

Yachtsman J. Ernstof; skipped '64 winner

BURLINGTON, Vt. — Jacob M. "Milt" Ernstof, 65, former Narragansett Bay S Class champion, who skippered the 38-foot yawl Burgoo to victory in the 1964 Newport-to-Bermuda race, died of a heart attack here Friday night.

He had moved from Providence to Vermont 10 years ago, and in recent years had lived on his farm in Waterbury Center, Vt., about 10 miles from Stowe, with his Norwegian-born wife, Sidsil, and his two sons, Joel and Eben.

Mr. Ernstof and his crew of S Boat skippers made history in two successive Newport-to-Bermuda races, not only for the success they achieved, but for the manner in which they achieved it.

In 1962, his first year as a Cruising Class skipper, Mr. Ernstof, Everett Pearson, Alden Walls, Dr. Terrell E. "Ty" Cobb, Robert O. Read, Russell R. "Bud" Hunt Jr. and Jorj Levy sailed Burgoo to first in class and second in fleet on corrected time.

Two years later, with Jeff Spranger and Dr. Ernest McVay aboard in place of Pearson and Cobb, Burgoo won the race, the first Rhode Island entry in 32 years to do so.

Prior to Burgoo's victory, ocean-racing crews had been used to adopting a somewhat more relaxed routine for night watches than during the day.

ERNSTOF, J. Milton

February 4, 1977, in Vt. Residence, Perry Hill Farm, Waterbury Center, Vt. Husband of Sidsil (Abbott) Ernstof. Father of Eben and Joel of Vt. Loving brother of Mrs. Daniel Robinson and Mrs. Walter Adler of Providence. Funeral was held Sunday in Waterbury, Vt.

Mr. Ernstof and his crew changed all that, devising a system whereby each man on watch spent 20 minutes every hour at the helm, 20 minutes in the cockpit and 20 minutes on the foredeck.

"We felt 20 minutes was as long as a man at the helm could maintain total concentration," he later explained.

They sailed their Invicta Class yawl like a dinghy, with an intensity of concentration seldom seen up to that point. The constant striving for every last ounce of speed in a dying breeze tipped the balance in their favor in the final few hours of that race.

Mr. Ernstof's last race on Burgoo was the transatlantic race from Bermuda to Denmark in 1966, with a crew of college-age sailors aboard. Burgoo lost her rudder 1,000 miles west of Scotland, but her crew fashioned a replacement, using boards from the cabin sole, and made it safely to a harbor of refuge in the Scottish Hebrides.

Mr. Ernstof was a modest, soft-spoken man who avoided the limelight whenever he could. He was also a deeply religious man.

Dr. McVay recalled powering out past Castle Hill on the way to the starting line for the '64 race, with the wives and children of the seven men aboard waving at them as the black yawl pointed her bow seaward.

"Suddenly, Milt shut off the engine and said we were going to have a little prayer," McVay said.

"He had all of us put a hand on the tiller, and then he said a few words. I wish I'd had a tape recording of it. He didn't ask to win the race. He just asked for God's guidance, and asked that God take care of our families while we were gone.

"It was very moving, and it's something we've spoken about whenever we got together after that."

Mr. Ernstof traveled down from Vermont a number of times in recent years to visit members of that crew, and they usually gathered as a group at the home of one of them in the Providence area.

ERNSTOF, JACOB

26, 1937

JACOB ERNSTOF IS DEAD AT 59

Well Known Real Estate Man
and Former Part Owner of
Hotel Ill Two Days.

OPENED STORE WHEN 21

Was Active in Jewish Charities;
Gained Added Prominence as
Able Handball Player

Jacob Ernstof, well known Providence real estate man, and at one time part-owner of both the Crown and Narragansett Hotels, died early this morning at his home, 35 Vassar avenue. He was 59 years old.

Mr. Ernstof was stricken ill Saturday morning. He had been actively engaged in business up to that time.

Born in Vienna, Austria, Mr. Ernstof came to the United States as a youth of 16 and entered the clothing business. His rise was rapid, and before he was 21 he had opened his own clothing store.

The business grew, and he opened another, and larger store, in Cathedral square, later opening two stores in Pawtucket and stores in Worcester, Mass., and Hartford, Conn.

About 1915, he turned to the real estate business, and as his interest in real estate grew, he retired gradually from the clothing business and disposed of his stores.

At one time, his real estate holdings in the downtown section were extensive, but he had disposed of most of them at the time of his death. In 1922, he had an interest in both the Crown and Narragansett Hotels, but later sold out.

Active in Jewish charities and affairs, Mr. Ernstof was a director of Miriam Hospital, a former director of the Jewish Orphanage and a director of the Jewish Home for the Aged.

He was a director of the Lincoln Trust Company when that company was reorganized about a decade ago.

He was a member of the Providence Lodge of Elks, having joined that organization in 1902, and a member of the Touro Fraternal Association. During the Spanish-American War he was a member of an organization known as the Touro Cadets.

One of his favorite hobbies was handball, and he achieved considerable reputation as a player. For about 30 years, he met all comers at the Y. M. C. A. and beat most of them.

He leaves his widow, Mrs. Minnie (Manshel) Ernstof; two daughters, Mrs. Daniel Robinson and Mrs. Walter Adler; a son, J. Milton Ernstof, and four grandchildren.

Jacob Ernstof



Providence Real Estate Dealer
Former Clothing Merchant Dead
In His 60th Year.

ERNSTOF, JACOB

ERNSTOF,
Jacob

10 / 29 / 37 THE JEWISH HERALD,

Jacob Ernstof Dies After Brief Illness Was Prominent in Jewish Affairs

Funeral services were held last Wednesday for Jacob Ernstof, well known Providence real estate man, and at one time part-owner of both the Crown and Narragansett Hotels, who died on Tuesday morning at his home, 35 Vassar avenue. He was 59 years old.

Mr. Ernstof was stricken ill Saturday morning. He had been actively engaged in business up to that time. Born in Vienna, Austria, he came to the United States as a youth of 16 and entered the clothing business. His rise was rapid, and before he was 21 he had opened his own clothing store. The business grew, and he opened another and larger store in Cathedral Square, later opening two stores in Pawtucket, and stores in Worcester, Mass., and Hartford, Conn. About 1915, he turned to the real estate business, and as his interest in real estate grew, he retired gradually from the clothing business and disposed of his stores.

At one time, his real estate holdings in the downtown section were extensive, but he had disposed of most of them at the time of his death. Active in Jewish charities and affairs, Mr. Ernstof was a director of the Miriam Hospital, a former director of the Jewish Orphanage and a director of the Jewish Home for the Aged. He was a director of the Lincoln Trust Company when that company was reorganized about a decade ago. He was a member of the Providence Lodge of Elks, and also of the Touro Fraternal Association.

Besides his wife, Mrs. Minnie (Manshel) Ernstof, he leaves two daughters, Mrs. Daniel Robinson and Mrs. Walter Adler; a son, J. Milton Ernstof, and four grandchildren.