

THE OUTLINE OF SAILING TOURISM TRADITION IN POLAND (1918-1939)

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Abstract:

The first organizations which undertook sailing issues were, among others, *Warsaw Rowing Association*, *Military Rowing Club*, *Academic Sport Association* and scouting. The first sailing scout detachment was organized in May, 1919. Alongside, reestablishing sport clubs were leading sailing activity. During the first years after Poland regained the Independence, sailing associations were using their own syllabus, gathering lots of sailing lovers.

Due to the financial obstacles, mainly expensive equipment, the development of sailing tourism in Poland, during the Interwar period, was truly difficult. However, sea sailing was developing much better and it proved to be very popular especially among the youth.

In 1924, all associations and clubs united under *Polish Sailing Association*, which was supported by tourism committee.

Along with the growing demand for water equipment, the national industry of water sport was developing very fast. It produced canoes, boats and sailboats.

During the 20 year Interwar period, the specialist literature concerning sailing was published: *Water Sport* and many other publications. This activity was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II.

The predominant aim of the article is to remind historic events connected to the evolution of Polish sailing.

For this article, an enquiry in specialist press was made. The author also relies on the memories of the participants of described events. The article is also based on the sources of *National Digital Archives*.

During the enquiry, the source analysis was made, which was necessary in establishing the narration of examined problems.

During the period of Partitions and in between 1918 and 1939, the sailing tourism was referred to as *water vagabondage*. The development of sailing tourism in Poland started from somewhat primitive and individual forms and then, turned into organized swimming units which were developing alongside with the advancement of technology. The associations and organizations that were able to preserve their swimming equipment, harbors and sailing infrastructure were the first to introduce sailing tourism into their activity. Among the organizations that undertook the first sailing activity were *Warsaw Rowing Association*, *Military Rowing Club*, *Academic Sport Association* as well as scouting. The first sailing attempts were individual and merely local. When after the World War I the situation settled,

the scouting instructors began to continue sailing development and organizing water scouting teams¹.

The first sailing troops were organized on the initiative of Józef Jakóbkiewicz in May, 1919². The scouting organization viewed sailing as an aim through which the development of young Poles would be shaped. Moreover, the syllabus of scouting teams included efficiency requirements, that were: building raft and swimming on it, proper sailing and rowing skills. To achieve that, sea training in lifeboats was performed³. The reestablishing sport clubs also performed sailing activity. During the first years after regaining the Independence, sailing associations led their activity on the basis of their own programs, in short time gaining mass of sailing lovers.

The Polish sailing tourism during the interwar period was developing with obstacles, due to costs of equipment. Sea sailing was developing very quickly. It was popular especially among youth. Those who were eager to learn the rules of sailing could choose one of training facilities in Jastarnia. One form of training was sea voyages, during which young people could gain experience and skills in steering sailboats at sea⁴.

In scouting structures, one of the first groups that were conducting sailing training was, established in 1919, 17th *Poznań Scouting Group*. In the same year, the harbor of *Military Rowing Club* started its activity.

The first sailing regatta took place at Charzykowskie lake, 25th July, 1920. It was organized by *Association of Water Sport Friends*.

The significant contribution to the development of sailing in Gdańsk could be attributed to Józef Klejnot-Turski, the initiator of *Polish Banner*⁵.

In 1922, 17th *Poznań Scouting Group* organized the first wandering camp. In 1925, 17th *Poznań Scouting Group* took the name *sailing team of sea dogs* by Jan Kiliński in Poznań⁶.



Czesław Czarnowski, in 1924 bought the yacht 'Carmen' to swim with his crew across the Baltic Sea⁷.

On May 23rd, 1923, schooner 'Lwów' sailed on its first oceanic voyage. Young sailors from sea school in Tczew during the cruise on ship 'Lwów' heading to Brazil, on 13th August, 1923, were the first Polish crew who crossed the Equator⁸.

Warsaw 1924, the harbor of Polish Yacht-Club on the Vistula in Warsaw.

¹W. Głowacki: *Wspaniały świat żeglarstwa*, Gdańsk 1970, s. 212.

²Tamże, s. 133.

³E. Sikorski: *Szkice z dziejów harcerstwa polskiego w latach 1911–1939*, Warszawa 1989, s. 35.

⁴W. Kwast: *Turystyka*, [w:] „Przewodnik Sportowy” 1933, s. 215–217.

⁵J. Klejnot-Turski: *Sport żaglowy i motorowy*, „Gazeta Gdańska” nr 38, s. 6

⁶J. Kwaśniewska: *Z historii Poznańskiego Okręgowego Związku Żeglarstwa*, Poznań 1990, s. 25.

⁷W 1925 r. stan posiadania „YKP” zwiększył się o dwa zakupione jachty, *Gryfi i Witeź*.

⁸*Dziesięciolecie Polski Odrodzonej. Księga pamiątkowa 1918–1928*, Kraków – Warszawa 1928, s. 475; „Sport wodny”, 1933 nr 10, s. 185.

The sailing voyages on the Vistula were organized by *Polish Yacht-Club* (among others in 1924). The sailing experience gained on the Vistula enabled the club members to organize sea cruises. Furthermore, for this purpose, the member of *Polish Yacht-Club*,



August 1925, jury yacht during sea regatta in Gdynia

In Poland, in 1924 when it comes to outstanding sailing activity one can enumerate *Polish Sailing Club* in Chojnice, *Sea Clubin* Tczew as well as Warsaw sailing clubs such as: sailing section of *Military Club*, *Polish Yacht-Club* and yacht club. The above mentioned associations and clubs were all united into *Polish Sailing Association*⁹. In *Polish Sailing Association* all matters concerning the development of sailing tourism were ascribed to commission of tourism¹⁰.

The growing number of sailing lovers caused that in 1925 *Military Rowing Club* singled out sailing section of *Military Rowing Club* led by Ludwik Szwykowski.

One of the most significant events in 1926 was M. Zaruski's cruise, who, with his crew, sailed to Sweden and Denmark on board of *Witeżyacht*. Considering the conditions of that time, the cruise gained recognition among sailing society. Moreover, *Witeżyacht* took part in numerous cruises until the outbreak of World War II¹¹.

Among scouting society, sailing trainings were performed on a large scale. Among others, *Poznańsea dog team* in Gdynia (1926) organized the first scouting camp. After completing the camp, scouts were given first sailing ranks. The scouts from Poznań due to conducting training activity were chosen as Polish representatives at water scouts convention in Denmark in Helsinogor (1927). During the sailing competition Poles defeated English scouts.

Aspiring to self-reliance, sailing lovers of *Military Rowing Club* established in 1927 sailing group of *Warsaw Sailing Association* that was led by Franciszek Głowacki¹².

The possibility of sailing through the Vistula aroused interest among owners of sailboats and all of those who were planning to go on a water cruise. Among the sailing society, such possibility motivated to establishing new sailing sections. The new initiative appeared, namely, building small sailboats at home.

⁹T. S.: *Żeglarstwo* [w:] T. Sawicki, W. Kwast (red.): *Przewodnik Sportowy*, Warszawa 1933, s. 196–202.

¹⁰§ 54 Statutu PZŻ.

¹¹M. Halter: *Szacowny jubilat (1924–2004)*, „Żagle”, 2004 nr 9, s. 4–5.

¹²W. Głowacki: *Dzieje żeglarstwa polskiego*, tom 1, Gdańsk 1989.

In 1928, during the scout convention that took place at Hungarian lake Balaton, the first water scout team of Ursynów achieved victory, defeating English, German and Austrian scouts.



1928, the sailors training facility in Chojnice



1930, sailboats harbor at Narocz lake

The sailing department that, from 1926, was operating at *Main Scout Quarters*, after the stocktaking created in 1930, enumerated 26 teams which were composed of 843 scout-sailors and used 84 water units. Apart from that, *Polish Scouts Association* underlined that it had many lake and river harbors as well as scouts sailing publications¹³.

Among the swimming unit, it was frequent to observe canoes with sails which were used to swim across all Polish water areas. The canoes were mostly used to train beginners. The sailed canoes were frequently bought, because of their low price, especially by schools and youth organizations.

¹³E. Sikorski: *Szkice z dziejów harcerstwa polskiego w latach 1911–1939*, Warszawa 1989, s. 81; autor podaje 830 harcerzy-żeglarzy i 83 jednostki pływające.



Harceńskie Archiwum Cyfrowe, sygn. 1-P-268-3

Warsaw, 1923, the canoe regatta.

The level of sailing development, especially among scouts, can be easily proved by organizing in 1932 the international scouting convention at Garczyński lake in Pomerania district. To the achievements of Polish scouts, except for successful organization and winning first place in numerous sailing events, one could also enumerate the presence of Polish president Ignacy Mościski, that contributed to the prestige of the event. Among the sailors of England, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Poland, Romania and Hungary the most significant was the rivalry of Polish contestant with England, France and Germany¹⁴.

Alongside with the constant growth of demand for water equipment in Poland, the water sport industry was developing quickly. It manufactured canoes, boats, sailboats, engines for motorboats and also tents. In Gdynia, 1932, brothers Leon and Olgierd Tumiłowicz, started pioneering production of sailboats and yachts in their small workshop.

The organizer of first marine sailing regatta from Gdynia to Ronne (on Bornholm island) between 22nd – 24th of June, 1933, was marine department of *Polish Yacht-Club* (functioning from 1928). Moreover, 9 yachts participated in the regatta, 6 yachts were from *Polish Yacht-Club*. The winning one was *Witeży* yacht, the following places were taken by, respectively: *Jurand*, *Orion*, *Chochlik*, *Irka*, *Halina*, *Fladra*, *Mohort* i *Temida II*. The organization of the regatta itself as well as the participation of above mentioned yachts turned out to be yet another organizational success and also the test for sailors and their clubs¹⁵.

In 1934, the Tumiłowicz's workshop turned into, well-known for its production, shipyard¹⁶. The start of yacht production in Poland was somewhat innovative. The first yacht launched on water was called *Eksperyment*, the following ones were *Konik Morski* and *Haj*¹⁷.

¹⁴„Sport Wodny”, 1933 nr 3, s. 51, jako zwycięzców Złotu wymienia skautów Węgierskich; W. Głowacki: *Dzieje żeglarstwa polskiego*, Gdańsk 1989, s. 233, jako zwycięzców Złotu wymienia Harcerską Drużynę „Wilków Morskich” z Poznania.

¹⁵„Sport Wodny”, 1933 nr 10, s. 185.

¹⁶Tumiłowicz Leon (1908–1971), jeden z pierwszych konstruktorów jachtów żaglowych. W 1934 r., wraz z bratem Olgierdem, założył pierwszy warsztat szkutniczy w Gdyni (późniejsza stocznia jachtowa). Budowano tam m.in. małe jachty balastowe typu Mewa, znane Koniki Morskie (jachty typu słup, powierzchnia ożaglowania 40 m², długość 9,6 m, do wybuchu II wojny światowej wykonano 26 sztuk), jachty typu „Tom” o powierzchni ożaglowania 100 m² (wśród nich Polonia z 1958 r. jacht flagowy Polskiego Towarzystwa Turystyczno-Krajoznawczego). Tumiłowicz był projektantem jachtu „Opty”, na którym dla L. Teliga odbył rejsu dookoła świata.



1934, Water facility of Polish Scout Association in Jastarnia

Apart from the production that started in 1932, 10 ballast yachts were bought (they were referred to as Czajka). In accordance with their construction and sails, they were made use of in sailing and organizing cruises in the coastal zones. One of the most significant events in the history of sailing was around the world cruise, undertaken on the initiative of Władysław Wagner. To meet this aim, the renovation work of the abandoned motor ship's hull started. The ship was sailing across the Baltic Sea under the name of *Zjawa* (phantom)¹⁸. During the cruises, it turned out that the ship did not fulfill the requirements necessary when it comes to cruising around the world. It was the main reason that Władysław Wagner with Jerzy Knabe i Andrzej Piotrowski set sails on the board of 'stolen' yacht called *Zorza*. The yacht belonged to the *First Marine Crew*. W. Wagner made that decision after he realized that *Zjawa* did not have necessary factors to sail across the oceans. After numerous adventures, yacht and crew swaps, after 7 years of wander, *Zjawa III* (that was the name of another yacht participating in the cruise), even though Wagner was not on board, on July 4th, 1939 finally reached its destination¹⁹.

¹⁷ „Żagle”, 1971 nr 4, s. 2.

¹⁸ T. Słowiński: *Harcerstwo w ZHP*, „Świat żagli”, Gdańsk 1975, s. 45.

¹⁹ „Sport Wodny”, 1933 nr 20, s. 386; W. Wagner do kraju nigdy nie powrócił, zmarł na Florydzie w dniu 12 września 1992 r.



Southampton 1939, *Zjawa III* yacht, W. Wagner (on the left) with his two Australian friends; David Walsh (in the middle) and Bernard Plowright.

In 1930, Swedish schooner *Petrea* was bought (its first water launch was in 1902). Primarily, the sailboat was used in polar zone. The boat was renovated by scouts, students and highlanders. When all the work was completed, the boat was launched in 1935. It was renamed to *Zawisza Czarny*²⁰.



Petrea schooner in Jastarnia, after the renovation it was sailing under Polish banner (*Zawisza Czarny*)

²⁰E. Sikorski: *Szkice z dziejów harcerstwa polskiego w latach 1911–1939*, Warszawa 1989, s. 82; szkuner „Zawisza Czarny” zastąpił wycofany jacht „Lwów”, na którym pływano w latach 1923–1930, aż do jego wycofania.

The schooner, under Polish banner, set its first sail with its first captain, general Mariusz Zaruski. The crew counted 51 members²¹. During the cruise, *Zawisza Czarny* set from its harbor in Gdynia and visited Copenhagen, London, Antwerp and Amsterdam and returned home²².



1938, *Zawisza Czarny* atsea, from Gdynia to Norrkoping – Visby – Gdynia

In 1933, the sailing clubs owned 12 yachts and 180 sailing units with sails measuring from 5 up to 35m²²³.

Taking into consideration the cost of sailing equipment, within 15 years of water touristic cruises, mainly small and frequently, rather primitive boats were made us of. Also cheaper and smaller yachts which sails measured form 5 to 10m² were popular. They were used merely on continental waters.

In 1933, Witkor Kwast in *Przewodnik Sportowy* writes about the condition of sailing tourism. The author states that sailing tourism encounters obstacles but they do not prevent it from reaching the right way of development. Sea sailing is in an excellent position; well organized and educating those who are eager to join the navy. Kwast also mentions that education takes place in Jastarnia and it is complemented with sea cruises²⁴.

²¹B. Miazgowski: *Ze wspomnień żeglarza*, Warszawa 1959, s. 52.

²²*Sprawozdania Naczelnej Rady Harcerskiej z lat 1935–1938*; Od czerwca 1935 r. do końca 1938 r. szkuner odbył 15 dłuższych rejsów, w którym uczestniczyło 588 harcerzy i 167 członków załogi.

²³T. S.: *Żeglarstwo* [w:] T. Sawicki, W. Kwasta (red.): *Przewodnik Sportowy*, Warszawa 1933, s. 201.

²⁴W. Kwast: *Turystyka* [w:] T. Sawicki, W. Kwast (red.): *Przewodnik...*, dz. cyt., s. 214–217.

In 1934, the two-mast yacht *Grażyna* was bought for women – sailors. Its first captain was Jadwiga Wolf.

Between 1935 and 1938, *Zawisza Czarna* took part in 15 sea cruises. 588 scouts and 167 members of various organizations participated in the training. The captain of most cruises was Mariusz Zaruski²⁵.

In 1935, Zaruski was honored by *Polish Sailing Association* with the recognition diploma of sailing club *Chojnice*. During 13 years, the club was supporting tourism and water sport²⁶.



Sailboat in StaryFolwark. The 30s of 20th century.

At the beginning of the 30s, at Wigry lake in Suwałki, there was water section that organized sailing. At the lake shore, apart from above mentioned StaryFolwark, the sailors could use one more harbor in GawrychRuda. The local public opinion stated that *Wigry*harbor was not popular among people of Suwałki. Due to the prices, it was reserved merely for cream of society. In spite of expensiveness, the number of visitors was growing fast, which induced local authorities to extend touristic infrastructure.

Formed at the beginning of 1935 in Suwałki, *District Tourism Council* elaborated ‘the scheme to improve tourism in Suwałki’ that concerned Wigry lake. The realization of most of these projects was aborted by the outbreak of World War II²⁷.

In 1938, three sailing courses took place at Wigry lake. Starting with officer one, the courses trained considerable number of participants form entire Poland, who would become

²⁵Na podstawie *Sprawozdań Naczelnej Rady Harcerskiej z lat 1935–1938*.

²⁶Z. Twardowski: *Zarys dziejów...*, dz. cyt., s. 58.

²⁷A. Ambrosiewicz, M. Ambrosiewicz: *Stary Folwark cz. 1, „Wigry”*, 2005 nr 1.

the propagators of sailing. The marshal Aleksander Prystor with senators and members of parliament opened one of the courses²⁸.

The last considerable travel undertaking of marine scout society was all around the world cruise of 39th *Warsaw Scout Team* that started in 1938. The cruise took place on board of *Poleszczukyacht*. In mid-July, 1939, the scouts reached New York where they stopped the cruise and decided to return home²⁹.

Right before the outbreak of World War II in September 1939, in Poland, 3639 scouts took up sailing. They were all united in 135 sailing teams. Water scout society administered 1016 sailing units, composed of 16 sea yachts, 936 sectional sailing boats and 64 non-sectional ones³⁰.

During the Interwar Period, the periodical magazines, such as *Water Sport* were very useful in practicing sailing.

After 1918, Poland had to build the sailing resources from scratch. People endeavored to make up for lack of sailboats, yachts, harbors, basic infrastructure as well as qualified cadre with activists devoted to sailing. Such positive approach of sailing society was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II.

²⁸Tamże.

²⁹E. Sikorski: *Szkice z dziejów harcerstwa polskiego w latach 1911–1939*, Warszawa 1989, s. 84.

³⁰S. Towiński: *Żeglarsstwo w ZHP, „Świat Żagli”*, Gdańsk 1974, s. 45.