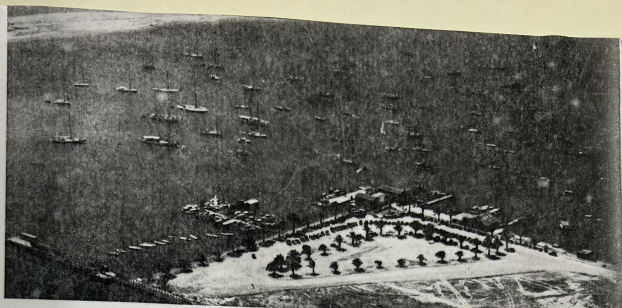




The fleet that attended the Pacific Coast Championship Regatta in 1935, the last time it was held at San Diego. This year all hands will come to the Harbor of the Sun again for the first time in ten years. The racing will be from August 5th to 10th, inclusive.

HISTORY OF THE San Diego Yacht Club

By GERALD F. MacMULLEN

SAN DIEGO, fifty-five years ago, was not what one might term the perfect location for a yacht club—at least as we know yacht clubs today. The disastrous collapse of the real estate boom of the late eighties left the town flat on its back. But in spite of it all, there were still men who loved sailing, and who decided that some sort of a boating organization was needed. So on January 20th, 1891, forty-six prominent citizens gathered and organized the San Diego Yacht Club. It has been in existence continuously ever since.

Of the original forty-six, not one now remains in the club membership, and few are still living. It is regrettable that practically nothing remains of their early records. The starting point of the history is a little paper-backed book containing the constitution, roster and list of officers. This book was turned over, at the time of the 1924 regatta of the SCYA, to Alonzo Jessop of San Diego, by W. W. Pedder of *Diablo* fame, for Pedder was a charter member. J. G. Decatur was the first Commodore. A paragraph, yellow with age, from the San Diego "Union" files for February, 1892, states that "at a meeting held last night, the old directors of the Yacht Club were re-elected." From then until 1905 there were only two other commodores—J. M. Harney and H. F. Griswold. How long each served is a thing which the most persistent scratching of grizzled heads fails to answer.

One of the keepers' houses at Ballast Point lighthouse was the first home of the yacht club, and its first big function was on Admission Day, 1891. The club's burgee, which was then plain blue with a white star, probably first fluttered in the breeze on that day. The club prospered, and articles of incorporation were filed on September 27th, 1895. The following April a gathering of 125 persons on various yachts and barges visited the point for a day of aquatic sports. This was the last big celebration held there, and in 1898 the privileges were withdrawn, for military reasons. The dawn of the new century found the club in a more or less drowsy condition.

In 1902 a new and aggressive organization, known as the Corinthian Yacht Club of San Diego, was formed with L. A. Blochman as Commodore. An active competitor in the field

seems to have stirred the pioneer club, for we find faded minutes of a meeting presided over by Commodore Griswold on March 30th, 1903, "for the purpose of reviving the San Diego Yacht Club." The "revival" took the form of the erection of a cosy clubhouse at La Playa late that year.

It is indeed fortunate that the scrap-book of the Corinthians has come to light. It tells of the deeds of that active bunch, and also mentions the old Chula Vista Yacht Club—a hard-sailing lot of he-yachtsmen, whose disbanding, years later, should never have been permitted. There is also mention of the Phoenician Yacht Club, which was quartered on "the Steamboat Wharf." The Corinthians' flag was the one now flown by the San Diego Yacht Club, and their clubhouse was at the foot of Broadway in San Diego, near the present site of naval headquarters. The Lipton Cup, still prized by all California yachtsmen, was presented to the Corinthians by Sir Thomas Lipton on July 22nd, 1903.

That familiar spectre, "financial difficulties," now rears its scaly head, not only in the San Diego but also the Corinthian club. Rivalry is forgotten, assets—such as they are—pooled. Enter, on the first day of June, 1905, the "new" San Diego Yacht Club.

Headquarters were then at the foot of Broadway. For five years yachting centered there and at Chula Vista, with another fleet growing at the Junior Yacht Club anchorage. In 1910 work was started on the Broadway pier, and the club received new orders to move.

A relic of the boom days was the old ferry steamer *Silver Gun*—peace to her memory!—which had turned out to be an unmanageable marine juggernaut. After a few trips, on which she wrecked ferry slips and showed a tendency to "extreme crankiness," she was laid up, and for years served as a casino and dance hall at Coronado Tent City. A new casino was building, the yachtsmen secured possession of the old ferry, which was towed to the foot of Hawthorne Street.

Then followed five wonderful years—halcyon days in the club history, when race followed race, trophies and glory were accumulated, and those who fell by the wayside at club smoke

