The Houston Yacht Club

The Houston Yacht Club has a history its members can be proud of rightfully. Fifty years ago it began as the Houston Aquatics Club. The year was 1898 and the place the old Rice Oyster House, near where the present Main Street viaduct crosses Buffalo Bayou. Even then the club had racing sailboats to take pride in and names like "The Country Girl," "Irma" and others were famed in Galveston Bay sloop racing. But in those long-gone days the sloops had to be poled from Rice's Oyster House down the bayou to the Bay, as auxiliaries were rare.

The present name was first used in 1905 when "The Houston Aquatic Club" became "The Houston Yacht Club." However, in 1908, when motor craft began to capture the yachting imagination, the name was again changed, this time to "The Houston Launch Club," to fit the existing trend. A new house was established at Harrisburg and the first charter for the club was received from the State of Texas.

In 1919 the organization became a charter member of the Gulf Yachting Association, and this development marked a trend it has steadily followed through the years.

Yachtmen's tastes began to swing back to sail from motor craft which reached an impetus in 1925 sufficient to result in the founding of another "Houston Yacht Club" by members of the Launch Club who were interested in sailing and who therefore wanted a base directly on the Bay. A house at Seabrook was acquired and joint privileges exchanged with the Houston Launch Club. The result, which was inevitable, the present organization, occurred in 1926, when the Houston Launch Club of Harrisburg and the Houston Yacht Club of Seabrook combined under one charter, taking the present name. The Houston Yacht Club, housed in the present building and harbor at Shore Acres on upper Galveston Bay.

The first Lipton Cup races in Texas waters were held at the Houston Yacht Club in 1929. In 1941 they were again held here.

During the war the members turned their entire facilities over to the Coast Guard and it was used as a boot camp, where as many as 275 men were trained at one time.

The club is a member of the North American Yacht Racing Union as well as the Gulf Yachting Association. When it installed Corinthian class racers in 1946, it became a member of the Corinthian Owners Association.

The Golden Jubilee Year of 1948 has a special meaning to all Houston Yacht Club members, 50 years of existence, second only to the Southern Yacht Club on the Gulf of Mexico in point of continuous activity—a real golden anniversary.
he Houston Yacht Club is housed in its distinctive and spacious building, set in beautifully landscaped lawns that slope away to its own harbor and Galveston Bay. Stairs fan out impressively down the building's face from the front door, where one sees the new swimming pool, the docks, the club's own harbor and a vista that is a tonic for any tired city dweller. From here he can gaze at the open bay and the wooded shores beyond with the ships moving down the channels.

On the wide lawns, where barbecues are held in season, are the playgrounds for children, where a wading pool, sand pile, swings and slides are a delight to the young and an aid to parents in enjoying themselves in the boats or the building, as their taste of the moment dictates.

The type of person who loves sailing, or even just being near boats and the sea, is the type to discriminate. For a half of a century people of taste and discrimination have made a labor of love of the Houston Yacht Club. The result, as might be expected, is a definite ornament to its community, one always mentioned to a newcomer in the same breath with those others that actually form an integral part of the more important social structure.

Whether he handles the tiller of a sailing skiff, a Corinthian class racer or gives orders to a skipper on a teak-inlaid schooner, the man who loves to sail is a bit of an aristocrat at heart. Whether he owns a 16-foot inboard or a cruiser, he has the same loves and interests and likes to share them. And while he tends to be perhaps informal, he knows and appreciates the better things of life. The Houston Yacht Club is the haven of such and has been for 50 years. No other social organization attracts this worthwhile sort of person so unerringly because no other has had the unselfish interest of numbers of that same sort of person lavished so upon it. That is why there is an atmosphere of ease and friendliness and interest about the Houston Yacht Club that cannot be duplicated or imitated. When you enter the grounds and buildings, you know you are where people enjoy themselves.
When the family is away for the summer and the husband is tired of his empty house, there is no better place for a member to spend his time than the Houston Yacht Club. He has only to register in, as illustrated at the bottom of the opposite page, to enjoy all that a resort hotel could give, plus all that no hotel of any sort could ever offer.

The dining room expresses subtly the atmosphere most ideal in which to dine while looking out at coastline and bay. Appointments and fittings are what they should be: pleasant, comfortable and attractive, suggesting the companionship known to those who love boats and the water. It is what it was designed to be: a place to enjoy good company and good food together. The room is dominated at one end by just the sort of fireplace a yacht club should have. On the side facing the bay it is colonnaded, opening on to a wide veranda. The normal table arrangement is for 55. Banquets or large parties involving 300 people, however, can be accommodated. The dining room, opening through a roomy hall on to the large lounge, is used with the other two mentioned when dances are held here.

The club takes pride in the delicious food it serves. A varied menu, one a member would expect to find at a club on the shore, makes its bid for attention along with all the other attractions to be found. The taste of such delicious dishes as Shrimp Cocktail Arnaud, Broiled Jumbo Shrimp l'Assurance, individual Flounder a la Normande or Red Fish Steak Morel are a fitting reward to an afternoon on the water or a drive in the evening from home to the club.
A refreshment and recreation room, complete with everything one could wish for, awaits the member who wants a momentary rest from the more strenuous outdoor life. Its decor and fittings are conducive to your pleasure and the enjoyment of the friends you bring. Here is a perfect setting in which to spend an afternoon or an evening.

The new swimming pool is a recently completed addition to the many opportunities for enjoyment offered by the club to its members. It is sixty feet long, thirty feet wide and ranges in depth from three to nine feet. A competent swimming instructor can be had for members who want swimming lessons.

Those who prefer the more convivial pleasures, indicated in the foreground, need only to let their desires be known.
Snug harbor! When the town pallis and you want to get away but the wind is too high and the water too rough for sailing, the fireplace at the end of the dining room is a charming spot to meet your friends and converse. The comfortable atmosphere is suitable to the mind that enjoys a pleasant place away from town where pleasant people meet.

The motifs in decoration noted in the illustration at the left are carried, with tasteful variations, throughout the lower floor.

Through the graceful curves of the arches can be seen evidences of the thought given to the pleasure of club members, both young and old. In the foreground, left, immediately in front of those people about the bench, can be seen the children's wading pool. In center one can see the children's playground.
The building contains 14 bedrooms for guests. In addition, there is a women’s dormitory that can accommodate 35. The men’s dormitory at the opposite side of the large building accommodates 125. This dormitory has adequate facilities of all types, such as showers, lockers, etc.

The harbor is the first consideration for the present, and during the winter of 1947-1948 will be rehabilitated to accommodate cruisers and sailors of deep draft.

The Houston Yacht Club is the place for the person who always wanted to be an amateur sailor. Under the club regulations, to take out a club boat, one has to be a qualified skipper. At present, the club has 110 qualified skippers who have passed the examination necessary. Naturally, any owner sails his own boat when and where he pleases but for the member who wants to do some sailing and does not desire to own his boat, there are competent sailing instructors. The club owns seven Corinthian class racers that are available to members. The only payments for learning to sail at the Houston Yacht Club is the boat rent.

Club activities include a series of races with the Corinthian Club, an annual come-and-go event. Another is the come-and-go regatta with the Fort Worth Club, also annual. Then there is the Lipton Cup Race, with 11 clubs from St. Petersburg to Houston competing. Besides this, the Houston Yacht Club has had an entry in the St. Petersburg-Havana Race from time to time. A special regatta is planned either for the season opener or Labor Day. It will be a two-day affair including obstacle races, races for motor boats, auxiliaries, sailors; in fact, any type of boat is to have a race if entered. The idea of this event is to bring the boating public together. The motor boat events will not be speed contests but will be computed, elapsed time over a course of known distances.
Slips, dock and harbor —
objects of
increasing attention
in the future.

Days are set aside
for the women
members.
In addition, every Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning and afternoon, when there is not a scheduled race, there are club races. These are divided into races between A and B skippers, besides which there are open races. Skipperettes and Juniors also have events especially for themselves.

Requirements For Membership
HOUSTON YACHT CLUB

Senior Resident Membership:
Any man or woman of good moral character living in Harris or Galveston counties.

Senior Non-Resident Membership:
Any man or woman of good moral character living outside Harris or Galveston counties.

Junior Membership:
Any unmarried boy or girl of good moral character, between the ages of 15 and 23, inclusive, sponsored by a Senior member.

Student Membership:
Any unmarried boy or girl of good moral character, between the ages of 16 and 22, inclusive, who is attending college or declares an intention of attending college within the next six months, sponsored by a Senior member. This membership is for the months of June, July, August and September only and must be applied for annually.