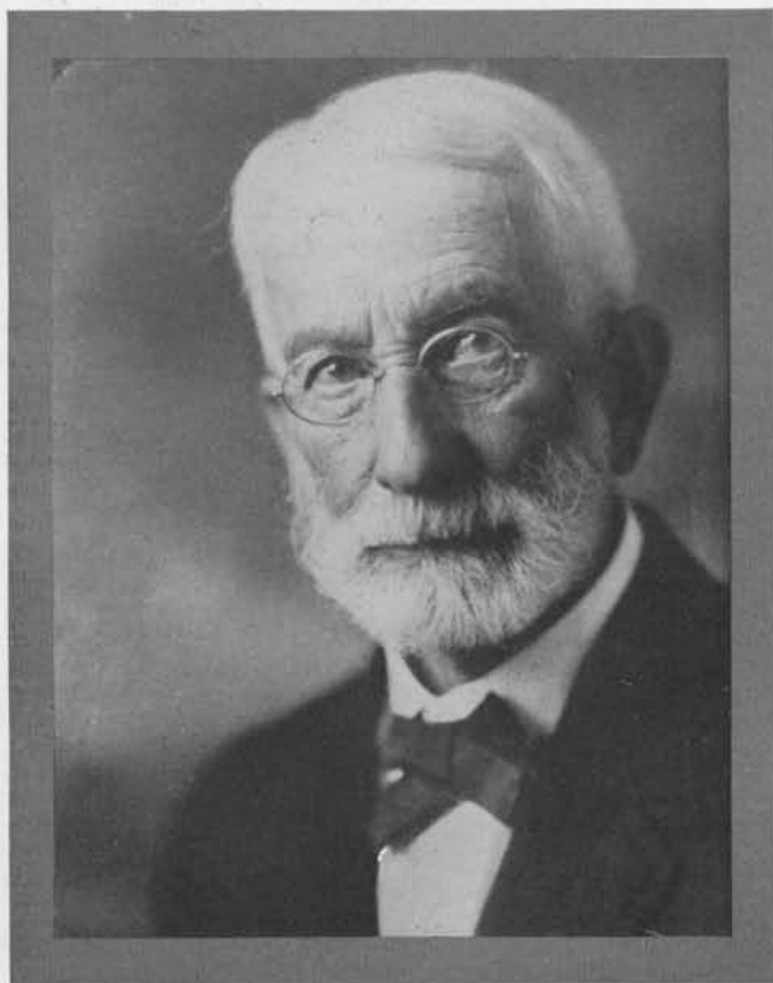


## *In the World of Yachting*



RALPH M. MUNROE

**T**HERE are but few yachtsmen living today who have done as much for the sport or who have as deep a love of boats and the water as Ralph M. Munroe, one of the founders and for many years the Commodore of the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club. As an amateur interested in yacht design he has turned out many shoal draft craft that have helped materially in the development of fast, seaworthy centerboard boats.

Beginning life as a mechanical engineer in New York, all of his spare time was devoted to the water. In 1877 he visited Florida and explored the southeast coast, especially Biscayne Bay, very thoroughly, and in 1882 he abandoned New York and made his home in this remote and then almost unknown region.

There is no place here to recount Mr. Munroe's labors in the development of the east coast; they were unceasing and covered many lines — business, fisheries, surveys and natural history, and, as a matter of course, navigation. The love of vessels and the knowledge of them acquired in youth on New York Bay were concentrated on a problem of the first importance, the development of a seagoing craft of limited draft. There were shoal draft yachts in plenty about New York in those days, but the less said of their seagoing qualities, the better, as speed was the sole end in view. On one of his frequent visits in summer to his old home Mr. Munroe designed the "Presto," a lively little craft 35 feet on the water. She was built, and built well, by A. C. Brown of Tottenville. She proved a complete success, and several similar yachts were built for Kirk Munroe and others on Biscayne Bay. In 1891 Mr. Munroe designed for his own use the larger "Micco," 40-8 o.a.; 40-6 l.w.l.; 13-0 breadth; and 3 ft. 2 ins. draft. The rig of these yachts showed a much larger and more effective mizzen than was then known on the few yachts about New York with a ketch rig. The 31-year old "Micco" is not only in commission this year but she was one of the fleet that sailed to Bermuda and back last year; it is worthy of remark that in the last years of his life Mr. Bayard, once a confirmed "cutter-crank," owned and sailed the shoal draft "Micco" with much satisfaction.

Seaworthiness and safety as essential factors in a yacht first came to the fore in the heated and often acrimonious discussions of the early 80's; the answer to the problem was sought chiefly in the heavy displacement, deep draft and low lead of the cutter, but Ralph M. Munroe found a thoroughly satisfactory solution in a yacht of moderate displacement and limited draft.



**H**ISTORY repeated itself this year in the Chicago-Mackinac race, the weather being decidedly foul, and the race being won by *Virginia*, one of the smaller boats. And they struck it rough in the Bayview-Mackinac race, too. From all accounts, both were terrific "dragouts," with boat after boat dropping out in a sinking condition, or with blown out sails or damaged rigging. Such is life in a Mackinac Race!

The Larchmont-Gloucester race was one of the closest, hardest-fought, and the toughest on navigators and crew that I have ever been in. From start to finish boats were bunched together in different groups, producing the keenest kind of competition. The shifting breezes kept skippers and crews constantly on the alert, day and night, to take advantage of every slant. The fog on the first night in the Sound made navigation difficult and trying, the heavy mist, strong breeze and dangerous shoals in Vineyard and Nantucket Sounds made mean going, while the "beach combing" down the back of old Cape Cod kept all hands on the jump, all the boats tacking in toward the beach until almost into the breakers in order to get the favorable slant of wind close in shore. There was very little rest, mental or physical, from start to finish, and the crews were thoroughly fagged out when they finally drifted across the finish line off Gloucester. It was a splendid, well-sailed race, with a goodly proportion of windward work to silence the croakers who predicted that it would be nothing but a slide down the wind with the prevailing southerly.

Although John Alden didn't score with *Malabar VI*, he wore as wide a grin as any winner ever did when the final results were tabulated. For the handsome schooner *Sachem* led the fleet into Gloucester, the *Bonita IV* copped the Brooklyn Challenge Cup and the sloop prize, *Mystic* won in the schooner class, and *Nahma* took the prize in the yawl class — all Alden-designed boats. And a few days after this, out goes *Malabar VI* and cleans up in the Corinthian Y. C. 90-mile ocean race! Pretty much All-Alden Regattas, what?

Charlie Mower is to be congratulated on turning out a really worthy shoal draft schooner in *Windjammer*. With a hull draft of only 4 feet, she proved her seaworthiness and comfort in her winter cruise around Cuba, while her speed was well demonstrated in the Larchmont-Gloucester race, when she was always threatening the leaders until past Nauset, when the light head winds and lump of a sea slowed her up enough to let several boats get by her. She has full headroom, a big, roomy interior,

the speed and seaworthiness of a deep-draft craft, and looks every inch a ship. We ought to see more of her type in the near future.

After losing two races in *Fifi* on account of spreader trouble, Harry Maxwell was heard to murmur plaintively in Henry Nevins' port microphone:

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust,  
Please give me some spreaders which will not bust.

That dope on Sunex and Seoxyl seemed to hit the nail on the thumb, to judge by the number of inquiries I have had about them. So here's another hint for the cruising man: Get a supply of Gold Seal butter, in sealed tins of various sizes. It's fine stuff, keeps indefinitely, so you can "stock up" heavily, with the comforting knowledge that you'll always have clean, fresh butter on hand, even though the ice gives out. And you won't have to depend on picking up more or less inferior stuff at high prices in out-of-the-way places, either.

A youthful skipper in the Star class and his crew of one were scanning the records on the bulletin board at Larchmont towards the latter part of Race Week, when the skipper, suddenly pointing to one of the boats half way down the list, exclaimed: "That's the fellow we hit three times yesterday — and the first time he was wrong!" It's a foul life amongst the Stars.

Last month I made the statement that the Class E, Lake-type sloops on Barnegat Bay had been soundly beaten by the local catboats and sneakboxes. I made this statement on the authority of a veteran Barnegat sailor. Now comes Mr. Charles E. Lucke, Jr., another Barnegat tar, and takes me severely to task. Mr. Lucke claims I'm all wrong — that the new "scows" usually beat the cats about six minutes on a 10-mile course, trim the large sneakboxes some ten or twelve minutes, and that the only time they get licked is in very light air, for which conditions they are under-canvassed. As Mr. Lucke is close to the racing situation in Jersey waters, it looks as though my first informant had given me a bum steer. The Class E sloops are apparently not only winners, but have been quite successful in injecting new pep into the racing. Perhaps when the season is over the Skipper will give us some tabulated results of the summer's racing, so that everyone may make his own comparisons.