

## The History and Pictures of the Sir Thomas Lipton Cup

A notable trophy that PICYA awards is the 1913 Sir Thomas Lipton Cup. Sir Thomas Lipton visited the Bay Area in 1912 and intended to field a 12-meter boat to compete with a San Francisco Bay boat during the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915. However, the beginning of World War I made this impractical. The cup was raced in 1916, 1918, 1919 and 1920. The last three times won by John Hanify. He presented the cup to the Olympic Club for display but tragically, he lost his life in rough seas in 1922 and this ended interest in this class for racing along with the knowledge of where the Lipton Trophy was located. It was 'lost' for roughly 40 years and 'discovered' in the display case of the Olympic club by Paul Marcucci of the San Francisco Y.C. It was returned to PICYA after negotiation and a new Deed of Gift was written with approval of the Lipton Estate effective September 1, 1960. The original Lipton Cup melted in the St. Francis Y.C. fire of 1976. Irreplaceable, a modern sailboat replica was substituted.

### Brief History of Sir Thomas Lipton

#### SIR THOMAS LIPTON'S GIFT

The life of Thomas Johnstone Lipton of Great Britain provides history with a most outstanding icon in the field of yachting. Sir Thomas, who was knighted in 1898 by Queen Victoria, offered all yachtsmen an excellent example of a true sportsman in the broadest, highest and finest sense. He exemplified a keen contender and clean competitor. He was undaunted by defeat. He was aggressive and ambitious to the end.

Sir Thomas' race winnings - and there were many - were marked by his modesty in victory. In his defeats abroad or in American waters, he demonstrated how one can be a good loser - "the world's best loser" - and always be a truly great winner.

#### INDOMITABLE ETHICS

Thomas Johnstone Lipton was born on May 10, 1850 in Glasgow, Scotland, and eventually became one of the world's great success stories. He went to work at an early age as an errand boy in a Glasgow bookstore. At the age of 15, he came to the United States as a steerage immigrant but never forgot his homeland. He first worked in a grocery store, then drove a mule streetcar in New Orleans, became a traveling portrait salesman and finally worked on plantations in South Carolina and Virginia.

Sir Thomas returned to Glasgow at age 26, with enough money to open a small grocery store. As his business grew, he opened other stores - first in Scotland and then all over Ireland, Wales and England. To supply these stores, he acquired tea plantations in Ceylon and also purchased coffee and cocoa plantations. A global entrepreneur, Sir Thomas operated a large packing house in Chicago, a bacon curing plant and bakeries in England. He had fruit orchards and factories for making jellies and jams. Within 10 years, he was employing 8,000 persons.

Sir Thomas' business empire grew, and his stores were in many lands. His name, known around the world as "Lipton's Tea," became a household word. At the age of 40, he was a millionaire. Although the tea was recognized for his business success, he was also a man who knew how to crown a life of labor, with a penchant for leisure.

In 1898 at the age of 48, he entered the sport of yachting and challenged for the America's Cup - that precious and coveted trophy which was first won in 1851 by New York Yacht Club's schooner, *America*, in the race around the Isle of Wight. When Sir Thomas entered the fray, the Royal Yacht Squadron, England's most exclusive club, had already made 10 unsuccessful attempts to regain the prized trophy from its keepers at the NYYC.

King Edward VII and King George V both shared their interest in yachting with Lipton and enjoyed his company. Between 1899 and 1930 he challenged the American holders of the America's Cup through Royal Ulster Yacht Club five times with his yachts called Shamrock through Shamrock V. However, he earned a reputation as "the world's best loser," and was presented with a gold cup by the people of America for his good sportsmanship in 1930. Although he tired of being the perennial good loser, he did not lose enthusiasm for the event, which consumed so much of his life.

As a self-made man Lipton, however, was no natural member of the British upper class and the Royal Yacht Squadron only admitted him shortly before his death. Lipton was inducted into the America's Cup Hall of fame in 1993.

When he died in 1931, having never married or had children, much of his fortune went directly to the city of Glasgow for social, sporting and educational programs that still exist today. He was 81 years of age and was said to have been planning his sixth attempt at The America's Cup.



**Sir Thomas Lipton May 10, 1850 – October 2, 1931**



**Original Cup Before the 1976 Fire at the St. Francis Y.C.**



**Current Sir Thomas Lipton Trophy, After Fire**