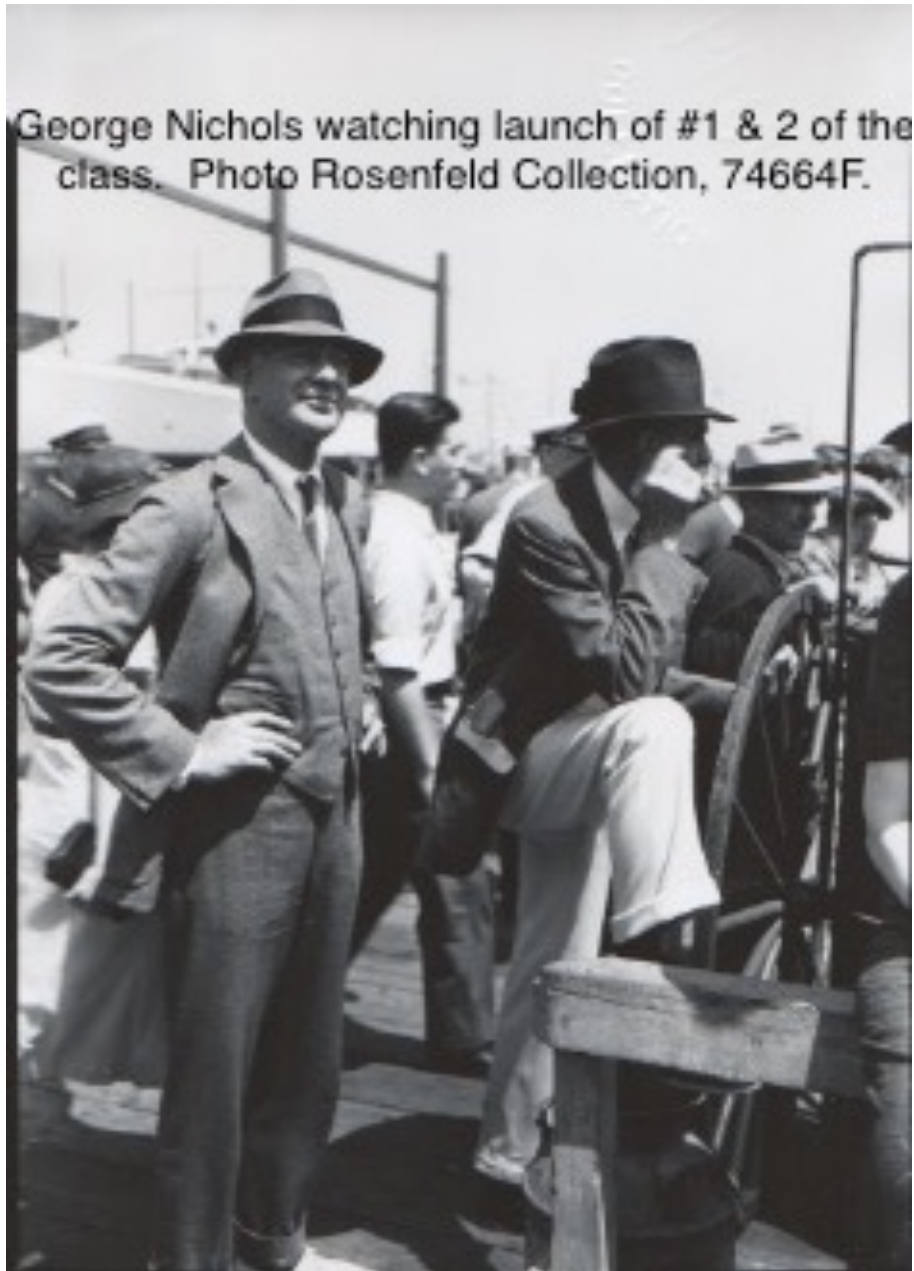


George Nichols was the first owner of #18 (Nevins hull #413, surveyed with #17 & #19 on July 29th) in the class. He was on the committee that selected the design and named his NY32 *Gentian*. Nichols became a member of the NYYC in March 1912 and served as the Commodore from 1925-1927. During his first year as commodore, the length eligible for enrollment and voting rights in the Club was reduced from a waterline length of 38' to 30' for sailing yachts. He was a member of the Committee on Racing Appeals from 1935-1950 and was appointed Club secretary in 1938 to fill out the vacancy occurring when George Cormack died that June. Cormack had been the secretary since 1902 and had put up a Cup for the NY32 class on the event of the first race as a class. Although those launched and surveyed raced in their own class during the Larchmont Race Week in July that year, the Cormack Cup was raced for among the class during the NYYC Annual Cruise that August. Nichols was also a member of the Eastern YC beginning in 1911, the SCYC, where he served as rear commodore in 1915 and vice commodore from 1916-1918, and the CSHBC. He was an NAYRU member and had been a CCA member since 1928.



"In the World of Yachting" (Yachting, July 1924, p43) NYYC vice commodore Nichols was the featured yachtsman. It mentioned his membership in the SCYC and NYYC, where "he has been identified with nearly every movement in those organizations looking toward the bettering or broadening of yachting and yacht racing. From 1921 to 1924 he was President of the Yacht Racing Association of Long Island Sound, and did much to strengthen and build up the prestige of this foremost racing association of the United States." Nichols was known as a racer rather than a cruiser. It named some of the boats he had sailed, small boats such as Seawanhaka 15-footers and Fish (16 ft) as well as

America's Cup defenders. In 1922 and 1923 he was a member of the selection committee that picked the 6-meter team to race against the British.

George Nichols was the oldest of John White Treadwell Nichols six children. George's grandfather (George Nichols Jr) was known as the "blind proof-reader" and, although nearly blind had completed a five volume edition of Senator Charles Sumner's papers in 1882. He was appointed the proof reader, or editor, for Harvard University, where he had graduated in 1928 from the Divinity School. In his later years, he was advisor to Longfellow, Lowell and Holmes among others. John, the youngest son of George Nichols Jr, with bad eyesight did not attend college, but became a partner and treasurer of Minot Hooper and Company. This was the first textile manufacturer to work in New England. He worked to make the donation of the Peirce-Nichols family home in Salem to the Essex Institute (now part of the Peabody Essex Museum). This is the home where George Nichols (born July 4, 1778) married Sarah (Sally) Peirce in 1801. Later, in 1836, he married Sally's sister, Betsy Peirce. A Salem Shipmaster and Merchant, the Autobiography of George Nichols (1921) provides an account of his voyages and family history including voyages of his father Ichabod Nichols. This bringing together of the Nichols and Peirce families would make two of the first owners of the NY32 class (#18 and #6) distant cousins.

George Nichols (born in 1878) graduated from Harvard in 1900 and joined the dry goods, or woolen, firm of Minot, Hooper and Company of Boston and New York. (NYYC history, obit NYT Aug 15, 1950). He later became a partner of the company, holding that position until his death. In 1917 he married Jane N Morgan, daughter of J P Morgan and sister to NY32 first owners Henry (#19) and Junius (#20) Morgan. Nichols' oldest daughter, Jane, married Walter H Page Jr, a son of Arthur W Page, first owner of #12. Their son, George Jr, later owned #10 of the class. Their youngest child was Henrietta, but known as Rita. Nichols, at 58 years old in 1936, was the oldest of the original class owners. Much of this family history can be found in Witch's Breed by Susan Nichols Pulsifer (1967), one of George's sisters.

On August 8, 1942, Nichols wrote W P Stephens (Mystic, Coll. 91, B5f12) with a correction to part 39 of Stephen's "Traditions and Memories of American Yachting" series published in the August 1942 Motor Boating. The series was published in a book of that name in 1981 where part 39 begins on page 178. Nichols' letter in longhand read as follows:

"Dear Mr. Stephens,

In your August installment in Motor Boating there is a small probably typographical error which, knowing your passion for accuracy, I take the liberty of calling to your attention. Harbinger was built for James (not Joseph) Ripley Hooper. Mr. Hooper at that time was a partner of my father. He was later President of the New England Trust Co and died four or five years ago. I spent most of my summers in Hull through 1889, as

my father owned a cottage there, and it was quite a treat to be taken for an afternoon sail in *Harbinger*.

Mr. Hooper's skipper "Bub" James was I think an important factor in the success of his boats. "Bub" was also a lobsterman and mackerel fisherman and the son of Captain William James who taught me to sail. Mr. Hooper always raced in his boats but, as I remember, took no part in their handling.

Sincerely yours,  
George Nichols"

*Harbinger*, according to Stephens' article, was a cat boat of 28' 10" over length, 27' 6" waterline length and 2' 6" draft with 1,362 square feet of sail area. Hooper was a member of the Hull YC and owned her for four years until he sold her in 1892 to take up the Herreshoff "tin-keel Handsel." In July 1889, *Harbinger* raced in an Eastern YC race against two well know cutters, *Saracen* and *Kathleen*, both of 30' waterline length. *Harbinger* won that race by twenty minutes. Stephens wrote "The rivalry of *Saracen* and *Kathleen*, Burgess against Gardner and Boston against New York, was watched with keen interest by yachtsmen far and wide, and when both were defeated by an unknown craft the interest shifted to the new type." This rivalry between NY and Boston was seen again between the NY32 and the Paine, or Marblehead, 36.

An article in The Rudder from March 1936, "New York Yacht Club's New One-Design Class," states a committee was formed to consider a new one-deign class to replace the NY30. Commodore William A. W. Stewart was elected at the annual meeting in December 1935, but the minutes appear to be lacking any news of this committee.

"The committee appointed to consider the idea of a new one-design class was appointed by Commodore W. A. W. Stewart and consisted of Robert N. Bavier, Paul Hammond, C. F. Havemeyer, George Nichols and John B. Shethar. This committee invited John G. Alden, Luders, Ford & Payne and W. J. Roue, Belknap & Paine and Sparkman & Stephens to submit plans. The Sparkman & Stephens plans were selected and bids then asked for, Nevins being reported as the lowest. The class was then officially adopted by the New York Yacht Club and a committee composed of Vice-Commodore E. Townsend Irvin, George Nichols and Robert N. Bavier was appointed to carry out the matter of class organization. This committee restricted the class to twenty boats, and so enthusiastic was the response of New York Yacht Club members that the class was closed in remarkably short order."

This article is the only place that any of the other designs submitted to the committee for evaluation has been found. It shows the dimensions and sketches for four of the proposed

designs. The Sparkman & Stephens design (45'4" loa, 32' lwl, 10'7" beam, 6'6" draft) was that chosen. There was no Alden design among those given in the article, although among Alden's designs (Carrick and Henderson, 1995) is No. 622 with layout and lines (46'6" loa, 32' lwl, 10'6" beam, 6'9.5" draft) described as "one-design sloop for the NYYC" but beaten by Olin Stephens' design. The Rudder article states that the Luders design was for a yacht of about 44' 7" loa, 30' lwl, beam 10'4" and draft 6'5". The Ford & Payne and Roue designed boat was about 45' 4.5" loa, 31'3" lwl, beam 10'7" and draft 6'8". The design dimensions of the Frank Paine yacht was the largest at about 47'3" loa, 33'10" lwl, beam 11'3" and draft 6' 5.5". They all had an engine, accommodations for four plus crew, galley, fuel and water tanks and head.

It is worth a note here about the Paine design because three were built by the Lawley & Sons yard in Neponset, MA to race in the fleet with four of the NYYC 32-footers in time for the Bermuda Race. Two raced to Bermuda, namely *Actaea* owned by Henry Sears and *Gypsy* owned by Frank Paine, both NYYC and EYC members. Either Paine enlarged the design some or the dimensions reported above were incorrect because the length given in The Rudder report of the Bermuda Race (August, 1936) was a length over all of 50'4" and waterline length of 36'. This design became known as the Paine 36, or the Marblehead 36, and over the years there was a certain rivalry between these new boats from Boston and the new ones from New York, beginning with the 1936 Bermuda race.

The fall of 1936 brought a design by Nick Potter for another 32 foot waterline length, but this time in California. It was originally done for an individual who showed this design to four others. All five accepted the design and the California 32 was born (46' loa, 32 lwl, beam 10'9" and draft 6'9"). H.B. Warren wrote an article for Yachting in 1937 (December) and Thomas Skahill told the story in WoodenBoat (#83, 1988) of this racer/cruiser built at Fellows and Stewart Yard on Terminal Island. All were sailing by July, 1937.



Gentian and Alera (NY30 #1) in 2006. Photo Debbie Rogers.

Nichols, like the first owner of #14, O'Donnell Iselin, owned and raced a NY30. In Nichols' case, she was *Phryne* (#17, originally owned by Henry Maxwell) in 1914 (Schoettle, 1945 -chapter NY30s). Only one other NY32 owner (#7) had owned a NY30 prior to his 32. In 1916 Nichols moved to the NY50 class with *Carolina*, racing her successfully. In the fall of 1926, Clinton Crane, SCYC commodore from 1927-1929 and a designer, bought NY50 *Grayling*, renaming her *Ibis* (Crane, 1952). Nichols and Crane decided to alter the gaff rigs of the NY50 to marconi rigs with enough sail area to rate in the NYYC's 46-foot (M) class under the Universal Rule. Harold Vanderbilt had *Prestige*, designed by Starling Burgess, built with the M-rating. A NY50 with her original rig was in the 56-foot or L class. Parkinson (NYYC history, 1975) reported that Nichols had changed *Carolina*'s rig to a marconi one in 1919. It was the first time such a rig had been tried on a boat of such a large size. Nichols raced her in a series of trials off Newport against Morgan's *Grayling* sailed by his son Henry. *Carolina* easily won, proving decisively how much more effective the marconi rig was especially when going to windward. Parkinson suggested that these trials probably influenced the proposal for the 1920 America's Cup in that it was to be held off Newport in yachts with the marconi rig. The racing among the three 50s as M class boats was of great interest in 1927, although Crane said that Nichols, "a good sailor in any size boat and almost unbeatable in the Fifties" (p161), beat *Prestige* more than *Prestige* beat *Carolina*. But with a new mainsail, *Ibis* beat *Carolina* in the King's Cup race. Junius Morgan brought out his *Windward* to the M class together with three other new boats -- *Valiant*, *Simba* and *Istalena* -- while *Spartan*, *Chiora* (x *Iroquois*) and *Andiamo* also changed their rigs, expanding the class rapidly.

Nichols was twice skipper of America's Cup prospective defenders. In 1920 he was chosen to skipper *Vanitie* against *Resolute* for the honor to defend. *Resolute*, skippered by Charles Francis Adams, was chosen. In 1930 Nichols was chosen to

skipper *Weetamoe*, designed by Crane and managed by Junius Morgan. Parkinson, relief helmsman, Bavier and Morgan were part of her afterguard. Three others vied for the honor to defend against *Shamrock V* -- *Enterprise*, *Yankee* and *Whirlwind*. *Enterprise* was chosen to defend after the series of match races among the contenders. Crane wrote that the first thing Nichols did upon learning *Weetamoe* had not been chosen "was to say to me, "Clinton, it is all my fault; the boat was better, but I let you down." That isn't the sort of thing that many men are big enough to say. I don't know anybody of my acquaintance who was more honest with himself and with other people than George and no one whom I miss more today." (p 181, Crane, 1952)

During the winter of 1929-30 George Nichols and Junius Morgan had a pair of Development class 20-footers built at the Herreshoff yard at the same time *Weetamoe* was being built there. This Development class was designed by Captain Nat Herreshoff and could be rigged with one, two or three masts or rowed when the wind died out. (Bray, WoodenBoat, 1988, #84). Streeter (1988) wrote that the development class "unfairly received the nickname, "Suicide Class." The boats were brightly taxing to handle but not vicious or dangerous. It was an unusual design which was characterized as resembling a light "whale boat with a square stern and wishbone booms for main and jib. Two of these were near twins, ..." (p 129). These were the two built for Nichols and Morgan. The Nichols boat was later donated to Mystic Seaport. Streeter mentioned a third that was built for Paul Hammond that was donated to the Herreshoff Marine Museum. Crane wrote that Capt. Nat was a great friend of Nichols. In the Stephens collection there is a letter from Nichols to WP Stephens dated May 23, 1939 (Mystic, Coll. # 9). The letter was written to thank Stephens for letting him read the Herreshoff and Stephens correspondence. "They are most interesting and even though I had seen some of them in Bristol they have given me much new and greatly appreciated information. That Mr. Herreshoff got real pleasure from the correspondence I know. Herbert Stone tells me that he hopes to arrange with you and Mr. Herreshoff for their publication." Almost fifty years later that occurred with the informative background information supplied by Streeter.

From J boats, Nichols and others moved into the Herreshoff Fish class. Crane laid up *Ibis* "with the coming of the deep depression of '31" (1952, p. 202) He wrote that the Fish boats could be rigged either as gaff or marconi, with little difference in speed found between the two. One season at CSHBC, de Forest won the class championship with his gaff rigged *Grunt*. At the end of the season there were a series of match races. Crane and Nichols reached the finals, Crane wrote, but each time they arranged to race the final match, there was no wind. In 1932, there were 21 of the Fish class at the CSHBC. Nichols owned *Valdor*, Crane owned *Tuna* and AW Page owned *Shandygaff* (Fairchild & Crocker, 1964). Crane wrote that following the Fish, he and Nichols moved to the Atlantic class. That was a Burgess designed boat of 1929. Among the Atlantic class at the CSHBC were *Rebel* for CF Havemeyer, *Cowslip* for Nichols, *Ranee* for Nichols Jr. and two in the Page family (Fairchild & Crocker, 1964). The club had ordered 13 Atlantics in the fall of 1929 after having one on loan from the American YC that season.

In November 1935 WP Stephens wrote Nat Herreshoff that he was  
"much concerned with the future of the sailing yacht (and of yacht designers). I see the Commodore of the New York Y.C. racing on one of your S-boats; the Commodore of the Seawanhaka C.Y.C. ditto; ex-commodore Nichols sailing an Atlantic O.D. [One-Design] boat in a class in which the champion is a boy of fifteen or so. ENTERPRISE and WHIRLWIND have gone to the junkmen, and the others must inevitably follow." (Streeter, 1988, p126).

Stephens went on to suggest smaller yachts for the America's Cup competitions of the future. The footnote to explain what is quoted above identified Junius Morgan as the NYYC commodore, Van S Merle-Smith as the SCYC commodore and James Rousmaniere as the Atlantic champion. Streeter explained that he felt Stephens had seen these "three senior yachtsmen" at the end of the season racing on Oyster Bay. Morgan had raced *Windward* and Merle-Smith had raced his 12-meter *Seven Seas* that season.

*Gentian* did not appear in any of the race results in 1936 through 1938 while Nichols owned her. She did apparently go on at least one junior cruise in 1937 from Oyster Bay and participated in a match race in 1938 from Eastern YC against *Larkin* (#10). From an *Apache* log (Mystic, LOG #818, a gift of Mrs. Havemeyer) there is a junior race in 1937 from Cold Spring Harbor Beach Club (CSHBC) where *Gentian* was one of the loaned boats along with *Apache* (#2, owned by Havemeyer), *Dolphin* (#19, owned by Henry Morgan) and *Folly* (#20, owned by Junius Morgan). The owners loaned the boats with their paid hand aboard and sometimes another crew. In the case of *Apache*, Porter Buck was the other crew also aboard. He was part of *Apache's* Bermuda Race crew from the year before (see story for #2). According to the log page dated July 7, Wednesday, the start was at Oyster Bay and finish at the Port Jefferson gong. A harbor start was at 9 AM and the finish at 2:40 PM. The watches are listed – Porter Buck, Captain; first watch – Molly Page, Candine Dogert, Emily Hornblower; second watch – Lester Briand, Charles Putnam, Paul McCulloch. The junior racers noted change of helm and change of watches during the race. The note at 11:25 was that they "changed helm. *Gentian* and *Gay Head* luffing match. Speed increased ... wind freshening. Speed 5 knots." At 2:20pm they (*Apache*) rounded the gong first and at 2:25, they changed watches. "No 19 too close for comfort." At 2:40 the finish was *Dolphin*, *Apache*, *Folly*" all within a minute." There is no other mention of *Gentian* other than she was part of the race.

Nichols bought no sails other than the original set that Ratsey supplied with each new boat of the class. He did have Ratsey wash her "main cover" in the fall of 1936 (Mystic, Coll. # 236, v 178) as did *Revonoc* and *Notus II*. In May 1935, Nichols ordered a spinnaker for the Fish class and a loose footed mainsail (v154) and that fall he got a mainsail for a "suicide class" with a note that said "account - no charge" (v 155). In February 1925, Ratsey estimated sails for *Carolina* (v112). Her mainsail of 650 yards was \$2,215, battens \$25 and a jib of 190 yards was \$570.



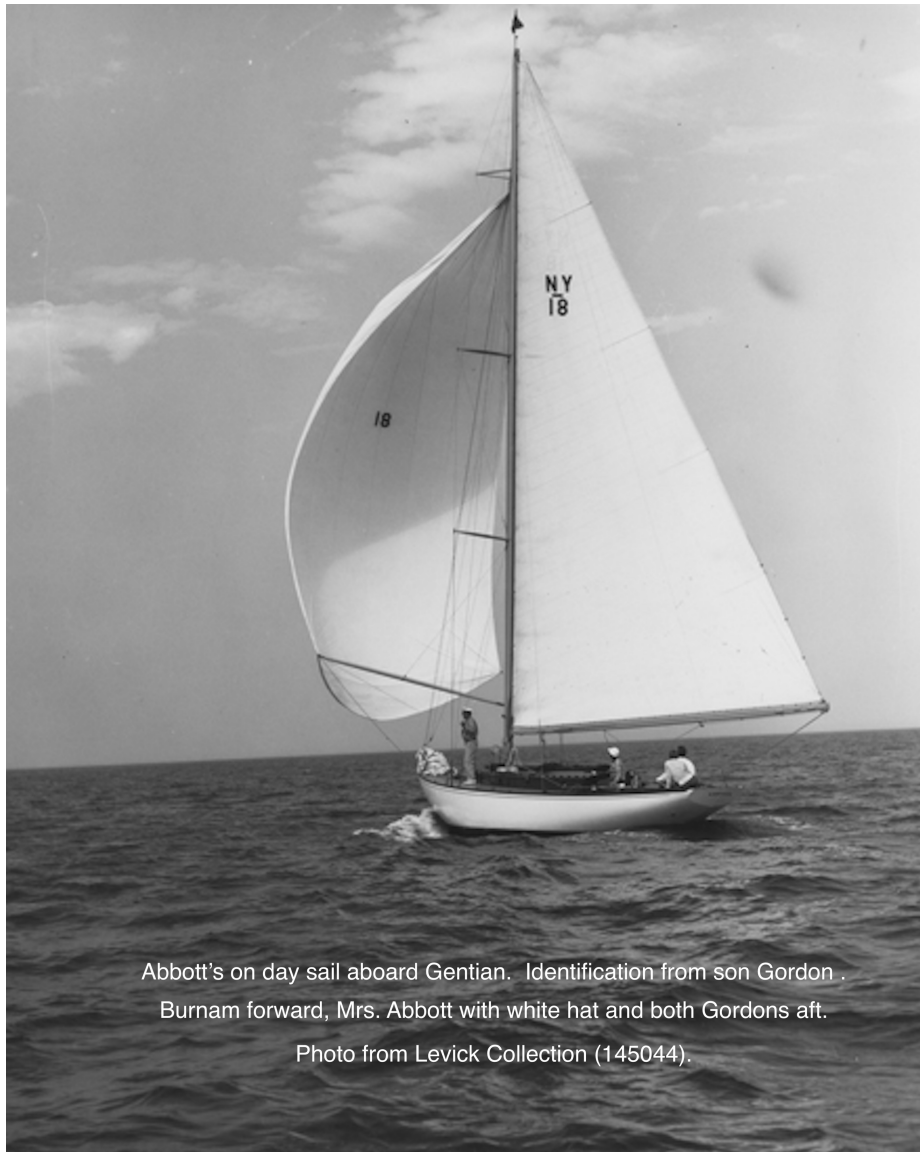


Nichols is probably best known for his 6-meter racing in *Goose*. In 1938, he had S&S design her (#243) and she was built at the Nevins yard. Henry Morgan also had S&S design a 6-meter (#238), *Djinn*, for him that year. *Goose* was # 81 of the class and *Djinn* was #80. In the spring of 1938 both Nichols and Morgan ordered lots of sails from Ratsey for their new boats (Coll. # 236, v 136). *Goose* finished third in her first race in June 1938, but started winning later in the season (SCYC history, 1965). She was elected to defend the Scandinavian Cup. She won it in three races with three firsts. One of the selection committee members was HH Anderson, a former 6- meter skipper, and owner of NY32 #9.

Nichols' daughter, Rita, said (pers comm 5/04) she did not know why the name *Gentian* was chosen for the NY32 whose topsides were white. She remembers cruising aboard her, but her father did not like cruising. She said her father had a "superstition" about names for his boats -- he preferred names with double vowels like *Goose* and *Weetamoe*. Rita christened *Goose* and was very upset she did not to get to go to Finland the first year, but she was aboard with the rest of the family for the 1939 races there for the Gold Cup. Her brother filled in as skipper when her father took ill and *Goose* won the Gold Cup. Rita said she learned to sail on *Valador*. *Cowslip* was named with reference to the family farm where they raised cows in Cold Spring Harbor. Today the land is the Upland Farm Sanctuary of the Nature Conservancy. The 'slip' was to the 6-meter, she suggested.

Although no one really knows why Nichols named his NY32 *Gentian*, none of her owners since have changed her name. There are only three of the class where that is the case (#2 and #7 are the others). There is a flower called 'gentian' with either yellow or blue flowers. It is an herb and supposed to help relieve discouragement felt after a setback or plans gone wrong, according to the web site Bach flower remedies.

For 1939 *Gentian* had moved out of the NYYC but remained in the Eastern YC with her new owner Gordon Abbott of Manchester, MA. Abbott had become an EYC member in 1937. She served as Abbott's flagship as commodore of the Manchester YC. A Boston Herald new clipping apparently from early in 1939 by Ed Earle bore the headline "Gentian added to 'head fleet -- Former New York "32" to race in cruising division" and told of additions to the cruising fleet as well as notes on the frostbite fleet racing at Marblehead. Earle wrote that *Gentian* was the first of the 32s to leave the Sound to sail out of Marblehead. According to Earle, she had "taken the "lead-off" berth formerly held by the old Bar Harbor 31-footers." Earle described Abbott as a "prominate member of the Eastern YC." Her sale had been through the E Arthur Shuman Jr Inc office. Among the notes --"bits of oakum" -- was one saying that Robert Parkinson, son of "noted J class yachtsman" Jack, was newly associated with the Shuman office.



Abbott's on day sail aboard *Gentian*. Identification from son Gordon .  
Burnam forward, Mrs. Abbott with white hat and both Gordons aft.  
Photo from Levick Collection (145044).

Abbott's son, Gordon, remembered *Gentian*, both racing and cruising aboard her. (per comm 5/05). His father bought *Gentian* for the 1939 season after losing his 8-meter, *Cockade*, in the 1938 hurricane. Young Gordon helped on the foredeck of both the 8 meter and the NY32 in races and accompanied his parents on two week cruises to Maine in August aboard *Gentian*. He said their paid hand, for both boats, was Ralph Barnum, a native of Grand Manan who had never learned to swim because of the cold water temperature. Barnum was "very much a part of the family" and often played cards with the family after dinner. He was an "excellent cook" and taught Gordon Jr to sail. Gordon wrote that "in the days before the war, paid hands played vital roles in the operation of the yacht, serving as a member of the crew and maintaining her brass, brightwork, rigging and machinery." In 1939 *Gentian* won the Jeffrey's Ledge Race, first in Class B. She also was one of the EYC team racing against SCYC off Marblehead. A picture of *Gentian* under sail was on the cover of a local weekly, The North Shore

Breeze, a magazine reporting on activities, social and others, in the communities north of Boston.

Gordon said he knew Nichols' son and later sailed with Nichols Jr aboard *Magic*, the Concordia the younger Nichols owned after he owned NY32 #10. With the coming of war, Abbott Sr received a commission in the US Naval Reserve and was called to active duty early in 1941. He served in mine sweeping in both the North Atlantic and the Pacific. Gordon wrote that his father was "skipper of a YMS and later of a 220-foot fleet sweeper, USS DEFENSE, AM317, aboard which he was awarded the Navy Cross for seamanship and heroism on the Picket Line at Okinawa in April, 1945." The EYC yearbook listed *Gentian* with Abbott for 1939, 1940 and 1941.



Gordon is mentioned in 1947 aboard *Mustang* (#17) for a day of sailing on Long Island Sound. Gordon says he was a freshman at Harvard and just out of the Navy, "a QM3c, also in mine sweeping." He was aboard with his college roommate Bob Erskine. Bob served aboard *Mustang* with Rod Stephens for many years.

In the 1942 Lloyd's Register *Gentian* was listed as owned by Eugene Allen Steuart in Chicago. With her move, there were six of the class on various of the Great Lakes. When Lloyd's was next published in 1947, *Gentian*'s owner was given as B M Smalley of Chicago. This change in ownership has been filled in by Yachting race results, a later *Gentian* owner, Ray Teborek, and two of the Smalley daughters, Nancy and Robin. Ray Teborek wrote a history of *Gentian* when he was rear commodore of the Chicago YC. It was included in the Great Lakes Cruising Club Lifeline (Summer 1984, p12). Teborek wrote that *Gentian* came to Belmont Harbor with the Steuart brothers in 1941. They were Chicago YC members and raced her for a "season or two" before the war and draft forced them to sell the boat. The new owner was Burt Smalley. His daughter, Nancy, found several trophies. The earliest was from a Lake Michigan Yachting Association regatta in August 1943 where *Gentian* won the Class B cruising award. Robin, wrote that she thought her father bought her in 1942.

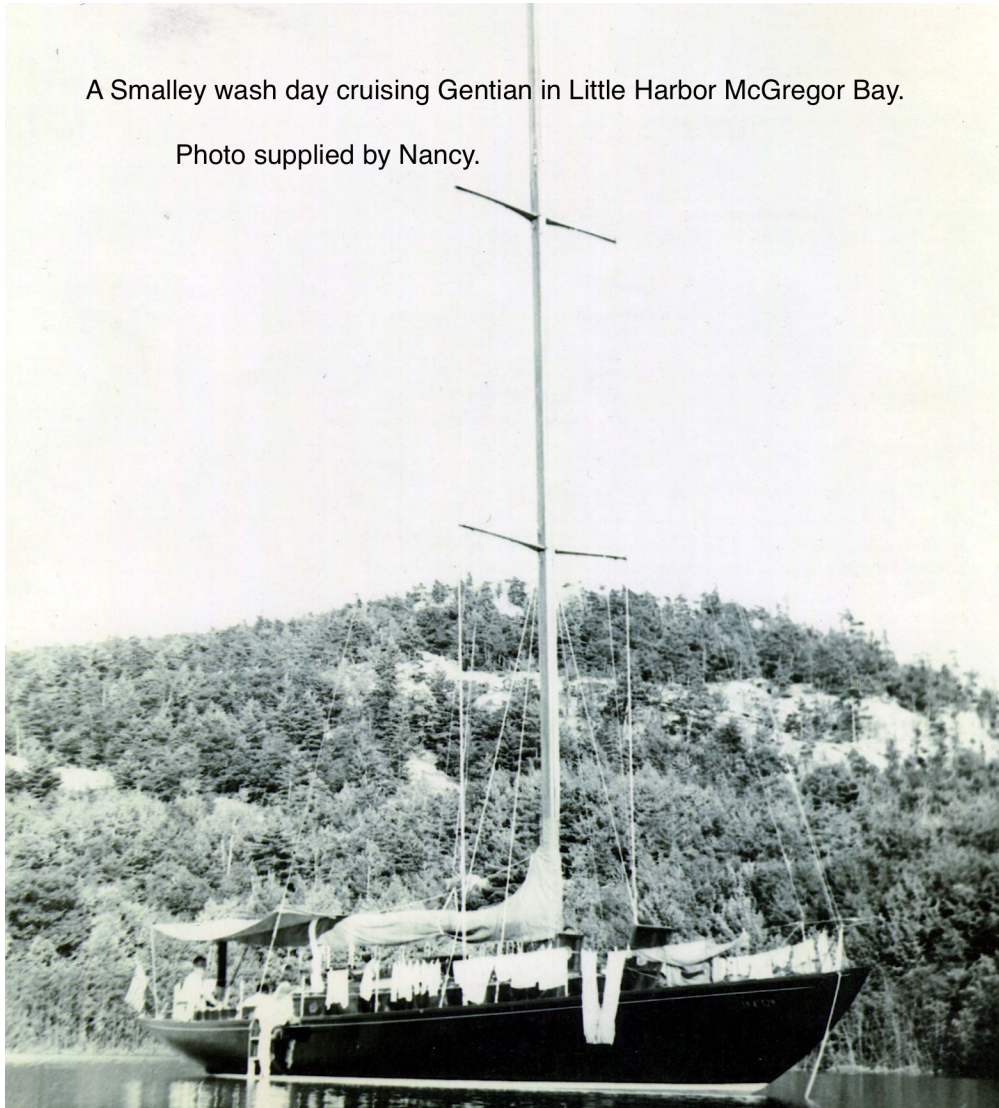
The only information about *Gentian*'s time with the Steuart brothers comes via the Smalley family and Teborek. Burt Smalley bought NY32 #18 from Steuart about 1942 with an offer to have them buy her back for three payments over three years, according to Robin. They did not make the payments though. During the period with the Steuart's, *Gentian* sank in Belmont Harbor, although no specifics about water depth but it seemed to have been due to open seacocks. Smalley had her back when they defaulted, before he put her up for sale. He moved her mooring from Belmont Harbor to the Great Lakes Naval Station. Robin wrote (em 4/07) that her father was constantly making improvements to his 32. Her bright work was in constant repair and upkeep. "It was a very sad time after the boat was sunk and then repaired with formica" she wrote.

Burton Smalley was a Chicago YC member beginning in 1942. The Chicago YC yearbook for 1951 listed his business address as the Joslyn Manufacturing and Supply Company in Highland Park, IL. One of his daughters clarified the address – while Joslyn was where he worked in Chicago, they lived in Highland Park. Smalley raced *Gentian* in several Chicago Mackinac Races beginning with the 1946 one. She won Class B in 1947 and placed second in Class A in 1952. Other local awards included the Tri-State Race, an annual Labor Day race from Chicago to Michigan City, IN to St Joseph, MI and back to Chicago, a first in 1944, 1946 and 1950. She also raced at Jackson Park YC for third place in 1945 for the Michigan City Race.

Nancy wrote (em 5/02) that she did not race aboard *Gentian* as her brother did, but did go on the cruises in the North Channel. The cruises were usually 1-2 weeks, her Dad's vacation, after the Mackinac race. Her Mom had a "Dunken Hines" rating for the best food on that race. The crew was well supplied, while they in the car going up to the Island had all the stuff that was taken off for the race but went back aboard for the cruising. Robin remembered cruising during the summers of 1954 and 1955 in Sturgeon Bay. The laundry day picture embarrassed their mother, who would take it all in when anyone came by. The daughters remembered cruising with Hollis Baker, a friend of their fathers, and his NY32 *Whisper* (#10).

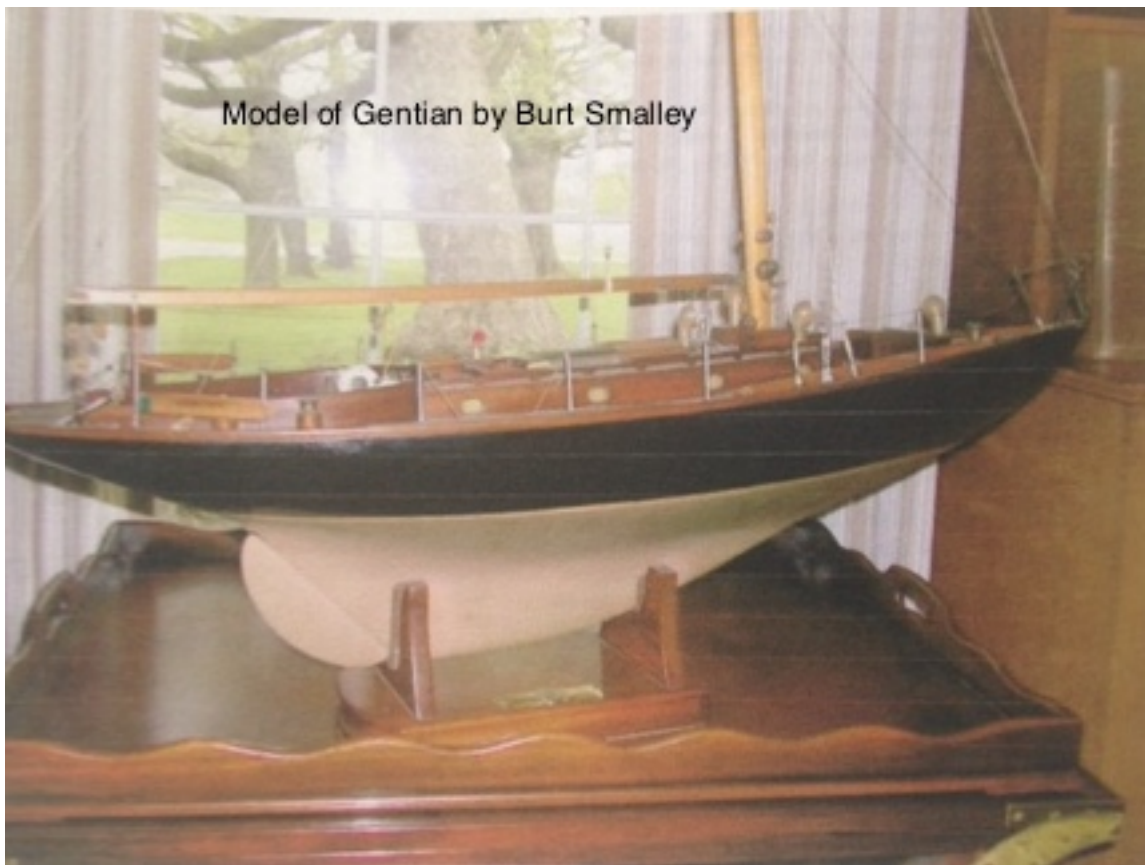
A Smalley wash day cruising *Gentian* in Little Harbor McGregor Bay.

Photo supplied by Nancy.



Nancy wrote that her father owned the boat for about eight years or so and then sold *Gentian* back to the Steuart brothers after they got back from war service. Teborek (em 2/04) wrote that Smalley sold the boat "back to Bob Steuart but the purchase was financed by Burt Smalley. Steuart defaulted on the note" probably about 1956. Both daughters described their father as a very talented wood worker. He made a model of *Gentian*, which is still in the family. He also added high cockpit combings to the NY32. Later Smalley built a Luders 40, which "looked very much like a 32 but smaller" wrote one of his daughters. This boat was named *Robin* and was the 1963 Port Huron Mackinac Race winner in Class B and overall with Jim Smalley, Burt's son (Yachting, September). While Teborek owned *Gentian*, he and Burt talked a lot about the boat recalled a daughter.





In the fall of 1945 Smalley ordered a Ratsey blue jib, genoa and mainsail (Mystic, Coll. 236, v 161). The next fall he went to Ratsey for a balloon jib and in January 1947 he ordered a spinnaker (v 162). One of the design plans (#125-C4-1) is for a mast head modification Smalley had S&S draw in 1946, that increased the size of the sheave and put in inside the mast. The revision was included while repairing the delamination of the top eight feet of the mast according to his daughter Nancy. A letter from Teborek's file dated September 1953 was a response from Arthur Gauss of the Nevins yard to Smalley about the NY32 galley hatch. It was the Lucite hatch designed by Rod Stephens, he said, which they made. It cost \$200 and the hood with canvas and fittings was an additional \$125. Gauss estimated it would take a day to install the new hatch.

For 1958, the Lloyd's Register shows *Gentian's* owner as Dr. William Wolf and she was still in Chicago. Teborek's file contained several letters between Wolf and Rod Stephens at S&S. The first is dated January 30, 1958 to say he had recently purchased *Gentian* and wished to "place her in her original condition and perhaps add modifications proven since the original design." He added that one modification that had been suggested was to increase the height of the toe rail. Wolf also asked S&S to advise him "if the *Gentian* has been designed and built for cruising Pacific waters, or what modifications are necessary to place her in that condition." He requested a complete set of drawings both to do any future repairs and to assist in building a scale model. About a

month later, Rod Stephens responded to Wolf, saying he was pleased to hear he now owned *Gentian* and that he, Rod, had owned one since 1945 (#17) finding her "ideal for coastal cruising and ocean racing." The letter says that enclosed were twelve prints of various design drawings (design #125 -3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 23, 24, 40, C10, and C15) covering deck, interior, mast with spreaders, strut and tangs, boom, sail plans (C & 1946) and spinnaker pole. The bill for these copies was \$15. Rod said that there were a number of small deck and cabin interior changes, but the only "alterations" he had made were to add about 500 pounds of ballast to the keel and extended the "foretriangle to the stem head and slightly reduce the mainsail..." He related that one of the boats "had the rail extended to a height of 3" or 4", which has a slightly beneficial effect on the rating, and, at least from an appearance standpoint, added to the freeboard." [This was most likely #3.] Rod also mentioned that several had been altered to a yawl rig, which he pointed out "could be an advantage in heavy-weather sailing" but did not think it made much difference from "a competitive standpoint." In early March, Wolf wrote back to Rod thanking him for the plans, paying his bill and proposing an interior change. He said they desired to convert the interior "into a 2 stateroom setup with the companionway opening into the cockpit" and wanted Rod's ideas on the plan. Rod responded with two additional drawings (#125-8 & 30) to show the companionway centered and leading into the cockpit (as #6 & 14 of the class were originally built). But he said he was not clear on the idea of two staterooms with this arrangement because it "makes it difficult to have any staterooms, as such." They would be glad to work out any revisions, on a cost plus basis, should Wolf wish to pursue them. No further correspondence on the subject, if made, has survived.

In July 1960 Wolf received a letter from John Meiszner, Collector of Customs Treasury Department in Chicago, regarding his request for measurement and documentation. Wolf's address was Lincolnwood, IL and not the Chicago address of the S&S correspondence. *Gentian* was identified as "39K529." Meiszner wrote that "as soon as the enrollment for this vessel is ready, we shall be happy to forward it to you." Wolf was advised to contact the Marine Division for further information. Bob Norman, who knew Wolf, as did his father, wrote (em 1/04) that he had never heard Wolf talk about sailing *Gentian* in the Pacific. He also had not heard about or seen a model of the boat. After about a year of checking around Chicago, Norman said he could not find any of the "old" crew members. Teborek wrote (em 2/04) that he had heard that Wolf had taken the boat to Palmer Johnson in Sturgeon Bay, where he had a 100hp GM diesel installed, the cockpit combing height increased and put "blonde formica throughout the interior" which eventually caused the original bulkheads to rot. When Teborek owned *Gentian*, they wanted to remove the formica and found the bulkheads "crumbled into little pieces."





Blonde formica  
main cabin

Photo Teborek, 1974

According to a bill of sale from S&S, Wolf sold the boat to Charles S Davis of Grosse Pointe, MI, in September 1963. George Woodruff, at S&S, explained in a letter (Teborek's file) to Davis, accompanying the bill of sale, that Wolf had begun the documentation process with the Chicago Customs office. He was unable to complete it while the boat was in Milwaukee because that city did not fall within the jurisdiction of the Chicago office. Woodruff said Wolf would be happy to ask the Chicago office to turn the file over to Davis if he wished to pursue the documentation.

Terry Davis, in 2007 at GSAAA, wrote that his Dad bought #18 in either 1962 or 1963 when she lay in a crib at Palmer Johnson in Wisconsin where she had apparently had sat for year or two. They had visited with a surveyor to check *Gentian* out and found dry rot in the transom, broken ribs, planking needing replacement, hull and deck needing paint.... Her interior had been changed from the original in the galley area and having pull-out berths in the main cabin with formica added. Davis had the yard work on her during the winter and spring before they arrived to sail her to her berth at the Bayview Yacht Club. When they arrived, she had two large pumps with hoses working to keep her afloat until planking swelled. After some 12 hours for both pumps, she did tighten up well. They had a wonderful sail enjoying the higher cockpit combings Smalley had added; as Terry wrote this "made her cockpit very dry and comfortable. It also was high enough to give back support when sitting or working a winch – a change that was both attractive and practical. Another on-deck change was a new attractive

forward hatch housing which curved up, allowing the hatch opening to face aft -- - therefore, the hatch could be open and a head and shoulders working out of it, without being exposed.” During the night with most of the five crew asleep, crossing the Lake from Sturgeon Bay to Leland, MI, about an 80-mile sail, Terry awoke hearing the helmsman call out seeing what he thought was a bank of storm clouds ahead. “Things immediately got very loud when my father corrected the helmsman, stating that this was not a cloud bank, calling all hands on deck to quickly jibe before we hit the beach.”

In mid-December 1963 Gilbert Wyland of S&S wrote Davis at the request of Olin Stephens concerning "leaking in the vicinity of the stem scarph on GENTIAN. If the scarph has been weakened due to the headstay load, it might be desirable to set in a heavy bronze bar formed to fit the stem bevel at the sides and thru-bolted with long countersunk bolts alternated with long wood screws."

At about the same time Rod Stephens' secretary, Geraldine Manzare, wrote to Ed Hunsader, superintendent at Palmer Johnson Boats. She explained that Rod was on Europe in business, but she had been able to obtain and was passing on the information Davis had apparently requested. She had contacted the manager of the yard where *Mustang* was kept. She wrote: "This gentleman is as familiar with MUSTANG as Mr. Stephens is and, therefore, I think you will find his recommendations helpful. He recommends No. 10 canvas for the new decking on GENTIAN on a base of Alroy #706. For paint, he recommends Alroy #711 Epoxy Marine Coating." She enclosed an Alroy brochure describing the process step-by-step. Handwritten across the bottom of the letter is "Minneford Yard" and "M. Goss". Alroy Process Corporation was on Hudson Street in New York. According to the "Technical Data Sheet" for Alroy 706 Marine Adhesive and Primer, it was "a unique adhesive for laying canvas, fiberglass and backed vinyl decking, but it is also an unsurpassable primer for coating and painting new canvas or fiberglass. Alroy 706 is non-explosive and not a nitro-cellulose." The finish coat recommended was Alroy 711 Epoxy marine coating. For an "unexcelled non-skid surface" they recommended adding "Alroy special formula non-skid powder" to a second coat of the Alroy 711. Handwritten in the margin of the non-skid paragraph is the note "Rod Jr recommends this highly, secy."

An early February letter from Rod to Davis explained that Davis had telephoned Olin in early December with his stem scarph leak questions. Rod's reply to the question told much about additions he had made to his NY32, #17

"The stem scarph near the waterline has not been a problem on my own boat but I have always been rather conservative in the backstay loading as it does not seem to make a big difference in performance.

I do have a small plate about 6" long, probably 1/8th Everdur, with reasonably large screws exactly covering the exposed portion of the scarph. I put this on when I first bought MUSTANG in 1945 and have seen no motion in this area.

Where you have had some motion, I think an effective plate would have to be considerably longer, possibly having some bosses which would

permit effective use of a few centerline thru-bolts to make an effective tension member. It should not, of course, cover the rabbit seam.

The lower scarph at the forward end of the galley has had a slight tendency to weep. I have occasionally injected compound and carefully tightened the related fastenings. It has further been supported by a husky bronze maststep which was put in during the winter of 1961-62.

I have also applied 1/8<sup>th</sup> Everdur plates to reinforce the Joint between the keel and the forward pieces of lead, half on the original casting and the other half covering the supplemental forward piece which I believe was installed in about 1937 in all of the boats. This keeps the seams smooth but, of course, has nothing to do with water-tightness though it may provide a little extra stiffness and some additional support in that way.

I hope these points will be helpful and that everything will go well with GENTIAN."

A letter in February 1964 from Rod was to Ed Hunsader about genoa track. The question asked must have been about the size of track suitable for *Gentian*. Rod wrote that "the 1" x 1/8" track is the same weight that I have on MUSTANG. It does the trick as long as a foot block is used so the track is taking only the downward component of the genoa sheet. However, on my own track I think the screws are about 5" long so they penetrate through the rail, through the plank sheer and just a little into the sheer strake." The letter was apparently a copy sent to Davis.

Skip Gmeiner (#2), secretary of the New York 32 Owner's Club, wrote to Davis in April 1964 to "officially" welcome him "aboard." He asked if Davis planned to keep her name, pointing out that there were only three -- naming *Apache*, *Ibis II* and *Gentian* -- that still had their original names. There was a fourth -- *Ragamuffin* -- then as well. Gmeiner said that the thought of seven NY32s crossing the starting line for the Mackinac Race would be pleasing to O'Donnell Iselin, the commodore and only original owner. A form to describe the boat was attached to the letter. Gmeiner's summary table from the later 1960's showed Davis the owner and *Gentian* having roller reefing and a Gray gas engine. Her topsides were light blue with a white waterline and tan deck. Her head stay was still the double one of the original rig. Her interior was white with the original two main cabin berths. Gmeiner wrote (em 5/02) that Davis raced *Gentian* out of the Bayview YC in the 1960s. He had sailed aboard her as well as raced against her many times. "In one Mackinac Race we had NY-2 Apache, NY-4 Tigress, NY-5 Vitesse, NY-6 Falcon, NY-15 Dauntless (X Sapphire) and NY-18 Gentian. What a Photo opportunity!! I now wish I had taken some pictures." It was probably the 1964 race he remembered, but in 1966 there were seven with the addition of NY-16, *Ballina*.

Teborek's file contained two additional items about *Gentian* while Davis owned her. One was an Aetna Insurance policy for period from September 1965 to September 1966. The premium was \$387 for coverage of the hull to \$18,000 (presumably her cost at purchase), liability for property damage and bodily injury of \$500,000 and medical payments to \$1000 for *Gentian*. She was to be laid up from November 15<sup>th</sup> until April

15<sup>th</sup>. The other item was a boat painting bill from Thor Ipsen from July 1967. The work was done at the BYC using three quarts of "Bills" bottom paint (\$36), two quarts of "Baltic" blue (\$9.60), one quart of "Sunprotect" varnish (\$6) and sandpaper (\$5). The labor was broken into three sections. Sand and paint bottom to boot top was \$96. Sand and paint top sides to cove strip came to \$93. Repair and varnish exterior bright work was \$100.

*Gentian* raced in her first Port Huron Mackinac Race in 1964 with "C S Davis jr" listed in the results published in the September Yachting. She finished fourteenth with five others of the class finishing ahead of her. For the 1966 Port Huron Mackinac Race *Gentian* finished seventeenth with C Davis - R Valade listed in the Yachting summaries in the September edition. There were seven NY32s racing as had in the prior years' race. In 1966, *Gentian* finished ahead of *Falcon II* and *Ballina*. In the 1968 Mackinac Race, there were again the seven racing, but *Gentian* was listed in the summaries with Hargrave Garrison (Yachting, September). In 1969 there were only six of the class listed racing. That was the first year of the Trans Superior Race of 379 miles, described as the longest freshwater race in the world. Garrison and *Gentian* raced in Class A with three other sisters and two others. *Tigress* and owner George Lyon won, both elapse and corrected time, with *Ballina* and owner Reid second and *Gentian* fourth (for more see section for #4).

Garrison worked for Ford Motor Company in 1968, having moved to Detroit from CA at the beginning of the year, according to information on an unfiled bank credit application. He had a radiotelephone operator permit granted in August 1968. Teborek's file contained a survey of *Gentian* done by marine surveyor Leslie Neesley in May 1971. She was at the Bayview YC and in commission. She was stored afloat there in the winter. The exterior had been completely refinished that spring. All the planking was found to be in good condition. Her engine was a Gray model 112 of 31 hp in "fair" condition. Her bilges were "oily and need cleaning" and there were two bilge pumps, a manual and an electric. Her stove was an alcohol one. There were two anchors and two rodes, a radio telephone, fathometer and a speedometer. Under remarks, Neesley wrote that "*Gentian's* hull is in sound condition, and is capable of resisting large seas and heavy weather. The mast and rigging need careful attention, but are basically strong and intact. The staunions need to be rebolted, and pinned to their bases." Neesley was one of the sons of the owner of #15, *Sapphire*.

An ad for *Gentian* was in the Sailing classifieds, but the page in the file is undated. One other yacht listed on the page was "new Sept 1971," the newest of those there. *Gentian* was described as in "excellent condition and well equipped." The asking price was \$15,000 and the contact was Frank Taylor of Cedarville, MI. An undated brokerage page from Irish Boat Shop Inc., David Irish president, for *Gentian*, also from Teborek's file, listed the engine as a 1964 Gray 35hp with a penned in note that it needed new rings. She could sleep seven, three in the main cabin, and the interior was formica finished. Another hand written note said all the formica was delaminating. Her sails were mostly 1966 by Boston Sailmakers. The stove was a four-burner alcohol one. There was a new aluminum spinnaker pole, a dinghy, a life raft and a winter storage

cover among various items listed. The hull was blue with a white boot top and blue bottom with white deck. Other notes written on the page said that she was sold five years ago by Charlie Davis to Hargrave Garrison. She was owned for three years and then sold because Garrison wanted a smaller boat. "1900 into last year -- wooded, refinished deck" and she also had new cushions in the cabin and aft berths according to the notes. In the top corner written in was "Frank Taylor, Taylor Lumber Co., Cedarville". There were two bills of sale dated April 19, 1973 to Ray Teborek of Chicago in his file. One was from Hargrave Garrison and the other from Frank Taylor. Teborek wrote (em 2/04) that Taylor had crewed for Garrison before buying *Gentian*. Taylor had moved to Cedarville where he ran a lumber yard and construction business. She spent time with Taylor on Mackinac Island in the summer while he was working there and was wet stored in Cedarville during the winter.

Frank Taylor in a phone conversation in 2007 when we owned *Gentian*, said he did not have any other boats, but crewed with Garrison in two Port Huron and two Chicago Mackinacs. Frank's brother was an attorney at Ford where Garrison worked. Garrison raced the boat to Mackinac and then Frank would take her to Chicago, when Garrison would arrive to race her again to Mackinac. They left her with Frank moored in Cedarville where Frank could keep an eye on her and use her too. Taylor owned a lumber yard and said he had her for three or four summers, buying her after the second one from Garrison. He listed her with Dave Irish where Ray Teborek bought her. Taylor said he wet stored *Gentian* one winter and guessed in the damp the formica started to delaminate.

The sale to Teborek began *Gentian's* documentation record. He said he had the help of a retired documentation officer who found an old file, presumably the one started by Wolf. The present abstract of title documentation for *Gentian* begins with 1973 sale to Teborek by Frank Taylor. The Great Lakes School of Wooden Boat Building picked a new site in Cedarville (St Ignace News, June 22, 2006) which included Taylor's home, although he had since sold it.

When asked why he bought a NY32 and then why he sold her, Teborek wrote (em 2/05) as follows, somewhat in general terms reminiscent of other owners.

"I learned to sail at age 10 with a neighbor who built a 28' wood ketch. He was the old fashioned sort and if you wanted to go sailing you started by working on the boat in the spring. You literally started at the bottom (sanding) and worked your way up. I did eventually reached the pinnacle and was allowed to put finish varnish on the topsides.

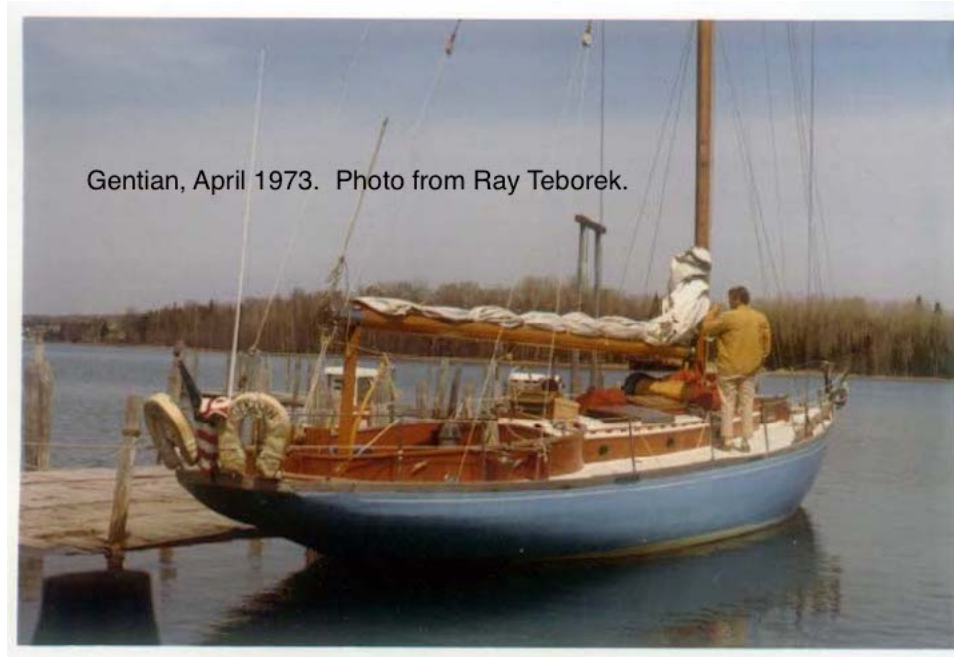
I eventually moved on and raced my own Lightning and Star all the while keeping an eye on *Gentian* sitting in the harbor. I later crewed in the Universal R fleet and various wood offshore boats. In the late 1960's I was sailing regularly on the hotter big boats in Chicago, going south for the old SORC. From 1970 to 1972 I sailed extensively on a state of the art S&S 57 footer named Charisma. Amongst the guest experts

were such people as Bill Ficker, Olin Stephens, etc. After the 1972 Bermuda Race several of us left the boat rather than go transatlantic and went en masse to Detroit to commission a brand new C&C 61 for a new owner in Detroit. The end result was that I skippered that boat for a year both North and South and we won the owner 15 trophies out of 20 starts, all while I also held down a full time job.

After the last SORC race in Nassau I was very burned out and the owner wanted to drive his own boat so we had a friendly parting. I could not imagine myself without a boat and hence started to look around. Affordability was one issue but we were hoping to find something big enough for two couples to cruise in reasonable comfort. I found *Gentian* listed with Irish Boat Shop in Harbor Springs, Michigan and the rest is history. We were initially pretty much of a budget operation but the first project was to remove the blond formica paneling that entirely covered the interior and to rebuild the interior. Fern and I were just dating when I bought the boat and got married that September. Somehow the marriage survived the winter where our only day off from restoration was Christmas day

By 1988 we had pretty much outgrown the boat because the boys were now 8 and 10 and, while they did their own sailing in sailing school it seemed that their big boat interest was mainly to have friends along for the cruises."

The harbor he had seen her in was Belmont Harbor when Smalley owned her. The documentation for *Gentian* showed that Teborek took a mortgage of \$9530 in June 1973 and satisfied that loan at a Chicago bank in January 1974 when a half interest was sold to Richard Lewis. Teborek reclaimed this interest in the boat in May 1975. Teborek explained that Dick Lewis was a long time friend who had a mooring in Chicago, but had moved his boat elsewhere. Lewis became a part owner of *Gentian* in order for her to moor in Chicago that season.



Teborek first took *Gentian* from Cedarville to Charlevoix to have her hauled and inspected the bottom. She was "robin's egg blue" then, although she had been black when Smalley owned her. *Gentian* was relaunched and moved on to Chicago. There she was hauled again and "among other things repainted dark blue" (em 6/02). They sailed *Gentian* that summer, but "never left without at least two garbage bags of formica" (em 5/02). He wrote that Wolf had the formica installed by Palmer Johnson, but it trapped moisture, especially with wet storage. That winter Teborek said they removed all of it. They "fit new bulkheads and completely stripped and refinished the interior. I had doors and drawers made since the originals would not dry out sufficiently to open and many of the drawer fronts had been replaced with pine which had rotted." With the interior apart, he said he did not see broken frames. They refinished the interior in white and varnish. Other winter projects at various times included adding covering boards and new toe rails, deck recanvassing twice, cabin house top recanvassed once and building a new main cabin skylight like her old one. In the late 1970s when they were primarily cruising with their young sons, Teborek replaced the tiller with an Edson wheel. At the same time, he replaced the round roller furling boom with a shorted rectangular one. He said that the original boom was apparently swapped for the roller furling one in the 1950s. Teborek removed the hyfield levers from the running back stays and added two small winches instead.

*Gentian's* first Chicago Mackinac Race since those she did with Smalley was in 1978. Teborek said that their 1973 season was devoted to finding out what kind of shape the boat was in and how she handled.

"After that season a group of us that used to race regularly together on other boats said that, if everything came

together, we would do the Mac. That did not happen until 1978. The "everything" included a seaworthy mother's helper for our 6-month old son Kevin for the cruise back.

The race itself was not one of the easier ones. The start was a 20 knots plus dead run with the boom regularly rolling into the lake with the wind gradually shifting to a 25-35 knot beat. That was followed by 24 plus hours of almost dead calm and glassy lake (not exactly 32 weather). All on board had agreed to two basic objectives. First, we were going to race against the best there was (under the IOR rule rather than the local rating rule (again, not 32 friendly) and, second, to beat at least one other boat. We exceeded both goals by a small margin. The following winter one of the crew collected all of the race pictures and gave us an album, complete with appropriate comments." (em 2/05)

When Teborek bought *Gentian* her engine was a Gray model 4- 112. Early in 1976 Teborek wrote S&S for propeller and hatch information. David Pendrick replied to Teborek, at a Northern Trust Company address, with the calculated propeller size for the Gray engine, a 20" x 13" one. He supplied several plans to help with the hatch question, including "Type Plan No. 68 from Rod's New York 32", and three others from other designs. Teborek wrote that this engine

"met its end while cruising in about 1979 when the block cracked and we sailed into the dock in Sheboygan, Wisc. A local fellow by the name of Peter Kronich (still a friend) sent us to Oshkosh to buy an Atomic 4 from the factory. Then he and I installed it in a day and a half at the Sheboygan Y C boatyard after Peter returned from the Port Huron Mac Race. After about 5 days in Sheboygan we completed our cruise. I replaced the Atomic 4 over the winter of 1987-88 out of concern about the conversion to unleaded fuel. That engine change was done by Eldean Shipyard in Macatawa, Michigan where we were storing the boat at the time. The engine that I installed is the one that is in the boat now. I sold the boat in the Spring of 1988 and therefore had not heard the engine run until last summer." (em 2/04)

Teborek stopped in Castine while on business in Bar Harbor and attending a wedding nearby in 2006. We invited him aboard for a sail and a pleasant visit.

The last engine installed in *Gentian* was a Westerbeake 30hp diesel. Her next owners were Larwrence Kilduff and James Celano III, partners in real estate development ventures in WI, who bought her in April. Teborek said he had heard that *Gentian* went hard aground-- on her side in shallow water -- while Kildruff and Celano owned her. He noted broken frames as well as a new rudder when he later saw her in an airplane hanger in Kenosha.



Jim Celano wrote (em 4/07) that he had good memories of *Gentian* while he and his partner, Larry Kilduff owned her. He said that Larry was "an expert sailor " and knew *Gentian* 's history. Kilduff wrote (em 4/07) that he knew George Nichols Jr as a "friend/employer/wonderful man" and heard her history from him. Kilduff was the sailing master of the *Regina Maris* and executive director of Ocean Research and Educational Society, established in 1974 by the younger Nichols, who later owned #10 of the class. "Apparently NYYC was having trouble filling out the initial order of 20 NY32s needed to get the class started and built and leaned on George's dad ... among others ... to get the deal done." Kilduff said he sailed on boats of sizes from Sunfish to Barkentine "and made a habit of keeping them off the bottom." He did not recall any grounding hard enough to do damage to the rudder. One of their real estate ventures was the Pararie Cove Marina which had a sandy bottom where *Gentian* got stuck once, but with no damage. The abstract of title showed that while they owned her, *Gentian* was mortgaged twice. Once to the Lasalle National Bank in June 1989 for \$25,000 that was satisfied in October 1991. The second was with the Heritage Bank and Trust in September 1991 for \$35,000 and satisfied in November 1994.

In 1990 *Gentian* was for sale through a Classic Yacht Association broker in St. Joseph, MI when George Vosburgh looked at her. She was out of the water in Waukegan, IL and needed deck work (em 4/05). Vosburgh said when he looked at *Gentian*, he had been sailing on Lake Michigan for about ten years with the same crew. They made deliveries mostly back to Chicago from Mackinac Island after the race. He said he had always loved wooden boats and had decided to find one for himself. Vosburgh said he "loved the boat" but knew she needed lots of work. Instead of taking on *Gentian* and her much needed work, he took a new job in Pittsburg, PA. He saved the brokerage sheet though. It showed that *Gentian* had accommodations for seven, a three burner gimballled alcohol stove/oven, refrigerator, four berths in the main cabin with paneled mahogany and white painted bulkheads. Her electronics included windspeed and apparent wind indicators, depth sounder, barometer, loran, VHF and compass. She also had a cradle. There were eight sails which included Dacron Sobstad main and 150% genoa. The asking price was \$55,000.

Miles Lowry wrote (em 1/06) that ten or so years earlier he "stepped foot on *Gentian* as she listed in the waters of Lake Michigan. I recall going below, smelling the mildew and feeling her soft partners below the mast step." She was for sale through Larsen Marine, but kept at North Point Marine. Lowry said he made an offer, but it was refused. Some friends of his remembered racing on her from Belmont Harbor in the 1970s and 1980s. "My strongest memory of her was the smell and two marvelous items - a HUGE binnacle and compass and some incredible teak work on the settees." The tall binnacle with the compass was just forward of the wheel and supported other electronics.

Patrick Matthiesen looked at *Gentian* in January 1994 at Larsen Marine in Waukegan, IL. His NY32 files contained the Larsen brokerage pages as well as one from Sterling Yacht Sales in Mystic CT. Neither of these brokerage offices had dated the pages and there are some interesting differences in the information they contained. Sterling's, for example, listed the galley with a two burner gimballled alcohol stove and a

Norcold 12 volt refrigerator, but Larsen's did not have refrigeration checked and only described the stove as having alcohol fuel. They agreed on the types and number and age of the sails, but Sterling said they were Murphy and Nye, while Larsen said they were Sobstad. They agreed on the wheel steering and the Stearns roller furling. Sterling gave her location as Winthrop Harbor, IL, which is just north of Waukegan on the state border. The price they listed was \$59,000. One of the brokerages pages from Larsen Marine had the price originally typed in at \$49,000, but crossed out and then written in at \$42,900, which was also crossed out. Another Larsen page, probably from a later date, listed the price as \$39,500. The Larsen pages had been faxed to Matthiesen by Harvey Caplin in December 1993 with a note on the cover page. The note included some "items not on the spec sheets. It is not an estate sale, but very seriously for sale. She has a wheel, raised bulwarks, new boom. She is ashore. Deck recanvassed 1991. I know there are some cracked frames aft. I will try to learn of other defects."

After his visit to *Gentian*, Matthiesen wrote Caplin about his findings and feelings about the boat. Matthiesen lived in London. Matthiesen, after thanking Caplin for showing him *Gentian*, wrote that

"she has the potential for being quite lovely and is around the size and very close to the type of yacht I am looking for, e.g., both vintage and graceful. Quality of build and condition are very high on my priority list. The problem with a boat like *Gentian* is that she has to be in pretty good state to start with or the cost of restoration outruns the intrinsic value. Where the overrun is not too substantial one can subordinate this to one's passion for the boat. In a case like the NY 32 its intrinsic value on the market today in reasonably sound [though not exaggerated "museum" condition] fully equipped with recent gear and sails is somewhere around the \$50000 mark. I say this with some authority as I looked at a 1947 design derivative of the NY32, double planked and more strongly built and in near immaculate condition and the asking price is \$60000. I used her as a comparison as she is of identical size though different interior layout."

To look at *Gentian*, he said he had to break through the ice and snow, only had two hours and did not see the mast and rigging or sails. But he followed with some sixteen "details all of which need attention." These included --

" The covering boards and rail have been renewed but have been bedded in pounds of synthetic compound ('Bondo') to make them watertight. This will make future removal difficult. .... The decks were recanvassed instead of covered in Dynol laid on epoxy which will mean they will require redoing within roughly 5 years.

House varnish neglected and mahogany blackened and will require bleaching.

Bow anchor winch missing (removed when redecked?)

Outside of hull: it was difficult to examine this carefully because of the weather but the hull is showing its seams badly and is not totally

fair. Seams have been filled with semi elastic compound which has shrunk and loosened. ALL seams above and below w.l. require total cleaning out..... Two planks forward starboard side may need renewal because of softening. There were other apparent areas of surface softening which might be treated by wooding respective areas and treating with WEST epoxy system.

The counter transom is splitting and detaching and will require relaminating and rebuilding.

Starboard carlin to aft cabin hatch rotted through.

The bilge area, strappings, most floors, frame heels and garboards, as well as bronze floors and frame straps & keelson, seemed in very fair state from a brief examination. There appeared no sign of electrolysis. All the wiring and cabling running through the bilge is untidy tangled, much is old and should be condemned. The boat should be totally rewired .... The whole bilge area was badly in need of thorough scrubbing, priming and painting

Several frames near the aft quarters require sistering on the turn of the bilge (not unusual)

Mast step. This is in poor condition and almost certainly requires immediate renewal with one of longer and stronger design to prevent racking of hull and straining garboards. Ideally it should be replaced with a monel step with wishbones connecting laterally to chainplates or at least 18 ins up the hull through bolted.

General: Both the galley and the toilet are pretty shabby though functioning. .... much of the interior paint work will require burning off and recoating.

The boat is far from being a wreck but money has clearly been spent on certain items like new stemhead fittings in ss. but not on others. At a labour rate of \$15 per hour if contracted to a self-employed shipwright the boat could probably be put into pretty good state for around \$35000. At yacht yard rates this would rise to some \$80000+ and render proper restoration impractical."

Matthiesen speculated on his options for the needed restoration work locations. He listed three -- shipping *Gentian* as deck cargo to England, trucking her to Maine, or taking her to Toronto or Kingston, Canada -- with cost questions for each unknown and the impracticality of supervising long distance work of the kind needed. He closed the letter with the observation that "unless I have overestimated the costs the boat would end up costing more than one of her derivatives (mentioned above) in near perfect condition." He asked to be kept up dated on any developments, but heard nothing further. In March 1996 Matthiesen, in his capacity as the Wooden Hull Secretary of the S&S Association, wrote to Skip Gmeiner with the hope of persuading him and other NY32 owners to join the S&S Association. At that time, he said that *Ice Fire*, in Italy, was a member as was *Sirius*, owned by an American member but berthed at City Island. In this letter, Matthiesen told of looking at a two NY32s when for sale -- *Gentian* and *Ibis* -- but said

he had bought the S&S yawl *Inverness* in 1994. "I miss the grace of the NY 32s, although probably my boat has a higher performance and certainly more accommodation."

In November 1994, Kilduff and Celano sold *Gentian* to David and Kathryn Korn of West Allis, WI according to the bill of sale and abstract of title. Korn said that he had reviewed the work needed on her with Kilduff. Korn felt it was he rather than his wife or his partner, Celano, who wanted to sell the boat. Kilduff seemed to want to move into further property developments rather than take on the expense of any restoration.

In emails (6/02, 5/06) Korn described *Gentian* sitting in her cradle at the Larsen yard in Waukegan as "graceful and sleek." He said he had "always yearned for a wooden sailing vessel that had such a nice counter and stem and elegant lines. I had always admired S&S styling in that era. It was rare a sailing vessel indeed, that was both S&S and Nevins and, so close." Korn said that the original asking price for *Gentian* was \$64,000, to which he said he "laughed." The price was quickly reduced to \$32,500. He wrote.

"I laughed some more... and this got the owner a little upset... oooooops... My reply to him was that this was a project and was something I didn't need to do...only if the price was right, since I knew it would take a lot of my effort, time and money. About 2 weeks later the broker called me and said \$16,000 was the lowest price. I wished them luck in finding a buyer and walked away from the yacht. About a week later... I received a call from the broker asking me to take it for just the cost of the outstanding balance to the yard which was \$8400. They wanted this off of their books at the end of the season."

Korn brought the broker a bank check and became *Gentian's* new owner. He said he went out and bought some tarps and line and covered her up for the winter. During the winter, he would drive down to Waukegan a few nights each week and every weekend to work on removing her interior. In the spring, he had the boat trucked to his airplane hanger at the Kenosha, WI airport. The hanger was the climate controlled environment where he worked sanding and scraping the hull and removing and cataloguing the interior. He said that there was enough room left in the hanger to inspect his customer's airplanes as necessary. The mast was left in the Larsen Marine mast house with the idea that they would repair and refinish it during the last year of *Gentian's* restoration. Korn said he had experience restoring vintage race cars as well as aircraft and approached the work on *Gentian* in the same manner.

Korn said he had hired some interested and skilled high school and college age helpers, but he thoroughly enjoyed doing the work himself. Once he removed the ceiling, though, and saw that most of the frames had multiple cracks, he knew the added extent of the work needed would not please his wife. Her health problems had initially made him hesitant about buying *Gentian* with all the work she needed, but Korn said she had been interested and helped with some of the early disassembling of the interior. He said she demanded he get rid of the boat, although he hoped to find a yard that would

take the work on as a long-term project. In October 1997, the Korns sold *Gentian* to Thorpe Leeson from Newport, RI. At that time Leeson also owned *Vitesse* (#5). Korn explained that

" I basically just donated her to Mr. Leeson...never received a dime for her, because of the pressure from my wife to just get rid of the boat or she was going to sell it for scrap as the engine wasn't too old and the lead would have had some value. I could never do this to *Gentian*. So the best thing to do was to try and find someone to just take her off my hands who could give her the love and care she truly needed..."



The Korn's next boat was a Cigarette boat that the now ex-wife insisted upon them buying. Korn described it as a "historically significant vessel" which ended up needing new engines and other work. Most recently he was looking at a 6-meter located in Palm Beach, FL offered by Cannell, Paine and Page.

Among Patrick Matthiesen's files is a note from Thorpe Leeson dated November 1997. He wrote that he owned three S&S designed yachts. *Gentian* had recently been trucked from the Chicago area to Newport. He was awaiting *Vitesse* (#5) to arrive from the Norfolk, VA area. The third was the "original Loki yawl 'LOKI' that he described as a "lovely boat that needs only cosmetics. The NY32s are in need of restoration." Leeson went on later in the note to say "should you know anyone looking for some good

classic boats I am always interested in selling or trading. I have spent a lifetime owning classic things especially boats. I have owned over 30."

It wasn't until spring 2002 that Korn saw a NY32 mast and original size boom. It was *Tenderly's* (#10) at Dutch Wharf in Branford, CT. He had flown a company jet into Groton, CT. While there, having heard that she was for sale, he arranged to visit the boat yard. Korn wrote that she

"had a loooooong boom ..... And I did see her mast .....WOW....65 ft is pretty long when you see it lying horizontally in the masthouse. Sadly, she is in the middle of some rather nasty litigation between the yard owner, a Mr. Paul Jacques and the current owner over some repair work done to her. There was even a WARNING: US Marshall's Seizure of Property sign posted on her, just above the keel on the aft starboard side. Mr. Jacques said that *Tenderly* was to be auctioned some time in the near future and was hopeful that the new owner would let his yard do the restoration."

Korn said he was told by the yard owner that a new owner was looking at an estimated 3500 to 6000 hours of work at \$45 per hour there. But he was kept at a distance and did not get to look closely at her. According to information from Mitch Neff at that time the asking price was \$25,000 and the yard bills amounted to some \$17,000.

A few years later, Korn had a flight to Providence, RI and went to Newport to see the International Yacht Restoration School (IYRS). While there he said he noticed

"what looked like a NY32 sitting in a fenced area of 'donated project boats.' I found out it was *Ragamuffin* .... After meeting with some of their management and trying to get some info how to buy/sponsor her restoration they were real distant... It seemed all they wanted was to teach people how to work on those Beetle Cats. I told them I could sponsor her as a second year project and pay 50,000 - 75,000 per year until she was done after undergoing a through survey and a detailed project schedule was drafted so I knew what the finite time/money would be. They didn't seem interested in this at all. ... They were more interested in talking to me about sponsoring a huge project they just acquired called *Coronet*."

Leeson wrote (em 2/05) that he had seen a sign in a Martha's Vineyard boat yard saying that Korn wanted to give *Gentian* away. At the time he owned another NY32 *Vitesse*. "I wasn't really looking for a 32 but I have spent most of my adult life rescuing old boats. Many of them being S&S. ... I am actually not a big fan of 32's. The cockpit is uncomfortable. ... Running backstays are a pain as well..." He said he had seen two others in very poor shape -- one in Port Townsend, WA and another in Tarpon Springs, FL. They were #13 and #11, respectively. Leeson said he had sailed several times on *Salty* (#9). Leeson owned *Gentian* for two years before selling her to Lawrence Anderson III. Anderson took the boat and rig to his back yard in Guilford, CT, where he

planned to work on her. His future plan (pers com 3/02) was to have two of the class so he could charter them for match races or company outings on the Sound. The second he was looking at was *Tenderly*.

In April 2002, *Gentian* changed owners for the thirteenth time since her first sale from Nichols to Abbott. She has recently been tied for this many owners by *Ragamuffin* (#7). The only other of the class to keep her name through all owners is *Apache* (#2), but with the fewest owner changes. An online ad from Authentic Yacht Brokerage with offices in Ottawa, Canada and Guilford, CT brought the information to the Rogers family that *Gentian* was for sale in CT. The asking price was \$19,500 according to the revised brokerage information of late February. The boat was in Anderson's back yard together with her mast and boom as well as a variety of other small boats. *Gentian* was uncovered and in places light was visible through her planking. Her interior was empty forward with frames showing. The removed parts, including head sink, companionway ladder, tiller, locker and cabinet doors, trim pieces, stove (a two-burner alcohol Shipmate), berth frames, etc, were stacked inside. The engine was still in place. Her deck had spots of rotten or soft areas and the exterior varnish, unlike that on the interior main cabin house, was mostly gone. There was a box of labeled photographs depicting the interior removal and what pieces came from where. Although her mast had been supported off the ground, it seemed that the supports had all collapsed at the same rate, leaving it essentially resting on the ground, but in one piece. The berth cushions and sails were stored in Anderson's basement. The sails were a mix of Boston and Sobstad. The old mainsail was a Boston as was a jib and the mainsail cut down to fit the shorter boom was a Sobstad along with a genoa. She had a roller furling jib. Many of her bronze fittings had been chromed.

The Rogers' had heard that another, *Tenderly*, was also for sale in CT and had made arrangements with Mitch Neff, S&S president and *Falcon* crew member, to see her at the same time. She was in Branford with an asking price of \$25,000. Her interior was still intact and pretty much original according to Neff. But she needed structural work which would probably require some of it to be removed. However, the Rogers' never got to look at *Tenderly* because the US Marshall seized her and Neff's message was not to come, "she's been arrested." With *Tenderly* unavailable and the interior already removed from *Gentian* so work could be started, they bought #18. She plus her stands and the mast and boom, on two separate trailers, were trucked to Rollins Boat Shop in York, ME. (Yard rates in ME were \$10-15 lower than the CT \$45 ...) Two others of the class had spent some time with Rollins and the yard would allow the owners to work on their boat. When ready for the water *Gentian* made her way to Castine, ME where *Falcon* (#6) was already moored.

Up until that time, the Rogers' largest sailboat was a J24. They raced her in local PHRF races in Castine and sailed in Penobscot Bay. They had a variety of other small boats as well, including a Whitehall, a recent build by their youngest son, Ben, who was about to graduate from high school. The family had been talking about getting a larger sailboat for a few years. Of the many choices, it always came down to a Concordia or a NY32. Living in Castine, there was one of each in the harbor to get to know. Both sons

had sailed aboard each of them, one mostly on the NY32 and the other aboard the Concordia. The family already had an interest in working on boats and some experience working on their own. Looking at *Gentian*, it was clear she had not been in the water for years. But they felt they had the resources and talent to help her back to sailing. And she could race *Falcon* as she had done on the Lakes, which would please that owner too.



In her first season back sailing, *Gentian* won the Eggomoggin Reach Race and had a wonderful race with two sisters -- *Falcon* and *Siren* -- through the Deer Isle Throrofare on the way to Wooden Boat in Brooklin, ME. It was their own race within another race. The three sisters have had several interesting summer classic races together in Penobscot Bay since then. *Gentian* also cruised with family members during the season in the Bay.



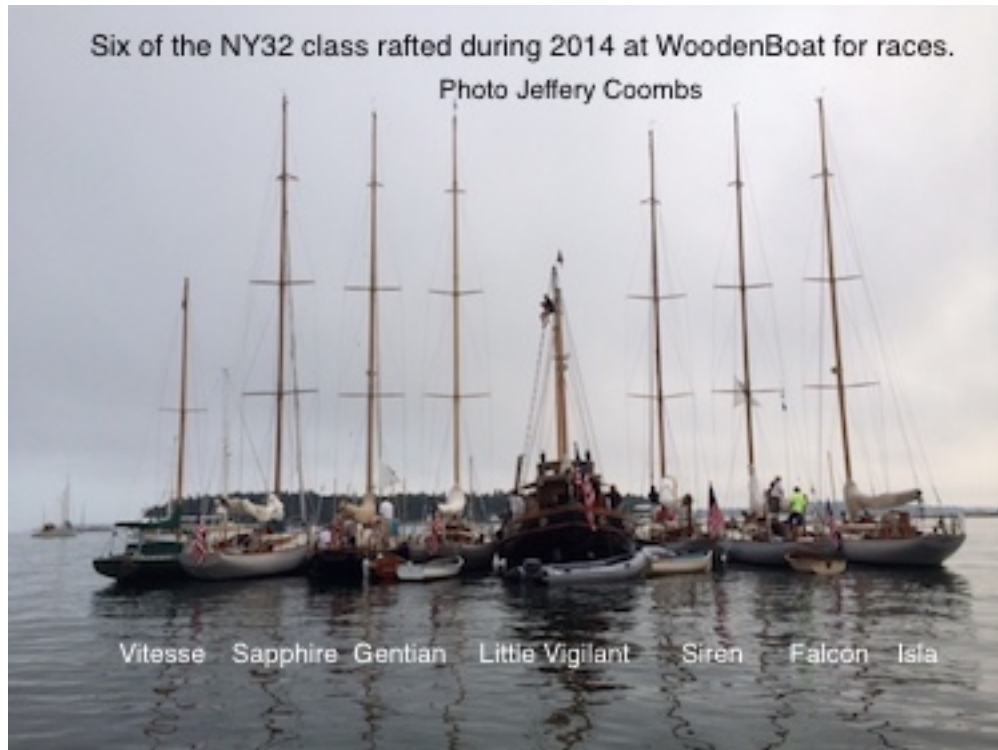


In April 2004, *Gention* narrowly missed going up in flames when a fire consumed a work shop in the Rogers' driveway where she was stored. Her aft port side sustained most of the fire damage. The family did the work with one son making the planks and guiding the project for the rest to help. They replaced four planks plus the sheer, toe rail, and a small section of the cabin house side as well as taking out the interior ceiling in the port aft area to reach the butt blocks. They had modified the interior design from the original to move the head forward and the galley area aft to the companionway port side and it was still a 'work in progress.' *Gention* was launched in July that year and raced against her sisters and others in August. In the November 2006 Sail, Cory Silken captured *Gention* racing in Castine Harbor during the class' 70<sup>th</sup> year celebration. She gets warm wishes, admiring gazes and comments like "nice lines", "like to see all that varnish again", or "a beauty" wherever she goes.

In 2010, the Rogers' family decided that, although they love their NY32, they were not around as much as they liked to enjoy sailing or racing aboard. She was for sale. By the fall of 2011, she had found a new owner, Richard Armstrong. She moved to MA near another sister, *Siren*. Here *Gention*, with Richard wanting a finished more original interior rather than the Rogers' 'work in progress' one, over the winter had Buzzard's Bay Yacht Services work to make the interior just right. She, now light grey, returned to Penobscot Bay for the classic boat races each year. All agree Armstrong did an amazing job completing *Gention*'s restoration and were happy to have his *Little Vigilant* along at WoodenBoat for the classic Eggomoggin Reach Race in August.

During the 2013 sailing season, Ben Sperry sailed *Gention* for Armstrong. Ben is part of Sperry Sails in Marion, MA, who did all of her new sails to fit the original rig

when the Rogers' took her on. Sperry wrote recently that he and his family took *Gentian* on "full time" in the 2015 sailing season." But Sperry said he thought Armstrong "found she didn't fit his lifestyle..." It worked out that *Gentian* is now part of the Sperry family. They cruise weekends with their young family, race the "Wednesday night beer can racing out of New Bedford Yacht Club." They have also raced *Gentian* in Nantucket regattas, Opera House Cup, Whalers Race and Vineyard Cup among other local races. Of course, they all with *Siren* and *Isla* come to Castine for the classic yacht racing each season with *Little Vigilant* as well.



Any questions, corrections, more information, please contact me – am happy to see all

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Notes -- Mystic Coll. are among the Manuscript Collections at Mystic Seaport  
-- Rosenfeld photos are housed at Mystic Seaport  
-- Levick photos are housed at the Mariners' Museum

