

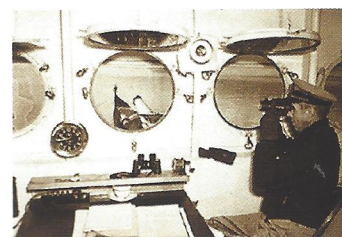
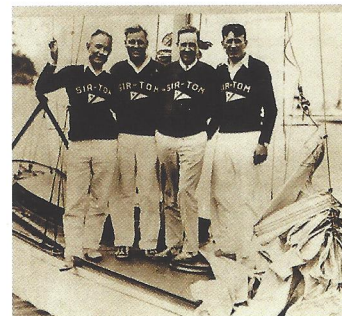
# SAIL TEAM SEATTLE

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SEATTLE SAILS TO WIN THE NEW YORK YACHT CLUB INVITATIONAL CUP  
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# A BEACON IN THE PAGES OF HISTORY

## Seattle Yacht Club

If you were to gaze off the shore of Elliott Bay in the year of 1894, you might catch a glimpse of nine-year-old Ted Geary, testing his mettle in the school of wind and water. Geary, born the son of a piano maker, spent many days on the water, playing hooky to sail the Sound in the first boat he ever built: a nine-foot, homemade canoe rigged with a gunnysack.

Geary went on to design and skipper such winning yachts as *Spirit*, *Pirate* and *Sir Tom*, turning from boy wonder to one of the most acclaimed yacht designers the Pacific has ever known.

Geary's genius, enthusiasm and vision still echo through the halls of the Seattle Yacht Club, where his portrait hangs, with his crew, onboard *Sir Tom*, an "R" class boat that dominated the racing circuit along the West Coast for three decades.

The Seattle Yacht Club maintains this legacy of vision, relentless fortitude, and passion for wide-open water. Founded in 1892 as a gathering place for yachting – including power and sailboat racing and recreational boating – the vigor of the yacht club has reached throughout Puget Sound, across international borders, onto Olympic podiums, and deep into the vibrant community of its home.

### A SCOPE ON HISTORY

The Great Fire of June 6, 1889 destroyed much of Seattle's commercial core and every waterfront wharf from Jackson to Union Streets. In the wake of rebuilding efforts, Washington become the country's 42<sup>nd</sup> state and Seattle, "bubbling with ambition and optimism" was said to be "the boomingest place on earth," cites historian John Caldbick.

In 1892, the Seattle Yacht Club was formally founded, naming Fred E. Sandler as its first Commodore. Charter memberships were offered for \$5 each; monthly dues were one dollar.

**TOP LEFT:** In the Roaring 20s, prosperity prevailed and luxury yachts were in vogue, including these moored at the Seattle Yacht Club in Portage Bay; PHOTO: MUSEUM OF HISTORY & INDUSTRY **TOP RIGHT:** *Sir Tom* crew (L-R): Andy Joy, Roy Corbett, Ted Geary, Swift Baker, c. 1926; PHOTO: SYC ARCHIVES **BOTTOM RIGHT:** During WW2, SYC volunteers served aboard their powerboats in the U.S. Coast Guard's *Flotilla 24*, to patrol the Northwest coast and inland waters. PHOTO: SYC ARCHIVES



"With the advantages we have in beautiful and convenient waters, we should have a yachting and rowing club here very soon that will excite the interest and admiration of the citizens of this city."

- Pierson Haviland, Seattle realtor  
*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 1892

In 1893, everything changed. The Panic of the New York Stock Exchange's free fall triggered the worst economic depression the United States had experienced to-date. With 20% unemployment in the Seattle area, interest in yachting and social clubs dwindled, along with the fortunes and hopes of many.

## GOLDEN DAYS

When the first load of gold from Alaska's Klondike arrived in Seattle aboard the steamship *Portland* in July 1897, hard times began to dissipate, and the region began to enjoy prosperity once again.

A second yacht club formed in Seattle in 1894. The Elliott Bay Yacht Club began with 50 sailors, 25 vessels, and a home at Brighton Boathouse at the foot of Battery Street. The Elliott Bay and Seattle Yacht Clubs engaged in a friendly rivalry until 1909, when the two clubs merged into one. The new club, touted by the *Seattle Times* "as one of the strongest on the Coast," took the name of the Seattle Yacht Club and the leadership and burgee of Elliott Bay's club.

In 1913, the Seattle Yacht Club launched the first formal celebration of boating season's Opening Day on Elliott Bay. In 1920, SYC's new Clubhouse on Portage Bay was dedicated in a ceremony that drew more than 1,000 people. That same day, the Montlake Cut saw its first Opening Day Parade and, with few exceptions, Opening Day has been celebrated there on the first Saturday of May every year since.

## A HOME ON THE BAY

**1880:** Puget Sound's Budlong's Boat House was the locale of the first gathering place of SYC yachtsmen.

**1882:** SYC moved to the Brighton Boathouse at the foot of Battery Street in downtown Seattle.

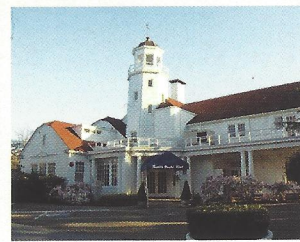
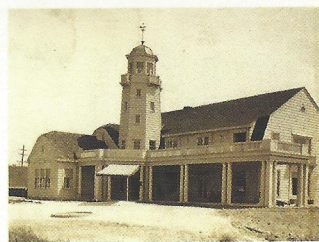
**1892:** Seattle Yacht Club's first official home was a float and a boathouse on a 200-foot strip of shoreline just southeast of Duwamish Head, leased from the West Seattle Land Improvement Company for a dollar per year.

**1909:** SYC merged with the Elliott Bay Yacht Club permanently flying the burgee with the Star & the Bar.

**1912:** SYC established its first outstation at Manzanita Bay on Bainbridge Island. Members currently enjoy 10 outstations stretching from Gig Harbor, to the San Juan Islands, to Cortes Bay in Canada.

**1917:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers forged the Ship Canal, making it possible to travel by boat from Lake Washington to Puget Sound.

**1920:** SYC's new and permanent Portage Bay clubhouse was dedicated on Opening Day, and proclaimed by *The Seattle Times* as "the finest of its kind on the Pacific Coast and one of the handsomest in the United States."



**ABOVE:** Portage Bay Clubhouse in 1920 and today. Designed by noted architect and yacht club member, John Graham Sr., SYC's clubhouse on Portage Bay has been a shining beacon through history since 1920.

## WORLD WAR II

On December 7, 1941, the United States entered World War II. Seattle Yacht Club members answered the call in a variety of ways, including 141 members who served in the armed forces. In 1942, the U.S. Coast Guard established *Flotilla 24*, made up largely of SYC volunteers and their vessels, to patrol ►





the Northwest coast and inland waters. Before the war's end, 60 yachts from the Seattle Yacht Club and 300 members had been on active duty in Puget Sound. The women of SYC formed a Red Cross unit charged with supporting the war and the men fighting it. On Opening Day in 1944, the Seattle and Queen City Yacht Clubs treated 200 wounded sailors and their nurses to a day on the water. When World War II ended in 1945, only 139 of the 141 serving SYC members returned home.

### THUNDERBOATS

In the 1950s, the Seattle Yacht Club jumped into a whole new type of racing with unlimited hydro-planes. SYC's thunderboat, *Slo-Mo-Shun IV*, set a new speed record of 160.3235 miles per hour on Lake Washington. A month later, the yacht club sent *Slo-Mo* to the Gold Cup race on the Detroit River, where it became the first boat west of the Mississippi River to win the national trophy – a prize it held onto tenaciously. For the next four years, the Gold Cup was run on Lake Washington, and it was won every year by either *Slo-Mo-Shun IV* or its sister craft, *Slo-Mo-Shun V*. The club eventually stepped back from the unlimiteds, but the thunderboat races that it first brought to Seattle more than half a century ago are still an annual Seafair tradition.

### THE NEXT GENERATION

In the 1950s, Seattle Yacht Club purchased a fleet of Penguins – small, single-sail boats ideal for teaching. First used to instruct



the children of club members, the Junior Sailing Program opened to the public more than 25 years ago, and is now one of the club's most popular offerings. The club also sponsors a Junior Race Team, a High School Sailing Team, and the "Opti" Green Fleet Program, which teaches racing skills to those aged eight to 13.

The future of the Seattle Yacht Club belongs to the next generation. Youth programs, sailing schools and a cadre of engaged junior members ensure a bright and vital legacy that young Ted Geary might have once imagined, and certainly helped build.



### THE STAR & THE BAR

When the Seattle Yacht Club merged with Elliott Bay Yacht Club in 1909, the burgee with the Star & the Bar flew over the consolidated organization, dubbed by *The Seattle Times* as one of the strongest on the West Coast.

**Editor's Note:** Thank you to historians Thomas G. Skahill, John Caldbick/HistoryLink.org, and the SYC Historical Committee.

**TOP LEFT:** *Slo-Mo-Shun* set the world water speed record on Lake Washington and won the coveted Gold Cup in Detroit in 1950. **PHOTO:** COLLECTION OF THE HYDROPLANE AND RACEBOAT MUSEUM **TOP RIGHT:** Megan discovers the magic of the wind in her "Opti." SYC's Optimist is an 8-foot dingy, easy to manage and perfect for teaching juniors how to sail. **PHOTO:** SUZANNE LUSNIA