



The American
SAILBOAT

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MBI



New York YC members Philip H. and George A. Adey originally owned the New York 30 *Amoria*, the former *Adelaide* II. The *Amoria* was built at the Herreshoff yard. Paul Darley

did that leave big boats? There were, naturally, fewer of them, but the idea of designing boats to a single design, or class, was taking hold even in the bigger boats. The New York Yacht Club commissioned the design of a sloop with a 70-foot waterline in 1900, but even in those pre-income tax years, only four of them were built, all by the Herreshoff yard. Reducing the waterline length to 50 feet increased the fleet to nine, and there were even more of the 40-foot class built.

A boat called *Minerva* dominated the 40-footers, which were first built in the last years of the nineteenth century. In an effort to beat *Minerva*, bigger boats were built, but again, cost was an issue. The big boats cost their owners an estimated \$3,000 (equal to \$61,000 in 2000) per crewmember per season, and so the trend was to smaller boats, even for the wealthy. This had the side effect of making boats available to those of lesser means, and so classes with a greater number of boats were possible.

In 1916, the Herreshoff yard launched the first of the 40s, built for both cruising and racing. Critics stated that Herreshoff had taken the design from the Cup boat *Resolute*, and they criticized it for “dumpiness,” a result of the headroom and the decidedly un-Herreshoff high freeboard. The high rig, coupled with high deadrise that ran for the length of the boat, caused the boat to make what a writer in *Rudder* described as a “slide off to leeward.”

The 40s were beamy; they carried the same beam as the 50, although they were 10 feet less on the waterline.

As an indication of the shift from professional crews to owner-sailed boats, the New York YC rules for the 40-foot class limited the number of professional crew to four, allowing two more to be put on temporarily for a race. The owner was required to helm the boat “except on runs and reaches,” which left a loophole big enough . . . well, big enough to sail a boat through.

Also forbidden was purchasing more than one set of sails per season, except for replacing sails that “in the opinion of the Committee, may be damaged through accident beyond serviceable repair.”

The New York 30, smaller yet, was part of the trend to smaller, owner-driven boats. The ideal of the “Corinthian,” the amateur who sailed strictly for the love of the sport, was gaining strength and popularity, given that it made it more difficult for money to beat talent.

The 30s, dating to 1905, were 43 feet overall (the numbers of this series referred to the waterline length), while the later 50s, dating to 1913, were 72 feet overall.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, a 30-foot boat was the smallest boat a member of the New York YC

could own and still be eligible to vote on club business. There has been speculation that this was the impetus for Nat Herreshoff’s design of the 30, which was criticized, with some accuracy, as being wet and narrow, with a tiller that seemed to always be in the way in the tiny cockpit. It was popular nonetheless, probably to some extent because of the lower costs associated with a smaller boat.

— THE SMALL BOAT TREND —

The trend—despite the 50s being designed later than the 30—was to smaller, and therefore less expensive, boats. A 50 cost \$17,000 in 1913 dollars (\$294,000 today), whereas the 30 was “only” \$4,000 (\$69,000). Nonetheless, the trend was clear. A New York 50 carried a professional crew of only four. Although one of these four was a steward, with, presumably, duties on



(previous page) *Raosa II*, the last of the New York 40s, was built as a yawl-rigged version of the Herreshoff design in 1926, using the original molds. Paul Darling

Nat Herreshoff was justly proud of the New York 50s design, stating they were built of “about the best material and workmanship that ever went into yachts of their size.” Despite this, only nine were built, and after World War I many of them were riggered as yawls or schooners, reducing the size of individual sails and making them easier to handle. This photograph shows two of the fleet, with their gaff topsails set at the start of a prewar race. Rosenfeld collection, Mystic, Connecticut