

# The Good Ship Ono



In 1928 and 1929 the Dawn Boat Company built about 130 yachts. This was a boom time for this Bronx, New York shipyard. In 1930-31, at the start of the depression, Dawn launched only seven hulls. The luxury boat market collapsed along with the stock market and most of American business.

ONO was launched in 1929 with the launch name MACABOY. What? What is a Macaboy? It was a very popular “snuff” product produced by the family owned and operated Pierre Lorillard Tobacco Company of New York, established 1760. Which family member got the yacht is lost to time, but this is known: MACABOY was designed and built as a fast commuter yacht as was quite customary for that time period. Many wealthy businessmen live on the waterfront off Manhattan Island. Typically one would be picked up by his captain and crew from his estate and delivered to the city in the deluxe cabin of their private yacht. Meals or cocktails could be prepared along the way. The private jet of the Roaring 20’s.

Interestingly, the Lorillard family already had an interest in boats. They owned a small shipyard in Titusville, Florida, that built small fishing boats for use on the Indian River there. Here is where facts turn into speculation. As the stock market crashed, the yacht MACABOY was moved to Florida. Why? Did the Lorillard executive decide to go fishing? Being in the tobacco business the company certainly had ties to the tobacco industry in Havana...also a great source for money making, or maybe smuggled Rum. Sounds possible? When rum runners boats were seized for illegal activities, they were often sold cheaply at auction by the US government. Hmm.

Undoubtably there is much that could be learned about the Lorillard family that originally purchased the yacht. They were the oldest tobacco company in the US, founded in 1760 and sold to Reynolds Tobacco in 2014 for 27.4 billion. They sold a lot of tobacco products including cigarettes named, Old Gold, Newport, Kent, Maverick, True, and others.

So next owner Lewis W. Myers was a California federal judge. He bought the yacht and had it brought to California. California had many great shipyards that he could have purchased a yacht from. Why buy one from Florida? Connections to the right people in the Federal government perhaps fit into this puzzle. I have found no records of this transaction but if the shoe fits... Lewis Myers became Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court. He was well connected.

I met an older woman during a boat show at the Long Beach YC. She asked if she could come on board. She actually had been on the boat before. She had been the legal secretary for the Myers family for 28 years. Amongst other stories she shared was the fact that Myers came home one day and surprised his family with the news that he had bought a yacht. The family story was that his wife shrieked, "OH NO"! The family thought that was so funny that ONO stuck and became the yacht's new name as well as the name for the Hawaiian fish. A cute double meaning of OH NO/ONO.

The Myers family of three generations had the boat for more than 40 years. They were avid fishermen and had a live-a-board captain named, Old Joe, who kept the boat ready and ran her on fishing trips. They went as far as the Coronado Island off Mexico. As the 60's and 70's came along the family painted over all the beautiful Mahogany with white paint. This made the boat look like a more modern fiberglass boat of the time. The popularity of varnished old wood came back later. Somewhere along these years the original six cylinder engines were replaced with the current Detroit diesel 6-71 engines. This increased the boat's range and durability.

In 1983 John Franck spotted the boat and realized it was ripe for a restoration. Included with the yacht is John's book that he made for me explaining the 6 year effort that he and friends made bringing ONO back to an original classic yacht look. John did a fine job of restoring a yacht that was in well used condition. I love this book but it really must remain with the boat.

As far as we know ONO was not used in any military service during the Second World War. Perhaps Judge Myers was able to pull strings and protect her from that.

Best I can conclude from the info I have, this is the ownership record:

1. Lorillard family.1930-1935 ?
2. Lewis W. Myers family, son and grandson. 1935-1983, 48 years.
3. John Franck, wife Vikki. 1983-1993. 10 years.
4. David and Sophia Medrano. 1993-2012. 19 years.
5. Rick and Elissa Olson. 2012- 2026 14 years.
6. Shawna Burch. 2026-

The Medrano's and Olson's were active CYA members. The yacht was CYA flagship with David as commodore in 2001. Again CYA Flagship with Rick as Commodore in 2017.

Shawna Burch owns ONO and will remain member of the Classic Yacht Association along with her husband Loren Burch. It's a fine organization and good for the boat's history.

-Shawna Burch, 9/21/26