HISTORIC AMERICAN YACHTS
EARLY BOSTON VESSELS. THE NORTHERN LIGHT AND COQUETTE

Winfield M. Thompson

(Author's note: This text is a historical account of early Boston yachting. It discusses the Northern Light, a yacht owned by Major William F. Winchester, and other notable vessels of the period. The Northern Light was a keel schooner that was well known in the early days of American yachting. The account highlights the social and economic context of the time, including the rise of yachting as a sport and the development of the Dreamers, a social club in Boston.)

The Northern Light was owned by Colonel William F. Winchester, a Boston merchant of large means, engaged in the wholesale provision and packing business. The firm of Winchester was established by Colonel Winchester's father, Edmund, and his brother, Amasa, who as young men went to Boston from the farm in Newton on which they were born, and began business with small capital and large ambitions. The firm in the war of 1812 supplied provisions to both the army and the navy. On admission as a partner of William P. Winchester the firm name became E. A. and W. Winchester, and under this name the business was conducted by William P. and his brother Stephen after the elders had passed out. The Winchester firm occupied in its day a position much the same as that of a great Chicago packing house of to-day, and it was a saying of its time that the price of a pig could not be fixed in Cincinnati without Colonel Winchester's consent.

The firm was one of a number of late 18th-century American cities, among men and women whose fathers or grandfathers made their money in the commonplace avenues of trade, were less apparent in the earlier days of our democratic republic than now; and though he did not enjoy the social standing of merchants engaged in the China or Indian trade, Colonel Winchester stood high in Boston, and counted his friends by the hundred, among all walks in life. He was possessed of a personal charm that drew people to him, and by his wide sympathies and affable manners he maintained an unusual degree of popularity. He introduced into American yachting an element it had lacked up to this time, namely, free-handed hospitality. He was not satisfied always to take with him on his yacht a small company of friends—though he loved well the society of his intimates—but invited persons by the score, giving hundreds each season an opportunity to enjoy the rare pleasures of yachting.

Unlike some of the yachtmen of later days who have entertained lavishly afloat, Colonel Winchester possessed a practical knowledge of yachting, obtained in his early youth in and near Boston harbor. His first boat of any importance was the Mermaid, 12 tons, which enjoyed the distinction of being the first private decked yacht seen at Nahant, then a popular place of resort on the North shore of Massachusetts Bay, not yet known, in the early days. It was a fine social distinction that have developed in Boston, and other American cities of late years, among men and women whose fathers or grandfather's money in the commonplace avenues of trade, were less apparent in the earlier days of our democratic republic than now; and though he did not enjoy the social standing of merchants engaged in the China or Indian trade, Colonel Winchester stood high in Boston, and counted his friends by the hundred, among all walks in life. He was possessed of a personal charm that drew people to him, and by his wide sympathies and affable manners he maintained an unusual degree of popularity. He introduced into American yachting an element it had lacked up to this time, namely, free-handed hospitality. He was not satisfied always to take with him on his yacht a small company of friends—though he loved well the society of his intimates—but invited persons by the score, giving hundreds each season an opportunity to enjoy the rare pleasure of yachting.

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*The earliest regatta sailed in Massachusetts waters took place off Nahant, in 1845. Mr. Parke Stevens, whose family became well known in New York society, was a hotelkeeper at Nahant in the forties. Before the New York Yacht Club was formed, Commodore Stevens made cruises to Nahant. The place has long since been overshadowed in yachting by Marblehead.*
From his ownership of the Mermaid Colonel Winchester developed the ideas that led him to build the Northern Light. He wanted a fast, able and handsome schooner. Such a vessel as he desired was not to be found in Boston, and must be built.

There was then in Boston a young Danish shipwright named Louis Winde (pronounced as if to rhyme with Wind). When the manuscript was completed it was my purpose to show it to Mr. Winchester, and making suggestions that resulted in the admission of data to the manuscript of this paper on the Northern Light. When the manuscript was completed it was my purpose to show it to Mr. Winchester in accordance with an understanding reached at what proved to be a final interview, for before the work was finished Mr. Winchester died suddenly, at his home on Beacon Street, Boston. He had been an invalid for a number of years. He was 60 years old.

Louis Winde was both designer and builder, for he had a yard in Boston in the forties. His schooners would stand to-day as fine specimens of the builder's art. Though Winde's adopted country has been tardy in recognizing his genius his native land has not, for in the naval museum at Copenhagen are eight of his models, finely wrought examples of the designer's art, of which the museum officials are proud. They represent half-block models of boats for war vessels, and while they have no bearing on yachting, they show the versatility as well as the skill of this pioneer designer of yachts in Massachusetts.

The Northern Light was built in 1839, in the yard of Whitmore & Holbrook, a well-known Boston firm of that day. In a scrapbook kept by Colonel Winchester, I find a cutting giving the following description of the yacht:

"She is constructed of oak and copper-fastened, and coppered up to the bends, which are painted black; and around the edges of which is a red moulding. She measures 70 tons, and draws 5 feet of water forward, and 9½ feet aft.

"Her decks and standing room are the same as those of our pilot-boats—the former painted cream color and the sides and seats of the latter and the companionway green. She has a large and beautiful cabin, which is fitted up in splendid style. It contains four berths and two state-rooms, with a berth in each appropriate for ladies. The forecastle contains four berths and cooking apparatus. "

"She is pilot-boat rigged, and has the most beautiful hull and sails in the world. The stricken rigging consists of 418 spars and 8523 feet of lines. The crew consists of 22 men.

"The Northern Light went into commission early in 1846, a set of extra long spars, the mainmast being 76 feet, or 13 feet 6 inches more than the vessel's length on deck, and the foremost 74 feet. The yacht is represented as carrying these spars in the picture of her presented herewith, which was painted by C. H. Lane, of Boston, for Mr. Stephen W. Dana, a cousin of Colonel Winchester. The yacht is represented as carrying these spars in the picture of her presented herewith, which was painted by C. H. Lane, of Boston, for Mr. Stephen W. Dana, a cousin of Colonel Winchester."

The Northern Light's dimensions are given as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurement</th>
<th>Value 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of keel</td>
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<td>Depth</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Main gaff</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tonnage</td>
<td>96</td>
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For racing in light weather the yacht was given, in 1846, a set of extra long spars, the mainmast being 76 feet, or 13 feet 6 inches more than the vessel's length on deck, and the foremost 74 feet. The yacht is represented as carrying these spars in the picture of her presented herewith, which was painted by C. H. Lane, of Boston, for Mr. Stephen W. Dana, a cousin of Colonel Winchester. The yacht is represented as carrying these spars in the picture of her presented herewith, which was painted by C. H. Lane, of Boston, for Mr. Stephen W. Dana, a cousin of Colonel Winchester. After sketches by the English marine painter Salmon, who was noted for his accuracy in detail.

The Northern Light went into commission early in
The summer of 1839. Her original entry on the records of the Boston custom house bears date of July 22, 1839.

The vessel's name was on every waterman's tongue when she made her first trip down Boston harbor, and throughout her career, I may add, the interest of waterside people in her never abated. She was recognized queen of the Boston fleet, even after larger and more powerful vessels appeared like the Coquette. She was always kept up in the best possible style, and Colonel Winchester devised many little adornments to make her striking. He rarely sailed without a party of gentlemen sailors on board, and these he provided with a costume consisting of red flannel shirt, white trousers and straw hat, with a ribbon around the crown made of cream-colored Chinese silk, bearing in gilt the words "Northern Light," and streaming behind in liberal ends, after the custom of the time in the decoration of sailors' hats. I have passed through my fingers one of these hatbands, a yard long, yellowed with age, and with the gilt sadly marred by time's corroding touch, and have been transported by it backward through the years, until I stood with a merry crew on the deck of the Northern Light—the buff and green deck—and helped work the yacht down Boston harbor, among tall-sparred Indiamen, lumbering coasters, and sharp-sterned pinkies, descendants of the caravels, that came by scores from up and down the coast for a port and mart at Boston.

The yachting costume worn on the Northern Light was the first devised in America. Its purpose was to keep the shore clothes of the Colonel's guests spotless, and its design was to please the eye of the yacht's owner, who had a fondness for things bright and gay. A change of clothing was made by those who sailed on the Northern Light at Colonel Winchester's boathouse, on Ripley's wharf (now no more), opposite the navy yard. Here lockers were provided in which guests could hang their blue broadcloth coats, adorned with large gold-plated buttons, their flowered waistcoats, their tall, chimney-pot beavers of striking size, and their mouse-colored trousers, if they followed the fashions and came down thus strikingly attired.

Here and there a man is found to-day who remembers seeing the amateur crews of the Northern Light in their gay costumes. One such is Captain Arthur H Clark, Lloyd's representative in New York.

"I must have been very young," says Captain Clark, "but I can remember seeing her coming into Nahant in a good, stiff breeze, and what appears to have made a lasting impression on my youthful mind was her crew being dressed in red shirts and white trousers. I recollect that her bows were scraped bright and varnished, with black rails and a crimson stripe. Altogether she appeared the finest yacht I had ever seen."

The period in which the Northern Light flourished was distinguished by flowery apostrophes in the public prints to the beauties of yachting, or of this or that yacht. A Boston editor's style, in describing a new yacht, is characteristic. "This beautiful swiftsure has already spread her canvas to the breeze," he wrote, "and opened the snowy furrow of the sea, leaving a wake behind as straight as an arrow and gorgeous with the hues of the rainbow. All that her builder aimed at and her owner wished has been accomplished—she is as seaworthy as a bird, and as easy as a sailor's hammock."

To the sorrow of the historian, these eustatic effusions were not distinguished by precise information about the yachts mentioned, or their movements.

Yachting reporters were not maintained by the news-
papers in these days, and nearly all the news of yachting
events then, and for many years thereafter, was communi-
cated to the press by the owners of yachts, or persons who
sailed with them. This resulted often, when trials of
speed were described, in conflicting opinions and sta-
tements as to the relative merits of the vessels mentioned.
Inasmuch as races were not sailed over fixed courses, or
under any rules except the common rules of the road at
sea, there was ample leeway for individual judgment to
be warped by the warmth of enthusiasm.

I can find no reference to any races sailed by the Northern
Light with other yachts in the first four years of her
career, though many were the trials she had with packet
sloops and schooners, pilot boats and other commercial
craft, she fell in with on her cruises in Massachusetts Bay.
Invariably she gave these vessels a good view of her stern.

The effect of these trials of speed between the fast
yachts of the day and commercial types was to reverse
earlier conditions, and lead builders to imitate the fastest
yachts when building schooners for trade or traffic. An
anecdote told by Captain Forbes in his pamphlet "A Dis-
cursive Sketch of Yachting," illustrates to what awkward
situations this spirit of emulation sometimes led.

In 1841 Captain Forbes, who was in Boston after an
absence of a few years in China, became interested in a
schooner of about 100 tons, called the Ariel. She was
built by Sprague & James, at Medford, from designs by
Mr. Joseph Lee, of Boston, to beat a pilot-boat schooner
Captain Forbes had bought in New York, called the
Anglona, built by Brown & Bell. The Anglona was in-
tended for a despatch boat at Canton, in the service of
Russell & Co. Mr. Lee, who had designed for Mr.
Forbes a fast brig called the Rose, felt a little put out that
he had not received an order for the schooner for China.
Captain Forbes agreed to take a half interest in any
schooner Mr. Lee could build to beat the Anglona.
The Ariel was the result. In the summer of 1841 Captain
Forbes was asked to inspect the Ariel at Lewis wharf,
Boston.

"I went, and beheld a long, low topsail schooner, with
very long, hard-pine masts," wrote Captain Forbes in his
notes, "the foremost stepped very far forward. The hold
was so shallow an ordinary man could stand on the
dekelson and look over the coamings of the main hatch.
I took a good look at her fore and aft and expressed doubt
about her ability to carry her spars. It was agreed she
should be given a trial down the bay against the revenue
cutter Hamilton. She proved crank, and the cutter beat
her easily. It was next agreed to give her more ballast
and try her in a good breeze. In company with the yacht
Breeze she went out for a second trial in a good westerly,
with 13 persons on board. Pilot William C. Fowler was
at the wheel. She dragged around the outer bay for some
hours under short sail, and the pilot found it something
of a problem to keep her on her feet in the swells."

Trouble was brewing, and while beating home Captain
Forbes took the precaution to order his brother, John M.
Forbes father of the late J. Malcolm Forbes, former
owner of Volunteer—to shift the painter of the tender
towing astern to the weather quarter on each tack. Cap-
tain Forbes tended the foresheet, holding a turn with it,
while Captain Fowler did his best to keep the schooner
going. Off Long Island, however, she lay down and re-
fused to go further. The foresheet was let go, and all
hands, including a patriarch of 80, who was among the
visitors aboard, made shift to get to weather. The vessel
settled fast, and it was soon found that the tender's painter
was not on the weather quarter, but submerged to leeward.
Captain Forbes, by lying out on the main boom,
got hold of the painter, and began cutting it.

Mr. J. M. Forbes, in his memoirs (Letters and Per-
sonal Recollections), describes the scene thus:

"The first thing we knew of her going down] was
seeing the sails in the water, and the sea pouring down the
open companion way, filling her. We scrambled up on
the bilge, and then Fowler called to me to save the old gentle-
man, who was being swept down into the cabin with the
rush. We got hold of his collar and pulled him up among
us, and found it was old Captain Richard Cleveland
(per-
haps 80 years old), cousin of President Cleveland.
He was a plucky old man and took it very coolly.

Mr. Forbes continues: "R. B. F. got into the boat
and began cutting the hard painter with a little penknife,
sawing away at it as our vessel sank. We watched him
with eager eyes, for our lives depended on its not break-
ing and its continuing to cut fast enough. I had, as usual,
a good jackknife, which I opened and held ready in my
mouth while steadying myself to run or swim out to him
if his knife gave out; but he had the line cut just as the
water began to rise over our shoes where we stood on
the Ariel's side, still nearly dry. He pulled the boat in
rapidly by the end of the painter and we all got on board
without serious wetting, except Captain Cleveland.""
THE year 1844 was a brilliant one in early American yachting, for in that year the sport was organized, with the founding of the New York Yacht Club. Boston vessels cruised South of Cape Cod, met the newly formed New York Yacht Squadron—as the fleet of the foremost American club was styled in its first years—in the neutral waters of Newport, and sailed against them with spirit, and a moderate amount of good fellowship. Sectional feeling was not absent, however, in the glorification by each party of its favorite type of vessel. The Boston men scorned the centerboard, and picked flaws with vessels that carried it. The New Yorkers saw no virtue in the keel, and were sure the heavy Boston vessels could sail only in a gale, and not very fast then. Three Boston yachts were in the first small fleet to meet and race the vessels of the New York club. They were the Northern Light, the Belle, a fast pilot boat, hired by Captain Forbes and others for the cruise, and a small schooner, the Lancet.

Without describing here the first rendezvous of the New York and Boston fleets, I will mention a few of the events at Newport in which the Boston craft figured. Captain Forbes, in his notes, states that associated with him in the cruise on the Belle were "Sam Hooper, the two young Sears boys and R. S. Fay," all Bostonians of a generation that has passed along. He proceeds:

"The Belle was in charge of Captain William C. Fowler. ** At Newport we found Commodore John C. Stevens in the Ginecrack, with a squadron of yachts. A regatta was organized, and we sailed around Conanicut Island with a fine breeze. We came off victorious, much to the surprise of the New Yorkers. In those days there was no embarrassing question of allowances, no records of area of canvas; the only rules I remember were that the starboard tack must keep the wind in belling, and no change in ballast must be made. We had sailed the day before the race in company with one or two of the New York boats, and were beaten, particularly by a big North River sloop, known as the Vincent Barcaloo or some other such name. Captain Fowler did not try to do his best that day, but on the day of the race he took every movable thing out of the ends of the Belle, concentrated his ballast more amidships, took down every rope not wanted, even to unhooking the topping lift, and it was by these changes that we beat the New York squadron so handsomely."

Captain Forbes’ memory of the name of the sloop perhaps misled him, as it appears from the records of the cruise that the sloop must have been the Eliza Ann.

Under date of August 6th an account was printed in the Newport Herald, "contributed by a distinguished officer of the Boston fleet," without doubt Captain Forbes, describing a trial between the Belle and the sloop Eliza Ann. The pair sailed over to Point Judith, to windward. It appears that on the wind sloop and schooner were on even terms, but off the wind, on the run home, the sloop gained five minutes. The New York schooner Cygnet and the Lancet accompanied the racers and had a race of their own, the Cygnet winning. "We should have stated," the report concludes, "that the Eliza Ann is considered the fastest sloop on North River. She has a deep centerboard, and a mainsail, the shadow of which would cover the whole state! The Cygnet was built by Mr. Steers, who was on board of her."

The race around Conanicut Island, which is the first record of an American club against other vessels, was sailed August 7th, and was thus described in a Newport paper:

"The signal for starting was given at 10:30 a. m., wind light S. W., which freshened during the race to a fine breeze. At 10:36 the Belle passed the point of Fort Adams leading the way, followed close by the Dream, the Ginecrack, the Cygnet and the Spray. At 11:17 the Belle bore round Beaver Tail Light, followed by the Cygnet at 11:22, by the Ginecrack at 11:25, the Dream at 11:27, the Spray at 11:30. ** At the coming in the Belle was still ahead as she had been during the whole race, passed the signal flag at 1 o’clock 17 minutes, having beaten all the boats as follows: The Cygnet 115/ minutes, the Ginecrack 153/4 minutes, the Dream 24 minutes, and the Spray 27 minutes; beating the Cygnet about 2 miles in 23."

The Cygnet is thus mentioned because she was considered the fastest vessel entered. A correspondent, evidently with the fleet, afterward figured out for a New York sporting paper that under any system of allowances the Belle would have lost to the Ginecrack and have come in fourth. The Thames Yacht Club rate was quoted to support the statement. This brought about an animated debate through the press as to the merits of measurement rules.

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The Belle was built in 1842 by Samuel Hall, of East Boston. Her dimensions were: Length, 66 feet 6 inches; depth, 6 feet 9 inches; draught, 6 feet forward, and 8 feet aft. She measured 72 tons. Her foremast was 55 feet and her mainmast 67 feet.
The tonnage of the contestants in the race was stated to be: Belle 76 tons, Cygnet 43 1/2, Gimcrack 25, Dream 28, Spray 37. All were schooners.

The Northern Light arrived at Newport August 8th, the day after the race around Conanicut, and Colonel Winchester at once threw down the gauntlet to the captains of the fleet. The day after his arrival he put out in a fresh Sou'wester, inviting a brush, but no one came out to go against him. The next day the breeze was not so fresh, but from the same quarter, and a race was arranged with the Cygnet. There being no measured course, and no stakeboats, the result of the race became a subject of dispute. Friends of the Boston vessel reported the Northern Light outsailed the Cygnet. A correspondent of the Boston Atlas, a daily paper long since defunct, wrote an account of the trial, over the signature of "Landsman," to the great glory of the Northern Light. He stated that the New York vessels were "fine looking boats, and essentially different from anything seen on the other side of Cape Cod," but that some of them had "centerboards—a machine, which in my judgment, entirely alters the character of the vessel, and which should not be tolerated in any boat that pretends to sail blue water."

Another correspondent signing himself "Waterman" hotly attacked the statements of "Landsman," defending the type of boats used by the New York Yacht Club, and adding that Colonel Winchester had declined a trial around Conanicut Island against the Cygnet. "Landsman" came out with "A Rejoinder" under the quotation.

These miseries are more than may be borne.

He went all over the Northern Light-Cygnet trial, sneered terribly at "Waterman" and his "most learned talk," denounced the centerboard afresh, called "Waterman" to account for displaying a "vast ignorance" concerning sporting ethics and the aims of Colonel Winchester, and covered him with scorn and opprobrium generally. The identity of these writers is not revealed in their spirited compositions, but we may infer that they were yachtsmen both, and representative of the amenities of the sport as they existed in that day.

The anonymous correspondence quoted soon led to a personal controversy. Colonel Winchester, who meanwhile had returned to Boston with his yacht, felt obliged to issue a "Card," disclaiming credit for having beaten the Cygnet, "a yacht of 45 tons," stating he had declined to sail around Conanicut, "among islands and shoals," because his pilot did not know the ground, and adding that he was ready to sail the Northern Light against "any pilot-boat or schooner yacht" that could be brought forward. "I have never desired a particle of reputation for the Northern Light beyond her honest claims for speed," he concluded. In the course of his remarks Colonel Winchester expressed the opinion that a scow was best suited to sailing off the wind.

The spirit of contention aroused by the events off Newport next seized upon by "A member of the New York Yacht Club"—how often we have seen the utterances of this anonymous person preserved in print!—who wrote the Spirit of the Times that the Cygnet was entitled to a lot more credit than "Landsman" gave her. The matter did not rest here, for soon Commodore John C. Stevens entered the lists, with a letter to the Atlas, dealing with the merits of the centerboard, and the various claims made for the Northern Light. His defence of the centerboard cou
Col. William P. Winchester

The gist of all the arguments that were made for it throughout the following half century. He went on to say he believed the scow model a match for the type represented by the Northern Light. As a postscript to his letter Commodore Stevens issued a challenge to sail a pilot boat against the Northern Light for $5,000, $10,000, or $20,000, from Beaver Tail Light, Newport, around Block Island, in September; or for a wager, sometime in October, "when there is likely to be more wind."

The card of Colonel Winchester, which had brought out this challenge, had been prompted in part by a claim that the owner of the Northern Light had declined to sail a race against the Belle on the return from Newport. It was reported the Belle had spoken the Northern Light off Seconnet, and had proposed a race, but that Colonel Winchester had replied that his vessel was out of trim. In the war of words between "Landsman" and "Waterman" these statements had become more or less befogged. While clearing things with his "Card," Colonel Winchester had unconsciously drawn the fire of Commodore Stevens, as stated. Captain Forbes next contributed a note to the press, stating he really had not challenged the Northern Light, but had held up for her, about dark off Seconnet, and had hailed, saying "How are you?" The reply was "We are out of trim."

All these exchanges of compliments in the press served to stir up great public interest in the respective merits of the Northern Light, Belle, and the New York yachts. The upshot was an arrangement for a series of three races between the Northern Light and Belle, off Boston. In the first, sailed in a fresh breeze and strong sea, the Northern Light won. In the next, sailed in a light breeze, the Belle won. I cannot find that a third decisive meeting was secured, owing to various delays.
Self-satisfied skipper of the Brenda, Brenda over.
The clipper captains on arriving came around and looked the seadog from Massachusetts found them too slow for line, and about the channel up the river. "Follow us," said they. The halled some Baltimore clippers he fell in with for information. He made a good run to the Capes of the Delaware, and there Philadelphia parties, A Boston skipper was hired to deliver her. alone. When he got through with the Brenda he sold her to though other yachts of that period carried theirs spread out in the wings, Mr. Sears was a reserved man, and loved to sail alone. When he got through with the Brenda he sold her to the larger schooners being unable to cut down her lead. The Northern Light proved the truth of all the praises bestowed upon her. For beauty of model she cannot be equalled, and the setting of her sails was a theme of universal admiration and favorable comparison with our New York boats; and it was plain to be seen that if a Boston boat took the cup she was to do the deed."

The Mist won in a drift late in the evening, with the Northern Light second. In a special race for $200, sailed the day after the regatta, the Northern Light came in first on elapsed time, but lost on allowance to the Hornet, a pilot boat owned outside the club.

The races at New York were followed by the cruise to Newport, in which the Boston vessels took a prominent part. The Northern Light and the schooner Siren had several encounters before and during the cruise, and their respective merits were undecided when the fleet arrived at Newport.

The Hornet was built as an oyster sloop, in Somerset County, Maryland. Her original custom-house papers, issued at Snow Hill, Maryland, bear date of September 14, 1819. Her first owner was John Sterling, and her original dimensions as follows: Length, 46 feet; beam, 13 feet 6 inches; draught, 4 feet 10 inches. She was brought to New York for a pilot boat when comparatively an old vessel. In 1847 she was partly rebuilt. In 1850 she was rebuilt by Steers, and in 1879 she was again rebuilt, in Boston. Her beam remained the same through these vicissitudes, but her length was increased finally to 59 feet 6 inches on deck, and her draught to 7 feet 6 inches. As late as 1890 she was to be seen in Boston waters, her name having been changed to Sport. By those who knew her age she was properly honored as the oldest existing American yacht. She is no longer on the list of yachts, and probably lies rotting in some New England dock. Her career is without parallel for length among American yachts.

"The Brenda was one of the best boats designed and built by Windo, being the equal of the Northern Light in all but size. Her model hangs to-day in the office of Mr. Windo's son, a dealer in shipbuilders' stock, on Beverly Street, Boston. Mr. Sears, her owner, built and occupied as his residence the splendid house on Beacon Street, now owned by the Somerset Club. He was a yachtsman never afraid of deep water, and had many ideas of his own about a boat, which he carried out on the Brenda. He would have no galvanized iron on board, claiming it was not strong. He did not follow the custom of carrying awnings. The ballast of the Brenda was lead, and was centered over the keel, though other yachts of that period carried theirs spread out in the wings. Mr. Sears was a reserved man, and loved to sail alone. When he got through with the Brenda he sold her to a Boston skipper who was hired to deliver her. He made a good run to the Capes of the Delaware, and there hailed some Baltimore clippers he fell in with for information about the channel up the river. "Follow us," said they. The seadog from Massachusetts found them too slow for him, and struck out for himself, reaching Philadelphia a day ahead of them. The clipper captains on arriving came around and looked the Brenda over.

"What kind of a boat is that anyway?" they inquired.
"Oh, that's only a third-rate boat from Boston," replied the self-satisfied skipper of the Brenda.

The Winchester Mansion on the Charles River, at Watertown, Mass.
In a trial off Sandy Hook, before the start of the cruise, the Northern Light had distanced the Siren in a trial in which the latter broke down before the windward turn was reached. It was therefore decided to settle the question of supremacy off Newport. August 4, 1846, was selected for the trial. The vessels met outside the Beaver Tail, and were sent away to weather, the leader at the end of three hours to lay-to, with her jib to windward, and wait for the other to come up.

There was a strong breeze Southwest, and a good sea. The Northern Light found her tall spars too much to carry, and though reefed down, made bad weather of it, and was well beaten.

Colonel Winchester acknowledged his vessel's inability to carry her light-weather rig in a breeze, and asked for another trial in heavy-weather rig. This, however, did not come off. The light rig was promptly removed from the Northern Light, and was never used again.

From Newport the yachts returned to New York for further racing. Mr. Perkins, whose faith in Coquette was unbounded, had issued a challenge to race any vessel in the New York Yacht Club for $500. This was accepted for the Maria by Commodore Stevens, who suggested that the Northern Light be invited to join in the race. In the final arrangements the Northern Light was not included as a contestant, but was selected to act as leeward stakeboat, on a course that was to be 25 miles down the wind and return, off Sandy Hook. The result of the race, in which the Maria was disabled, shortly after turning the leeward mark, which was rounded with the Coquette 3 minutes 30 seconds in the lead, is a matter of record. In the strong breeze blowing Coquette had all the better of the conditions.

Some question was raised subsequently as to the length of the course, and Commodore Stevens expressed the opinion that the leg was not 25 miles long. Colonel Winchester replied—all this through the New York Herald—that he had followed instructions in placing the mark. The interchange of opinions brought out some reference to the relative speed of the Northern Light and the Maria, the schooner having shown up well in a turn to windward with the racers after serving as markboat. Colonel Winchester expressed himself as follows on the subject:

"I do not doubt the Maria will beat the Light in smooth water; but I do not believe any sloop-rigged vessel, with centerboards, can beat the Light in a heavy sea and heavy breeze. I should be pleased to test this question with the Maria, before retiring from yachting (as it is my intention of doing shortly), and as I cannot wait here for the Maria to refit, I propose a trial in Boston Bay at any time within a month which may be agreeable to Commodore Stevens, the race to take place in an Easterly ten-knot breeze, or anything which may offer above it."

Colonel Winchester stated that as he never staked money on races he would not bet on the result, but would pay into any charitable institution in New York $500 or $1,000, as agreed on, if the Maria beat the Northern Light. Commodore Stevens to pay a like amount to a Boston charity if the Northern Light won.

Commodore Stevens replied to the challenge, that as the Maria had lost her centerboard he could not race her again that season, but that if the Colonel would pay another visit to New York the next season, or if the Maria should go to Boston, he would be "most happy to give him the chance to make the present he speaks of."

The season of 1846 was the last one of active racing for the Northern Light, and the only one in which the Coquette appeared prominently. Mr. Perkins shortly afterward retired from yachting, and the Coquette was sold for a pilot boat. She served the Boston pilots many years, a staunch and able craft, well adapted to their business, and as fast as anything of her size in the bay.

On returning from New York in the fall of 1846, Colonel Winchester offered the Northern Light for sale.

In the spring of 1847 she was bought by a company of 26 citizens of Provincetown, for use as a passenger packet between Provincetown and Boston. Through the season of 1847 the yacht made a daily trip from Provincetown to Boston, or the reverse, "with the regularity of a steamer," according to watermen with good memories, though the distance is about 50 miles.

One man who remembered her in those days I found and talked with in his fish market, on Charles Street, Boston. His name is A. Chapman. He had sailed on the Northern Light as a foremast hand.

"Remember the Northern Light? Guess I do!" he said. "As well as if I had been aboard of her yesterday. She could cross the bay when nothing else could. I remember we went across once in a greasy Sou'wester with only a double-reefed foresail on her. The wind was abeam, and she hardly showed her nose above the surface from the time we left Boston until we reached Provincetown. She reminded me of a big hump-back whale with two irons in him, sousing along as fast as he could go! She was a great sailer. Wet? Yes, just a bit wet, when it was rough. We had to hang on, but she got there. Nothing stopped her, I can tell you."

(To be Continued).
HISTORIC AMERICAN YACHTS
EARLY BOSTON VESSELS, THE NORTHERN LIGHT AND COQUETTE
Winfield M. Thompson

PART III

WO seasons without a yacht were as many as Colonel Winchester could abide, and in the fall of 1848 he bought the Northern Light from her Provincetown owners—not the same to whom he had sold her, for the passenger packet business had not proved profitable—and in the spring of the glory of her old form and fittings.

This was an occasion for genuine joy among the friends of Colonel Winchester, who had mourned the Northern Light as sincerely as had her owner. One of Colonel Winchester's intimates was Dr. John Jefferies, a Boston practitioner, who had been an enthusiastic yachtsman from boyhood. The doctor had taken many a cruise as a guest on the Northern Light, and on her return to the colors of Colonel Winchester he commemorated the event in the following verses, which were published in the Boston Atlas:

Salutatory Address to the Yacht Northern Light on the Occasion of Her First Trip for the Season in May, 1849.

By Benjamin Bolus, M. D.

Huzzah! Huzzah! the Northern Light
Has left her winter quarters,
She's forth to roam, where billows foam,
In Yankee Doodle waters.

All hail the pride of Eastern waves!
The darling of these seas,

The queen that wears her flowing robes
So proudly in the breeze
We greet her in her new attire
So clean, without a speck

From stem to stern, below, aloft
From truckle to the deck.

She shows her freshly painted hull,
Striped with the Rover's hand,*

Her sail is fitted to the mast,
Like glove to lady's hand.
Her graceful hugging, flung in air
Aloft the breezes seek,
She shows the streamer at the top,
The ensign at the peak.

May prosperous times attend her step,
And former joys renew,
May pleasures heaped on pleasures wait
Her course, the season through.

Eolus! keep the winds in sore,
And suit them to her need;
Sometimes to gently part the waves,
Sometimes to plough with speed.

Eurus! if becalmed below,
She can't the harbor bring,
Please put your shoulder to the stern,
And drive her wing and wing.

A mild Sou'wester is the wind
Best suited to the bay;
Sweet Africus, we thee invoke
On every ladies' day.

When their fair forms shall grace the deck,
And they their hooks are baiting,
Pray, fishes, prove true gentlemen—
Don't keep the ladies waiting!

With rougher hands and stouter hearts,
Rude Boreas, you may rock it,
Bring gunwale down below the waves,
The waves to scuppers' pocket!

May winds and waves and skies combine,
Each time she leaves the shore,
To make the trip more pleasant prove,
Than any trip before.

Three cheers we'll give the Northern Light,
And then we'll give three more.
And three times three we'll give to thee,
The gallant Commodore.

A New York yachtsman, who was entertained on board the Northern Light in 1849, wrote the Spirit of the Times an appreciation of the hospitality of Colonel Winchester, on the occasion of a fishing trip, expressing himself as follows:

"The Colonel's fame in this department has long been familiar to us. He is almost a pioneer in yachting, and I wish the well-known hospitality that has made him and
his boat so popular were more generally appreciated and exercised. He would make such a Commodore as would render a yacht squadron in every respect worthy of the manly sport for which such an association is designed. There have been enough guests on his comfortable boat to populate a small continent, furnishing it liberally with distinguished men in every profession and pursuit."

The writer next describes the fishing party, and the delights of a drink called Bimbo, that was very popular at the time. Bimbo was made from a quart of brandy, six lemons, sugar and a quart of water. Its name and fame figured in a popular ditty of the times that was often sung on the Northern Light.

"About 2 o'clock p.m." says the yachtsman from New York, "the Light might have been seen off the Graves, while on her deck a crowd properly adapted by nature and education to adorn a festal board and do justice to its abundance, engaged themselves in dispersing a cold collage which brought together the good things of many climes in harmonious profusion. Massachusetts Bay oysters, and bananas looked each other in the face across the nautical table, while between them other delicacies and substantial dishes displayed their tempting qualities to appetites sharpened by pure sea air and agreeable society.

"The party engaged in fishing with no little success, enticing from the lower deep several fine fish, whose white flesh a few minutes after, mingled with the oozo of pork in the base of that gastronomic triumph commonly called 'chowder.'"

"But the greatest effort of the Colonel was made in the preparation of a saccharine beverage which they called 'Bimbo'—a sweet combination in which strength was concealed by flavor but still retained its energy and was ready to make a rapid ascent into ambition's airy hall, and enforce multiplication at the expense of the optic nerve. Bimbo is peculiarly adapted to piscatory excursions to the deep blue sea, and derives a delicate bouquet from the Boston atmosphere. It has a depressing influence on those who boast of resisting the power of alcohol, while it pleasantly exhilarates all who forewear their potations, yet are willing to acknowledge that an excess of stimulating fluids can raise the pavements and lure three-story houses around the corner. May the day be far distant when the magic touch of the Colonel shall cease to transmute spirits and sugar with fragrant concomitants into such a beverage as would have raised the devil with the old gods and converted Bacchus into a tapster for shares. But let me whisper to all confident young gentlemen who consider their brains bomb-proof, that on the score of discretion at least they should treat Bimbo like a pet tiger, only to be trilled with at favorable times, and with adequate caution. It deserves all the encomiums pronounced by Fat Jack on a good 'sherris sack'; 'It ascends me into the brain; dries me there all the foolish and dull and crude vapors which environ it; makes it apprehensive, quick, forgetful, full of nimble, fiery, delectable shapes; which delivered 'er to the voice, which is the birth, become excellent wit.' I pause, and drink to Bimbo and its founder, and in the words of a song which one of the Bimboians gave in a full, rich baritone voice, that still lingers in my ears:

He that doth this toast deny,
Down among the dead men let him lie.

"This, for the company we met to fish off the Graves, was a pleasant conceit. I believe they prided themselves on putting those sombre rocks out of countenance. May they long be able to experiment thus with entire success!" Thus full of his subject, and doubtless of Bimbo, the writer betook himself to his own yacht and set sail for New York.

The excursion he described was one of the last held on board the Northern Light. Colonel Winchester was that summer occupied with building a splendid country house at Watertown, on the banks of the Charles River, and this took up much of his time. When he should become well settled there—business was already crowding the quiet residence section of Franklin Street, with its grassy enclosure in the middle of the way, its wide-spread trees, the wooden statue of Ben Franklin, and the peaceful atmosphere of old Boston—and the swell-front red brick house that Colonel Winchester had occupied there for many years was to be given up. In it the honor of command of the Boston Cadets, now known as the First Corps, had been offered him, and accepted, carrying with it the military title by which he was popularly addressed. He had lived a busy, happy life there, and left the place with regret.

Colonel Winchester looked forward to many serene years at Watertown, years in which he could indulge himself freely in yachting. He purposed building a yacht of 100 tons on the lines of the Northern Light, and therefore in the fall of 1849 he disposed of that famous vessel for all time.

The last chapter in the career of the Northern Light shows her as a galley of a little band of adventurous argonauts who set out with thousands of others toward the new gold fields of the Pacific coast. Their names may now stand in high places on the records of the state of California, for aught I know. They were: Elton R. Smylie and Basilius Argyris of Boston, Francis I. Gould of Lexington, Mass., and George McG. Hall of Derry, N. H. These owners took possession of the Northern Light December 3, 1849.

Dr. B. Joy Jeffries recalls visiting the Northern Light when she was being fitted at a dock in East Boston for her cruise to California. Two sailors were stowing the forehold with firewood, and conversing on their equipment for the voyage.

"Say, Bill, we aint got no music," said one, affecting to recall a serious oversight.

"That's a fact," said the other, as if the discovery were important. But both kept on stowing wood.

The Northern Light sailed from Boston December 17, with six persons in the cabin, including the wife and..."
daughter of one of the owners, and five men before the mast. She encountered head winds to Rio, and was chased on the passage for a slaver, by the British war vessel Tweed, but arrived at the Brazilian port 47 days out from Boston. Leaving Rio February 13, 1850, for Magellan Straits, she fell in with the ship Chesire on the 28th, and in coming close to the ship to hail, narrowly escaped being run down, through a miscalculation of distance. The two vessels were so close the ship's side was touched with a boat-hook from the Northern Light's deck, as the Chesire swept past at eight knots' speed. The yacht proceeded unharmed, her people giving thanks, and after weathering the fierce Pamperos off the lower South American coast made Cape Virgin on March 12. Thus far the hardships of the rough passage had been withstood with fortitude, and all prayed for a quick and safe passage through the dangerous Straits. Entering the first Narrows of the Straits on March 14, the yacht ran into a fog, and was forced to anchor in Gregory Bay, in 14 fathoms, on a rocky bottom. In the night a gale came up. The sea made quickly, and the wind hauled until the Northern Light was on a lee shore. In inky darkness, and tossing fearfully, the yacht began to drag her anchors. Presently the heavier of her two chains parted at the shackle. It was laboriously brought aboard by tackles—the other chain was over the windlass drum, and could not be shifted—and pigs of lead from the ballast were lashed to it to retard the vessel's drift. The men who stuck to the wreck of the Northern Light found that a few more gales finished her, and awaiting themselves of a friendly offer of a passage on their way, they left the bones of the famous yacht in that melancholy resting place of so many good ships that before and since have ended their last voyage in those sinister straits.

In the winter of 1849-50 the friends of Colonel Winchester who had partaken of his hospitality on board the Northern Light agreed that an expression of their regard for their host and friend would be appropriate, and made up a fund with which to purchase him a souvenir of a fitting character. Their choice finally rested on a punch bowl, and one was ordered from the leading firm of silversmiths in Boston, Messrs. Jones, Ball & Poor, whose store stood on the corner of Summer and Washington Streets, on a site now covered by a clothing shop. When finished, in the spring of 1850, the bowl was placed on exhibition, about the time of the news of the wreck of the Northern Light reached Boston, at the maker's warerooms, where it was viewed by thousands. Its design, appropriately nautical, was much admired. To William P. Winchester.

Presented to
To Commemorate the Pleasant Hours
His Friends Have Passed
With Him on Board His Yacht
Northern Light
There is a removable lining of gold. The bowl weighs 225 ounces, and its cost was $1,000.

There is a story that among those who went to see the bowl when it was placed on exhibition was a certain prominent citizen of Boston noted for his tight grip on his purse strings. Viewing the bowl in a somewhat surly manner, he demanded, addressing no one in particular:

"What are they giving Winchester that for?"

"Because," responded a local wit at his elbow, with a bow, "he is one of the rich men of Boston who does not hang on to every cent he owns."

So far as I am able to determine, this bowl was the first souvenir of the kind to be presented to an American yachtsman. The bowl now stands in a place of honor in the public library of the town of Winchester, a handsome Boston suburb that was named for Colonel Winchester—although he never lived there—by some of his admirers interested in forming the town in the forties, by setting it off from Woburn and other towns. In the same library is a fine portrait of Colonel Winchester. Both were presented to the town by the late Thomas B. Winchester as fitting and lasting memorials of his father.

Colonel Winchester did not live to build his larger Northern Light, nor to enjoy for long the pleasures of life at his new home in Watertown. He died August 6, 1850, of typhoid fever, in the 40th year of his age. He left a considerable fortune and a good name.

The End.

THE DERELICT

Far out on the stormy ocean
Where the winter tempests roar,
And the days are short and cheerless
And the nights inspire awe.
Was drifting a lonely schooner
Far off from her native shore.
Tossed by the mighty billows,
Struck by the thundering blast,
Her rudder shattered in pieces,
Her bowsprit gone and a mast,
Rolling about quite helpless
The sport of the winds that blew;
Unmaned, unmanned, forgotten,
She floated as derelicts do.

In a little house on the seacoast,
Facing the open sea,
A mother sat with her children
Clustered about her knee,
Telling them, "Soon will your father
Back from the Grand Banks be."

"Long has he been, my children,
But surely to-morrow I'll see
In the paper news of our schooner
Spedding homeward to me."
But the only news in the paper
Was "a derelict sighted at sea."

Then halyards haul, ye sailors all,
Trim sheets, and lay her course,
And crowd her through the eager blue,
The wind is here in force!

H. V. SMEDBERG.

STRANGERS

O, it's side by side to the Beacon Hill
(And a maid walks there with me!)
But my Love, alas! is a stranger still,
And a stranger still, the Sea!
I have wooed the Sea as a sailor ought
In the Northern's whelming breath,
And a whisper caught of the word I sought
In the joy of the Game with Death;
But the Game with Death is played and won;
Aster the reefs of danger;
And in squall and calm, in fog and sun,
My Sea is still a stranger!

O, it's hand in hand to the Beacon Hill
(And my sweetheart with me there!) But her wistful soul is questing still
In a realm where I may not face.
I have wooed my Love as a sailor ought
With the old, old songs of the sea,
Till her lips were fraught with the word I sought,
The gospel of life for me;
But I see her listen, with eyes that glisten
(Though it's hand in hand on the Beacon Hill)
To voices near that I may not hear—
My Love is a stranger still!

O, it's lip to lip on the Beacon Hill
(And my Bride beside me there!) But she feels the passion and pulse and thrill
Of a joy that I may not share.
In death's despite, 'mid the shrieking night,
I have won through the crashing Sea;
Till the drowned men wailed at me!
I've dared the shoals of danger;
Till the drowned men wailed at me!
My Sea is still a stranger!

O, it's side by side to the Beacon Hill
(And my Wife is there with me!) But I see her listen, with eyes that glisten
(Though I call her mine on the Beacon Hill)
And her dreams are the dreams of the Sea's deep heart—
My Love is a stranger still!

WILLIAM SAMUEL JOHNSON.