Thomas Fleming Day

Editor and Publisher of the "Rudder" Magazine

The most influential figure in America pleasure boating as a pastime became of age. He was born in England in 1861, son of a geologist and schoolteacher. His parents moved to America when he was 6 years of age. He was raised in and near New York City. The boy's playground was the water-front of New Rochelle, then one of Long Island Sound's busiest yachting centres.

Day believed "Deep sea racing was inevitable"- it simply had to come" But what the historian Joseph Ellis has said of George Washington might also be said of Tom Day: he transformed "the improbable into the inevitable". He knew that small craft, if properly designed, built and bandied were just as safe at sea as large ones.

Tom Day had a dislike to out and out racing yachts, and those who sailed them, and did not hesitate to express that point from time to time. He was very strong on family cruising yachts and his mission was to see people go beyond their local ponds and explore further horizons and have fun. After reading around 90 issues of the Rudder Magazines, I have come to understand Tom Day. Each issue of the Rudder had two particular segments: "Round the Clubhouse Fire" where he spoke about his ardent and loyal subscribers, which he had worldwide whose numbers were numerous. The other segment was "Little Lessons". It is here one feels that you are still at school and he doesn't hesitate to scold, either. He was very strong on good sportsmanship, and he expresses this in particular using his close friend Sir Thomas Lipton as a perfect example of a good sport. Tom Day's friendship with T. A. Dickson came about through many years of the Rudder and he speaks very highly of Mr. Dickson in the Rudder.

Tom Day had in his mind a century ago: -amateur sailors in cruising boats can go to sea. His revolution is now a routine event. Skipper Day could die happy, whispering to a friend "I am slipping, but life is sweet still".

Thomas Fleming Day died in 1926 aged 65 years.

Notes by Ruth Plummer