

## Beginnings: Snipes on Sodus Bay

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Soon after the Robins appeared on Sodus Bay, bringing a renewed vitality to the Sodus Bay Yacht Club, the Snipe, a 15.5' national one- design class, sparked interest among the younger sailors and was soon to be 'adopted' by them. The first Snipes were brought to Sodus Bay in 1934 by Bob Chittenden and Gordon Chapman. The younger sailors took to them with much enthusiasm. Up to 20 Snipes were raced from the late 1930's until the 1950's. Just before World War II there were 3 racing divisions that competed at the Sodus Bay Yacht Club: Robins, Snipes and Handicap.

Nancy Huston Doubleday recalls, "there was a *Junior Yacht Club* at one of the three cottages to the East of the main clubhouse where all of us kids hung out. I started crewing for my brother Bruce on his first Snipe in 1941, when I was 11 years old. I was light and agile and Bruce, at age 15, could tell me what to do!"

In addition to Bruce and Nancy Huston, other "Juniors" of the day included Bud Seymour, Lloyd Ludwig, Wiles Converse, Bill Holmes, Fisk Hayden, Vern Mills, Henry Nesbitt, Janet Pammenter, Jack Peachy, Bernard Posse, Anne Salo, Lee and Jay Short, George Sibley and the Barrow sisters.

In 1942 Bill Croucher organized a measurement committee so the fleet could obtain a charter and soon the Snipes became the first local fleet to be trailed to other yacht clubs. This opened the young sailors' eyes to new competition and friends. It also demonstrated the Yacht Club's tradition and expertise in small boat racing to other Clubs. Again from Nancy Doubleday, "we trailed the Snipes to other regattas, Newport on Irondequoit Bay, Oak Orchard, and Canandaigua Lake. At times I was the only girl, I was like everyone's kid sister. Back at our own club, most folks were recovering from the Depression and the War, so the yacht club wasn't too fancy at this time. When we had our own Snipe Regattas at the Club, neighbors would donate food and our Club Steward, 'Smiles', who was like a Father figure to us and such a nice man, made sure everything went well."

The war depleted the fleet but it was revitalized in 1946. Newer boats built by Bill Kallusch and Emmons, proved the pre-war boats no longer complete. In the late forties Lee Short in a Bill Kallusch boat became the Eastern US Snipe Champion. Bruce Huston and sister Nancy, aboard Bruce's own *Slipstick*, took home many honors. Both Bruce and Lee Short were consistent Snipe winners of the day.

*Many thanks go out to Helen Huston and her family for the Snipe memorabilia on loan to us and on display in the history showcase.*

*Thank you Nancy Huston Doubleday for sharing your memories of the Snipes on Sodus Bay. You've given our members insights into the past and I appreciate the opportunity to have spoken with you.*

Rosemary Willette