



GEORGE CULP - June 29, 1873
June 18, 1962

Actor, musician, composer, author, businessman, yachtsman and poet - George Culp was a man of many talents. Commodore of Rochester Yacht Club in 1908, he devoted much of his life promoting the sport of yachting that he loved so much and serving the Yacht Club that was so important to him. For over 20 years he was in charge of the Race Committee and introduced many innovations in race management. He was Secretary of LYRA for four years.

He has left us a legacy of poems that capture the poignancy of sailing that all of us sense, but so few can adequately express.

For this we thank George Culp.

THE UNPAID HAND

I DOFF MY CAP to the unsung crew
Who do the things they're told to do;
That hardy, loyal, faithful band —
The toiling throng — the Unpaid Hand.

The Unpaid Hand in his dungarees,
Rough and ready and aimin' to please,
A-pullin' the sheets and cleatin' em fast
So the *Sassy Sal* won't finish last.

The unpaid hand who boils and burns
On a windless day, when the buoy-turns
Are hell to handle and hard to make
In a sizzling sun on a listless lake.

The Unpaid Hand in a gale o' wind —
Soaked to the bone — his knuckles skinned —
Settin' the spinnaker — takin' it in —
Hoistin' the genoa — sweatin' like sin —
Hikin' to weather to trim the boat —
Bailin' like hell to keep afloat —
Haulin' the backstays — trimmin' the main —
Over'n over'n over again.

And when the races have all been run
And the boat he crewed on's the boat that won,
And the luckier skipper is steppin' up
To get his flags and the Silver Cup

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Back in the corner — feelin' grand —
With a nice little bun — sits the Unpaid Hand.

1941

The Unpaid Hand

ODE TO ODENBACH

As firm as concrete, hard as rock,
Is Johnny Circe Odenbach.
By tucks and nips
The Six he skips
Stays out in front by half a block.

His Circe circles every buoy
With latitude that must annoy
And get the goats
Of trailing boats
That sense no victory or joy.

To Johnny and his loyal crew
All praise and glory that is due;
And when they've taken
Home the bacon
They will have some fat to chew.

When Circe's lines are through
the chock
And cleated to the damp old dock,
If lose or win
He'll merely grin.
We owed this Ode to Odenbach.

1947

TO PETE

Good old Pete! Thank God he won.
Declining years will be great fun.
I see him now in lee of locker,
In the sun — and in a rocker,
Telling how the great WHITE SQUALL
Beat 'em one and beat 'em all.
"Twas back in Nineteen Fifty Three,
"The wind was fair and sheets were free —"
Then follows details we may skip
For we all know his battleship,
And how his first-prize classy crew
Worked every hour to bring it through.

All Hail to Pete, his Crew his Boat —
And bless his heart — the tough old goat.

1958

SAILOR'S WIFE

The sailor's wife can't sit at home
and let her sailing hubby roam
at will upon his private yacht.
She has to face it,; she cannot.

In fact before he leaves the dock
she works at least once round the clock
to furnish countless odds 'n' ends.
And to the task she gladly bends
for she'll be free to come and go
at will while he's away. YOU know!

He has to have a roast of ham
a can of pickles and some jam
a pot of good old Old Boston beans
(she mustn't fail to patch his jeans)
a batch of cookies, home-made bread,
(a pillow for his balding head)
a hundred items on the list
of which some several will be missed.

When he had gone she came and went
on nothing less than pleasure bent.
But in her mind she knew there lurked
some crisis in which she'd be jerked.

It happened. Telephone from Dad.
"Can't get home. Weather's bad."
"Come and get us with the car."
(Only eighty miles. No far!)

And so she cancels all her dates
and drives thru counties, towns and states
to pick up hubby and his crew.
And tells them all a Thing or Two!

She got him home and into bed
with nasty cough and cold in head.
Why did he limp? He had no skin
from knee to ankle on a shin.

'Tis sad for wives of sailing yachters.
Yours quite truly,

AARON WATERS. 1956

LOCKER PARTY

They were whoopin' it up in the locker, on a Sunday Afternoon.
The rum was flowing freely, and the gang was getting in tune.
Some sixteen Six-metre sailors, plus skippers that numbered four,
Made twenty that started the party — but soon there were twenty more.

A Series had just been finished; 'twas the end of a drawn-out fight.
And every one of the racing tars was happy and getting tight.
The winning skipper and gallant crew were toasted and cheered and praised,
And the party proceeded to gather strength and speed in the hell it raised.

The locker was none too spacious with the sails and the gear it housed,
The fellows were packed like mackerel — like mackerel, salty and soured.
As rum went in the sweat came out; it oozed from every pore.
And every pore was pouring like it never poured before.

As time went on this human mass was coated as with grease.
If any friction had been there by now it sure did cease.
As torsos touched they slipped and slid and slithered full 'n' by.
It was no trick at all to get another drink when dry.

The source of all this rummy cheer was at the western end,
Where on an empty crate the host did sit and mix and blend.
He'd sip a bit himself and with his guests got more than mellow.
What once were light rum highballs got so heavy you would bellow.

The salty songs and stories now were mixed with beefy burps,
As pent-up alcoholic gas blew off in snorts and chirps.
But every tar could stand altho he wobbled when he walked.
And tongues began to thicken so they'd slobber when they talked.

The celebration now was prime when suddenly some Salt —
I think it was the one that's known to every one as Walt —
Went out the door, dove off the docks in trousers, shoes and socks,
And swam around the basin seeing fifty seven docks.

The locker now was empty, all except the host had gone.
And he sat on that empty crate and slept till almost dawn.
His name? Your guess is good as mine — with that you'll have to wrassle.
It is a fact that, like man's house, his locker is his castle.

LAMENT

You've been a darn good boat Ol' Girl —
You've served me well and true.
I hate to see you fall apart —
But that's what all boats do.

When stem and plank and rib and keel
Succumb to Old Dry Rot
There's nothing much more man may do
For his beloved yacht.

I've cut and fitted planks and frames
Til you were quite like new

From stem to gudgeon-keel to rail —
But what I've done won't do.

Your ribs no longer hold their curves,
Your planks are warped and sprung,
Your keel, so flabby, soft and weak,
No longer holds the bung.

You're gone Ol' Dear, Ol' Pal, Ol' Girl —
Below the waves you'll slip
When I can get the courage up
To shove you — Good Ol' Ship ...

1948