

A HISTORY OF THE ESCANABA YACHT CLUB 1934-1959 by John Mitchell

In 2018, annotated photos with notes in italic font, from the Escanaba Yacht Club archives, Delta County Historical Society, Escanaba Yacht Club members, and others, were added to enhance the historical text written by John Mitchel.

The following is based on excerpts from a talk on EYC History by Commodore John Mitchell on June 26th 1957, and added to later in a full scale attempt at a Club History, mostly from Memory.



The first phase of sail boating around Escanaba ended about 1910 or 1912, when the sailors of that day took to motor boating. The gasoline engine had been adapted to small boats and there were a dozen or more of these smart, round bottom, glass-cabin, varnished boats owned in Escanaba around 1912-1914.

I remember two of them, the 45' **CALANTHE**, owned by George Gray, who ran a boat livery with a dock about where the present L-dock is located, and the 40' **CHEROKEE**, owned by Fred Royce. Joe Mallmann, Horace Provo, George Beath and others all owned boats of the same type. These boats were all kept in a stagnant lagoon behind the old Merchants Dock, just west of Hansen & Jensen Fish House. This area was called 'Frog Hollow'. It has since been filled in.

Prior to this there had been a great era of sail boating, boats without power, and many of them cruised all of over Lakes Michigan & Huron. Fred and Gene Royce even cruised to Lake Erie on a 20' centerboard sloop when they were young men. I remember seeing the last of these fine boats rotting away beside the Lighthouse Boathouse, about where the EYC Clubhouse now stands.



*Sheldon Cobb's Cherokee
Washington Island - July 16, 1933*



She was a 20' clipper-bowed centerboard sloop, and even the sand drifted around her and the grass growing out of her decks could not hide her fine lines. About 1915 Ike Schram owned the last of these boats around here, an 18' broad beamed centerboard sloop, later sold to Paul Vezina who fixed it up and renamed it **FIREFLY**. She was finally lost on Hanover shoal off Chamber's Island while on a cruise with Vezina, Christiansen, Sheldon and others from Escanaba.

I bought the 33' C.B. sloop **VENUS** in Green Bay in 1922, and owned it until 1925, when I sold her to Paul Vezina, Ralph Christiansen and Bob Sheldon, the former crew of **FIREFLY**. She went ashore in a SE storm in front of the old Waterworks Building about 1929, was

repaired by Vezina and sailed to Manistique, then later trucked to Indian Lake, then about 1936 acquired by Joe Shipman and brought to Escanaba. (**renamed SANDRA II**)

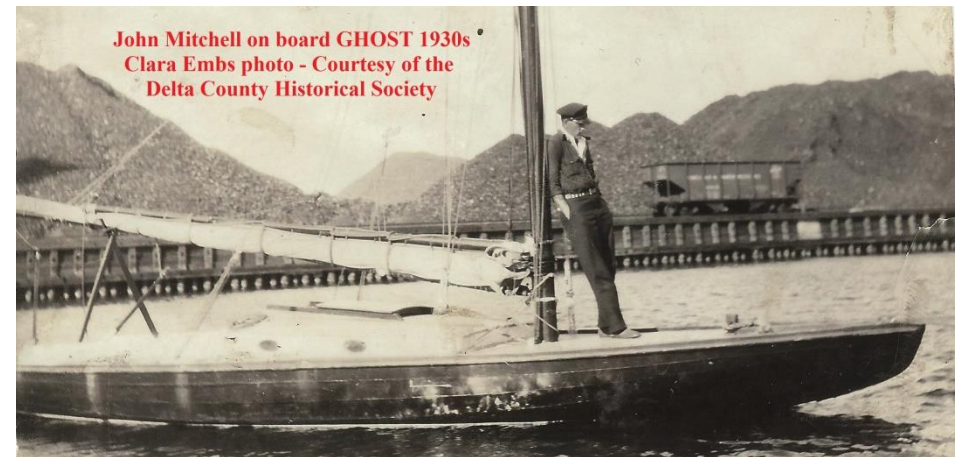


In 1928 I acquired the old **MILORD II** at Sister Bay, brought her to Escanaba, and renamed her the GHOST. With Buddy Reau, Cy Johnson and Bill Karas we sailed **GHOST** all over Green Bay and to Manistique, Port Inland and Beaver Island.

Around Ephraim and Fish Creek we fell in with other sail boats. We raced at Ephraim and Menominee, began to get together with other sailboat men, and a new era of yachting was about to start on Green Bay.

By 1934, despite (or because of) the Great Depression, which gave all of us a lot of leisure time and little money, quite a few sailboats were owned here and at Gladstone, as follows:

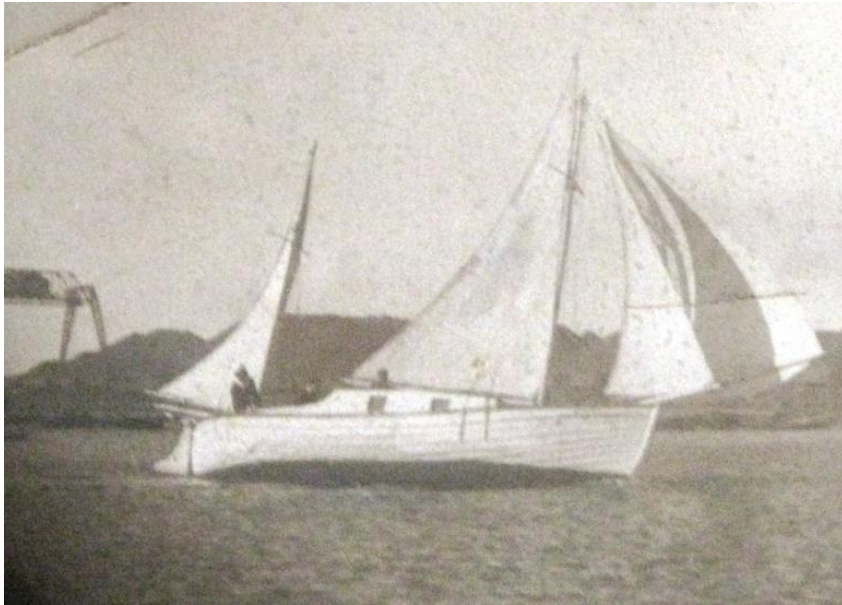
GHOST - still owned by John Mitchell. (*sold to C Royer ~1936 to buy OSLO*)



Note the ore docks in the background. Gaff rig. Apparently removed bowsprit, as shown with bowsprit in photo at left.

ROGUE - a 28' sloop rebuilt by Emer Kidd and Clarence Falk.

SANDRA I – a 26' ex-Coast Guard surfboat rebuilt by Joe Shipman and Timmy Crane. Ketch rigged. *Sold in 1936 to Willis Anthony and renamed VAGABOND. SANDRA I with ore dock in the background*



MARJAC II - A Washington Island C.B. sloop brought over by Jack Erickson and rebuilt by himself and Tim Crane. *Named for his wife Marian & Jack. Jack Erickson, City Attorney, with binoculars; Dave Charland seated starboard aft deck.*



p. 9 Marion Strahl photo book - Onboard MARJAC - Courtesy of Delta County Historical Society

SPRAY A new 24' 'Suicide Class' boat built by Mr. Arntzen and acquired by Geo Aley, Bud Pryall and others. This is the boat finally owned by Russ Johnson, but too far gone in 1955 to be used.

SEAHAG - A 30' ketch owned by and built by the Lindberg Bros of Gladstone. *Fred Lindberg & his son Walfred (Cheese) Lindberg.*

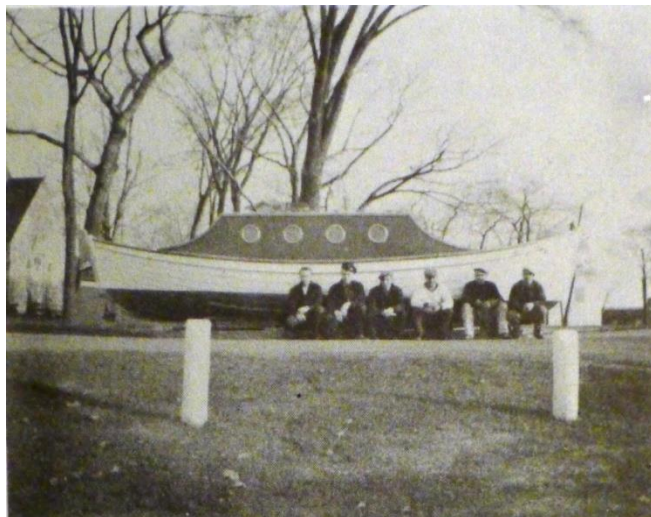


SEA HAG

*Courtesy of the
Delta County Historical Society*

BELMAR - A rebuilt CG surfboat with power only, owned by Ben Young and Sheldon Cobb.

BELMAR named for Ben Young's daughters Belle and Marlyn



Ben Young

In August 1934 this group, who had been getting together off and on during the summer, decided to hold an Autumn Regatta. To purchase a trophy, each owner had to kick in \$2.00 if he wanted to enter. None of us knew Joe Shipman very well. I remember Joe gave us a \$2.00 check and Emer and Ben Young and I had quite a consultation on the side, as to whether we should accept the check or demand cash. It is indicative of the hard times and scarcity of cash, that neither Joe nor ourselves thought this procedure unusual.

In October 1934 this group met in Sawyer-Stoll's office to organize a Yacht Club. This was accomplished, and a Constitution and By-Laws adopted during the winter. The first officers and charter members, as I recollect, were:

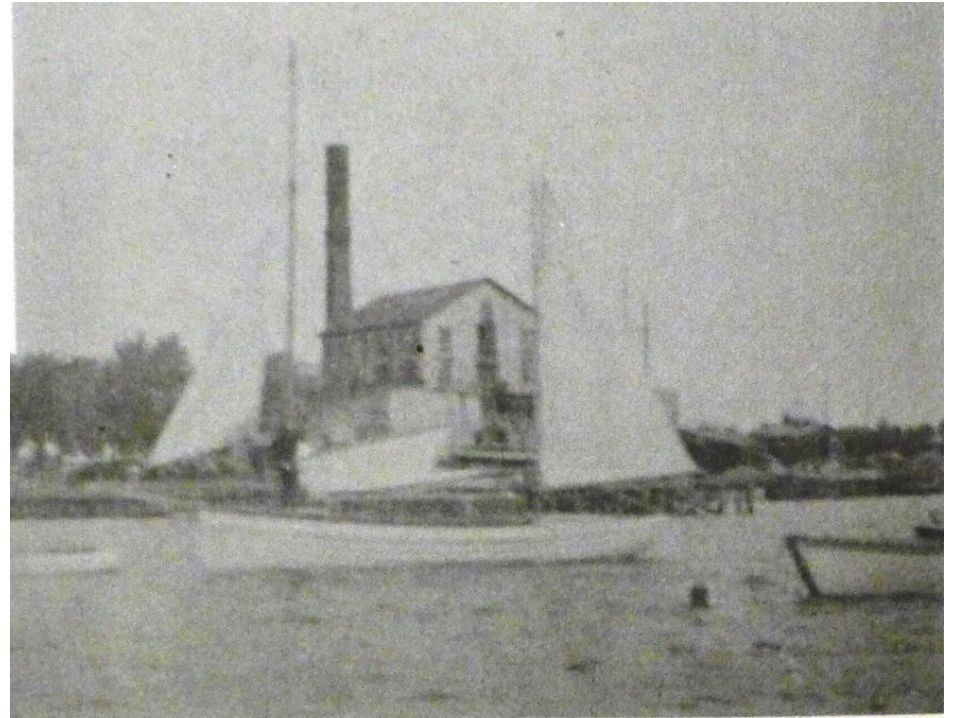
Fred Royce, Commodore
John Mitchell, Vice-Commodore
Ben Young
Sheldon Cobb
Jack Erickson
Jos. H. Shipman
Gordon Aley
Dr. G. C. Bartley
Emerson Kidd
Clarence Falk
George Jacobson (*Jiggs?*)
Bert Jacobson.

A Yacht Club had also been recently organized at Marinette & Menominee, and one of the first things we did was to go down to their meeting, and talk with them about organizing boating events on Green Bay.

In 1935 Joe Shipman made his memorable cruise to Washington Island with only a road map for navigation. Arriving there after dark, late as always, Joe tried to get into Little Lake which could be seen behind the trees, thinking this was Washington Harbor.



Joe Shipman's Sandra I
1933 to about 1935



Charlan — Burt and Jiggs Jacobson

Also about 1935 Bert and Jiggs Jacobson rebuilt an old pound-boat into a very presentable and comfortable 26' ketch named **CHARLANN**.

ONAWAY Ollie & Carrie Thatcher

In 1935 Ollie Thatcher bought the 28' keel sloop ONAWAY at Menominee, and he, myself, Jack Watson and Freddie Thatcher sailed her home.

In 1933-34-35-36 the fleet was anchored in the #2 ore dock slip, and a dirty place it was, with the boats showered with coal dust and cinders. Up to the end of 1935 we hauled the boats out on a Marine Railway we had built ourselves between the ruins of #4 ore dock and the coal dock.

North Shore Yard

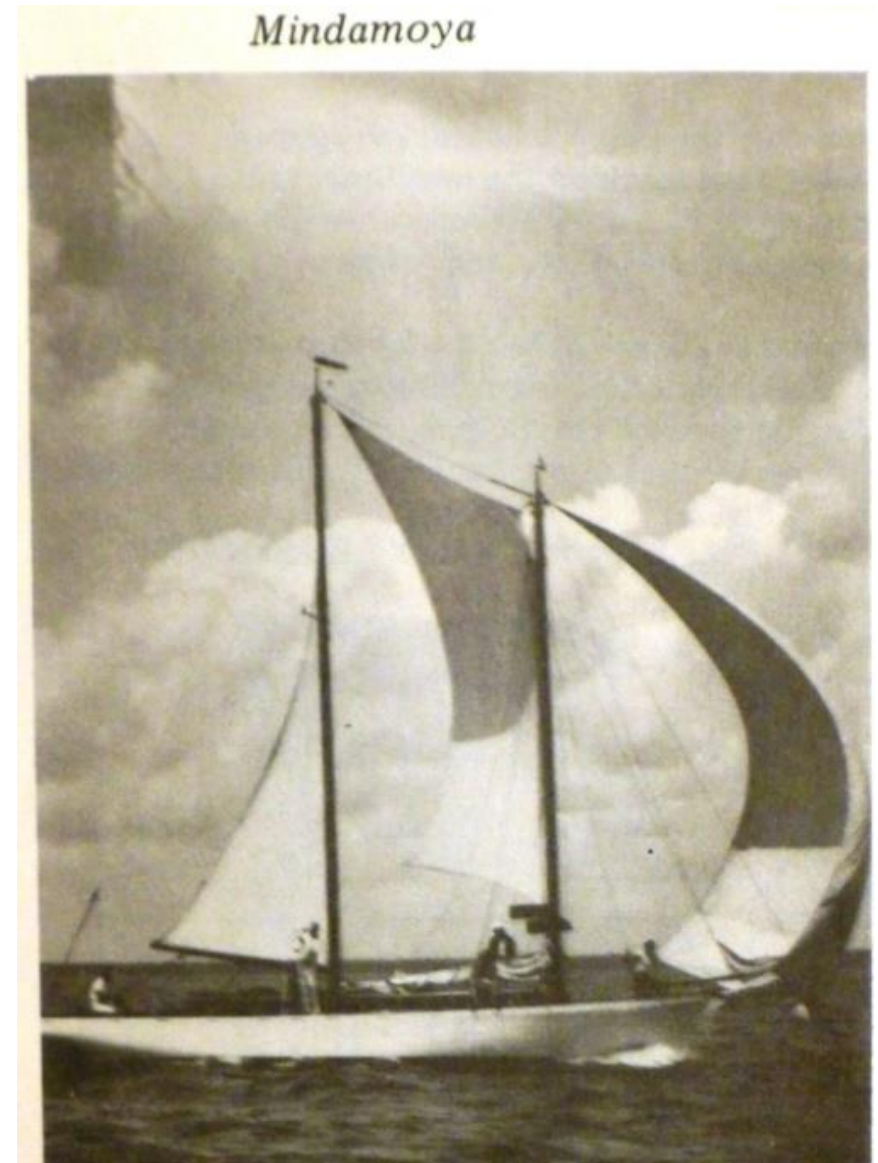
A word of tribute should go to **Ed Vinette**, Dale's father, without whose help and shop we could never have built the Railway and haulout cars, to **Sam Wichman** Carl's brother, who gave us the rails from the Coal dock, and to **Bert & Jiggs Jacobson** who stole all the angle irons and spikes from the C&NW. We used this railway 2 or 3 years. The work of hauling out was lightened by the Jacobson Boys singing "Ring around the Rosy" while we tramped round the old windlass.



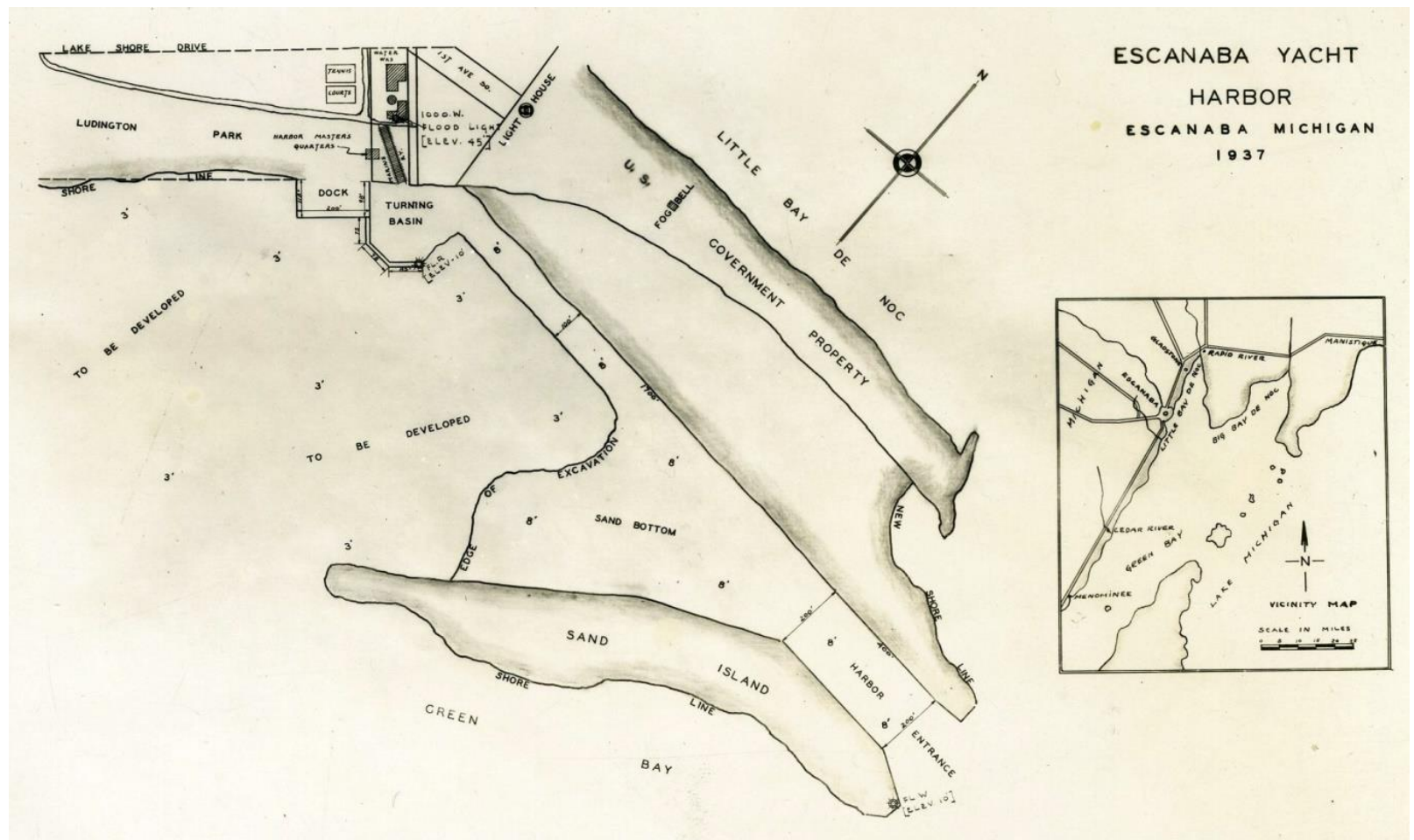
Ed J. Vinette



1936 ushered in a new Era and some new boats. John Mitchell sold the **GHOST** and bought the 6-meter **OSLO** in Detroit and the Jacobson Brothers finished and launched the **CHARLANN**. Charlie Stoll bought the 45'schooner **MINDEMOYA** in Chicago.



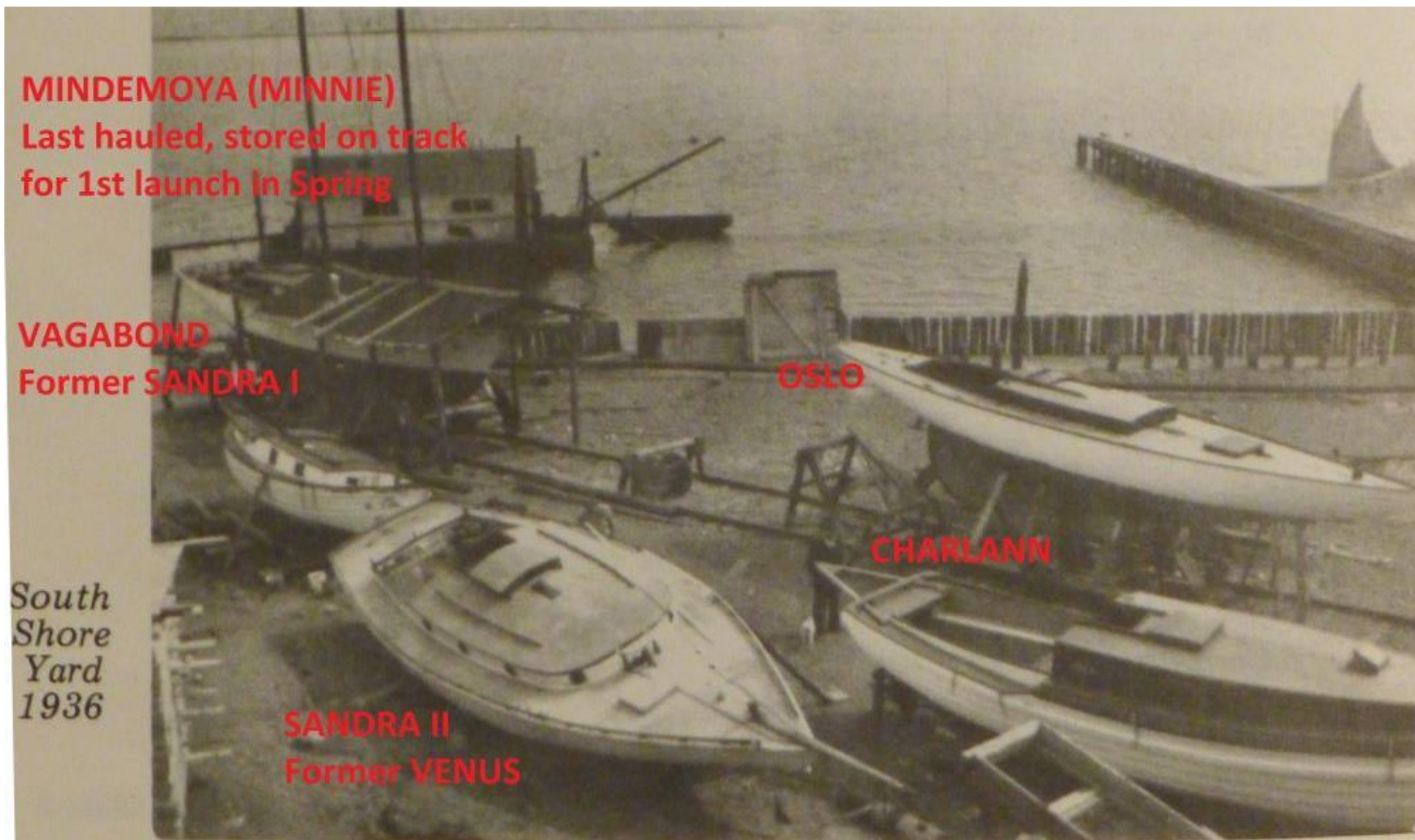
Also in 1936 the City and the WPA started building the present Yacht harbor, and later that fall had dug out a narrow channel through the sand-bars in to the old Waterworks. There the City took over our crude marine Railway and installed it there. All the boats hauled out there very late, the last ones on Nov. 11th, 1936. It was fortunate for us as the deep draft **MINDEMOYA** and **OSLO** could never have been hauled on the old railway.



Building the L-dock



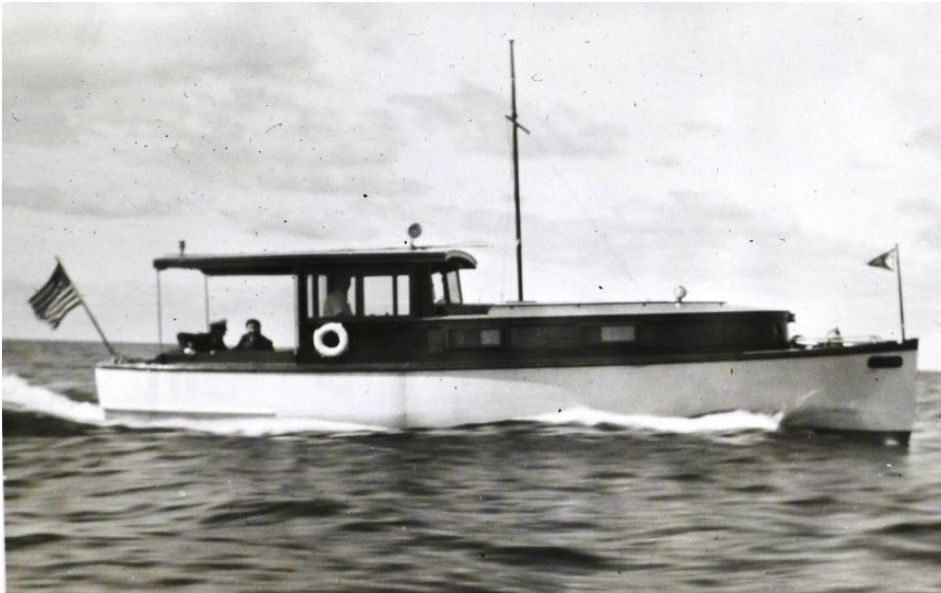
***Photos by Bernie Schultz from the
Escanaba Daily Press, Courtesy of the
Delta County Historical Society***



As it was, the **MINNIE** stuck on the track and it took the combined efforts of the whole Club, with triple-blocks tailed off on to chain-blocks and they tailed off onto a set of doubles and all hauled on by manpower and a truck to move her. I remember Jiggs Jacobson saying, "Either the 0#&8(?!! boat comes out or the X#!?! Waterworks goes in! We were anchored to a Waterworks fitting. It was after midnight before we had the **MINNIE** clear of the water.

At that time we were getting a pretty good fleet of powerboat also. Dennis McGinn, Lency Clairmont, Art Fillion, Doc Desilets and Walter Hornstein all brought in boats of various sizes.

Hornstein's **ROAMER** was the best of these.



Earl Owen

The 4-Corner Deal: Also in 1936 Shipman bought the old **VENUS** from Vezina and trucked her back from Indian Lake. No one had any cash in those days so they cooked up an interesting **4-corner deal**. Shipman, Willis Anthony, Falk and Kidd and the Jacobsons were all in on it.

Shipman traded his **SANDRA I** to Willis Anthony for Anthony's power runabout and a Redwing boat motor.

Shipman then traded the runabout to Kidd and Falk for trucking the **VENUS** from Indian Lake and reinstalling her centerboard.

The Jacobsons acquired the Redwing motor for work done and later installed it in the **CHARLANN** that they were building.

Then Emer Kidd traded his one half interest in the runabout for Falk's one half interest in their trucking venture.

Clarence Falk became first Harbormaster and used the runabout on that job, painting "HARBOR POLICE" on her bow in 2 foot letters.

Shipman renamed the **VENUS** the **SANDRA II** and sailed her until she was wrecked on Fish Island in Lake Michigan in July 1937 as mentioned later.



Willis Anthony fixed up the **SANDRA I** and called her **VAGABOND**. She was sailed by his sons, John and David Anthony for several years.



In the spring of **1937** Jack Eastman and Doc Boren came up to enlist our support for a proposed M&M Yacht Club 100-Mile Race. We tried to get them to sail it in two legs, one to Escanaba and the other back to Menominee.

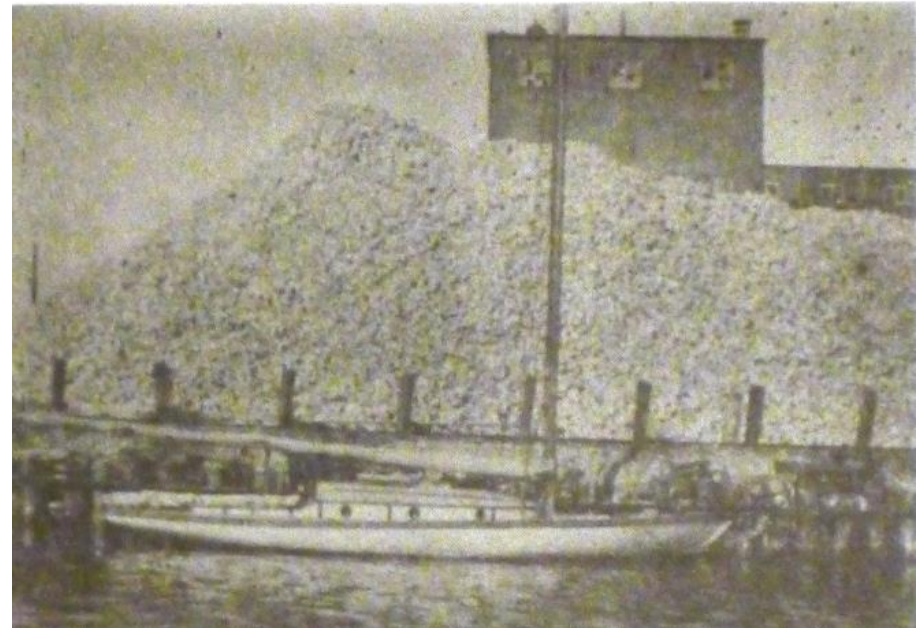
Out of this talk came the idea for an EYC Cruising Race, with a stopover at Menominee where we would sail their 100-Mile and this was done quite a few years. The Escanaba Cruising Race was first sailed in 1938 and continued each year until 1955, when 1955-56-57 were skipped because of lack of boats to sail it, but was resumed again in 1958. In some years we lay over in Ephraim also, to sail the Annual Ephraim Regatta. The race took most of the week. Sometimes the race ended in Menominee, a few times the last leg was back to

Escanaba and in recent years the finish has been at Sturgeon Bay.

On July 25-26, 1937 there was the worst summer storm ever seen on Green Bay and Lake Michigan. It scattered the Mackinac race fleet, with only 4 or 5 boats finishing out of 45 or 50.

The **OSLO** was in safe harbor at Washington Island, but the **ONAWAY** and **SANDRA II** had left Fayette in company to return to Escanaba and got caught in the worst of it. Both boats were forced to run down wind to Minneapolis Shoals crib, and the crews were helped up on the light, a most hazardous jump and climb.

Sandra II - Menominee - 1938



The boats were tailed off with long lines and during the night the **SANDRA II** broke away, crossed Green Bay, drifted through Rock Island passage and was wrecked on Fish Island just off Washington Island in Lake Michigan. It is my opinion that she did better on this hazardous crossing, than if Shipman had been at the helm.

We at Washington Island heard of the wreck being found and thought that Shipman, Earl Owen, Emer and others had been drowned. Shipman, the Jacobson Boys, Denis McGinn and the Plum Island Coast Guard towed the **SANDRA II** to Plum Island where she was repaired sufficiently to get her back to Escanaba.



That winter she was put in an old garage on 17th St. and Kidd and Falk and Shipman started repairing and rebuilding her, but she was in such bad shape that they burnt her up, piece by piece to keep the shop warm, and

out of her remains came a new **SANDRA III**, which was sailed by Joe until quite recently, when she was sold to someone in Detroit.



(Note: The large Hull numbers, shown on SANDRA III, were required in WW II on all recreational boats)



Art Crose's power cruiser launched – Daily Press 1940



The years 1937 to 1941 also saw the building of a fleet of **Seagulls** that started with a Seagull bought by Fred Kibby and another by Ed Erickson. A WPA boatbuilding project, with Bert Jacobson as Chief Builder, was started in a building at the corner of N. 14th St. and 1st Ave. N, and John Hebert, Earl Owen and Bill Nolden built SeaGulls there that winter. We ended up with a fine fleet of **Seagulls**. The owners and boats were:

Boat	Owner	Boat	Owner
Lorrie	Earl Owen	No-name	John Hebert
Nautical	Ed Erickson	Yehudi	Bill Holden
Carefree	Fred Kibby	Melodie	Francis Boyce
Suds	Bill Bissell	Kay-Jay	John Walch
Ah-mie	Shirley Jacobs	Yankee	Bud Schmitt

Fred Kibby was Commodore of the Seagull fleet and Dr. Roy Banks organized the Gull races. A race was sailed every Sunday, the winner being sent to Ephraim or Fish Creek to sail in the SeaGull Championship Races. John Jacobs was the only Escanaba skipper to ever win the Green Bay Championship in the Gull races. He won the Henes trophy at Fish Creek in 1945 on August 4th. The Green Bay Seagull Championship races were held at Escanaba over a 6 mile measured course on the North Shore. Fish Creek, Ephraim, M&M and Escanaba crews rotated four Escanaba SeaGulls, the YEHUDI, SUDS, CAREFREE and AH-MIE. At the end of the fourth race the series was a tie, each crew having 6 1/8 points. The 5th race sailed at 6PM was won by Fish Creek and the results were: Fish Creek 9 1/4 points, Ephraim 8 1/8, Escanaba 7 1/8, and M&M 6 1/8 points. The series showed that the Ephraim and Fish Creek skippers, in the fresh winds of Little Bay de Noc, were not as invincible as they had been on the calms of their home waters.

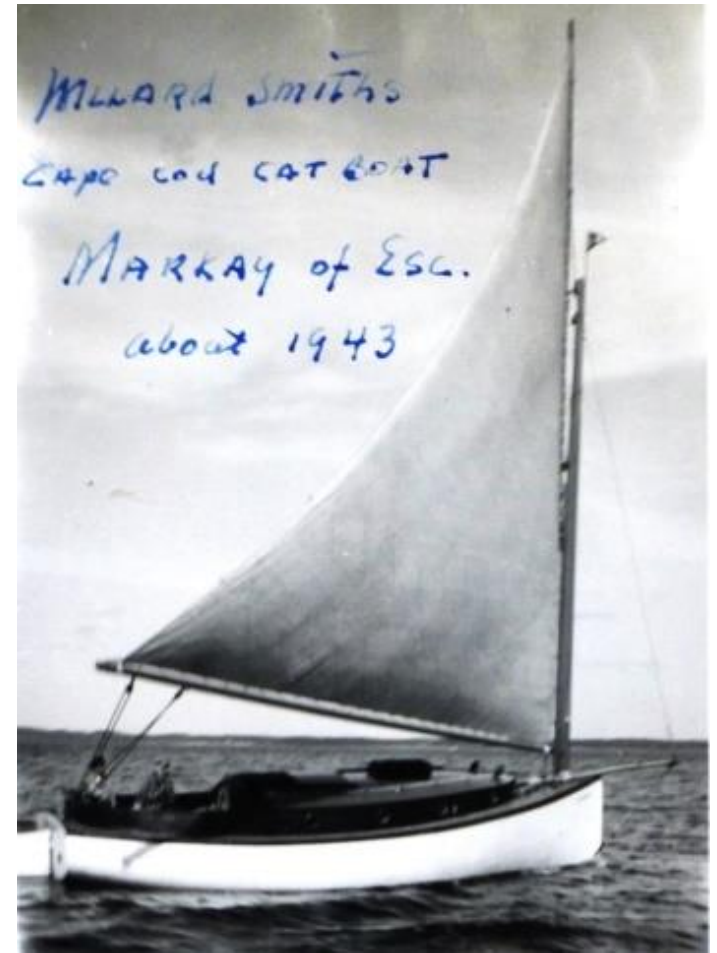


Willard Smith, who had moved here from Houghton, was the only EYC yachtsman who ever owned a cat-boat. About 1938 or 39 he bought the Cape Cod cat **MARKAY** and sailed her here for several years. She was about 28' long, 12' beam and shallow draft with a barn-door rudder and a main boom that reached half way to Stonington. But Smitty loved her and sailed and powered her all over Green Bay.

The **MARKAY** figured in a thrilling episode during the terrible 1943 Armistice Day storm. All other boats in the harbor were safely hauled out, only **MARKAY** remaining at her mooring. She had dragged some during the afternoon in the terrible sea that ran in the harbor, and about 8 PM with all of us watching, she finally chafed through her cable and drifted in toward the dock, toward certain and complete destruction. But through some trick of wind and sea she turned into the Marine Railway slip, probably sucked in by the backwash, and landed safely alongside the dock where willing hands tied her up. The

only damage was a frozen motor block. During this storm the wind pushed the schooner **MINDEMOYA** along the track until stopped by a timber, and Fillion's motor boat was blown down her track with such force that her shoring was shoved right through the side of Emer Kidd's **CHEROKEE**.

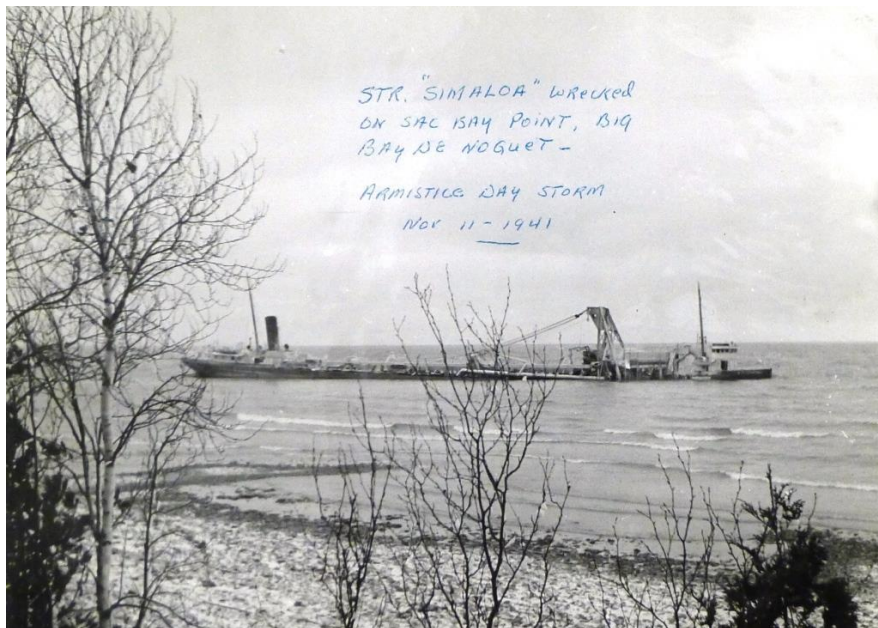
The pile driver barge, and the Minneapolis Light boat were both sunk in the harbor.



Many large vessels were sunk on Lake Michigan, and on Green Bay the big sand dredge **SIMALOA** was driven ashore and lost on Sac Bay Point.

At 10:10 p.m., November 12, the Munising station was alerted by the Michigan State Conservation Department that a steamer with 19 people aboard was sinking at Sac Bay near Fayette, on northern Lake Michigan. Rapidly the crew loaded their truck with the beach apparatus, breeches buoy and with all of the crew save one, headed for the scene. They arrived at 12:30 a.m. where they discovered what eventually proved to be the steamer Sinola 500 feet offshore and broadside to the beach. By 2 a.m. on November 13, the first of the crew was ashore. Ironically, this was the most notable rescue performed by the Munising crew and it was accomplished on Lake Michigan!

<https://www.nps.gov/piro/learn/historyculture/upload/MunisingCoastGuard%20rev2009.pdf>

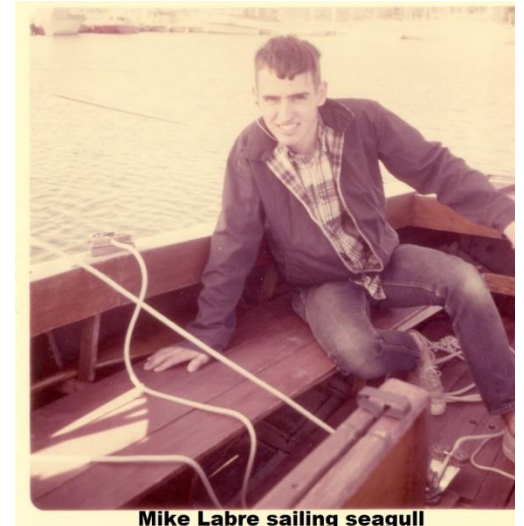


In 1942-43 the war was on and sailing time was greatly restricted, with the result that most of the Gull fleet was sold away from Escanaba, only 3 or 4 remaining.

The Boyce Gull was the finest of the lot, being a deluxe Thompson boat with varnished deck and chrome fittings.

She was bought new by Stanley St. Louis, who sold her to Boyce.

*She was sold again to Russ DeRoeck, then Steve Buckbee who worked with Mike Labre for a major rebuild and refinish. Then sold to Brian Black, and then “**With Grace**” was traded to Bob Buckbee for his O’day 27 “**Free Spirit**”.*



Mike Labre sailing seagull



*Seagull Melodie restored to full glory- now named “**With Grace**”*



Marion Strahl photo - courtesy Delta County Historical Society



Seagulls preparing to race from the L-dock

Of the other three Gulls remaining here in 1959, their history is:

St. Martin's	Bought new by Bill Bissell, sold to Menard, to Jim Moran to Russ Johnson to Harold Kelsey to Frank St. Martin
Hebert's	Bought new by John Jacobs, sold to Bob Deo to Lois Sawyer to John Hebert
Bissell's	Brought up from Ephraim by John Bissell Jr.

In 1942 the Coast Guard Temporary Reserve was organized, beginning with about 8 EYC members and expanding to about 50 men. This unit assisted the regular Coast Guard in guarding the ore docks. J.J. Mitchell was Commander of the Escanaba flotilla, Lee Wentworth was Jr. Commander, Pat Gasman Duty Officer. Walter Hornstein was Jr. Captain of the District from Green Bay north, with the rank of Ensign. After the war, efforts to retain the CGR(T) as a Coast Guard Auxiliary were not successful.

In 1941 Charlie-Stoll bought the fine 52' schooner **SAN CRISTOBAL** in New York and brought her up the Hudson and through the lakes to Escanaba. He took back her original name **ROSE OF SHARON**. She was built in Nova Scotia for the son of Lamont, the Morgan partner, and was intended originally for the Bermuda Race, which she sailed for many years. She is a smaller edition of the famous **NINA**, still owned and raced successfully by DeCourey Fales of N. Y. On the trip up the Hudson, the **ROSE** was run down by a tanker and seriously damaged. She was returned to Nevins' Yard in New York and repaired during the winter, then sailed to Escanaba in early 1942.



Art Aronson, City Engineer & later City Manager, and helmsman on the Rose of Sharon, was the visionary leader to develop the Escanaba Harbor on the South Shore for recreational boating.





About this time the old 40' yawl **URCHIN** was owned here, for a few years by an Employers' Mutual man named Morgan Hall, who, while he was here, was quite active in boating and yacht club affairs.

During the next few years the EYC Cruising Race was very popular, with boats like **ROSE OF SHARON**, **BENBOW**, **URCHIN**, **NORTHERN LIGHT**, **HALCYON**, Hornstein's 26' cutter **MARB**, and many others sailing in the Cruising Division.



The Universal Division saw Ed Erickson's R-boat, **YANKEE**, Mitchell's **OSLO**, Boyce's 22 square meter **BONNY**, and Bill Bissell's square meter **LUCILLE**, sailing along with such outside boats as the 8 meter **GREENSPOT**, the 8 meter **APT**, the Q-Class **STEPHIA**, 22's **RINETTE** of Marinette and one from Sturgeon Bay, as well as the old faithful Doc Boren's **JiBuJe** of Marinette.

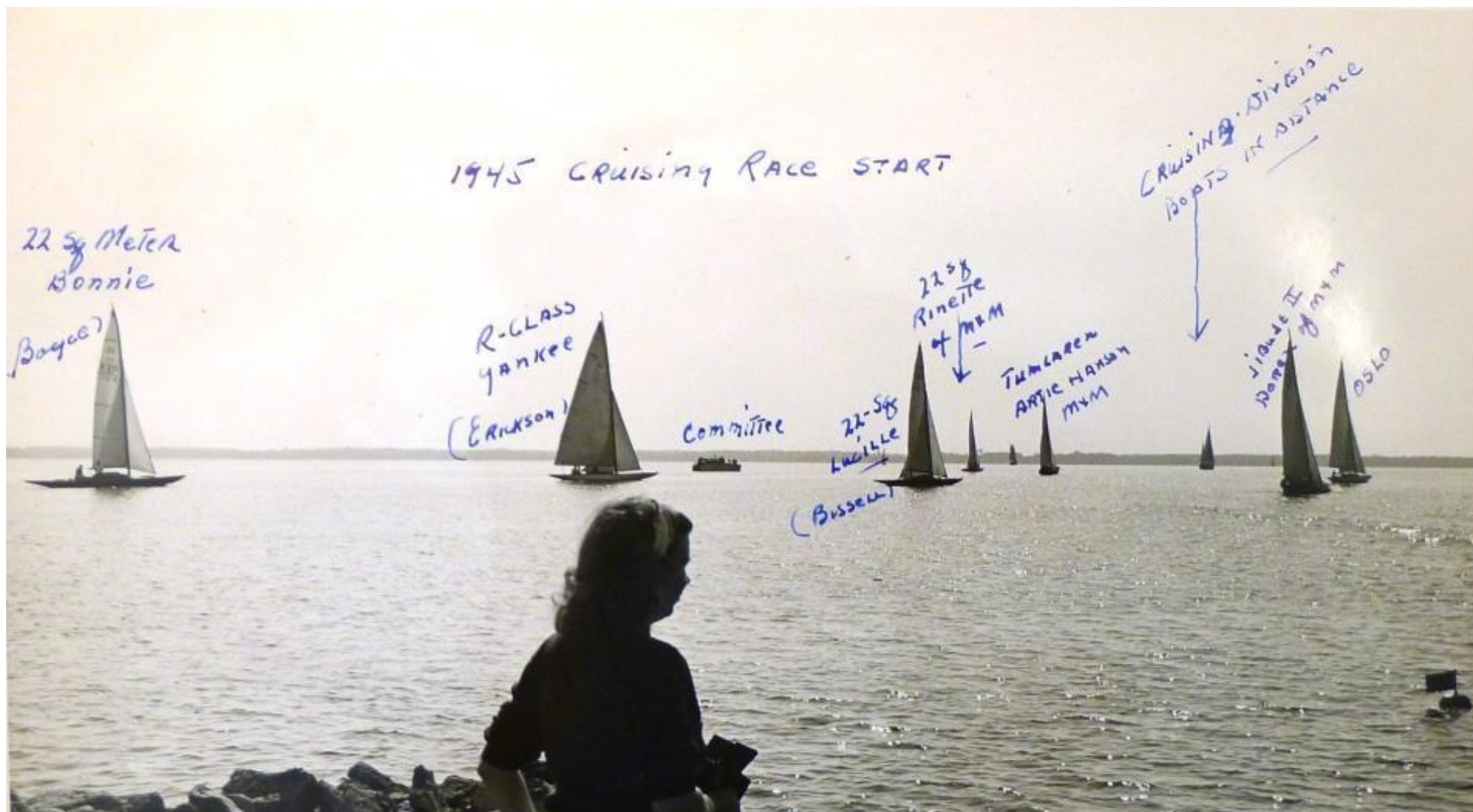
RINETTE IV (Sturgeon Bay), BONNY, OSLO, YANKEE



Fish Creek dock

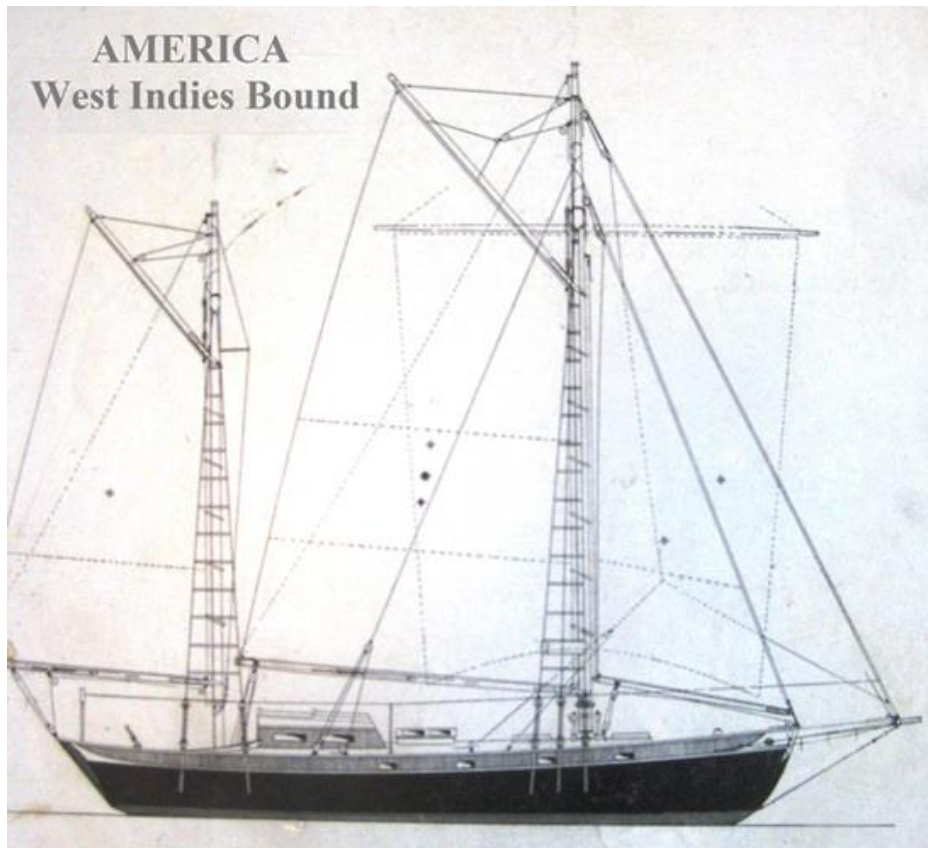


During this time much was made of the Cruising Race Fleet at the ports visited, with dinners at Ephraim, smorgasbords and lawn parties at Marinette and fish fries at Sturgeon Bay. That was when these places were courting visiting boats instead of being overrun with them as at present.



Fish Creek dock





Bernie Schultz photo Courtesy of the Delta County Historical Society

In 1947, Ed Erickson who had formerly owned the R boat, **YANKEE**, bought a ketch **AMERICA** in Detroit and brought her to Escanaba.

*(**YANKEE** was sold to Bill Holden)*

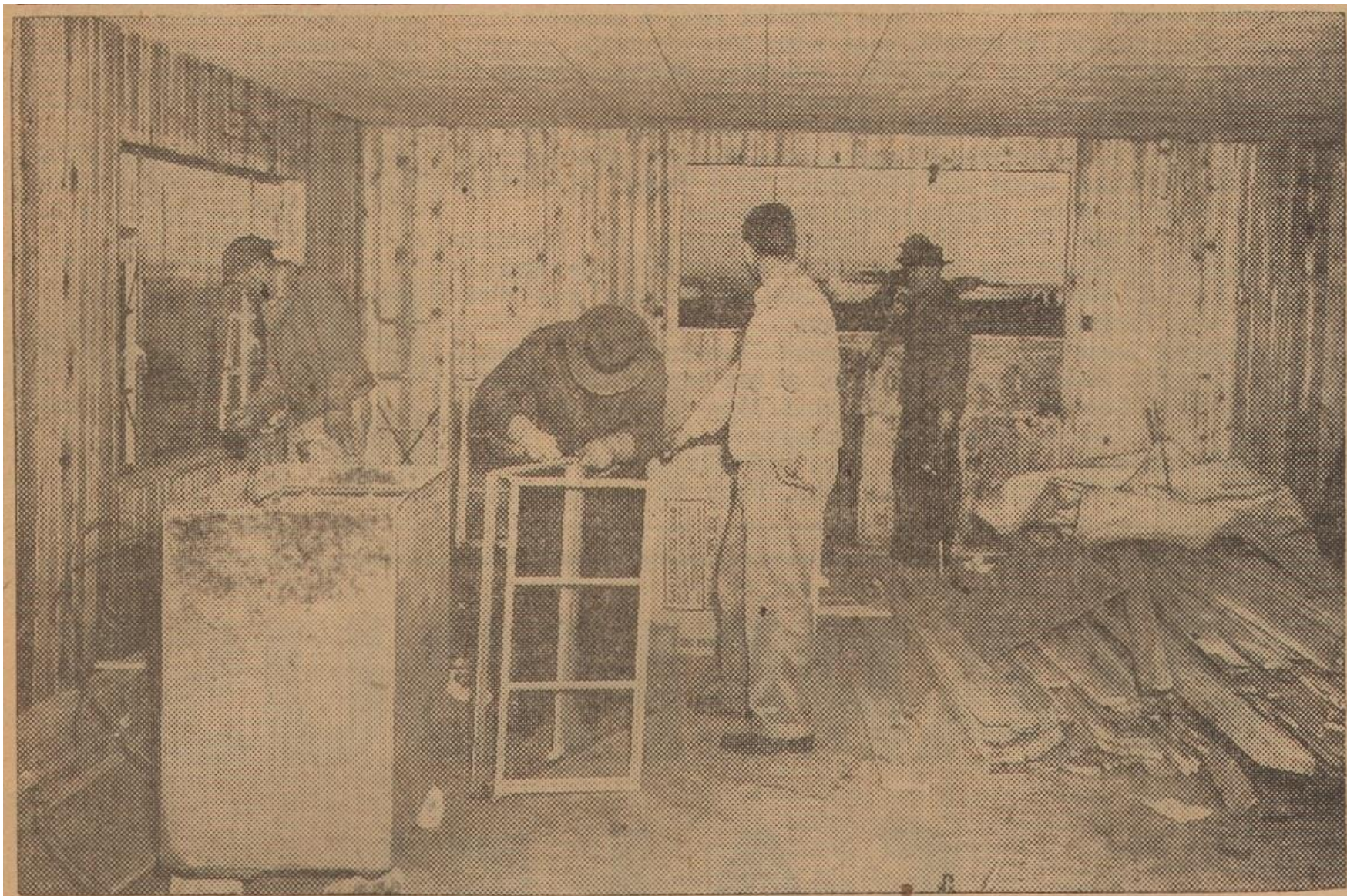
In October, 1948, Ed, Betty and Freddy Erickson took the AMERICA down the Mississippi to Florida and the Bahama Islands. They were gone two years, returning up the Inland Waterway, the Hudson River, Erie



Canal and the Lakes, arriving back in Escanaba about September 1950. Later in 1955, they made the same trip, but after a year in Florida, Ed sold the **AMERICA** and returned over land.

In the summer of **1948 the Clubhouse was started**. At that time the Club Officers were: John Youngs, Commodore, Al Wiles, Vice-Commodore, Art Fillion, Secretary, and John Novak, Building Committee. Ted Sura was also Sec'y of the EYC, Inc. that built the Clubhouse. (Sura and Dr. Hollick, now of Gladstone, also owned a SeaGull here at the time). This group, aided by others of the Club, collected \$2500 from the members and local business men.

That the expectations of the proponents of the Clubhouse were overly optimistic was soon evident, as the members who had been listed for contributions from \$100 to \$1000, actually came up with figures ranging from \$5 to \$300, the latter figure being the highest of any, and only one person contributed that amount, Charlie Stoll. **That we have a Clubhouse at all is due to the tenacity and hard work of John Youngs**, principally.



THEY WIELD BRUSH AND HAMMER —

Taking time off from boat sanding and painting, Escanaba yachtsmen are wielding brush and hammer these days as they complete work on their new club house at Sand Point. Pictured in

the main club room are (left to right) John Mitchell, Dale Vinette, Dick Hoyler, Commodore Al Wiles, and Frank St. Martin. The work is being done by members under the supervision of some hired help.

First EYC Club House Soon To Be Completed

After 17 years of waiting, the Escanaba Yacht Club at last has a home of its own—a place for its own gatherings and to entertain visiting yachtsmen from other ports.

The comfortable but unpretentious building is 52 feet long and 21 feet wide and is located at Sand Point on the north side of the yacht basin. The work of completing the building is being rushed so that it can be used this season. Boatmen members of the Yacht Club are doing much of the work themselves.

Main meeting room in the building is 42 feet long and 21 feet wide with picture windows overlooking the yacht harbor and Little Bay de Noc. A large stone fireplace centers the west wall, and behind that wall is the galley. Showers and toilets complete the facilities for club use. All floors are of concrete.

Commodore Al Wiles has cited the value of the club house to local yachtsmen and to the community. Escanaba each year is a port of call for many visiting boats, whose skippers are attracted here by the excellent small boat harbor. In the past there has been no Escanaba Yacht Club house where the visitors might relax and enjoy shore accommodations. This year there will be such facilities—and the visitors can be expected to stay longer and to come back more often.

The EYC is affiliated with the Lake Michigan Yachting Association, an association sponsoring both sail and power cruising and racing. Better accommodations for yachtsmen in Escanaba is expected to result in the eventual scheduling of more sailing events to bring more L. M. Y. A. members here.

For local yachtsmen the construction of the club house has been the realization of a dream that began in 1932 when the EYC was organized, with Fred Royce as the first commodore.

The club house problem was brought to a head a couple years ago after the city had agreed to lease the old water pumping station to the EYC for a club house. Remodeling was delayed because of the scarcity of materials and the city decided it might need the pumping station in the future and asked that the lease be terminated.

The yachtsmen thereupon decided upon a building program and the city provided the site and

will landscape it as a part of the general park improvement program.

Besides serving as a club house, the building will house the harbormaster during the summer season and provide a meeting place for groups that wish to make use of its facilities.

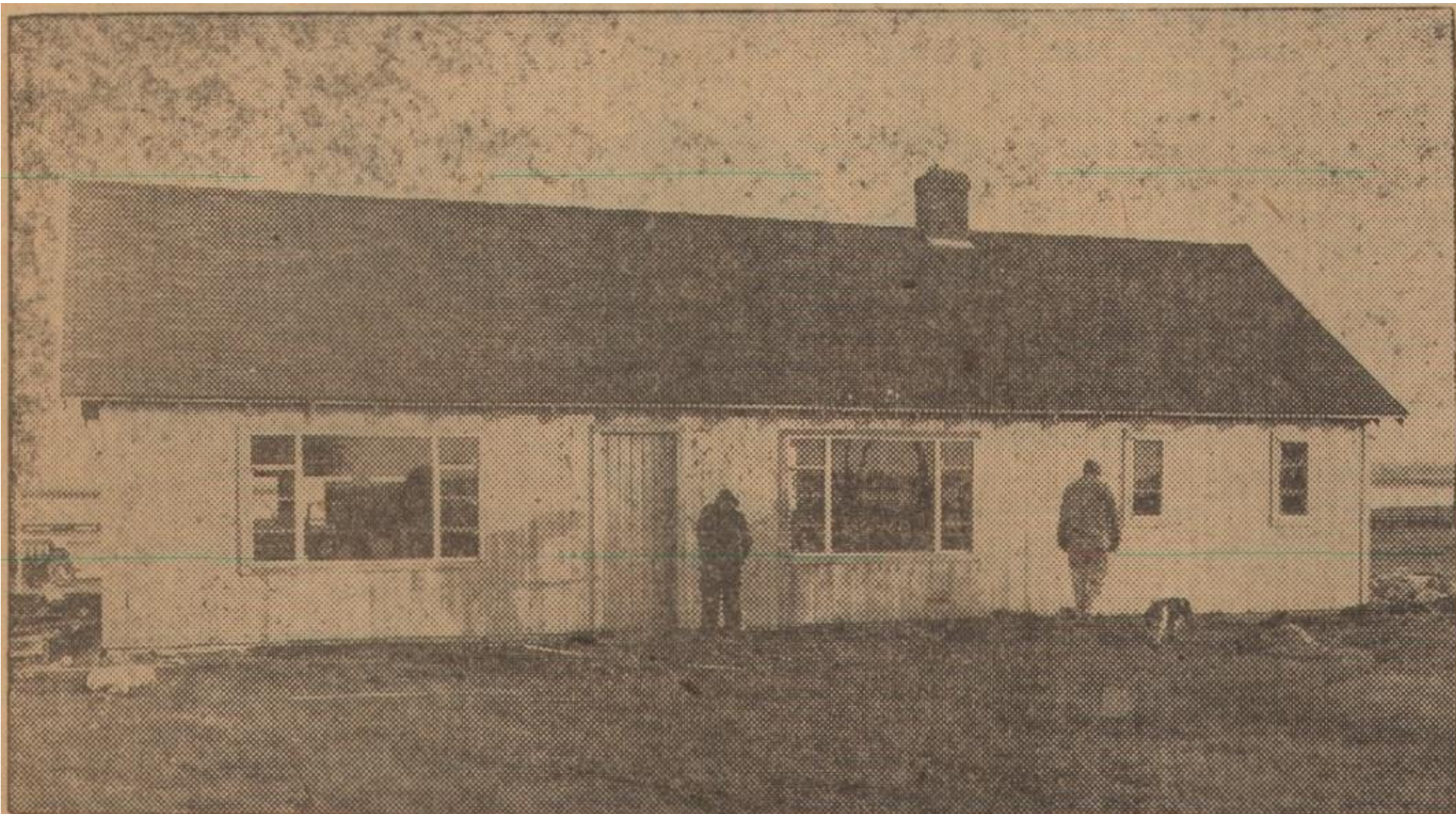
Faced with a big deficit they went ahead and put up the shell of the building and the roof. The interior was entirely unfinished, the windows boarded up, the unused material, including the aluminum window frames and glass stored in the building and the project was abandoned, mainly because John Youngs and Art Fillion left town. The unpaid bills amounted to about \$1300.

During the winter of 1948-49 **John Novak and Henry Polkinghorne built the fireplace**, Henry taking one half of his pay in EYC stock. Novak eventually was repaid for his cash outlays for material.

Daily Press June 3 1949 Courtesy of the Delta County Historical Society

Frank St. Martin, Harbormaster for more than a decade, sailor, master shipwright and cabinetmaker. The City of Escanaba dedicated the new yacht harbor building in his honor in 2000.





FOR LOCAL AND VISITING BOATMEN—
Ready for use within a few weeks will be this new Escanaba Yacht Club house near the yacht basin—the first “home” of the EYC since it was organized 17 years ago. The building is 52

feet long and 21 feet wide, with big windows overlooking the harbor. Yachtsmen are rushing completion of the building so that it will be open this season to local and visiting sailors.

View of north side of the EYC Clubhouse

During the winter of 1947-48 J.J. Mitchell was put away with a suspicion of a bad heart and was retired from the scene temporarily. That summer he sold the **OSLO** and in the Fall Of 1948 bought the **LUCKY STAR**.



Powerboat on the left is **Marissa** owned by Gilbert Sihvola from Ford River. Next to R is a fish tug, then “Frenchy” Trombley’s boat



*52' Cabin Cruiser
Owned by Lee A. "Al"
Wiles, Vice-
Commodore 1948
Bernie Schultz photo
Courtesy of the Delta
County Historical
Society*

The plan developed by Youngs, Fillion, Novak and others was to have a bar in the Clubhouse, engage a bartender and stage a lot of

lively parties, and with this in view they signed up a lot of EYC members who expected to have quite a gay time. But word of this got around and objections were voiced to the City Council by nearby residents and a delegation of ministers who went to a Council meeting and vigorously protested the building of a "saloon" on city property.

The City immediately clamped down on such a proposed use of the building and the Yacht Club had to acquiesce or lose their lease.

Many ingenious proposals to circumvent this ruling were chewed over at Yacht Club meetings, but to no avail.

This was a low point in Yacht Club history, as the Clubhouse enthusiasts were among the missing and

those who had been only lukewarm were not inclined to shoulder the burden of the Clubhouse.

This situation lasted almost a year, during such time I think the Club did not have a set of Officers, and no meetings were held.

In March, 1950, Les Wentworth, approached John Mitchell with the proposal to attempt to revive the Club and finish the Clubhouse. He said that if JJM would accept the job of Secretary he would take the Commodoreship.

This was done and on April 5, 1950, the letter "Members and Friends", which is the next page following was sent out. Old members were called and the first work bee saw 18 men on hand to go to work.

The surplus material was returned to the creditors and they were assured that new material ordered would be paid for promptly and eventually the old bills would also be paid.

In 1955 these bills were finally liquidated. Space does not permit giving credit to all those who helped, but

Les Wentworth, at least, should be mentioned as he worked there all alone on many of his days off.



*WASHINGTON ISLAND - 1935
Lucky Star purchased by John Mitchell Fall 1948 - not 1935*

*Joe
Shipman*

*Emer
Kidd*

*John
Mitchell*

A news clipping in the spring of 1947 showed the following boats being launched.

ROSE OF SHARON	Schooner	C. W. Stoll
APACHE	Cutter	Al Starr
MARB	Cutter	Walter Hornstein
MANDALAN (ex MINDEMOYA)	Schooner	John Youngs
OSLO	6 meter sloop	John Mitchell
YANKEE	R class	Ed Erickson
SANDRA III	Yawl	Joe Shipman
MARJAC	Sloop	John Walch
WINSOME	Power Cruiser	Art Fillion
Seagull		Lois Sawyer
Seagull		Al St. Pierre
Seagull		Jim Moran
Seagull		Dr. Hollick & Ted Sura

(MarJac was owned by Jack Erickson in 1937 – see p4)

1951-52 was still a low in Club membership and activities. Women were still not invited to meetings or Club activities. About this time it was proposed, debated and accepted that the wife was entitled to full membership on the husband's card, and the women would be welcome at all functions of the Club. Things perked up from then on and Ed Erickson began to show up at the meetings, along with other missing husbands.

In **1953-54** we acquired Russ and Betty Johnson as members. I think Russ was the last new member to buy shares of stock in the Clubhouse, Inc.

1954 saw the decline of the Cruising Race. That year it was won by **VANADIS** of Chicago.

In 1955 the **LUCKY STAR** left Escanaba harbor alone and was met by the **ROSE** at Washington Island and no other boats entered any other leg of the race. In 1956 the **ROSE** was not sailed at all, neither in 1957, but was revived in 1958 as noted.



*MANDALAN (former MINDEMOYA) painted on the cradle
Bernie Schultz photo from the Daily Press
Courtesy of the Delta County Historical Society*

In 1954-55 Emer Kidd and Bud Schmit built and operated the 30' steel power cruiser, **TURMOIL** around Escanaba and Ford River.



She was constructed out of the steel cabins of the Fox River Army Engineers survey boat, **MENASHA**, which marine contractor, Ben Gallagher (Bud Schmit's father-in-law) had bought in Green Bay and brought to Escanaba. The hull of the **MENASHA** is still used by Gallagher as a barge in his marine construction work.

Dana Peck, manager of the National Cash Register, built the inboard runabout, **RIK-E-JON** and became a member of the Club about 1953. In 1955, as a Director of the Club, he proposed that the Clubhouse be enlarged by the addition of the full length porch. He agreed to promote the financing if the Club Members would do the work.



In 1955 the Club was ready to pay off the last of the old construction bills left by Youngs, Fillion and Novak. Dana delivered these final payment cheques to the merchants and persuaded most of them to return the cheque as a donation toward the porch. As most of them had figured at one time that their entire bill was a total loss, they willingly agreed to this. Dana collected sufficient funds to build the porch, put in showers in the washroom and buy some children's equipment for the lawn.

Also in 1955 Ed, Betty and Freddy Erickson made their second trip down the Mississippi to Florida in their 40' R.D. ketch "**AMERICA**". They stayed down there 2 years and in 1957 sold the boat and they returned to Escanaba.

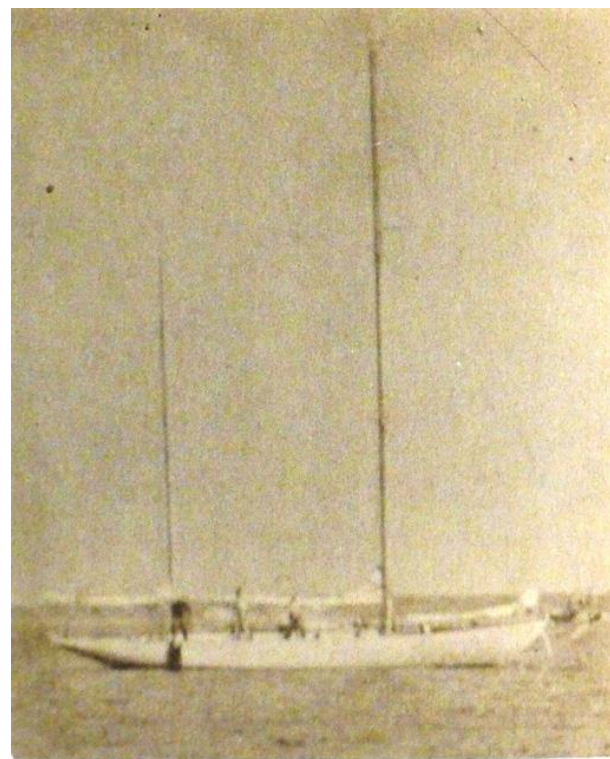
In 1954-55-56, the Russ Johnsons owned Jim Moran's Seagull and once sailed it to Ephraim for the races there. In 1957 they purchased the Bounty Class sloop **RAMPAGE** in Cleveland and with Frank St. Martin, sailed her to Escanaba early in the season.



Bergitta with owner, George Petersen on right, his brother Bill in the middle. Sold to Bill Berglund in 1951. Photo courtesy of Johanna Petersen

Great Bear
Renamed Lady
Marion?

*Photo below by Bill Perkins is the 22 sq. meter **VENTRON**, owned by John Walch. Several 22's in the Escanaba races were: Bill Bissell's "**LUCILLE**", Fran Boyce's "**BONNIE**", and "**RINETTE 4**", Roger Williams of Menominee.*



Great Bear — John Walch



That year, 1957, John Walch sold his former 22 sq. meter, **VENTRON (LADY MARION)** and bought the Q class sloop **CARA MIA** in Chicago.



*Cara Mia was the longest Q boat ever built; one of 18 Q's built for racing in Marblehead. In 1948 Ole Karas converted her from a sloop to a yawl, gaining two hours of handicap, setting a Chicago-Mackinac corrected time record of 30 hours, three minutes and 21 seconds. 1945, '47, '48 and '49 — Chicago-Mackinac – Winner. John Walch sold **CARA MIA**, which after several*

years and owners and conversion to a cutter then back to a sloop rig, was purchased by John Bissell who owned her several more years; the Q boat is now in Milwaukee.



CARA MIA: LOA: 53'0" / 16.15m
 LWL: 35'3" / 10.75m
 Beam: 8'10" / 2.46m
 Draft: 7'0" / 2.13m
 Designer: Frank C. Paine
 Original Owner: Harold S. Wheelock
 Year Built: 1929
 Built By: George F. Lawley & Son
 Hull Material: Wood
 Sail Area: 883 sq ft

Another "Lady Marion" at the fuel dock.



In 1956 Emer Kidd completed and launched the **40' steel ketch ADVENTURE** which he designed and built at the shop of TD Vinette Co.

She is a sturdy, beamy, roomy and comfortable boat. In early 1957 she was rigged and has since taken part in all the EYC sailing events.

Whittling the two masts took all winter



***ADVENTURE** Emer Kidd welding the hull in 1955*

***ADVENTURE**
under sail*



During these years outboarding has been busting its seams here, as in other parts of the country and more and more fine outboard boats were acquired here, some of whose owners became active and enthusiastic Yacht Club members. Water skiing became a popular sport also and the City installed a ski jump on the North Shore near the City Dock.

In **1957-58**, the Club fleet was pretty impressive. Boats and Owners were:

POWER	ROAMER		L. (Frenchy) Tremblay
	DAGMAR		H.J. Gruber
	LUCIFER		Soren Johnson
	BUCCANEER		Earl Lorey
	RO-BE-JO		Roy Hebert
	RON-JUS		Ron Stecker
	BERGHITTA III		George Petersen
	FLORENCE		Norm Stephenson
	<i>no name</i>		Dale Vinette
		36' Chris Craft	Paul Richter

SAIL	ROSE OF SHARON	52'	C. W. Stoll
	LUCKY STAR	40'	J.J. Mitchell
	RAMPAGE	39'	R.L. Johnson
	CARA MIA	52'	John Walch
	ADVENTURE	40'	Emerson Kidd
	BILJON	Seagull	John Hebert
	DORIS K	Seagull	Harold Kelsey
	VENGEANCE	Seagull	John Bissell



Louis “Frenchy” Tremblay’s ROAMER with the Rose of Sharon schooner in the background, and Lucky Star to the right.



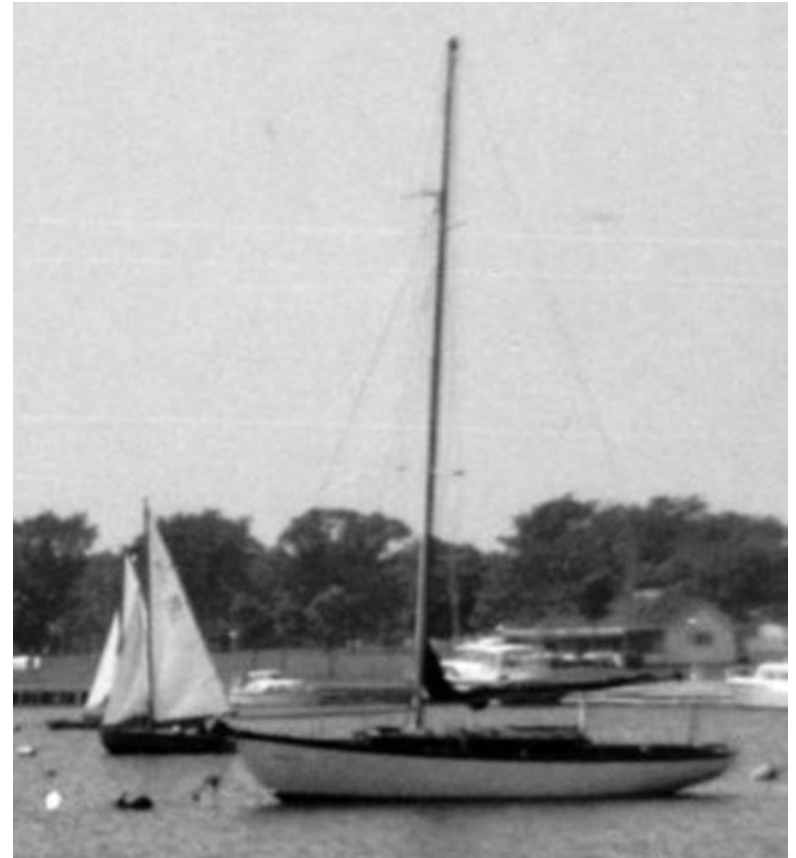
*RO-BE-JO owned by Roy Hebert
(Roy, Beula & Joan)*

BERGITA III Owner, George Petersen, is on the right, his wife Elsie on the left, with guests Catherine and Lester Danielson on board at Fayette.



FLORENCE BECKER in the haulout slip. Note dinghy ramp in left foreground of the photo by Bernie Schultz, courtesy of the Delta County Historic Society

Omitted from the list of Club member owned boats is the Weekender WIND SONG, owned by Al Starr, who has never been a member of the EYC, although he has owned boats here for about 15 years.



WIND SONG – Al Starr – 1965
36' Weekender design by Sparkman & Stephens
Later Owned by Bill & Charlotte Taylor, Bob & Marilyn Booker, then purchased by Gil & Mary Devlin Cheves in 1991. Nimphius Boat Yard, in Neshkoro, WI did a major restoration of the boat. She was sold in the 2000's to a person in the Apostle Islands area.

In 1958, the Club had a most active and prosperous year, many improvements were made to the Clubhouse and grounds including a wing on the north side for storage of furniture and equipment, and under the expert touch of Blanche Ryall, shrubs and flowers were planted around the building and in the flowerboxes, so that the Clubhouse began to look like it should. A full schedule of events was carried out, including a revival of the Cruising Race and Venetian night.

In 1958 the Club staged a most popular and worthwhile Boat Show on the Clubhouse grounds early in May. All these events, plus many more are on the schedule for 1959. There is no room here to list Event Schedules. All these are in the Secretary's files and in the Club History Album.

In 1959 it is expected that we will be able to make improvements to the Galley and washrooms, with money available for it. In past years when we thought we could afford to do these things, something more urgent had to be done.



Once, about 1954, when the septic tank filled and we had to put in a new tile field, and again in 1956 when the ceiling came down and had to be replaced, each of these

jobs used up all spare funds for those years.

Some of us old-timers have long felt the need for an attempt to gather material, news clippings, anecdotes, snapshots etc. for a Club History.

At the last meeting, February 14, 1959, this project was started. Elizabeth and John Brownell, the present Publicity Committee, have agreed to act as Club Historians, to assemble the materials of past years that will be sought out by all of us, and to keep clippings and some items in the future, all to be arranged in a durable Club History Book.

In April, Walter Hornstein proved to be a rich source of much material and generously gave us anything we needed from his albums.

The writing of this History from memory mostly, is a part of this project also, and it is hoped that it will be added to in the future, so that years from now, we and future yachtsmen of Escanaba, will be able to remember and relive these events of the past.

John J Mitchell
Commodore,
Escanaba Yacht Club
February 20, 1959



Photos & Assistance Courtesy of:

*Escanaba Yacht Club
Delta County Historical Society
Dean Shipman
Bob Buckbee
Mike Labre
Butch, Lug & Mary Kidd
Mary Cheves
Dan Branson
Ruthie Vinette
Joan Vinette
Don Aronson
Jean Peterson
Jimmy Walch
Carl Stenbol
Johanna Petersen
Keith & Lisa Anderson
Don Jacobson
Gregg Bruff
Roy & Sue Hebert
John Bissell
Chip Cipolla
Richard, Mike & Mary Growdon
Annie Walch*

*Additional photos are welcomed to illustrate people, boats
and events referred to by John Mitchell's marvelous
tale...and to extend the history through the 1960's to 2018...*

Check the [EYC website](#) for future versions.

Thank you, Marilyn Kinsey

*Any corrections, additions, deletions, etc. will be
appreciated. EYC, P. O. Box 70, Escanaba, MI 49829*