A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF THE STAR CLASS

1911 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 2001
From its very beginning the Star Class has attracted photographers’ attention. Morris Rosenfeld and Edwin Levick were among the early photographers who took pictures of the Star. The beauty and power of the modern Star boat continues to be an object interest for both amateur and professional photographer. We are thus fortunate to have a fairly good pictorial record of the Star Class starting with those early days of 1911 when the Stars first put in an appearance on Long Island Sound and at Nahant Dory Club in Massachusetts. The Star Class also has a very good historical record of itself. An annual Log which lists the boats and their owners, gives race results, carries the Class Rules, and other pertinent information has been published since 1922. An additional source of information is available from Starlights, the Star Class newsletter which has been published since 1925. Added to these sources there are two history books about the Star Class: “Forty Years Among the Star”, written by George W. Elder, and “A History of the Star Class”, written by Class Historian and long-time Log and Starlights editor C. Stanley Ogilvy.

It is the purpose of this pictorial history to bring together some of the more interesting photographs and events which have appeared in the Star Class publications.
The history of the Star began even before 1911. In 1906 a boat called the Bug was designed in the office of William Gardner in New York. These boats about eighteen feet long, were miniature Stars, their design being very similar to the as yet unborn Star boat. The Bug was at least in part the idea of Commodore "Pop" Corry, who wanted a small one design boat within the means of the not very wealthy yachtsman who liked racing. The boats cost $140 each, not an exorbitant sum even then. But the Bug proved to be too small and wet for comfort, and in 1910 Corry went back to Gardner to ask for a somewhat larger version. The Star was designed by the late Francis Sweisguth that winter, and twenty-two of them were built by Ike Smith of Port Washington, Long Island. They appeared on the Sound for the first time on May 30, 1911, for the Memorial Day regatta of the Harlem Yacht Club.

The original Star was not the trim vessel of today. Although the basic design has never been altered, construction methods and the care with which the boats are built have improved so much in sixty years that a 1911 model would not be recognized as a Star today. They cost $240 and looked it. Also the rig was entirely different from what it is now. A short mast carried a long gaff almost parallel to it, and an enormous boom hung three feet over the transom. Fittings were crude or non-existent. In spite of all this, the basic superiority of the hull design began to show itself and more Stars were built. At a time when small classes were springing up and dying out every year the Star survived, with nothing to support it but its own performance and the enthusiasm of Pop Corry and a few others.

In 1914 occurred an event without which there might have been no Star Class today. At least we can safely say that without it, the organization of one design classes of all kinds would have been delayed by years or decades. This event was the arrival on the scene of George W. Elder. When he bought a Star and interested himself in the welfare of the Class, a turning point had been reached, although no one knew it then. Pop Corry was the "father of the Stars", but George Elder was the father of the Star Class Association and remained its guiding administrator for most of his life.

It is hard for us to realize today what Elder did. Not only were there no international classes or class organizations in pre-1920 days; there were not even any inter-club classes. Each yacht club had its own design of boat, which raced locally, and that was all. Against this heterogeneous background Elder conceived the idea of a unified organization with enough influence to administer the affairs of many fleets of the same class, not only in various harbors of Long Island Sound (which in itself would have been a novel idea), but all over the country and eventually throughout the world. The outline of this grand scheme was presented by Elder in 1916 but not adopted until 1922. To appreciate its scope and daring we must recall the travelling and transportation conditions of those days. Inter-fleet racing was unknown because there were no two fleets of the same kind of boat. There was no electric haul-out equipment; boats the size of Stars were always kept in the water all summer. The automobile was still a new invention; that it would ever become sufficiently reliable to handle a trailer was doubtful. Thus many of the advantages which we reap from our class organizations, which we take for granted now, depend on modern communication and transportation facilities.

Yacht racing was suspended during World War I, and in 1919 the Star was one of the few classes which put in an appearance at Long Island Sound regattas and helped revive the sport in that area. Meanwhile Stars had taken hold elsewhere, and the groundwork had been laid for Elder to make his dream an actuality.

(From the 1971 Star Class Log)
It is rather doubtful, in this day and age of conformity and political correctness, that a personage such as George Corry could have had the sort influence that he had almost a century ago. His manners and ways of thinking, if the stories told about him in Elder's book and elsewhere are true, were eccentric to say the least, and he must have been a most colorful character.

Despite this, or perhaps because of this, “Pop” Corry was very effective in promoting his idea of the inexpensive racing yacht. It is fortunate that his idea was ably translated by Mr. Gardner and his draftsman Francis Sweisguth.

While “Pop” Corry was the person most responsible for getting the Star boat designed, it was George Elder who conceived of the idea of having a worldwide Star Class organization. At the time this was an unheard-of idea, but Elder’s efforts and determination paid off, resulting in the I.S.C.Y.R.A. which we have today.

During his later years Mr. Elder began to work on a book about the history of the Star Class. This book, “Forty Years among the Stars”, was published posthumously in 1955.
In about 1906 George A. Corry, the ring-leader of a small group of yachtsmen from the New York City area, asked William Gardner to design a small, inexpensive chine-built arc-bottomed sail boat with a keel. George Corry was a friend of William Gardner, and it was natural for Corry to contacted him to design the boat.

The first fruit of Gardner's effort for Corry's group was a boat known as the Bug. The Bug was drafted by Curtis D. Mabry of Gardner's office and made its appearance on Long Island Sound in 1906. The boat is reported to have been 19' long with a keel weighing 150 lbs.

After five years of racing the Bugs in the waters about New York City the owners of the Bugs decided that the boats were too small, too wet and much too uncomfortable. A committee was appointed, consisting of George Corry, A. B. Fry, Thornton Smith and William Newman, to take this matter up with William Gardner. That was done in the early fall of 1910. This time it was Francis Sweisguth who was Gardner's draftsman who drew up the plans for the boat, named the Star.

In the 1931 Log Mr. Gardner made the following comments:

“When I designed the Star my aim was to produce a boat that was fast, handy, seaworthy, and that could be built at a moderate cost; these qualities I was evidently fortunate enough to have obtained.

“The boat alone, however, was not entirely responsible for the great success that has followed. The great interest taken by the owners of the boats and the unceasing efforts of the Association to bring to the attention of the yachting world the merits of the boats, have been in a large part responsible for the unprecedented success of the class.

“The large fleet that exists to-day is very gratifying to me and my sincere wish is that the success of the Association will be as great in the future as it has been in the past.”

(WILLIAM GARDNER
1859-1934
Naval Architect)

(Photo right: 1922 Log)
“MOM” AND “POP” CORRY IN THEIR BUG

(Picture from Elder’s book “Forty Years…”, credit Francis Sweiguth.)

BUG # 2

(Photo: Star Class promotional brochure, credit Levick.)
FRANCIS SWEISGUTH
Designer of the Star
1882-1970

Francis Sweisguth was the draftsman in William Gardner’s naval architect office who drew the lines of the Star in the fall of 1910. He was also one of the original owners of the first 22 Stars built by Ike Smith in the winter of 1910-1911. He owned number 6 from 1911 through 1915. In the early 1920’s, when a rig change from the gaff rig to the short Marconi rig was proposed, Mr. Sweisguth designed the change. In 1929 when the new rig which is still in use today was proposed, Mr. Sweisguth was again involved, this time as a member of the Technical Committee which drew up the specifications for the new rig and sail plan. He continued to serve as the Technical Committee chairman through 1933.

Star of the 1910’s

Spars and Sails: Sliding Gunter
Mast, deck to sheave 18'5"
Boom 18'4"
Gaff (Or Yard) 17'6"
Mainsail Luff 7'4"
Mainsail Leech 28'6"
Mainsail Foot 18'4"
Jib Luff 17'9"
Jib Leech 15'3"
Jib Foot 7'8"
POPULARITY of one-design classes seems to be on the increase, and there are several new classes proposed for next season; one, a class of small schooners. Several of the most prominent classes racing on Long Island Sound were designed by Mr. William Gardner, of New York, and on the following pages are given drawings of a number of these boats as well as the drawings of two proposed classes. One of the most popular classes ever raced on the Sound in the small-boat division are the "Bug" boats, which were designed and built in the Spring of 1906. These boats are 19 feet over all, and cost complete only $125. Fourteen of these were built for members of the Manhasset Bay, Larchmont, Horse Shoe Harbor, Huguenot, and New Rochelle Y.C.

This year designs for a new class similar to the old, but 3 feet 7 inches longer over all, and known as "Star" boats, was gotten out and the boats cost complete $250. Fifteen of these were built for members of the American Y.C., six for various members of the Manhasset Bay, New Rochelle, Larchmont, and Horse Shoe Harbor Y.C.s., and ten for members of the Nahant Y.C. of Nahant, Mass. Both the "Star" and "Bug" classes were described by Mr. Thornton Smith in the January, 1911, issue.

All of the old boats as well as all of the new, except ten for the Nahant Dory Club, were built by Isaac Smith, of Port Washington, L.I. The ten for the Nahant Club were built by Richard T. Green & Co., of Chelsea, Mass.

A class similar to the new "Star" boats, except that they are 1.7 feet longer, a foot wider, and of the center-board type, has been designed with a view to placing the class on Gravesend Bay. It is proposed that members of the various clubs in the Gravesend Bay Association build to this class, and if the proposed plans are carried out, the class will be a great addition to racing on the Bay.
An early race on Long Island Sound. Leading in number 17, Little Dipper, is “Pop” George Corry. Since the owners of both number 10 and number 33 changed with some frequency in the first decade neither skippers’ names or boat names can be given with any certainty.

Another early race on Long Island Sound. Again “Pop” Corry, with “Ma” Corry crewing, are in the lead. Mrs. Corry was an accomplished skipper in her own right, and won women's races as well. Women’s races were a common feature of many race weekends in those days, and were held in the morning prior to the “main event”.

(Photo from “Forty Years…”, credit Morris Rosenfeld)

(Photo from “The Story of American Yachting”, credit Morris Rosenfeld)
Hiking, 1911 Style

George Corry and Mat Rock sailing Little Dipper in Little Neck Bay in 1911
(Crews take note: we fully expect that you will wear ties in the upcoming events.)

A CLOSE FINISH ON LONG ISLAND SOUND

“Saturn”, Long Island Sound Champion for 1921, leading.
Number 40, South Wind, was built by Irving Versoy of New Haven, CT, in 1914 for Bill McHugh of Norwalk, CT. Mr. McHugh was one of the founders of the Central Long Island Sound fleet, and at the time sailed out of South Norwalk Y.C. Note the forward hatch to bail out the forward tank. Originally the Stars had flotation tanks fore and aft much like the boats built during the 1980’s. However, because of leakage the tanks proved to be more trouble than they were worth and were soon taken out of the boats. Another feature of the early Stars was the long coaming which began just behind the mast and as originally designed continued all the way back beyond the end of the cockpit. Here we see that the coaming has already been shortened to finish at mid-cockpit.
Gordon Curry’s boat Aquilla of Manhassett Bay Y.C. Note that the coaming is shorter than that of number 40, ending at about the forward end of the cockpit.
Finishing in white squall on L.I. Sound’s worse blow in years, July 24, 1920.

Just after the start, Larchmont Y.C. Race Week
Saturday, July 22nd, 1916
Ad from the 1922 Star Class Log featuring Star #1

"TAURUS" W. L. INSLEE
(Ex-Champion Gravesend Bay)   L. I. S. Champion 1920

WILLIAM H. GRIFFIN
SAIL MAKER
Special attention given to Yacht sails of all kinds, canvas work of every description. Estimates cheerfully given.

Office and Loft
CITY ISLAND  NEW YORK

ISAAC E. SMITH
BOAT BUILDER

Port Washington  Long Island
Builder of the original twenty-four Star Boats in 1911. My specialty is building Star Boats. I have built more stars than any other builder in the country. Smith-built stars have won nearly every championship for the past eleven years. My prices are reasonable.

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A leeward start in Manhasset Bay
CETI, STAR # 7
Last of the Gaff Rigged Stars

Ceti, Star # 7, was one of the 22 Stars built during the winter of 1910-1911 by Ike Smith of Port Washington, N.Y. She was originally owned by R.G. Moore, and then George Barron. In 1913 she was given to Warren Ransom. The boat was moved to North Hatley, Quebec, Canada and sailed on Lake Massawippi until 1983 when she was given to Mystic Seaport Museum. Since she was used as a daysailer, no thought was ever given to updating her as was the case with her sisters which all went through the rig changes as the rest of the Star Class progressed from the gaff rig to the short Marconi rig to finally the modern rig which was brought into the Class in 1930.

To the right is Ceti being sailed by the Ransom family. Below is Ceti outside the storage shed in Mystic. Peter Vermilya, the curator of the small boat collection, is shown at the tiller. The mainsail is said to be the original mainsail. The jib, obviously, has seen better days and has many patches.

(Photos: Ogilvy collection)
As the Star Class continued to grow and develop during the late 1910’s and early 1920’s it became clear that the rig should be modernized. The first step was to change to rig from a gaff rig to a Marconi rig. This changeover occurred gradually during the early 1920’s. The same mainsail could be used on either rig.

The 1922 Log shows the Star sail plan with both the gaff rig and the Marconi rig. The caption to the plan states that the same sail can be used on both rigs. It is interesting to note that the number on the mainsail of the boat in the sail plan is # 6. While this is just a conjecture, it seems most probable that Mr. Sweisguth was responsible for drawing this sail plan.
INTERNATIONAL TROPHY, 1923-1925

The original “International” trophy for the Star Class is this “dust-catcher”, for a long time housed in Bayside Y.C., Little Neck Bay, N.Y., and now at the Port Washington Library. It was raced for three times before being replaced by the present World’s Trophy. The trophy was given to the Bayside Y.C. when it was retired because both of the winners of the trophy came from Bayside. They were Bill Inslee who sailed Star # 1, Taurus, to victory in 1922 and 1923 and John Robinson, who sailed Star # 61, Little Bear to the title in 1924.

OUR NEW INTERNATIONAL TROPHY

The finest thing in the realm of sport
(from July, 1925, Starlights)

“The Star Class can now boast of a perpetual Trophy that ranks second to none, not only in Yachting but in any sport. A Trophy that will more than hold its own with any of the historic Cups throughout the world. A Trophy that is well worth coming thousands of miles to race for. We have every reason to be proud of this Trophy of ours around which the traditions of our Class will be built, for it is a magnificent thing, a work of art...”

Thus began the article in Starlights describing the new trophy for what we now call the World’s Championship. Over hundred members of the Class donated money for the making of the trophy. The largest contributor was Sam Pirie of Chicago. His son Lockwood “Woodie” Pirie was to win the trophy many years later in 1948.

Ardian Iselin the Port Washington Y.C. was the first winner of the new trophy. He sailed Star # 202, Ace. He was able to sail Ace to win the World’s Championship again in 1936.

(Picture from 1926 Log)
“Taurus”, sailed by W.L. Inslee, winning the 1922 National Championship for the Western Long Island Sound against Stars from the Atlantic, Pacific and Great Lakes. “Taurus” has been racing since 1911 and was the first Star ever built.

Photo and above caption from the 1923 Log.

STAR # 1

Star # 1 was one of 22 Star boats built by Isaac E. Smith of Port Washington during the winter of 1910-1911. Given the boat-building practices of the day it is probably incorrect to say that Star # 1 was the first Star boat built. Most likely all 22 boats were built and completed at the same time, and it was only the luck of the draw that this boat received # 1. The very first owner of Star # 1 was W.K. Emerson. Mr. Emerson named the boat Taurus. Between 1913 and 1918, when Bill Inslee bought the boat, the boat had three other owners, none of whom were especially successful in racing it.

While Star Class lore credits Walter von Hütschler with introducing flexible spars to the Star Class in the 1930’s it was actually Bill Inslee who began this practice which he described in the April-May issue of Starlights in 1924.

After Bill Inslee had two successful seasons with the boat, winning the top Star prize in 1922, the “Nationals”, and then after the Star Class became international in 1923 the “Internationals”, Commodore George Corry figured that he should own Star # 1, and renamed it Little Dipper. Perhaps part of the incentive for Mr. Corry buying Taurus was the hope that he would regain his ability to win races as he had back in the early 1910’s. It didn’t happen.
HERE’S TO “BILL” AND THE “TAURUS” AND THEIR TWO GOLD STARS

This issue would not be complete unless proper tribute was paid to the one man and one boat which above all others deserve it. “Bill” and the “Taurus” have parted company, but their names shall go down on the pages of the History of the Star Class in a blaze of glory.

Two Gold Stars the emblems of two International championships when will the same man and same boat ever carry these marks of honor again? Probably never. It is the more remarkable because W.L. Inslee of Western Long Island Sound, under the colors of the Bayside Yacht Club sailed No. 1, the first Star ever built, “Taurus”, a Star of a vintage of a decade and a half ago, had many an owner before Bill, but her record under these various skippers was more or less of an obscure one, proof enough that it is the man and not the boat. These two battled scared veterans of many a race, twice fought their way through a perfect elimination system and twice defeated all comers in the largest one design class in the world beating boats built in recent years, boats that were the last word in perfection and modern improvements. Who else, we ask, could have accomplished, or ever will again accomplish, such a feat?

Inslee's record is worthy of note for it demonstrates what can be accomplished by persistency, study and application. His career as a Star Skipper began on Gravesend Bay in 1915. Inslee was always good but by no means what he is today. He was the recognized champion of his locality in those days but a greatly surprised one, when eight yachts of the Star Class invaded his domain in 1915 and the best he could do against them in that series was 8th. The following year he did better. Then he moved to the Sound where competition was keener. There he studied his boat and everything pertaining to the class, sails, paints, the balance of his boat, and every little detail. For four years he improved steadily, moving a notch or two nearer the top each year, finally in 1921 he reaped the results of his labors and won his first championship and in 1922 and 1923 easily repeated this feat.

His 1923 record was remarkable for he won every series in sight in which he qualified. Luck? Could it be luck to finish 1-2-3 every day at Larchmont Race Week against a field of 32 Stars in all sorts of weather and to win 5 first and 1 second in 6 International races?

We salute you Bill Inslee, as the greatest star skipper, the greatest small boat skipper of all times.
Star #1 was renamed “Little Dipper” when this picture was taken. Mr. Corry bought #1 after the 1923 season. His reason was that he felt he should own the first Star ever built.

After “Pop” Corry died in 1943 Star #1 was placed on display at the Manhasset Y.C., the yacht club from which “Pop” Corry had sailed throughout his career. However, unfortunately the boat was allowed to deteriorate and was finally broken up in about 1955. Only the transom, stem, and tiller remain and are on display in the yacht club.
In 1924, two years after the Star Class Association began, the San Diego Fleet was chartered. Its first officers were Ed Peterson, captain, and Joseph Jessop, secretary. Joe Jessop was very successful in the early days of the fleet, and won numerous Southern Californian events. Here we see Joe Jessop and crew John Sykes sailing Windward #213, built by Ed Peterson in 1923, on their way to winning the 1926 Southern California Yachting Association Championships.
1927 Officers of I.S.C.Y.R.A.
W.H. Gidley, Treasurer; G.W. Elder, President; G.A. Corry, Commodore; P.E. Edrington, V.P.; T.D. Parkman, Secretary

Action at the leeward mark: 1923 Larchmont Race Week
In 1928 there appeared in Starlights various cartoons drawn by Pat Clancy of the Detroit River Fleet.

Starlights, August, 1928

NOW THAT THE YACHTING SEASON IS OVER

Starlights, November, 1928
No foolin—
that all you
have to do?

Yes sir Boy—sailing on a Squall isn't great medicine.
What to do only from the main and Jib Sheets.
Set up the backstays—adjust the rake of
the spar—keep the boat dry—take the
bushes out of the lines—lay down on the
deck to keep the spray off the skipper, dive
under the bottom of the old scow every time
he thinks he's afraid winds on her keel—
Keep him posted on what the rest of the band
are doing—if he don't want to hear that tell
him a funny story.
Another boat which was very successful in the early 1920’s was the Irex skippered by Ernest Ratsey of the New York loft of Ratsey and Lapthorn, Sailmakers. Mr. Ratsey had a succession of Irexes and captured various honors, his highest being a Silver Star by winning the first Mid-Winter Silver Star Championship in 1926.

When it was proposed that the Star Class have a monthly newsletter it was Mr. Ratsey who suggested the name “Starlights” for it.

When the Class decided to go to the tall Marconi rig in 1929 Mr. Ratsey was a member of the Technical Committee which worked up the new specifications.

There were three Ratseys involved in the Star Class in the 1920’s and 1930’s: the father George Ratsey and brothers Ernest and Colin Ratsey. George Ratsey crewed for Ernest in the 1926 Mid-Winters. While Ernest listed himself as being a member of the Western Long Island Sound fleet Colin listed himself as being a member of the Solent fleet. This was probably indicative of the division of labor, with Ernest working the New York loft and Colin working the English lofts.

Stars from Cuba, France, and the U.S.A. about to round a mark during Star Class Week at Habana, Cuba. The Cuban yacht, “Aurrera IV”, which represented Habana in the last Internationals, leading.
Enrique Conill, of Flotte de Paris, sailing the Almendares in the Mid-Winter Championship. The first European Fleet ever represented in a Star Class Championship in the Western Hemisphere.
THE CUP OF CUBA
The Mid-Winter Silver Star Championship Trophy

Very early on in the formation of Star Class fleets Cuba played an important role in the development of the international aspect of Star sailing. The first Cuban fleet, la Flota de la Habana (FdeH) was chartered in 1923. After three years of the Havana fleet prospering a decision was made to host a great event which became the Mid-Winter Championship, also called “les petit Internationals”. Above is a photo from the March, 1929, issue of Starlights showing the Cup of Cuba and other trophies at the final banquet of the 1929 Mid-Winter Championship. Below is a photo from the March, 1928, issue of Starlights showing the participants and hosts at the end of the 1928 event.
Star of the 1930’s through 1960’s

Spars and Sails
Mast, deck to sheave 31’9”
Boom 14’7”
Mainsail Luff 30’6”
Mainsail Leech 30’6”
Mainsail Foot 14’7”
Jib Luff 20’6”
Jib Leech 17’10”
Jib Foot 7’2”

During the 1920’s high aspect ratio Marconi rigs became more common on racing sailboats. Already by this time several Star skippers were also involved in racing bigger boats, including the America’s Cup boats, so most assuredly developments in the aerodynamics of yacht sails were well known to the members of the Star Class. As a further push in the direction of adopting a more modern high aspect ratio rig for the Star there was pressure from Europe which indicated that the Class would be better accepted in Europe if it had a modern rig.

In the April, 1929, issue of Starlights, in an article entitled “Modernizing Star Rig under consideration”, there is the following comment: “Though the idea of adopting a more modern rig for the Star Class is not a new one, Larry Bainbridge, D.S., is responsible for placing it before the I.E.C. in such a convincing light that it has been unanimously voted to give the project wide publicity and then place it before the next annual meeting at New Orleans… Our present rig with it’s long boom is out of date, it does not appeal to the new man who is coming into the game and it will not retain the interest of the keen skipper who may be driven out of the Star Class and into classes that offer the modern improvements in sail design….”

The Starlights of November, 1929, continued the story in the article “Modern Rig Adopted for 1930”: “A modern rig was adopted at the annual meeting in New Orleans by a vote of 434 to 66, to become effective March 1st, 1930… The rig recommended by the Bainbridge Committee, which gives a boom to the transom and about the same sail area as the present rig, was adopted in principle and referred back to a Technical Committee, to be appointed by the President for any necessary refinements. This Technical Committee consists of Prescot Wilson, head of Geo. Burrows, Inc., sailmakers, Ernest Ratsey, of Ratsey & Lapthorn, Inc., sailmakers, and Francis Sweiguth, who drew the original plans and was formerly with Wm. Gardner.”

Obviously, although now almost 20 years later, Mr. Sweiguth still had more than a passing interest in the Star boat and the Star Class. It is interesting to see that the Class included him on the Technical Committee when the decision to go to the tall Marconi was made. In as much as no direct evidence has been found one can only speculate how much Mr. Sweiguth had to do with the development of the modern rig and sailplan.
In 1929 Francis Sweisguth was named as a member of the Technical Committee when the Class decided to go to the tall Marconi. In as much as no direct evidence has been found one can only speculate how much Mr. Sweisguth had to do with the development of the tall rig, and in particular the rigs experimented with on Ernest and Colin Ratsey boats Irex (#24) and Joy (#361). Pictured here is Joy with the experimental modern rig in 1929. Even after the modern rig was adopted by the Star Class in 1930 Mr. Sweisguth continued to be listed in the Logs as the head of the Technical Advisory Committee until 1933.
THE METAMORPHOSIS OF STAR # 202, ACE.

Ace, Star # 202, was built in 1924 by its one and only owner, Adrian Iselin II. Mr. Iselin and Ace have been probably the most successful combination ever in the Star Class. Aside from winning two World’s Championships, once in 1925 and again in 1936, Mr. Iselin won four Silver Stars, two Blue Stars (1925 and 1945), three Bacardi Cups (1927, 1935 and 1936) and a great number of Long Island Sound regattas.

Unlike Ceti, Star # 7, which was never updated by its owners since it was built in 1911, the Ace was constantly being updated to keep up with the newest equipment. Here we see her with the short Marconi rig which was used until the end of 1929. Note that when this picture was taken in 1925 Ace was still using the original backstay arrangement of just a simple two-to-one block-and-tackle. In 1925 Ben Comstock and Bill Gidley installed backstay tracks and slides on their boat Rhody, Star # 143. They won the “Internationals” in 1926, and in true Star Class fashion everyone had to have these new fittings, which at the time were called “Rhody Runners”. The use of backstay tracks and slides became the standard way of setting up the backstays and remained in use until the 1980’s.

On the following two pages are views of Ace as it went from the early tall Marconi rig with double spreaders of the 1930’s to the modern single spreader rig the late 1940’s.
THE DOUBLE SPREADER RIG

The rig used in the 1930’s-1940’s

Here is Ace in the double spreader era, sometime during the early 1930’s. The double spreader rig was the preferred rig for the modern tall mast from 1930 until the mid 1940’s. There was, and still is, no specification which stipulates how the mast is to be rigged. Today the single-spreader rig has become universal, and one would have thought that there are specifications which dictate this uniformity, but this is really just the result of mast-makers coming to a consensus as to what the best rigging plan for the Star should be.

In the Star Class the deck layout has also always been left to the preference of the individual skipper. Here in this photo we see that backstay tracks have been installed on Ace, whereas in the earlier picture of Ace with the short Marconi rig we saw that Mr. Iselin was still using the original backstay arrangement of just a simple two-to-one block-and-tackle. Backstay tracks and slides remained the principal backstay system until the 1980’s, at which time the under-deck backstay rope system began to become prevalent. Interestingly enough on some of the more recent boats the block-and-tackle system has been reintroduced, but now positioned about mid-cockpit rather than at the aft end of the cockpit as originally drawn in the Star’s plans by Mr. Sweisguth.

Another interesting item on this boat is the rather long chainplate. These got to be 1 foot or even more in length. However by the late 1950’s when builders got their boats “dialed in” these chainplates shortened up to just a few inches.
Here is Adrian Iselin II with his Ace near the end of their racing days. As far as can be determined from the records in the Logs, the last year Mr. Iselin raced Ace was in 1952. Boat 2664 to the right of the picture was built in 1947, so this picture was taken in the final five years. Ace has been up-dated and appears to be as well equipped as any of the newer boats. Note that the boats in this picture, including Ace, had all gone to the single spreader rig by this time. However, from time to time people would try out the double spreader rig, one of the last examples probably being Harry Nye’s Gale which appeared in the cover of the 1960 Log.

After his death in July, 1961, both his boat Ace and many of the trophies won by Mr. Iselin and Ace were given to Mystic Seaport Museum. Ace is now on display in the collection of small boats at Mystic.
ADRIAN ISELIN II AND GARRETT HORDER
1936 World’s Champions

In 1936 Adrian Iselin and his Ace won their second World’s Championship. They did this against a fleet of 35 boats, the largest World’s ever held by a one-design class up until that time.

During the 1930’s there was an interesting custom of stuffing the flags from the various competing countries into the trophy.

(Photo: 1937 Log)

STARS UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT PURDY BOAT COMPANY

This picture was taken sometime during the 1930’s at the Purdy Boat Company of Port Washington, N.Y. Four Stars are being built, two of which are nearing completion. The deck layout, fairly standard for the time, is clearly visible on the boat in the foreground. Note that this particular Star has a mid-cockpit traveler, whereas the one directly behind does not.
PATSY RASKOB
Sailed her first World's Championship
at the age of 12 in 1932

In the November 1932 issue of Starlights there is a picture of a young girl sitting on Pop Corry's knee. The caption reads as follows:

“Commodore George A. Corry, the “Daddy of the Star Class”, and its oldest skipper, and Miss Patsy Raskob, skipper of the Eastern Shore entry Ripple in the 1932 Internationals. Miss Raskob is not only the first of her sex to skipper a boat in an International Championship series, but is the youngest international skipper in the L.S.C.Y.R.A. The Commodore looks back to his 70th birthday, while Patsy looked ahead to her 13th when the picture was taken last September at the Pequot Yacht Club at Southport.”

In fact, Patsy sailed not only the 1932 World's, held by the CLIS fleet at Pequot Yacht Club, but sailed in the 1933 World's held at Long Beach, California. In 1932 Patsy finished 18th out of 28 boats, beating the likes of Herb Dowsett, Glenn Waterhouse (who was next year's World's champion) and Colin Ratsey. She did this with one WDR back in the days when there were no discard races. Her best race was a 7th, followed by a 9th. In 1933 she finished 12th out of 16 boats, with her best races being a 6th and an 8th.

The Logs show that Patsy continued to race her boat Ripple, #662, into the late 1930's, and was shown in the Logs as its owner until the mid 1940's.

(Photo from “Central Long Island Sound Fleet”)
WALTER VON HÜTSCHLER

In 1936 Walter von Hütschler, with Hans-Joachim Weise as crew, won the 5th running of the European Silver Star, which was held that year in Naples. Then in 1938 and 1939 he won the World’s.

The thing Walter von Hütschler is most famous for is the introduction of the use of the flexible rig to control mainsail shape, the principle still used today. Mr. von Hütschler claims to have come upon this phenomenon quite by accident. What he was really after was making his mast lighter by shaving off a considerable amount of wood (and weight) from the telephone polls for masts which were used in those days. The results proved to be more than he expected, and he became unbeatable for the years 1937, 1938, and 1939.

In 1940 Parkman Yachts printed a 22 page pamphlet written by Mr. von Hütschler entitled “Flexible Spars” in which he describes how the flexible rig came about.

This photo from the 1937 Log shows Hans-Joachim Weise (left) and Walter von Hütschler (right) being congratulated by 14th District Secretary Baron Fassini Camossi.

GETTING READY FOR THE START
1936 European’s

Pimm, Star # 1078, with Walter von Hütschler and Hans-Joachim Weise, getting ready to gybe around for the start of one of the races at the 1936 European’s. Star # 1224, Sheat, to the left of the picture, is skippered by Agostino Straulino, at the time a midshipman at the Regia Accademia Navale. Straulino came in second for the series.

(Photo: 1937 Log)
HIKING METHODS

As was seen earlier in the picture of Bill Inslee’s Taurus which appeared in the 1924 Log, the idea of both the skipper and crew hiking out by laying down on the rail was a technique of long standing in the Star Class. Walter von Hütschler’s crews Hans-Joachim Weise and Egon Beyn carried this hiking technique to the maximum as can seen in the above picture. However, Mr. von Hütschler was not alone in having his crews use this hiking technique, as can be seen in the spoof shown to the right.

Compare this style with that of Lowell North’s crew Jim Hill, which is shown in the pages about the late 1950’s in which it appears that even more athleticism was needed to hold the body as far out as possible away from the topsides.

This style of hiking finally gave way to the present method of mini-hiking, first with the introduction of hiking straps in 1969 and then the hiking vest in 1981.

(Both illustrations from the 1940 Log.)
The last World’s Championship held before World War II was held at Kiel, Germany, on August 21-26, 1939. Only three boats went from the U.S. Here is Stan Ogilvy’s Spirit, # 1776, followed by Agostino Straulino’s Polluce, # 1540, sailing past a German cruiser during the Championship.

In 1938 Walter von Hütschler won the World’s Championship and took the series to Europe for the first time in 1939. Actually, were it not for a mishap in the first race of the 1937 World’s, he probably would have taken the series to Europe a year earlier. After pulling the luff rope out of the mast and finishing 22nd, he went on to finishing 1st in the remaining four races, always winning by a large margin, the greatest of which was almost five minutes in the last race.

Because the very difficult conditions as a results of the impending war the German hosts did everything possible to make sure that all the contestants and their boats made it back to their respective homes safely. For example, the French contestants were escorted to the border by a German Naval Attaché in uniform to make sure that there would be no problems as they crossed the German border. The three American boats were sent to Denmark by horse-cart and then onto Norway where they were loaded onto one of the last American freighters to leave for the U.S. And the winner of the Championship, Walter von Hütschler, being actually a Brazilian national, left Germany for Norway and made his way to the U.S., where he was able to continue sailing Stars during the war years. The Star Class is fortunate that Mr. von Hütschler was able to bring the World’s Trophy along with him, or who knows what fate it might have met as the war progressed.