

Ratsey & Lapthorn Ltd. established a branch loft in 1902 on City Island at the Jacobs Shipyard. In an interview (Mystic, OH 88-16), Colin Ratsey related that his father and grandfather were brought to the US by "Mr. Vanderbilt and Mr. Morgan" because Ratsey & Lapthorn were the only sailmakers with the Egyptian cotton they desired for their J-boat sails. George Ratsey came in 1903 with a short letter of introduction from his uncle and partner Thomas Ratsey at the Cowes loft. In it Thomas wrote that George had mastered the "art of an up to date yacht sail manufacturer.... Any orders which American Gentlemen may entrust to our Firm will be equally as well carried out by him as myself." (Mystic, Coll. 236)

A Ratsey & Lapthorn sales book for 1902-1903 (Mystic, Coll. 236, v89) had among the first entries one for May, 1902, of J Pierpoint Morgan's order for *Corsair* covers, mizzen, foresail, straps, snaps of \$765.50 that included delivery of \$25. J P Morgan was the NYYC commodore for 1897-1899. Farther on was noted \$5598.78 for Cornelius Vanderbilt's *Rainbow* sails. She was one the four NYYC 70-footer class built by Herreshoff in 1900. This was Cornelius Vanderbilt III, who became the NYYC commodore for 1906-1908. A copy book (v50, p227) listed accounts paid in September that included the Vanderbilt amount. Also among the accounts listed then was Perry Chubb's for \$4268 and Ratsey & Lapthorn, Cowes of \$8210. Another copy book (v51) contained outgoing letters from April 4 to September 1902 either signed by Thomas Ratsey or stamped with his signature. In a letter of April 4th, he described the new sail loft, "which is a magnificent structure the largest private loft by far in the world, 2 floors, 175 by 50ft besides the basement, well on towards completion." Further on Ratsey relates that "we cut out sails and sail covers for Mr Pierpont Morgan's yacht "Corsair". A good man to start with was it not? Were we not lucky? We are making some new sails for "Vigilant""(p24) A letter to Perry Chubb (Williams St, NYC) on April 26 told him that *Vigilant*'s main sail and mizzen could be delivered whenever he wanted.

An April 11th letter to Ratsey & Lapthorn, Cowes speaks about Hayward's Brown Egyptian (BE) and their earlier order. "Labor is so expensive here, it will be better in future to have all heavy cloth made in 18 in. so if it is not too late, the 3500 yards of No. 0 which we ordered a week or two back by letter to you, had better be 3000 yards of 18 in. instead of 3500 yards in 15 in. Of course this will be with the heavy weft, but the 3500 yards of No. 0 -15 in. which we ordered of Hayward before I left England was to be made in the old fashioned style. That is with the ordinary size weft and it will not, therefore, do for America and must be kept for home use." Ratsey continues that they have orders and is pleased with the staff and mentions getting sewing machines from England. He noted that *Corsair* would sail the following week for Cowes and South Hampton, but that her covers "only got one coat of paint and could get redressed ..." Later in April was the news that the loft had 15 sailmakers

working, 3 lady machinists, 3 boys, 3 laborers and 2 Britons besides the office staff, but that he (Ratsey) had to "help with the cutting out and making seams"

A shift for some sails from BE to American cotton was noted among some correspondence related to a new main sail order for *Weetamoe* for Henry Lippett. A July 10, 1902 letter said it would be "No. 4 cotton duck \$816 completed for 7/26. We are using No. 4 Lowell duck as we are inclined to think the American Cotton will stand the change of climate somewhat better than the Brown Egyptian Cotton" This yacht was a Gardiner design of 85feet overall with 5000 sqft of sail built in bronze. A letter to Lippett on September 15th pointed out that the American cloth cost was "rather more" than BE even with the duty paid. But they would do the sails at the same price as the BE for the American Cotton -- "American Lowell duck has a greater density than English BE but the same weight Think Amer duck take the climate better..." September 10th was a letter to Ratsey & Lapthorn, Cowes to say 'they' were coming "home on the "St.Louis" sailing on the 23rd..... We have still more than we can do for the number of hands we have. The "Rainbow's" mainsail is admired by every one. No such sail had ever been seen on a 70 Footer before. Just cabled you for some 72's - 15" & 18" ordinary which I trust you will be able to send by this week's steamer. Yours truly, Thom W Ratsey."



George Ratsey bought land adjacent to the Nevins yard in 1919 and by 1929 had extended the floors of his loft there to accommodate the J-class mainsails. At this time Thomas' family remained in charge of the Cowes loft and the Lapthorn's at the Gosport loft. The New York (City Island) loft was George's. Ernest, his oldest son, joined the loft in 1919 and his younger son, G. Colin, joined in 1924. Classic Sails by William Collier (1998) is the story of Ratsey and Lapthorn sailmakers, established in 1790 in England, on both sides of the Atlantic. The Mystic Seaport houses a collection (#236) of the Records of Ratsey & Lapthorn. These are books and ledgers from the City Island loft, where the business was incorporated in 1927. In

addition to making and caring for sails, the loft made covers, awnings and provided rigging work. The Ratsey loft's motto was "There is to be only one standard of work in this loft and that is the best."

America's Cup races 1914-1937 and some good times for this sailmaker ...

The America's Cup challenges began in 1851 when the yacht *America* sailed across the Atlantic to join the race around the Isle of Wight. She won and brought the "old mug" trophy home to the NYYC for future challenge defenses. She had sails made in America of 'local' cotton. There were nine challenges by English yachtsmen until Sir Thomas Lipton's first *Shamrock* in 1899. He supported five challenges with his last in 1930, losing to *Enterprise*. In 1901, the racing was between Lipton's *Shamrock II* and J. Pierpont Morgan's *Columbia* representing the NYYC. The 1903 challenge by *Shamrock III* was defeated by Cornelius Vanderbilt III and *Reliance*. A 1914 challenge by *Shamrock IV* was postponed by World War I. There were two NYYC yachts, *Resolute* and *Vanitie*, that raced in trials for the postponed 1914 match. *Resolute* defended against *Shamrock IV* in the match in 1920. Lipton's last challenge was for 1930 when *Enterprise* and Harold Vanderbilt successfully defended for the NYYC. The 1934 match was between *Rainbow* and *Endeavor* and the 1937 match was *Ranger* besting *Endeavor II*. These last races of 1930-1937 were the famous J-boats (40-metres). When the America's Cup racing began again in 1958, it was among the 12-metre yachts.

Ratsey & Lapthorn sail estimate books, show how sail maker & builder worked together...

The \$10,500 building cost at the Nevins yard for the NYYC one design class in 1936 included a mainsail, working jib, Genoa and spinnaker by Ratsey & Lapthorn. Within the collection of records of Ratsey & Lapthorn (#236 with all volume referenced; and hereafter Ratsey) the original estimates for these sails, as well as the other sails ordered by the various owners of this new class, can be found. This collection contains data on the sails of and orders by owners of many other classes including stock sails for the comet, snipe, star and other one design classes as well as the organization of the business itself. All of the sail estimate entries are dated at least to month and year with yacht owner and usually yacht name or designer given. In general, for a new design, a sail estimate was identified by the designer, while estimates for an existing design were identified by the owner. For existing design estimates, reference was often made back to the original estimate page. Through the years after the launching of the NY32-footers many of the original owners and then the new owners of the boats had estimates and/or orders for new sails from Ratsey, either when their sails became worn out or when the designs or materials changed or boats were sold. In later years as the boats moved away from LIS and other lofts were established, owners reasonably bought from lofts nearer their sailing waters. Perhaps a measure of an owner's interest in racing a NY32, or any yacht, was/is how often new sails were purchased.

The NYYC one design 32-foot class was not the first class where Ratsey and Nevins had worked together nor the last. Two earlier examples of how Ratsey worked with the designer or the builder or interested yachtsmen on sail estimates come from 1912 and 1920 collaborations. In 1912 the Bayside Yacht Club had six Bayside Birds built. William Gardner designed this one-design class (The Rudder, December 1911) with a gaff rig. His design was 27.9' x 17.9' x 7' x 2.6' with a 1200-pound ballast. No builder is mentioned in The Rudder article for this design, although it does say that similar one design classes -- 14 Islip YC and 15 Larchmont YC -- were built at the Jacobs yard on City Island. Ratsey & Lapthorn estimated costs for the 350 square feet of sails for Mr Gardiner in November 1912 (Mystic, Coll. 236, v107). The tabulated estimate calculation shows the main and jib at \$50 plus \$6 for mainsail cover and a dollar each for spinnaker bag, jib hanks and sail ties. A spinnaker was included at \$13 for a net reported "by Mr. Levathan of \$72.... Very keen competition with Botcher + Griffin. Botcher was \$10 less and Griffin \$10 more so I think we shall get order. Told Mr. Gardner that price should include # & bird sewn onto sail in red material." A note written along the edge says "If sails are made of red canvas price to be increased \$15." A later estimate in December, 1912 for six spinnakers was quoted to Mr. Gardner's office at \$15 each. A note on the " Bayside ODC" appears dated January 1913 (v 108). It reads "Outfit as before: Quoted Mr Nevins \$72 to 80 but left the amount entirely with him to get us what he could. Mr N mentioned if he obtained \$75 would we be satisfied and we told him we would do anything we could to help him obtain the order. The whole thing is practically left in his hands." According to information of the Nevins yard, each was built for \$400, but that did not say what amount was for the sails.

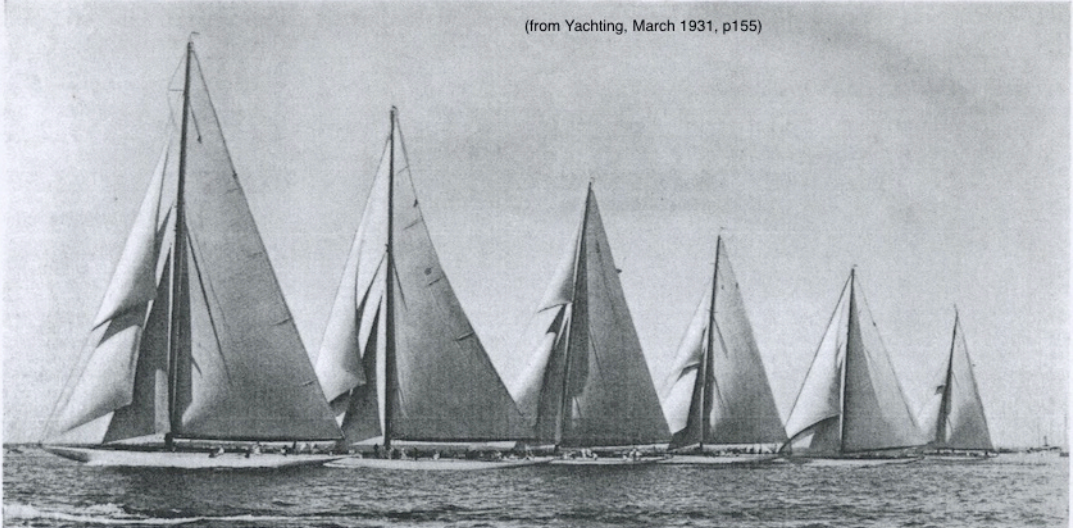
In 1920 the Larchmont Yacht Club commissioned Nevins to build 20 of William Gardner's design for the Victory one-design class. This class was to honor victory and the end of World War I as well as the yachtsmen who served in that War. Here, Ratsey was estimating for one of the principal organizers of the class. The estimate for Victory class sails was made for Junius Morgan in September 1920 and the original (v110) revised because "Mr Morgan says too high." The estimates included a mainsail with battens and slides, a jib and snap hooks and a spinnaker. The original estimate was a net of \$410 using brown Egyptian (BE) material for main and jib, which was then revised in October to add to \$377.50, but that was crossed out and "327.50" written next to the column. On this page is also written "If make of white material " and the amount "\$355 " also crossed out and "295" written over it. An additional estimate from October 20, 1920 for the same set of sails in BE shows a total of \$307.50 with a note "\$248 Imported white material". Another note says "Oct 30 Mr Morgan ordered 11 suits BE - \$307.50." The rate that changed the estimate most appears to be that charged for labor from \$2.25 to \$1.50 per yard on the mainsail and jib. These examples offer insights that suggest the NY32 estimate changes (see below) were not unusual, especially if Ratsey wanted the business.

Ratsey financials during the Depression years ...

Table R-1 --Ratsey financial information for 1928-1938 in dollars. Source is Ratsey collection 236, accounts for 1928-1935. Accountant was Mackay,Irons & Co, NY and Dundee, Scotland (= source1). Ratsey's fiscal year was September 1 to August 31. There were no audits available in this collection after 1935 until 1942.												
	1928	1929	1930	1931*	1932	1933	1934	1935 **	1936	1937	1938	
									(v70)	(v70)	(v70)	
Gross profit on trading (1)	204,387	260,404	615,759	138,489	70,268	89,990	207,106	130,875				
Administration salaries (1, unless v70 for the year)												
George Ratsey P	23,147	33,089	68,398	22,995	18,707	31,328	54,178	26,682		15,000	18,152	
Ernest Ratsey VP	18,147	24,589	59,898	14,495	7803	8,809	13,703	9,798	13,435	27,514	13,250	
George Colin Ratsey assistant VP				10,141	4,467	1,333		8,150				
Office employee salaries (1)	11,429	13,837	17,615	11,179	8,879	7,749	10,613	10,482	10,489	11,067	12,118	
5 employees (v75)								\$172.50/week	raises end 1935	\$195/week		
Net profit carried to surplus (1)	101,964	141,042	380,239	48,878	-7666	52,570	118,708	44,441	45,804	58,041	16,006	
Dividends paid from net surplus												
Sales - sails, rigs, gears & storage (1)	433,910	552,839	1,076,664	363,552	199,764	181,779	367,154	291,152				
Discounts (1)	8570	9066	8070	9410	5067	3188	9192	10,873				
Discounts as % of sales (calculated)	2%	1.60%	0.70%	2.60%	2.50%	1.80%	2.50%	3.70%				
Sales from monthly totals (see Table R-2..)	\$427,421	\$550,819	\$870,999	366,077	199,901	181,779	326,643	291,155	\$335,019	\$365,696	\$279,438	
Costs of materials used (1)	112,882	149,230	242,265	110,006	53,057	35,448	64,561	66,642				
Workmens salaries & travel (1)	98,084	121,498	186,934	84,429	54,738	43,176	73,870	71,558	85,651	93,474	84,850	
Light & power (1)	556	513	1099	843	706	505	641	617	617	714	651	
Insurance [work area] (1)	1647	2027	3307	2443	1429	937	1119	975		2258	1762	
*1931 among notes -- sad to report "defalcation" by Sidney White, oldest employee - started as boy & work way up , 30 yrs, trusted, etc-- loan account for some \$6000 only repaide some \$3000. President not feel this a business loss and to not carry it ... Aug. 31,1931 (v 70) White stole \$3558.74 cash												
** British war loan due 1952; penciled note 1935 "sold, \$60,000 bonds purchased"												

Some financial information of Ratsey & Lapthorn Inc is summarized from various sources as noted in Table R-1 for the years 1928- 1938. Ratsey had a very good business year ending in August 1930 -- sales in excess of a million dollars, a half a million over the 1929 year, the next highest for this period, with a gross profit of \$615,759 that translated into a net profit of \$380,239. Record sales during 1930 (v67), were made in July (over \$303,000) and February (just over \$250,000). This wonderfully profitable year was primarily due to their America's Cup activities, when in addition to regular business, they made, and surely repaired, all the sails for the J-boats.

(from Yachting, March 1931, p155)



PHOTOGRAPH BY LEVICK

All Sails for the Four Cup Defenders, Vanitie and Resolute

Ratsey & Laphorn, Inc.

Sailmakers Established 1790

Telephones: City Island-8
1012-1013

City Island, New York City

Effects of the economic depression appear to have hit the company in 1932- 1933. [see section on Nevins for some possible reasons] Company sales improved toward the pre-depression levels at the end of the 1934 fiscal year (probably helped by the America's Cup sail needs), but fell again by the end of their 1935 year. The arrival of the NY32 class job appears to have given the company a boost (Table R-2). Sales for 1936 cleared \$335,019 where the month of April (\$57,158) exceeded sales of the same month in any year from 1930-1940. June of that year (\$108,751) was only \$1275 less than the best June in 1929 of this period. May 1936 sales of \$63,236 were the third highest May during that period (v67 & 68). At the annual meeting November 21, 1938, president George Ratsey noted that the year ended considerably below average of proceeding years, but was satisfactory in view of the sever business depression during the greater part of the fiscal year of the company. He was optimistic of the prospects for the year "and looked to the future with confidence." (v78) However, total sales for their 1939 and 1940 years (v68) were lower than those of 1938, although still above those of 1932 and 1933.

Table R- 2. Ratsey sales by month for some years from 1929 -1938. Ratsey's fiscal year was Sept - Aug (Mystic, Coll. #236).								
	v67	v67	v68	v68	v68	v68	v68	v68
Audit year	1929	1930	1932	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
	9/28-8/29	9/29-8/30	9/31-8/32	9/33-8/34	9/34-8/35	9/35-8/36	9/36-8/37	9/37-8/38
Month								
September	6307.17	'blank'	2169.45	3475.44	25728.77	6671.45	4564.96	6172.91
October	9027.26	13533.33	7550.11	1508.68	9927.27	5290.28	6342.01	4225.22
November	12084.52	3979.72	4535.67	1793.32	1475.62	2997.37	6345.46	3409.72
December	5982.96	14949.58	2546.38	1297.1	2724.8	3180.74	8418.25	3145.24
January	6247.24	9875.48	4102.04	1973.81	10697.52	1573.85	12167.72	5612.3
February	109699.24	250868.9	11570.17	6201.6	4514.93	5651.18	9245.73	3061.21
March	6955.67	4752.45	9730.19	17067.34	56326.7	5960.21	20489.73	19463.1
April	25807.67	51679.35	31195.53	27257.3	25544.89	57158.3	34739.93	39836.8
May	112036.17	53535.49	42534.11	55303.5	39247.8	63235.8	64694.81	62615.18
June	109980.81	90202.92	33694.61	57616.25	51489.13	108750.8	75570.13	52447.76
July	82796.93	303091.5	32111.76	66616.58	39613.26	43198.5	87229.53	47443.72
August	63893.53	74529.11	18160.94	86532.33	23864.34	31350.76	35888.15	32004.57
totals (from column tabulation)	550819.17	870997.9	199900.9	326643.2	291155.0	335019.2	365696.4	279437.7
yearly total sales as in Table R-1	552,839	1076664	199764	367154	291152	NA	NA	NA

Sales by month over the years from 1928 - 1940 (only some years are among those in Table R-2 from those volumes), show that for those thirteen years sales were highest in May for five of the years (1929, 1932, 1938, 1939 and 1940). June and July each had three years of the 'best' month of sales in their audited fiscal years. June was best sales month in 1928, 1935 and 1936, with July the best month in 1930, 1931 and 1937. April was best in 1933 and August best in 1934. However, these were most probably the months billed.

Ratsey organization in US --

The organization and incorporation in 1927 of Ratsey & Lapthorn can be found in a Minute book for 1927-1930 (v77). Ratsey & Lapthorn Inc. was organized with capital stock of \$250,000 (par value \$1/share), or 250,000 shares total, broken out into 175,000 preferred and 75,000 common shares. The corporation paid a tax of \$125 to New York State as well as a

corporation filing fee of \$30. Dividends on the common shares were payable on the first of March and November from surplus (net profits). Preferred shares were on the basis of 5 cents per share per annum (v70) during 1930-1938, except 1932. Common share dividends paid varied during this period. In 1936, the common share dividend was \$1.50 per share up from \$1 per share in 1935. The shares were 90 cents per share in 1931 and 1933. In 1937, they were 80 cents and only 30 cents per share in 1938 (v70 & 79).

The first directors and officers were George Ratsey, Ernest Ratsey and Sidney White as president, vice president and secretary, respectively. There were 211,214 outstanding shares of which 168,500 were preferred shares; these were all held by Ratsey & Lapthorn Ltd. The balance of the outstanding shares, all common, were owned by six Ratsey or Lapthorn individuals. George and Ernest Ratsey in the United States together held 20,620 of these shares. [see foot note on Table R-1 for 1931 about Sidney White]

According to notes in this Minute book, Ratsey & Lapthorn Ltd had surrendered authority in the US in July 1903. At the third annual meeting in November 1929, George and Ernest Ratsey, Sidney White and Alfred Campbell (auditor with Mackay Irons Co.) were present and the five shareholders from England were represented by proxy. The inspectors of the election were John Craig and Imogen Horner. In the next Minute book available (v78), the directors at the 1938 annual meeting were George Ratsey (president & treasurer), Ernest Ratsey (vice president), G Colin Ratsey (assistant vice president), Imogen Horner (secretary) and Alfred Campbell (assistant secretary). The stockholders were the Ratsey's, Lapthorn's and Campbell. At this meeting, they noted that the year ended considerably below those of the preceding years, but satisfactory given the severe business depression during the greater part of the company's fiscal year. They held optimistic prospects for the next year "and looked to the future with confidence." In 1943, 1944 and 1945, Henry B Nevins was among the directors listed attending the annual meetings.

Saturday June 12th 1920 Saturday June 19th 1920
(Payroll list from v. 73, Coll. 236)

Saturday June 12 th 1920				Saturday June 19 th 1920			
No. of days pay 50.00 Long time 14.61		35 39		No. of days pay 50.00 Long time 14.61		35 39	
1. Cookworth	48	14	21 87	1. Cookworth	48	15 ¹ / ₂	24 21
2. Corbett	48	14	71 87	2. Corbett	48	18	78 12
3. Corbett	48	14	62 10	3. Corbett	48	15 ¹ / ₂	64 13
4. White	48	14	62 10	4. White	48	18	67 50
5. Graham	48	14 ¹ / ₂	62 78	5. Graham	48	18 ¹ / ₂	68 18
6. Hakeck	48	10	56 70	6. Hakeck	48	14	62 10
7. Bell	48	11	58 05	7. Bell	48	14	62 10
8. Davis	48	13	60 75	8. Davis	-	-	-
9. Hoffman	48	13	60 75	9. Hoffman	48	14	62 10
10. J. Graham	48	13	60 75	10. J. Graham	48	14	62 10
11. Miller	48	13	60 75	11. Miller	48	14	62 10
12. Burke	43 ¹ / ₃	10	52 50	12. Burke	48	14	62 10
13. McManara	43 ¹ / ₃	10	52 50	13. McManara	48	14	62 10
14. C. Hoffman	43 ¹ / ₃	10	52 50	14. C. Hoffman	48	14	62 10
15. Amico	43 ¹ / ₃	10	52 50	15. Amico	48	14	62 10
16. Toole	43 ¹ / ₃	10	52 50	16. Toole	48	14	62 10
17. Montan	43 ¹ / ₃	10	52 50	17. Montan	48	14	62 10
18. Wilson	48	8	22 50	18. Wilson	48	10	56 70
19. Collins	48	10	13 12	19. Murphy	48	14	62 10
20. McManara	48	10 ¹ / ₂	11 95	20. Wilson	48	15	26 44
1. Emery	48	13	50 62	1. Collins	48	15	14 68
2. Whelan	48	-	27 -	2. McManara	48	19	14 34
3. Buccino	48	13	35 15	3. Emery	48	15 ¹ / ₂	53 44
4. Miss Martin	43 ¹ / ₂	5	16 09	4. Whelan	48	-	27
5. Riley	48	5	17 50	5. Buccino	48	11	33 59
6. Cordes	48	5	17 50	6. Miss Martin	35 ¹ / ₂	4	13
7. Londer	39 ¹ / ₃	11	14 29	7. Riley	48	5	17 50
			121458	8. Cordes	48	5 ¹ / ₂	17 75
				9. Londer	48	5	17 50
				10. Bell	83	2	8 75

6 new carfare 6⁰⁰ 36.00

6. Bond 5⁰⁰ 30.00

Car 3 gals for holiday

66
1280 58
8 13
1288 71

8 new carfare 6⁰⁰ each

Extra for Bell & Hakeck

1383 42
48

1431 42

The wage books (v 73, 74 & 75) provide some information on wages Ratsey paid both office and work floor staff. For example (v73), for the week of June 19, 1920 (above), there were 30 employees (as workmen) listed paid a total of \$1383.42. There was an additional \$48 for "8 men's carfare 6.00 each" and \$30 "extra for Bell & Habeck working late on 'Vanities' sails at Newport \$15 each." *Vanitie* was in trials with *Resolute* to defend for the now 1920 America's Cup match. The list of employees' names, always in the same order, showing wages paid decreases toward the bottom of a page. The work week appears to be 48 hours, although some employees had a lesser number in that column. None of the columns are labeled. At the top, before any name, is "one week's pay 50.00" and "less home pay 14.61," but none of the employees listed show \$50 and only "Coachworth" (listed first) shows the effect of home pay or \$35.39 in wages. Sam Cornhill, always listed second, came from the Cowes loft to the NY loft in 1902 as a supervisor. The wages of the workmen ranged from \$78.12 to \$8.75. On Friday, September 28, 1923, there were only 18 employees listed for a total of \$531.81. Week's pay was \$55 and home pay \$13.62. This list begins with the same five names as the 1920 list. Moving to the June 27, 1924 week, there are 35 employees listed beginning with the same five, but with higher wages paid. The week's pay was still \$55, but the home pay was \$13.02. The total for the week was \$1368.50. There were seven "misses" listed in the loft then but none in 1920.



The Mystic Seaport LOG in 1994 (v 46, #3) included a story by Marifrances Trivelli ([Art and the Yacht](#)) about Dominick Tripaldi and his work at Ratsey & Lapthorn. His work bench was donated to the Seaport's collections. Dominick began as an apprentice in 1924 following his older brother, Andrew, at the loft. He became a skilled sticher, master sail maker and retired in 1973 as production manager, supervising all construction and repairs. At one time, all of Dominick's six brothers and sisters worked at the loft. When he began at the loft the material was Egyptian cotton and then nylon and Dacron became the sail material. His younger brother Jim worked fifty-three years at the loft until it closed in 1982. See the payroll list from December 1925 (below) and note numbers 22 and 23 named. Among the Levick photos as part of the Mystic Seaport Museum collections (above and below, for example) are notes of

identifications. One photograph of the loft machine room (below) noted that Jose de Cruz Fernandes, head sailmaker, is one seated at left machine. This was supplied by his grandson at the time of the LOG article. See the payroll list for December 1925 and number 14.



Corner of the loft machine room in 1925.

Photo by Levick at Mystic Seaport (1986.106.31).

Thursday December 24 th , 1925				Thursday December 31 st , 1925			
One week's pay 60.00				One week's pay 60.00			
Less house pay 14.55				Less house pay 14.55			
1	Coachworth	48.5	48	45	45	1	Coachworth 48.5 48
2	Cornhill	48	7	73	51	2	Cornhill 48 11
3	Atrill	48	6	60	60	3	Atrill 48 8
4	Graham	48	6	62	40	4	Graham 48 8
5	Miller	39 1/3	6	48	33	5	Miller 34 2/3
6	Larson	39 1/3	4	45	33	6	Larson 34 2/3
7	Collins	39 1/3	4	45	33	7	Collins 34 2/3
8	Ulmer	39 1/3	6	51	39	8	Ulmer 34 2/3 8
9	Mac Kinnon	39 1/3	6	48	33	9	Mac Kinnon 34 2/3
10	Mc Namara	39 1/3	6	48	33	10	Mc Namara 34 2/3
11	W. Ulmer	39 1/3	6	48	33	11	W. Ulmer 34 2/3 6
12	Fot	39 1/3	6	48	33	12	Fot 34 2/3
13	Macey	39 1/3	6	48	33	13	Macey 34 2/3
14	Fernandes	39 1/3	6	48	33	14	Fernandes 34 2/3
15	D. Hoffman Jr	39 1/3	6	48	33	15	D. Hoffman Jr 34 2/3
16	D. Henty	39 1/3	6	48	33	16	D. Henty 34 2/3
17	D. Hoffman Sr	39 1/3	6	48	33	17	D. Hoffman Sr 34 2/3
18	Berry	39 1/3	6	48	33	18	Berry 34 2/3
19	Berry	30 2/3	4	36	67	19	Berry 34 2/3
20	Figherea	39 1/3	6	48	33	20	Figherea 34 2/3
21	Lorman	39	6	48	33	21	Lorman 34 2/3
22	Tripaldi	48	6	19	-	22	Tripaldi raise 200 48
23	D. Tripaldi	48	6	11	86	23	D. Tripaldi raise 200 48
24	Emery	48	8	45	-	24	Emery 48
25	Burke	48	5	35	63	25	Burke 48 4
26	Nansen	48	6	42	75	26	Nansen 34 2/3 3
27	Rose	47 2/3		3	27	27	Rose 4 34 2/3 4
28	Rose	34 2/3	6	32	75	28	Miss Tripaldi 48 1
29	Miss Tripaldi	48		24		29	" Stringham 43 1/2
30	" Stringham	48		22		30	" Booth 48
31	" Booth	39 1/3		16	39	31	" O'Donnell 48
32	" O'Donnell	43 1/3		21	67	32	Mrs. Atrill 48
33	Mrs. Atrill	42 5/6		21	42	33	Miss Schlag 39 1/3
34	Miss Schlag	48		20		34	" Esposito 43 1/2
35	" Esposito	39 1/3		11	47	35	" Jones 48
36	" Jones	48		12	-		
1388 18				1189 43			

(Payroll list from
v 73, Coll.236)

There is information about office wages weekly, other than the amounts paid to the officers. Wages paid in 1937 were also those recorded for the 1938 months. Volume 75 has a hint of business improvement in 1935 in a note found on page ten. The page has the five office employees listed for the full month of June 1935 -- four pay periods. There is a penciled note on the bottom half of the page. It lists each of the five names from above it, but with "raise " each either of "\$5" or "\$2.50" for July, August, September. An addition to the note says "Oct 1st balance winter months go back to above scale. GER" This returned these employees to their June wage rates. Below that is another note -- "Nov 27, 1935 next week go back to above as more work has come in GER" So beginning with December 1935 and beyond, these five employees returned to the higher wages. The initials are those of George E Ratsey, president. It appears that Ratsey might have known or did know (they estimated cost of sails for them ...) of the coming NYYC announcement for a new one design class several weeks before it became public. Or perhaps it was the orders from November. But comparing the fall pages from 1935 to those of 1936 (v155 & 156), both Novembers have two pages of orders as do both Decembers. In both of these years, there are no orders with an October page heading and both Septembers have two pages of orders. For January 1936, there are four pages, but only three pages of orders for January 1937. Ratsey added another note on wages on September 22, 1937 [after the Cup matches that season] "no more overtime." For June and July both of the Craig's wages showed overtime included. At the end of July 1937 Miss H Banta was added to the office staff at weekly pay of \$22.50. The already employed Miss Banta was then noted as Miss M Banta. The office wages remained the same through July 1938.

Office staff	1935	(weekly payroll)	1936
Miss Horner	\$45		\$50
Miss Cronin	32.5		37.5
J Craig	45		50
Miss Banta	25		27
Wm Craig jr	25		30

Volume 75 began with a list of four workmen (p76) for January 1937 -- George Graham, Charles Ulmer Sr, William Attrill and Sam Cornhill. For the 44-hour per week of work, their rate was 83.6 & 1.90 OT; 83.6 & 1.9 OT; 75.24, less OT; and 49.94 less OT. For March 10, 1937, Graham and Ulmer each had 44 hours plus 5 OT for pay of \$97.85, Attrill had 44 hours plus 5 OT for \$80.07 and Cornhill worked 44 hours plus 2.5 OT for \$54.20. This was a total of \$337.97. An example of their July hours showed all working 44 hours with Attrill with also 8 OT, Graham 7 OT, Ulmer 5 OT and Cornhill 1.5 OT, this was a week with a total of \$351.08. Given their longevity with the company, they were supervisors or managers/ foremen of the loft's work. For the March 2, 1938 week, Ulmer shows only 16 hours and is not listed after that. A note after his apparent last week states "not ent'd state unemploy't". The remaining three are listed at the same rate through May 1938. Charles "Buster" Ulmer left Ratsey to work at Fuller Sails (Nye pers com, 1/08). He and Gunnar Valentine then became partners for a while until they

split up and Ulmer set up his own loft. His son Charles "Butch" learned the sailmakers trade there. Ulmer merged with Halsey-Lidguard and is now UK Sailmakers with Butch head. In his interview (Mystic, OH 88-16) Colin Ratsey explained how the Ratsey loft originally ran a four-year apprentice program so each employee learned all the aspects of sail making. He used the "Buster" Ulmer example of why they gave up the program and just taught a new employee bench work or cutting or another aspect of the job. They realized that after the four-year apprenticeship, an individual could go off on their own, knowing the business and becoming competition. Colin said he was run through the apprentice program -- started right at the bottom and punched the time clock.



Ratsey & Lapthorn - 1930

<u>Back Row</u>	<u>Center Row</u>	<u>Front Row</u>
1.D.McDougal	16.Harry Davies	30.Gus Italiano
2.Hyman Heinz	17.Bill Johnson	31.Willy Hammond
3.Wm.Peckinkoff	18.William Stark	32.Otto Hoffman
4.Adrian"Toby"Collins	19.G.Carney	33.George Graham(Foreman)
5.Louis Vigaro	20.Bill Egan	34.Frank Hoffman
6.William Larsen	21.John MacNamara	35.Willy Geiss
7.George Parasan	22.Frank Fox	36.Dom Tripaldi
8. McDonald	23.Stanly"Pip"Stringham	37.Gus Italiano(cousin of #30)
9.Ed Mullin	24.Charles"Buster"Ulmer	38.Adolph Dobbiten
10.Bill Thompson	25. Owens	39.Martin Esposito
11.Louis Vigaro	26.Joe Barry	40.Charlie McKinnon
12.Nels(the Rigger)	27.John Fitzgerald	41.Jimmy Tripaldi
13.Bill Ulmer	28.Arthur Cornhill	42.Jack Hess
14.Ray Bell	29.Sid White	43.Emile Anderson
15.Howard Fernandes		

(photo Nye's collection)

For the 1930 America's Cup year, George Ratsey had an Alden designed 39' 10" waterline schooner (#390) built at the Charles Morse & Sons yard in Thomaston, ME. She was his *Zaida II* with a contract price of \$4,800 (Carrick and Henderson, 1995) and, with meeting rooms forward and aft, was used as a floating office during the America's Cup trials and races off Newport. This was also the year Ratsey's *Golliwog* designed by Arthur Payne (28' 6" waterline) was built by Nevins. Ratsey sold *Zaida II* for \$12,000 in 1937 with S&S getting 7% commission (\$840) on the sale (v 68, p110).

In his oral history, Colin Ratsey described a J-boat mainsail as over a mile of canvas weighing about a ton. He said the work on the sails was essentially around the clock which they could do then, but not now. According to Colin, his father could find 25 good sailmakers just "by whistling out the back door" of the loft. In a note dated August 27, 1982, George Graham, foreman at Ratsey, described *Enterprise's* mainsail pictured in an ad. It was made in 4 days with 40 men hand sewing for 14 hours a day (Nye's Ratsey collection). The NY Times (February 28, 1930) carried a story of the 50,000 yards of canvas for the three American Cup defender hopefuls by James Robbins. The three yachts, with sets of sails being made, looking to defend were *Weetamoe*, *Yankee* and *Enterprise*. A fourth, *Whirlwind*, apparently already had her sails finished. Robbins wrote -- "Each of the cup boats has three or four mainsails ready, a set of double lower headsails, or jib and staysail, three jib topsails of varying size, large and smaller ballooners for reaching, spinnakers for running before the breeze and storm trysails.... Most of the canvas is Sudan cotton, made in England. Some is domestic duck." The Ratsey loft made a genoa for *Ranger* of 4500 yards of cotton at cost of \$5530 in June 1937 (v 119).



During the late 1920s and into the mid-1930s, Ratsey & Lapthorn Inc. often ran ads in Yachting. They were usually a quarter page including a photograph of a well known yacht sporting their sails. In 1929, it was the large square rigger *Aloha*, in 1930 *Vanitie*, in 1931 the Cup defenders, in 1932 *Aloha*, *Bob Kat* and at the end of the year Olympic monotypes racing. 1933 often featured *Conewago*. In January 1947, NY32 #17, *Mustang*, was featured in a half page Yachting ad declaring "Nylon sails are here to stay." Nylon was the new fabric made by duPont. The largest processor of Nylon, Duplan Corporation, posted a full-page ad in the September 1947 with *Alar* (NY32 #1), winner of the race to Annapolis with all her Duplan nylon sails. They suggested with the summer rush over, sailmakers could deliver fine sails from their seven different weights of nylon cloth. With the arrival of new materials for sails, there were also several articles about these new sails and sail handling. Two by Rod Stephens were reprinted from Yachting in Yacht Sails, Their Care and Handling by Ernest E Ratsey and WH de Fontaine (1947). Other NYC sailmaker ads included ones for the Burrows, or Larsen, or Luders as well as Wilson and Silsby, in Boston, lofts.

Zaida spars for Hansen & Co.

New Mainsail		120	2 ⁵⁰	300 ✓
Zaidas Foresail	65	195		75 ✓
— Stay sail	40	120		75 ✓
— Jib				60 ✓
Fisherman	60			40
Ball Jib				50
Ball Stay sail				60

New Foresail 127/58 70 3" f=25 ~~160~~
Dec 12/36

Sparkman + Stephens
 Mains 646 235 2⁵⁰ 530
 Jib 304 110 2⁵⁰ 275
 #805

N.Y.C. ODC

Say Summer Price

Mains Jib

950

fanned 165
 to red

Genoa

Spin.

Quote Manny \$195

Steps + STrops + Chrus.

150

Foe Stay sail. \$90

nett.

Phoned Dec 12/36

250

2⁵⁰ Jib

60 2⁵⁰ = 150
 10
 \$ 170

Dray sail

Mainsail

as before Oct 31.

\$399.4

The first mention in the Ratsey books (v119) of the "N.Y.Y.C. ODC" or the "NYYC 32 footers," as they were usually noted, was an estimate for Sparkman & Stephens. It is on a page dated December 1935. The estimate listed each sail -- "Mnsl, Jib, Genoa, Spin., Fore Staysail" -- as well as "stops & styopo & covers". At the bottom of this estimate is the notation "Phoned Dec 12/36." The '36' is obviously wrong, given the page date and place within the volume. The prior page is labeled Dec 12 /35 and the next after is Dec 17 /35. It was given the same way for another estimate on the page, however, suggesting both estimates were done at the same time. It is possible that it was December 12, 1935, but that would make it extremely close to the date the class was publicly announced in the press. A standard Ratsey & Lapthorn estimate form stated 25% cash was due with the order and the balance on delivery. The sail estimates were known to the builders for their estimates made to S&S, but listed as an owner's cost until January 7, 1936 when the S&S specifications listed them as part of the builder's package. [see this and other changes early in the building given at the end of the section for NY32 #1]

Table R-4. NY32 sail data from Ratsey & Lapthorn Collection 236 (volumes as indicated)							
Sail	Area (sq	Luff measured (ft -in)	Luff finished (ft)	Yards material	Dec. 1935 e \$	1938 est \$	1945-6 est \$
Mainsail *	646	51-0	52	131 10 oz BE	530**	435	840
	950 Main & Jib				805 M&J	665 M&J	
Jib	304	42-11	43	57 10 oz BE	275**	230	380
Genoa	532	42-3	43	66 10 oz BE	150	257	652
Balloon Jib	545					215	orlan
Genoa (=Mustang)	609						632
Trysail	132	26-0	30	34 10 oz BE		90	132
Storm Jib	86		43	24 10 oz		65	86
CC spinnaker	1285	180%	94	87 4-39" mp	150	245	482
(similar Mustang's)	1385						nylon 519
Lippincott Rule spin	1750					365	
NAYRU spin	1875					390	
Working jib	322						
mainsail cover				23 6 oz white or khaki	50	78	82
total-M, J, G, S, cover					1155	1245	2436
					**summer 955		
					"nett 750"		
					included with boat		
Coll.236 volume sources:	188	134	134	155	119	120	188
Note: BE is brown Egyptian cotton							
*vol 121: Voyager (#12) 1950 mainsail estimates for 12 oz cotton all hand sewn \$1388; all machine sewn 10 oz cotton \$807; half hand 10 oz cotton \$969.							
** first calculation, then another "say summer price" shows mainsail \$395 & jib \$210 for total \$605							

When looking through the estimates, it is apparent that the information used to calculate sizes and costs were entered in the same format. This must have been well known to those who did the estimating because there are no labels to what look like column entries.

Some are square footage and yardage. As there were later orders for more sails for this class, the estimate data was found in other volumes and even as a table which was found among the loose pages of volume 188 (1937) which included additions and changes or additions for 1944-47. Looking at the updated table and the other pages, some of the numbers of the estimate can be figured out. These are included in Table R-4 together with the collection volume within which they were found. It seemed that Ratsey wanted this order from some of the notes and changes. A note on the 1935 estimate page -- "say summer price"- together with the fact that if the estimated cost of each of the four sails is totaled (\$1105) it exceeds the column ending with "Nett \$750.". There are two other notes written, perhaps later as the style is slightly different, on the page. One is under the spinnaker calculation saying "quote Manny \$195" where the nearest number is \$150 for the spinnaker. The other is at the top of the estimate calculation on the same line as "Sparkman & Stephens" saying in red "C F Havemeyer Special \$665". [Manny was first owner of NY32 #3 and Havemeyer of #2; see summary below] These additional notes for specific owners probably were for extra sails beyond the original package originally estimated for S&S. An additional note scrawled diagonally across the upper corner says "see 1938 page 1". This page is in volume 120 and the information can be found in Table R-4. The volume 120 page includes a note for the Genoa, balloon jib, CC spinnaker and Lippincott Rule spinnaker suggesting comparison to an estimate by Prescott Wilson. It is headed "PW" and "Wilson" and the numbers are 260, 210, 284 and 410, respectively. Wilson was the sailmaker for the Paine 36 sails in 1936. The luff measurements come from a sail data and measurement volume (134) and the yards of material in Table R-4 come from a sail data volume (155) from a page dated "Jan 13th / 36", the actual order date, and the yardage column.

836 through 853 with the order column empty. The row listing that for #7 lacks a line through it and had written in "Sold to F.T. Moses see tag 1665 D373".

The question of when the sails were made for the twentieth boat of the class may be that it was sometime in September. Early that month (v156) was recorded an order (tag 574) for storm jib and trysail for Gordon Gibbs. In this same volume, right after the pages of stock small boat sails, was a page headed "New sails either ordered by other people or made on stock for others." Here are listed four "NYYC OD" sails identified to "J de Forest" and marked transferred. Here they have lines drawn through them, although not all sails on the page do. [for more on the first owner of NY32 #7, please see her section]

On a page dated " Jan 31st /36" (v155) three of the owners ordered a trysail and storm jib. These are listed to Col. Peirce, J.K. Roosevelt and H H Anderson with reference to the NYYC OD. Also ordered at that time was a mainsail for Gerald Lambert and "Yankee" of 1433 yards cotton. Three more sets of storm jib and trysail were listed for F.M.E Schaefer, C. F. Havemeyer and Lee Stanton for Feb 7th. And B.K. Stevens is listed for a storm jib and trysail on Feb. 18th. O'Donnell Iselin ordered a storm jib and trysail on the May 21st page. All of these orders have lines drawn through them.

From the early news of the class and owners, there was mention of five of them planning to enter the 1936 Bermuda Race. The four of them that did the race were owned by Havemeyer, Stanton, Roosevelt and Peirce. A storm jib and trysail were/are definitely sails to have aboard when going to sea. Two other owners -- Anderson and Schaefer -- ordered these sails at the same time as the four racing to Bermuda. Later that month, Stevens also ordered a set. A guess at the fifth would be either *Clotho* or *Wynfred* as *Biquette* was never raced by Stevens, just cruised on LIS. Anderson had raced to Bermuda in 1924 as crew aboard the schooner *Black Duck* and in 1926 as owner of the schooner *Trade Winds*. Schaefer is not among any crew or owner in Bermuda races in 1936 or prior years (Loomis, 1936), although his brother raced *Edlu* successfully in 1934.

Other pages in volume 155 have more sails ordered prior to launching. March 5th C F Havemeyer ordered a tan mainsail and jib. The yardage of the jib is the same as before, but the mainsail is listed for 118 yards or smaller than the first mainsail for *Apache*. This may have been the sail used when he and his family cruised. Also on that page is a spinnaker for Ralph Manny which would be a second one for *Swell*. On the July 13th page, Havemeyer ordered a "Genoa jib B" which had 89 yards of 6 oz BE and Shethar ordered a Genoa jib of 66 yards.

With preparation for the second season of racing, several ordered new mainsails. These were all 126 yards of the 10 oz cotton. March 30, 1937 (v156) has orders from Schaefer, Barrows (new owner of NY32 #5), Coudert, Page and J. Morgan. May 6th has orders by Anderson for a Genoa jib of 89 yards of 6 oz cotton and a "1937 CC spinnaker " of 127 yards of 4-39 mp", which are both marked "store". At the same time 1937 CC spinnakers were ordered by Shethar, Manny, Iselin, Conover, Whitney, Coudert, Page, Havemeyer and Schaefer. It would

appear that *Valencia*, *Swell*, *Ibis II*, *Revonoc*, *Larikin*, *Notus II*, *Rampage II*, *Apache* and *Wynfred* would be racing with the new rule spinnaker in 1937.

Summary of NY32s by sail and Nevins numbers with first names and owners, NYYC membership, Lloyd's survey and latest homeport						
Sail #	Nevins Hull #	Original Name	Date of Lloyd's Survey (by John S Heck)	First Owner	Date of Election NYYC	2018 Homeport (# of owners++)
1	396	<i>Valencia</i>	June 1, 1936	John B. Shethar	Dec. 1919	lost in Mexico (7)
2	397	<i>Apache</i>	June 1, 1936	Charles F. Havemeyer	March, 1929	Cohasset, MA (4)
3	398	<i>Swell</i>	June 1, 1936	Ralph Polk Manny	May, 1934	Spain (13)
4	399	<i>Geisha</i>	June 1, 1936	Louis Lee Stanton	Jan. 1934	Port Huron, MI (9)
5	400	<i>Esmeralda</i>	June 6, 1936	John K. Roosevelt	Aug. 1928	Mystic, CT (13)
6	401	<i>Spindrift</i>	June 6, 1936	Albert E Peirce	March, 1929	Castine, ME (8)
7 +	415	<i>Nepsie</i>	Sept. 15, 1936	Johnston de Forest	May, 1907	Blue Hill, ME (13)
8	403	<i>Wynfred</i>	June 6, 1936	Fredrick M. E. Schaefer	May, 1935	lost - yard fire 1942 (3)
9	404	<i>Clotho</i>	June 16, 1936	Henry H. Anderso	Jan. 1935	City Island, NY (7)
10**	405	<i>Larikin</i>	June 16, 1936	George Whitney	May, 1925	SW Hbr, ME (10)
11	406	<i>Mehitabel</i>	June 29, 1936	Frederick T. Moses	March, 1936	Hope Valley, RI (6)***
12	407	<i>Rampage II</i>	June 29, 1936	Arthur W. Page	March, 1936	West River, MD (9)
13	408	<i>Biquette</i>	June 29, 1936	Byam K. Stevens	March, 1936	parts to Holland (11)
14	409	<i>Ibis II</i>	July 17, 1936	O'Donnell Iselin	March, 1905	Liberty, ME (5)***
15	410	<i>Sapphire</i>	July 17, 1936	Perry MacKay Sturges	Jan. 1930	Portsmouth, NH (8)
16	411	<i>Notus II</i>	July 17, 1936	Frederic R. Coudert, Jr	Dec. 1928	Crescent Sail Club MI (7)
17	412	<i>Revonoc</i>	July 29, 1936	Harvey Conover, Jr	March, 1936	Mystic, CT (6)
18	413	<i>Gentian</i>	July 29, 1936	George Nichols	March, 1912	SoDartmouth, MA (15)
19 **	414	<i>Dolphin</i>	July 29, 1936	Henry S. Morgan	Oct. 1921	Italy (9) ****
20	402	<i>Folly</i>	June 6, 1936	Junius S. Morgan	March, 1913	Marion, MA (6)
21	none	<i>Masquerade</i>	April, 2010 launch	Pieter van der Aa	not applicable	Holland (2)
+ <i>Ragamuffin</i> was first launched in 1937 with owner J. Gordon Gibbs . She was surveyed for him on October 29, 1936.						
Gordon Gibbs was elected to the NYYC on October 1, 1936.						
* F.T. Bedford (NYYC member 1924) had original contract (<i>Helen</i>) and in June sold to George Whitney						
** R.N. Bavie (NYYC member 1924) had original contract (<i>Tern</i>) and sold in May to Henry S. Morgan.						
++ family of any number of generations is counted as one						
*** for sale and/or in need of much work to sail again						
**** sold but lost in Mediterrean during delivery in 2016						

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
 -- Tom Nye's Ratsey collections, City Island Nautical Museum
 -- Levick photos are housed at the Mariners Museum