

The Watertown Yacht Club was founded in 1940 and incorporated on September 21, 1942. It is situated at Sunset Bay on the Charles River in Watertown Massachusetts, near historic Watertown Square, approximately 7 miles upriver from Boston Harbor.

RIVERTON YACHT CLUB was the name on the first recorded proceedings, dated November 7, 1941, of what we now know as Watertown Yacht Club. A group of local men who shared an interest in "boats and yachting" had been meeting regularly in Bob Ellis's cellar for four weeks. Many of these men had for years kept their boats on private moorings on the Charles and had made each other's acquaintances through hops and mishaps just as we do today. They were convinced of each other's commitment to boating and had developed an almost fraternal atmosphere. Discussion centered on forming a new organization. The minutes of an early meeting begin with the meeting agenda:

"Shall we form a group to be known as the RIVERTON YACHT CLUB?"



Sunset Bay with the armada of craft, establishing the beginnings of the Watertown Yacht Club.

Similar ideas had been circulated in the neighborhood in the mid-thirties. Another group had proposed building a clubhouse on the banks of the Charles near our present location but they had also planned to hold public dances there. That part of their plan seems to have been "the fly in the ointment" that put an end to the efforts of the boys at this time" said an entry in the sixth meeting records of November 26, 1941 with 14 interested locals in attendance.

But things were different in 1941, and there was a challenge to get something started. At a meeting on December 11 the vote was unanimous to go ahead and "organize now". (It was also stated at that time that every man who had attended one or more meetings prior to December 11th, would be considered a "Charter Member".) An immediate election was held with the following results:

COMMODORE: Warren (Bunny) Burnham, Allston
VICE-COMMODORE: Robert Ellis, Watertown
TREASURER: Howard Cooper, Watertown
SECRETARY: William A. Allen, Brighton
STEWARDS: Felix Russo, Watertown

The members voted to hold weekly meetings during this formative stage, with the first and third meetings of each month specified as "business" meetings because so much had to be done. The Executive Committee was directed to draw up a set of Rules and By-Laws for approval by the members. The second meeting in December was declared the Annual Meeting and Election of Officers. (From the list of elected officers above, the reader might wonder why a steward would be elected rather than hired as we do today. The answer is that the "Steward" performed the duties of the "third officer", and his title was in fact changed to Rear Commodore the next year.)

On December 18, 1941 the first Regular Business Meeting of the "Yacht Club" was called to order in the newly decorated basement Club Room in the home of Vice-Commo-

dore Bob Ellis in Watertown. The Treasurer's report was omitted but the usual "line a week" collection was collected.

The first official business was to decide on a name for the Club. RIVERTON, SUNSET BAY, and WATERTOWN were offered for consideration, and after much deliberation WATERTOWN was unanimously accepted and remains our name today. Club dues were established at 50 cents per month or 25 cents payable at each business meeting (whether present or not). Those in the Military Service would be exempt. The newly drafted Constitution and By-Laws were presented to and accepted by the members and a committee was appointed to design a burgee. George Ward of Watertown, and Clem Churchill of Brighton were elected Directors and added to the Executive Board. Regulations from the MDYC were already being received.

The newly formed Burgee Committee presented three different proposed designs, none of which were found to be used elsewhere according to Lloyd's Register of Yacht Clubs. After due deliberation (some purists felt that a letter on a burgee was too radical) a burgee design was finally selected and fifty