

The First Port Huron to Mackinac Race

1925 had only 6 boats finish

"On the way to the 85th sailing"

The first race had its genesis in 1923. Dr. William Wilson, a Bayview member, had chartered the 62 foot motorless fishing schooner *Lloyd W. Berry* for the Newport to Bermuda Race. With Bayview members Leonard "Stubby" Jerome, Lloyd Kurtzwarth, Bobby Burns, Phil Nichols, Homer Caldwell, Chic Stodgell, and Herb Stone as navigator they easily won class B. This was certainly a stunner for a bunch of sweet water sailors to hold their own with the blue water sailors. The following year, with the same enthusiasm, a group of 15 to 20 Bayview yachts were towed up from Detroit to Port Huron for a 4th of July regatta in Lake Huron. At the regatta party afterwards at the Harrington Hotel, the Port Huron Yacht Club's Commodore Henry Clough, Ed Kierfer, Joe Gannon, and Russ Pouliot from Bayview put in place the plans for a race on July 25th, 1925.

At the start of the race 12 yachts were towed out to Lake Huron with their engines sealed for the start of the first Port Huron to Mackinac Race. In the original weather handout the prediction was made, *"The weather is impossible to predict. While there may be several days of southerly wind, we are much more liable to encounter squalls, calms, and northerly winds."* At

1600 hours the first gun went off for the 3 boat racing R-Boat class A, ten minutes later a gun for the single boat of class B, and ten minutes after for the 8 boats of cruising C. Despite the light rain and slight chop the yachts were off on a starboard reach in a slight southeasterly, but all this soon changed. A southeast thunder squall with plenty of wind ripped through the



fleet and by 2200 hours and the fleet was scattered. Leading the fleet were the R-boats *Bernida*, *Neagha*, and *Rascal*. A half hour later the building wind shifted to the northeast, the seas started to pile up and fleet began a hard beat. By dawn on Sunday, three yachts had already dropped out. By Monday evening Perc William's *Charlyn* was in Alpena with no sails left. *Calypso* put into East Tawas with the same problem with *Red Arrow* and *Typhoon* also anchored there to ride out the storm. Three of the cruising schooners returned to Port Huron unable to bear the beat in hard seas. The same evening *Bernida* crossed the finish line with *Neagha* finishing 3 hours later. The next yacht, *Suez*, crossed the finish line 33 hours later followed by *Red Arrow* and *Typhoon*. The newspapers reported the skippers were unanimous in their belief it was one of the worst storms for a Great Lakes regatta up to that time and so the first Mackinac Race was in the history books.

Scratch Sheet:

Class A - Racing Sloops

Rascal Com. A. Jennings DBC

Bernida Russell Poulet BYC

Neagha E. Martini BYC

Class B - Cruising Sloops

Urchin Alger Sheldon BYC

Class C - Cruising Yawls & Schooners

Charlyn P. Williamson BYC

Genesee E. Mercer BYC

Suez W. A. Wilson BYC

Typhoon R. W. Keifer PHYC

Red Arrow J. W. Vaughn DBC

Calypso C C Gmeiner DYC

Gato Nero George Baker DYC

Ventura DYC