



“The Story of the Six Stars”

Sadly bereft of humor, imagination, inspiration, style, wit and the other excellent qualities encouraged by the essay contest, I am reduced to this colorless recitation of facts about the six stars on the burgee. I couldn't say what they “should” stand for, but, have learned from conversations over a good many years with the people who were present at the founding of the club what the stars actually do mean. Perhaps by now we are far enough removed from the event that most of the membership may not know. This “essay” is meant only to satisfy the curiosity of anyone who asks.

The actual founding of the club took place at a well-attended meeting either in the late spring or early summer of 1933 at the then new boat building shed of the Lee Shipbuilding Company, on the site now occupied by the Harwich Port Boat Works. Very unfortunately, the club's records of this and all subsequent meetings of both the general membership and the Board of Governors for the next 20-25 years have been lost. Memories of those who were there in 1933, quite naturally, have faded a bit and, sometimes, conflict. We do have, however, the records of the Race Committee for the 1930s, thanks to Ralph H. Snow, his son, R.B. Snow and R.B.'s daughter, Nancy Snow Lowery.

The information available to me is that the name “Stonehorse Club” (named after the lightship, not the shoal!) was adopted at that meeting and that the burgee design was approved either then or at the first annual meeting on Labor Day, also at the boat shed. Because the 1933 race circulars show a fouled anchor design at the letterhead, the burgee may not have been created until during that summer. In any case our burgee was designed by Priscilla Lee, the third-born of six children of Mary Davis and Humphrey A. Lee. Priscilla was a 20-year-old art student at the time. Her family and her close relatives, the Davises, undoubtedly were the most influential in establishing the club. The burgee design with its six stars was intended partly to honor the six individuals deemed to have been the prime movers in the founding of Stone Horse. These men were:

Bernard Russell Andrews (known as “B.R.” to his many friends here), age 45 in 1933, a 1908 graduate in mechanical engineering of Worcester Polytechnic Institute. He was the founder and President of his own company, Andrews and Goodrich, then of Cambridge, which was a manufacturer of heating and ventilating systems. During his time in Harwich, he built his own good-sized cruising catboat, and later on owned in succession two fine schooners. He was an enthusiastic advocate of the establishment of Stone Horse, and spent a great deal of time of the Race Committee and in organizing and running racing events.

Edward Aaron (“Ted”) Davis was age 43 in 1933 and a lifelong summer resident of Harwich Port. After graduation from Dartmouth in 1913, he worked in the advertising business in New York before becoming a writer and editor of the Saturday Evening Post. By the time Stone Horse was founded, Ted Davis had an intimate knowledge of Cape Cod waters and had done a great deal of cruising in his own boats along the entire East Coast of the United States.

William Davis Lee, age 23, a nephew of Ted Davis and brother of Priscilla Lee. He also had spent the summers of his still young life in Harwich Port, and had both married and established the Lee Shipbuilding Company less than a year before the founding of Stone Horse. Bill Lee had accumulated nearly a decade of intense practical experience in building, rebuilding, buying, selling and very actively sailing both sail and power boats up to 50 feet or so in size. He attended Tabor Academy and Ridley College, a Canadian college preparatory school, after which he elected to live on Cape Cod and become a professional boat builder.

Neil Cook McMath, age 41 in 1933. A 1914 civil engineering graduate of Cornell, he and his wife, the former Margaret Kales of Detroit and Harwich Port, had come here in 1931 to attend the wedding of her sister, Alice. He was an experienced yachtsman who previously had met the Lees and the Davises. Unable to find work in Detroit during the depths of the great depression, Neil McMath decided to stay on in Harwich Port and help Bill Lee build boats.



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Palmer Cosslett Putnam, age 33. He was a descendant of the family who had established the G.P. Putnam, and Sons publishing house. Palmer Putnam’s biography shows that after graduation from MIT with a bachelors and masters degree in science and a year of further study at Yale, he served from 1930-1932 as Chairman and President of G. P. Putnam and Sons, after which he spent the balance of the decade doing research on wind turbines. In Harwich, he was very much interested in racing sailing boats, and assisted strongly in the founding of our Club. He is remembered here as brilliant, highly competitive and somewhat of an eccentric man who is given credit by his teenage crews with teaching them a great deal about sailing.

George Ichabod Rockwood, age 65. He was another graduate, in 1888, of Worcester Polytechnic Institute in mechanical engineering. He was an inventor and was the founder and recently retired President of the Rockwood Sprinkler Company, manufacturers in Worcester of fire sprinkler systems for commercial and industrial buildings. I think he saw sailboats primarily as difficult, and therefore, interesting problems in aero and hydro-dynamics and mechanics; but he strongly supported the idea of a yacht club here to teach young people how to handle their boats properly. This was the idea uppermost in mind of all the founders

This is the actual “Story of the Six Stars.” Upon its official organization in March, 1934 under the laws of Massachusetts, the name of the club was altered to “Stone Horse Yacht Club of Harwich”, formed in order “to help people who go upon the water by encouraging the exercise of courtesy, judgment and skill in the handling of craft and by having available information and aids which will tend to increase the enjoyment and safety of yachting and, in general, to encourage yachting.”

Now, an opinion, held by a number of people who were active here at that time, as well as by me:

There should have been seven stars instead of six on the burgee, one of them to recognize Waldo Hayward Brown (called Brownie by his contemporaries), age 37 in 1933, as a founder. Although he surely did as much as anyone else to ensure the establishment of Stone Horse, there was, apparently, a bit of conflict between his ideas and the sort of club it should be and those of some of the other founders. Whether as a result of this or for some other reason he was not included among the stars I do not know, but he really should have been.

Waldo Brown received extensive training in naval architecture and marine engineering at MIT, after which he became one of the earliest U.S. naval aviators. By the 1930s, he was practicing yacht designing with some of the leading firms in Boston; and he raced actively in some of the major classes in Marblehead and Marion. Living here in Harwich Port, he felt, as did other founders, that too many people didn’t know what they were doing were endangering themselves by going out on the Sound in small boats. He strongly advocated a new yacht club to teach sailing and seamanship.

He became the club’s first Race Committee Chairman, at a time when the fleet consisted of a good many widely disparate typed of boats which had to be handicapped for racing. Waldo Brown’s background made him ideal for this job. In addition, I think he put together the race circulars; he provide the club’s first R. C. boat; and he made his dock and boat house on the western side of Wychmere (Randy Greene’s old property) available for club gatherings and for starting and finishing a good many races. But for his consistent efforts, racing here might not have had nearly as smooth and active start as it did.

George Rockwood
2000