

**Archive**  
**Lakeshore Museum Center**  
**White Lake Yacht Club Finding Aid**

**Collection:** White Lake Yacht Club (WLYC) Collection

**Object ID Number:** X95.102.001

**Location:** LCM Archive, room 204, Back Room, Top of Hackley Case.

**Dates:** 1903 to 2001

**Quantity:** Six archival boxes, 15.5 x 13.5 x 10.5

**Restrictions:** No Restrictions

**Abstract:** This collection includes several different types of archival materials created and collected by the members of the White Lake Yacht Club. This collection provides information about the development of the WLYC and how it served its community for over a century. This collection provides researchers with information about the club's founding in 1903, the beginning years as the WLYC became more organized, the middle years of hardship as the club worked to redefine itself, and more current years that closely resemble the WLYC as it appears today. The White Lake Yacht Club was founded as a place for community members to meet, share their enthusiasm of yachting, and improve their boating skills. White Lake Yacht Club also served as a place for social gatherings of all kinds and worked to include events for all ages. The WLYC is a part of Whitehall's history and is well known throughout Muskegon County.

**Historical Information:** The White Lake Yacht Club (WLYC) is located in Whitehall on White Lake and was founded in 1903. The WLYC first used the "Dus-Kew-Rera" Clubhouse to host dancing parties and other social activities. In 1903 there were 24 members with John A. Kruse as the Commodore, W.S. Gerts as Vice Commodore, Champlin Butterfield as Rear-Commodore, Charles A. Welch as Secretary, and Ed Douglass serving as the Treasurer. George H. Mason and G.F. Wadsworth completed the board of directors. Several residents, pleased with the summer activities, discussed building a permanent headquarters and began planning the building of a clubhouse in 1904. The WYLC searched many locations in Whitehall before selecting the property of George E. Mason. Mr. Mason leased his property for a dollar a year and gave the WLYC the option to purchase the property for \$1000.00 at the end of five years. Mr. Mason also stipulated that the clubhouse was to cost at least \$2500.00 and was only to be used by club members and their guests.

In 1905, the White Lake Yacht Club was admitted to the Lake Michigan Yachting Association. J. Fred McGuire was elected Commodore, and A.D. Butterfield, A.C. Campbell, Dr. John E. Walsh, and H.F. Harvey joined the board of directors. In 1906, WLYC was incorporated as a non-profit organization under the laws of the State of Michigan. That same year, construction of the building began in earnest after necessary funding was obtained. Pilings for the structure were driven by Robert Love of Muskegon and the contract was given to Robert H. Osborne. Lumber for the building came from the Erickson-Steffe Mill in Whitehall and construction was

completed in August of 1906. An opening gala was held to celebrate the exciting event and for the next ten years the club served as a meeting place for all kinds of social events and sailing races.

In 1917, during World War I, the club was forced to close as many young men were fighting in the war and community members focused more on the automobile and playing golf than in yachting. The club lay dormant for several years and the clubhouse fell into a state of decay. In the 1920s, a former member, Clarence E. Pitkin, was determined to bring back the White Lake Yacht Club as a place for all ages to gather. He went to local White Lake businesses and communities to try and regain interest in the club. In 1925 Mr. Pitkin's efforts paid off when he finally found an enthusiastic resident, Al Pack, willing to help him bring the Mississippi Valley Speedboat Association Gold Cup Races of 1925 to White Lake. A huge stand was built on the water's edge across from the tannery in Montague to accommodate six thousand people. Unfortunately, the power boating event was considered a financial catastrophe.

Despite the unsuccessful summer event, several people began planning the reorganization of the White Lake Yacht Club. At the end of the summer in 1925, a big costume party was planned and the group called it the Pirate's Ball. Everyone who went to the ball had a great time and it furthered the interest of community members in reopening the club. In June of 1926, Clarence E. Pitkin sent a letter to everyone who had shown an interest in the revival of WLYC. Forty members and sons of former members responded and a meeting was scheduled to meet on the dockside of the club and the club was reborn. Henry D. Sturtevant was elected Commodore and Clarence E. Pitkin served as Secretary and Treasurer for 35 years until his death. Once again, the White Lake Yacht Club served as a venue for social activities.

In 1926, WLYC opened a sailing school which offered a course that covered an eight week period for members and their children. The White Lake Yacht Club News began publication in 1927 and Clarence E. Pitkin served as the editor. In 1928, a junior organization was formed to provide a group for young members to improve their sailing schools and participate in other club functions. In the 1930s, club members worked with other Great Lakes yacht owners to convince their Congressmen to keep White Lake open, and helped make repairs on government owned piers. WLYC members also helped found the Western Michigan Yachting Association. Plans for the club bar, "The Anchor Room," began in 1933 as materials were gathered and membership to the club was granted in exchange for labor. The Anchor Room opened in July of 1933.

In the spring of 1941, a new pier and breakwater was installed by Roy Love of the Love Construction and Engineering Co., Muskegon, Michigan and the cost was \$10,000. The original footings would not be able to withstand another cycle of high water and a dock fund was established to pay for the building of the pier to protect the club for the future. Later, in 1974, an all steel pier was built. Improvements to the White Lake Yacht Club continued. In 1963, Past Commodore Fred Fischl and his wife Barbara proposed that the pollution of White Lake demanded that the club build a swimming pool. In 1965, members voted to build a swimming pool and individual members loaned the club money to finance the project.

From 1903 until the present, the White Lake Yacht Club brought together a community interested in sailing by providing a venue for races, classes on sailing, and social events for all ages.

**Scope and Contents:** This collection provides researchers with information about the development of the White Lake Yacht Club and how it changed over time to meet community and members' needs. This collection is composed of different paper materials and includes ledgers, club records, letters, receipts, photographs, negatives, and posters. This collection traces the history of the WLYC from its beginning to the present.

This collection is organized into the following twenty-three series: Administrative, Financial, Membership, Correspondence, Events, History, Historical Registration, Letterhead and Brochures, White Lake Channel Dredging Dispute, Racing, Sailing School, Swimming School, White Lake Golf Club, Commodore Gallery Project, Commodore Awards, Future Planning Committee, Newsletters, Articles, Publications, Newspapers, Visitor Guides, Miscellaneous, and Photographs.

The Administrative series includes the by-laws and the constitution and policies of the White Lake Yacht Club, the house rules, officer and board of directors lists, meeting minutes from the board of director's meetings, annual meetings, and other specific meetings, treasurer's reports and general reports from committees, and general correspondence that focuses on administrative concerns. This series also includes legal paperwork and records such as the lease and deed, easement agreements, memorandum and survey reports, liquor sales agreements, and correspondence relating to the WLYC property or legal matters. This series provides researchers with information about the business aspects of the White Lake Yacht Club and how concerns changed over time.

The Financial series includes income and expense reports, property appraisals, receipts and bills, donation records, ledgers recording membership dues, and records concerning the financing of the pool. This series also includes correspondence regarding membership fees and fiscal concerns. This series covers all of the financial aspects of the WLYC and documents club expenses.

The Membership series includes membership lists, membership directories, forms and applications for membership, correspondence regarding membership, and obituaries of well known members. This series provides information about how membership and types of membership changed over time.

The Correspondence series includes general correspondence sent to members and officers that does not deal with specific administrative or financial concerns. This series also includes press and news releases and correspondence sent regarding the aerial photograph project of 1973. This series provides researchers with an understanding of WLYC concerns and how WLYC was part of a national network.

The Events series includes club programs, notices, and calendars featuring club events that were available to club members. This series also includes programs and information about the Commodore's Ball, the annual Pirate's Ball, annual regattas, and Butterfly regattas.

The History series includes general club history, a history written by Courteney Pitkin, the history of the burgee, and general histories of the Whitehall area.

The Historical Registration series includes correspondence on a state and national level that gives historical information about the White Lake Yacht Club, and property information in hopes that the WLYC building will be placed as a historic site of the Historical Registration.

The White Lake Channel Dredging Dispute series includes letters to Senators and U.S. Representatives and newspaper clippings regarding the 1989 U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's proposed ending of the dredging of small harbors. The White Lake Yacht Club was opposed to this position and organized a campaign to demonstrate their opposition.

The Racing series includes schedules of races, correspondence regarding racing, duties of the race patrol and the scoring system, and racing courses.

The Sailing School series includes class schedules, manuals, lesson plans, exam information, applications, the financial aspects of the school, the history of the sailing school, graduation exercises, graduation lists, and correspondence regarding sailing school concerns.

The Swimming School series includes historical reports, swim reports, historical information, and graduation announcements.

The White Lake Golf Club series includes articles of association, by-laws, membership lists and cards, meeting minutes, legal and fiscal records, historical information, and general correspondence. The White Lake Yacht Club property is near the White Lake Golf Club property and the WLYC purchased the Golf Club's property and incorporated the Golf Club into WLYC.

The Commodore Gallery Project series includes correspondence regarding photographs of past Commodores of the WLYC and the club's efforts to find photographs of all of WLYC's Commodores, plans of the gallery and lists of Past Commodores, and receipts and financial information regarding picture frames and costs associated with the project. The Commodore Awards series includes certificates, pen set catalogs and information, receipts, and correspondence regarding the Commodore award.

The Future Planning Committee series includes correspondence, meeting minutes, property surveys and plans, financial records such as estimates, receipts, and proposals, membership lists, and reports/memorandums. The Future Planning Committee was formed from WLYC directors and esteemed members to discuss the future of the WLYC and the purchase of the Butterfield Property.

The Newsletters series includes issues of newsletters sent to WLYC members from 1927 to 2001. The earlier newsletters were published four times a year. Many of the newsletters are photocopies of the originals.

The Articles, Publications, and Newspaper series include articles and general publications collection by members on general topics. Some of the articles regard the WYLC events and building and other articles regard yachting in general. There are also centennial edition and special events newspapers collected by members.

The Letterhead and Brochures series includes White Lake Yacht Club brochures and several examples of WLYC letterhead and envelopes. The White Lake Visitor's Guides and Brochures

series includes general information about the White Lake area and tourist attractions. The Miscellaneous series includes playing card catalogs, a map of the Whitehall area, general notes, business cards, a drawing of the WLYC building, product information booklets, commodore hat emblem, and Celebrate White Lake Goodrich Steamship Lines posters from 1993 to 1995.

The Photographs series includes images of the White Lake Yacht Club building exterior, Grand Stand Miss Valley Speed Boat Race of 1925, the Sylvan Beach Hotel and Cottages, Courtney Pitkin's House, Colby Street in Whitehall, the Junior Yacht Club of 1952, Sailing Classes from 1926 and 1927, boats, and the Butterfly and E Regatta from 1950 to 1970, the *S.S. Carolina and the S.S. Georgia*, and the Wabaningo Club; Postcards with images of boat buildings, outdoor scenes, the WLYC, Sylvan Beach, the U.S. Life Saving Station, White Lake aerials, Whitehall city dock, White Lake Golf Club, the weathervane in Montague, the summer residence of Charles Welch, and Murray's Inn; Photographs of the Pirate's Ball from 1926, 1928, and 1929 and the 1954 ball with Mrs. Carroll Cole, Courtney and Gig Pitkin, Mr. and Mrs. George Bogurt, KT Cannon, Mrs. Lu Holly II, Anne Newson, Kay Frauenthal, Carmie Guerin, Marian Blaine, Betty Garner, Bill Guerin, Jack Guerin, and Loker Chittenden; Photographs of the following people: Max Lau, Frank D. McGuire, George Boggart, George Manson, Andrew Courteney Campbell, Elsie and Alvin Youngquist, Brad Harvey, Mrs. Shirley Milne, Tom Sillus, Rob Tiuarduck, Terry O'Connell, Ernie Wegner, Ginna Wisnow, Leslie Wegner Atterberry, Jack Chatain, Steve Dake, Thomas McMurray, Ed Wilson, Min Biegler, Clarence E. Pitkin, and Joe Pitkin; Photographs of Award Ceremonies from 1952 to 1983 with Ann Mulne, Commodore Ernest A. Wagner, Maynerd Meyer, Gordon Lindeman, Mrs. L. and Terry Bischoff; Photographs of the WLYC Golden Anniversary in 1957 with Clarence Pitkin, L. Chittenden, Duane Pierson, Hilary Davis, Doug McNiel, Glenn McMurnan, Buddy Melges, and Neil Manary; Photographs of groups with Max Lau, Willy Lau, Covell Radcliffe, Neil Manny, Don DeKoster, Bill Bartholomew, Bill Kena, Harry Pilliger, Ned Dake, Stormy Webber, Jim Butterfield, Jack Orr, and Bob Horton; Photograph of the First Board of Directors in 1926: Harold Pillinger, Jack Gewrin, Mr. Smith, Mr. Kean, Harvey Manny, Bill Krugman, and Clarence Pitkin.

**Arrangement:** This large collection was collected by a former White Lake Yacht Club member and commodore and was donated in several different sections. The collection was brought to the Lakeshore Museum Center Archive to be stored and processed. The collection was divided into logical series, placed into six document boxes based on series, and does not adhere to the original order. Several of the series contain records and information that may overlap with other series, and the materials are organized in a manner that provides the easiest access for any potential researchers. Some of the materials appear in both series as the information pertains to the content of both series. Three oversize posters were placed into a folder and placed on top of the collection. This collection is stored in the Archive, in the Back Room 204, on top of the Hackley Flat Storage Cabinet. Box 1 contains Administrative, Financial and Correspondence 1980 to 1995. Box 2 contains Correspondence 1946 to 1979, Membership, Events, History, Historical Registration, and the White Lake Channel Dredging Dispute. Box 3 contains Racing, Sailing School, Swimming School, White Lake Golf Club, Commodore Gallery Project, Commodore Awards, and Miscellaneous. Box 4 contains Future Planning Committee, and Newsletters 1991 to 2001. Box 5 contains Newsletters 1940 to 1990. Box 6 contains Newsletters 1926 to 1939, Articles, Publications, Newspapers, Visitor Guides, and Photographs. This collection is cataloged on Past Perfect.

## Contents

X95.102.001 Archival Materials

### Series 1: Administrative

*Sub-Series: By Laws/ Policies*

*Sub-Series: Constitution*

*Sub-Series: Officer Lists*

*Sub-Series: Legal*

*Sub-Series: Meeting Minutes*

*Sub-Series: Treasurer's Reports*

*Sub-Series: Reports*

*Sub-Series: Correspondence*

*Sub-Series: Executive Board and Finance Meeting, 1967*

*Dates: 1906 to 1995*

Located in Box 1

### Series 2: Financial

*Sub-Series: Ledgers*

*Sub-Series: Property Appraisal*

*Sub-Series: Receipts/ Bills*

*Sub-Series: Income/ Expense Reports*

*Sub-Series: Correspondence*

*Sub-Series: Pool Financing*

*Sub-Series: E Boat Regatta Donations, 1960*

*Dates: 1906 to 1995*

Located in Box 1

### Series 3: Correspondence

*Sub-Series: General Correspondence*

*Sub-Series: Press/ News Releases*

*Sub-Series: Aerial Photograph Project, 1973*

*Dates: 1946 to 1995*

Located in Box 1 and Box 2

### Series 4: Membership

*Sub-Series: Forms/ Applications*

*Sub-Series: Membership Lists*

*Sub-Series: Directories*

*Sub-Series: Correspondence*

*Sub-Series: White Lake Golf Club*

*Sub-Series: Obituaries*

*Dates: 1926 to 1996*

Located in Box 2

**Series 5: Events**

*Sub-Series: Season's Programs 1914/1915*

*Sub-Series: Social Calendars/ Notices*

*Sub-Series: Commodore's Ball/ Pirate's Ball*

*Sub-Series: Regattas- Annual, Butterfly*

*Dates: 1914 to 1995*

Located in Box 2

**Series 6: History**

*Sub-Series: Club History*

*Sub-Series: Burgee History*

*Sub-Series: General/ Regional*

*Dates: 1960s, Most Unknown*

Located in Box 2

**Series 7: Historical Registration**

*Dates: 1986*

Located in Box 2

**Series 8: Letterhead/ Brochures**

*Dates: Unknown*

Located in Box 2

**Series 9: White Lake Channel Dredging Dispute**

*Dates: 1989*

Located in Box 2

**Series 10: Racing**

*Dates: 1983 to 1992*

Located in Box 3

**Series 11: Sailing School**

*Sub-Series: Lessons*

*Sub-Series: Manuals*

*Sub-Series: Exams*

*Sub-Series: Schedules/ Calendars*

*Sub-Series: Graduation Exercises*

*Sub-Series: Graduation Lists*

*Sub-Series: Applications*

*Sub-Series: Financial*

*Sub-Series: Correspondence*

*Sub-Series: History/ News*

*Dates: 1939 to 1993*

Located in Box 3

**Series 12: Swimming School**

*Sub-Series: Historical Report*

*Sub-Series: Swim Report*

*Sub-Series: Graduation*

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**Series 13: White Lake Golf Club**

*Sub-Series: Articles of Association/ by Laws*

*Sub-Series: Membership*

*Sub-Series: Correspondence*

*Sub-Series: Meeting Minutes*

*Sub-Series: Legal/ Fiscal*

*Sub-Series: History*

*Dates: 1970 to 1990*

Located in Box 3

**Series 14: Commodore Gallery Project**

*Sub-Series: Correspondence*

*Sub-Series: Financial*

*Sub-Series: Plans/ Lists*

*Dates: 1903-1993*

Located in Box 3

**Series 15: Commodore Awards**

*Dates: Most unknown*

Located in Box 3

**Series 16: Miscellaneous**

*Dates: 1993-1995, most unknown*

Located in Box 3

**Series 17: Future Planning Committee**

*Sub-Series: Financial*

*Sub-Series: Surveys/ Plans*

*Sub-Series: Reports/ Memorandum*

*Sub-Series: Membership*

*Sub-Series: Correspondence*

*Sub-Series: Minutes*

*Dates: 1960 to 1994*

Located in Box 4

**Series 18: Newsletters**

*Dates: 1927 to 2001*

Located in Box 4, Box 5, and Box 6



**Series 19: Articles**

*Date: Most unknown*

Located in Box 6

**Series 20: Publications**

*Date: Most unknown*

Located in Box 6

**Series 21: Newspapers**

*Dates: 1939, 1972, 1993*

Located in Box 6

**Series 22: Visitor Guides/ Brochures**

*Dates: Most Unknown*

Located in Box 6

**Series 23: Photographs**

*Sub-Series: Pirate's Ball*

*Sub-Series: Award Ceremonies*

*Sub-Series: Golden Anniversary, 1957*

*Sub-Series: People*

*Sub-Series: Groups*

*Sub-Series: Postcards*

*Sub-Series: Boats*

*Sub-Series: Exteriors*

*Sub-Series: Negatives*

*Dates: 1916 to 1990*

Located in Box 6