



Stories from the Chicago Yacht Club

Chicago Yacht Club

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Organized in 1875 in the City of Chicago as an association of 37 yachtsmen, the Chicago Yacht Club is one of the oldest clubs in the United States. Known for their commitment to promoting the sport of sailing, the club is host to the venerable Chicago Yacht Club Race to Mackinac. CYC is also a leader in teaching children and adults to sail, having provided sailing lessons for over 85 years.

CHICAGO YACHT CLUB BECOMES NSHOF FOUNDING MEMBER **From the Commodore:**

“The Chicago Yacht Club membership is proud to become a founding member of the National

Sailing Hall of Fame. Since 1875 our Club has embraced an aggressive racing program, which today includes an average of 100 regattas annually. From our very active junior sailing program to our signature regatta - the Chicago Yacht Club Race to Mackinac - our focus is on supporting and growing the sport of sailing. We could not be more pleased to support the Hall of Fame in its effort to honor the achievements of American sailors.”

Joseph S. Haas, Commodore

History



The Chicago Yacht Club was organized at the Sherman House in the City of Chicago in 1875, as an association with a membership of 37 men. The first year there were 50 charter members with a \$5 initiation fee and \$4 dues, paid semi-annually.

In 1898 the club hosted the first Chicago-Mackinac Race as an informal contest between five boats. William Cameron's 64' fin-keel sloop Vanenna one the race with a time of 51 hours. The 289.4 nautical mile race is now one of the oldest annual freshwater distance races in the world, with more than 355 boats entered and approximately 3,500 crew participating.

Racers who compete in 25 Mackinac Races are invited to join the exclusive "Island Goats Sailing Society," originally named for the sailors' appearance, aroma and behavior upon reaching Mackinac Island.

Historical Timeline

[A dynamic web version of this timeline is available by clicking here.](#)

1875

The Chicago Yacht Club was organized at the Sherman House in the City of Chicago on the evening of August 7, 1875 as an association with a membership of 37 men. The first officers were John Prindiville (pictured), Commodore; T.M. Bradley, Vice Commodore; William F. Higgin, Rear Commodore; C.E. Kremer, Secretary; and F.W.S. Brawley, Treasurer. The first year book for the season of 1875-76 lists the names of the fifty charter members. The initiation fee was \$5 and the annual dues \$4, payable semi-annually.

1882

On January 9, 1882, the Club was issued its Certificate of Incorporation under the laws of Illinois. As the Certificate stated, the formation of Chicago Yacht Club was to encourage and promote the sport of yacht sailing and building.



1898

The first Chicago-Mackinac Race is held. William Cameron's 64' fin-keel sloop Vanenna won the race among the five boats entered in 51 hours. After a vigorous drive for members, the membership grew from six members and two yachts in 1897 to 60 and 16 yachts.

1900

In 1900 with membership numbering 125 and a fleet of 28 yachts, the club obtained the Argo Clubhouse, a 35 x 55 foot boathouse located at the end of the Illinois Central pier #3 at the foot of Randolph Street. It had been the former home of a group of yachtsmen called the Argonauts—a small group of socially oriented yachtsmen. Their yacht, the Argo, had been used in 1893 to carry their guests to the World's Columbian Exposition held where Jackson Park harbor is today.

1902

A new clubhouse, initiated by Commodore George Warrington, at the foot of Monroe Street, on pilings in the lake, was formally opened on June 28, 1902.

1911

Commodore Baum's Amorita establishes elapsed time record for the Mackinac race which stood for 76 years.

1920

Chicago Yacht Club and the Lincoln Park Yacht Club combined.

1923

In 1923, the barge and clubhouse at Belmont Harbor replaces the lumber schooner Carrier that had served as the Lincoln Park Yacht Club clubhouse since 1915. Carrier, a 177-ton canal, was built in Michigan in 1865. In 1923, she sank off Evanston while being towed to Waukegan. Her large wheel has been preserved at the Belmont Station and a mural shows Carrier when she was our Club ship. Our race committee crafts have all been named Carrier in her honor.

1925

Monroe St. Clubhouse moved to the present site to make room for the outer drive's construction.

1930

The depression of the 1930's put an end to the elaborate plans for the \$3,000,000 eight story clubhouse at Chicago Harbor.

1935

The second Chicago Harbor Clubhouse, which had been a display called "The House of Tomorrow" at the Century of Progress Exhibition, was moved to the site in 1935 as a temporary building.

1955

Construction of the first section of the present Monroe St. Clubhouse

1975

1975 marked the celebration of the Club's 100 year Anniversary and a new high in activity for the Club. Countless hours of effort by hundreds of loyal members went into the celebration. Recognition flowed from many sources including Illinois Governor Walker, Chicago Mayor Daley and President Gerald Ford. The latter two even enjoyed dinner at the Chicago Yacht Club.

1985

Chicago Yacht Club participates in sponsorship of Heart of America of America's Cup.

1992

Chicago Yacht Club Foundation was founded by then-Commodore Joseph Wright, Jr., Kurt Stocker, and Dick Wharton. A member can now give something back to the community while supporting the Club's nautical educational activities.

1998

CYC celebrates the 100th Anniversary of the first Race to Mackinac. The multihull record in the Race to Mackinac is established at 18 hours 50 minutes and 32 seconds by Steve Fossett on Stars and Stripes; the catamaran previously sailed by Dennis Conner in the Americas Cup.

2004

Belmont Station barge is relocated to the south east end of the Belmont Harbor.

2005

Chicago Yacht Club adds new Sailing Activities Center barge adjacent to Belmont Station.

2008

2008 marked the 100th running of the "Mac Race," with a record entry of 460 boats and 100% of the fleet was tracked by GPS transponder.

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