

For twenty years the New York Yacht Club 30-foot class has furnished the best racing on Long Island Sound.

## The New York "Thirties"

*An Interesting Sketch of America's Most Famous One-Design Class*

By SEABURY LAWRENCE

HAVING passed through their twentieth racing season, it may be said that the New York Yacht Club Thirty-footers offer the finest example in American racing annals of what it means to have a good class hold together. Leaving the building ways at the famed Herreshoff yards at Bristol in the spring of 1905, eighteen of these fine racing sloops took a lively part in the sport of that season. Now, a score of years later, we find that sixteen of the "Thirties" were in commission during the past season and that many of them took part in the racing and cruising throughout the season on Long Island Sound. Considering the age of the class, this is truly a remarkable showing.

Some men whose names are notable in American yacht racing history built and raced the "Thirties," in their earlier years, but it is a question if the sport in this class in the summer of 1905 was any keener than in the summer of 1924. There have been few finishes in the entire twenty years of racing in the class closer than that of this season between *Countess* and *Lena* on the New York Yacht Club squadron run from Newport to the head of Buzzard's Bay, a distance of about 37 nautical miles. This long contest, most of it a run before an increasing southwestern was always close between *Countess* and *Lena*, and at the finish Captain Dunbaugh's yacht was timed by the Race Committee just three seconds ahead of *Lena*. It was close work in a race of such length, but only typical of finishes likely to be seen any day the "Thirties" race. Their history is filled with incidents of this kind.

Season after season has seen them under sail and providing good sport for those who happened to be racing them. Many a Long Island Sound helmsman who arose to exceptional achievements received his early racing education as a "foremast hand" on a Thirty-footer. In this, as well as other ways, the class has been a very beneficial one to American yacht racing, and bids fair to continue in this capacity for some years to come.

The question "Why has the class held together?" may reasonably be asked in face of the fact that so many other good classes have disintegrated. The answer, perhaps, may be summed up in the statement that the "Thirties" are not only possessed of unusual racing qualities, but

can be used for cruising. It will be remembered that Captain Ogden Reid's *Lena* this year accompanied the New York Yacht Club fleet on its annual cruise all the way to Bar Harbor. This was a trifle lengthy, perhaps, for a vessel of the size, unless accompanied by a good-sized tender, but there are plentiful accommodations in a "Thirty" for a cruise of short duration. This fact has probably contributed to their long continuity as a racing class.

The names of the original owners of the Thirty-footers include many that will remain fixed for all time in the roster of yacht racing history. The names of some of the boats themselves have changed many times, possibly with every change of ownership, but a few, such as *Alera*, *Banzai* and *Nautilus*, have remained the same as when they first slid into the waters of Narragansett Bay so many years ago. An interesting incident of the cruise above referred to was that one of the original "Thirties," bearing her original name, was picked up at picturesque Islesboro and continued eastward with the fleet. This was *Linnet*, a sloop which had not been seen in western waters in some years. *Linnet* was built for Amos Tuck French, and was No. 10 on the racing list of the "Thirties." She was sold by Mr. French and disappeared from the roster of the New York Yacht Club for some years, but is now owned by Charles H. Talcott, a member of the club, who keeps the yacht in eastern waters.

Among the very few "Thirties" that have dropped out of the racing fleet is *Phryne* (17), a sloop that was sailed for several seasons by former Commodore J. P. Morgan and which was built by Harry L. Maxwell, now perhaps the premier racing skipper of Western Long Island Sound. As more or less of a "kid skipper," Harry Maxwell got a great deal of his early racing experience in the keen Thirty-foot class of those days. The story of *Phryne*, with her many changes of ownership, is typical of the history of many boats in the class, but it is unfortunate that the yacht for the last few years has been the property of a non-racing owner and has been laid up most of the time.

Harry Maxwell, one of the most enthusiastic and best informed of the racing yachtsmen, is still much interested in the Thirty-foot class, and gave the writer some inter-

esting notes on the changes of ownership in the case of *Phryne*. This yacht has always borne her original name, yet few of the Thirties have changed hands so often. It is an amusing fact that she was purchased from the Maxwells by C. W. Wetmore; then sold back to J. Rogers Maxwell by Mr. Wetmore, following which, some time later, Mr. Wetmore again became the owner of the yacht.

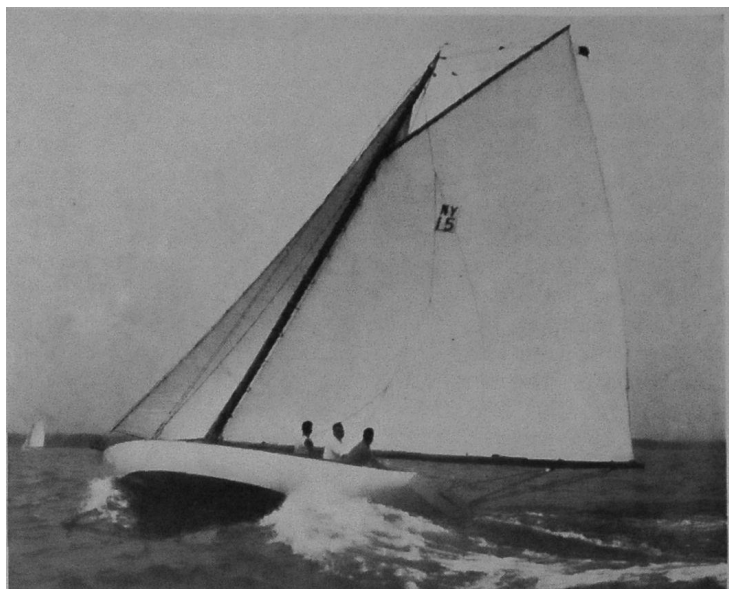
Mr. Maxwell explains this unusual sequence of transfers by saying that the first sale of *Phryne* took place during an illness of his father, who, upon recovery, demanded that the boat be bought back again. This was done, and young Harry Maxwell was once more on the quarter deck of a "Thirty" before going to more ambitious ships. *Phryne* later became the property of John F. O'Rourke, who sold her to former Commodore Morgan. After racing the boat for several seasons and enjoying some fine sport, Commodore Morgan built *Grayling* in the Fifty-foot class, and *Phryne* was sold in 1914 to George Nichols, who now has risen to the post of Commodore of the New York Yacht Club. Mr. Nichols sold *Phryne* several years ago to her present owner, M. V. B. Wilcoxson, of New Rochelle, who has not raced the yacht and has refused to sell her, although it is said that several offers have been made for her, one by former Commodore Morgan, who wished to re-purchase the yacht for sentimental reasons.

Fortunately few of the Thirty-footers have suffered the fate of *Phryne* in dropping out of the racing and not being kept up. Most of these fine sloops, excellently constructed in the first place, have been so well cared for that they might be pointed out as new boats to anyone not familiar with their history, without having a question raised as to the truth of the statement. The Thirty-footers in commission during the past season, a majority of which raced through the summer, were *Alera*, *Silhouette*, *Countess*, *Lena*, *Carolita*, *Amorita*, *Oriole*, *Minx*, *Phantom*, *Banzai*, *Nautilus* and *Adios*. Those in commission but which did not race were *Alice*, *Fiji II*, *Alida* and *Linnet*.

The old names of the "Thirties" must bring up a train of recollections to veteran yachtsmen of to-day. W. P. Stephens, Recorder of the Yacht Racing Association of Long Island Sound, whose memory is rich in yachting lore, gives some amusing facts in connection with the original names bestowed on some of these sloops. *Anemone Jr.*! There is a name that has not been recorded for years in the summaries of yacht racing. *Anemone Jr.* was No. 18 of the original Thirties and was built by J. Murray



The '30s' were always known as fine sea boats. This is the *Countess*, then owned by J. B. Dunbaugh, on the run from Provincetown to Gloucester, August 7th, 1922, in a hard breeze and rough sea.



The *Banzai*, one of the 30-footers that has always kept her original name. She is now owned by Edmund Lang.

Mitchell, described by Mr. Stephens as a "silk-stocking lawyer who went into a tough Tammany district of the old days and captured it for the Republicans." This, at the time, was regarded as quite an achievement.

Mr. Mitchell brought to this country an English ketch called *Anemone*, the first of its type in American waters and thought he could not do better than name his "Thirty" *Anemone Jr.* Under a change of ownership to the late Alfred G. Vanderbilt, Mr. Mitchell's yacht was renamed *Caprice*, afterwards being purchased by Ralph Ellis, who raced her for several seasons. Under the name *Adios* she recently flew the flag of Charles E. Trowbridge, who sold her to Ernest G. Draper, who calls the sloop *Blue Moon*.

*Maid of Meudon!* What gallant young skipper of to-day will tell off-hand which of the present "Thirties" bore this euphonic title. *Maid of Meudon* was No. 4 (they have always retained the original racing numbers) and was built by W. D. Guthrie, being named for a daughter born at Meudon, France. This yacht was sold out of the club, but returned to the racing lists once more as the property of W. Gilman Low, Jr., whose forebears owned some noted clipper ships in the American merchant marine. Flying the old house-flag of the Lows, she was named *Houqua* after one of the clipper ships, and bore that name for several seasons. Also at different times she bore the names *Juniata* and *Melody*. *Houqua* was purchased from Mr. Low by J. B. Dunbaugh, who renamed her *Countess*. The yacht raced well under Mr. Dunbaugh's ownership and in 1923 won the championship of Long Island Sound in her class. *Countess* recently became the property of C. Sherman Hoyt, who has been a notably successful helmsman in the Six-meter class.

A roster of the original owners of the Thirties contains names that have loomed large at times in American yachting. To begin at the beginning with No. 1, *Alera* (a name that has never been changed) was built for those noted young skippers, J. W. and E. P. Alker; *Ibis*, No. 2 (now *Silhouette*), by C. O'Donnell Iselin *Pintail* (5), August Belmont; *Dahinda* (6), W. Butler Duncan; *Neola II* (12), George M. Pynchon; *Minx* (13), now *Phantom*, Howard Willets; *Cora Mia* (14), now *Fiji II*, Stuyvesant Wainwright; *Banzai* (15), Newbury Lawton; *Nautilus* (16), Addison G. and H. Wilmer Hanan.

With such a start in life it is scarcely to be wondered at that the class has endured and flourished. Few of the "Thirties" have changed hands oftener or raced better than the present *Minx* (12), which is owned and raced by W. H. Hoffman, a capable young skipper who this year

