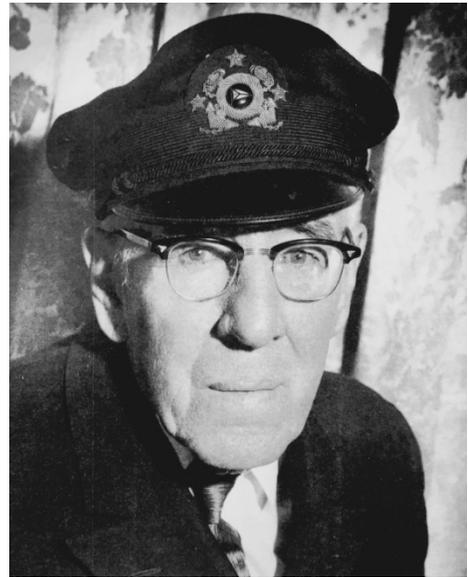


## Daniel Millard Callis, Senior (1881-1964)

Biography by Dan Callis, III

A passionate waterman, Daniel was on the sea from the age of 8 until he was 81. He began his lifelong love for sailing as a young boy as part of his father's fleet and by seventeen he raced his first boat under the flag of the **Corinthian Yacht Club of Baltimore, Md.** In his lifetime Daniel was a member of **the Yacht Club of Baltimore, The Maryland Motor Boat Club** for which he served as the rear commodore and the vice commodore, **The Chesapeake Yacht Racing Association, The Seattle Yacht Club, The California Yacht Club, The Catalina Island Yacht Club, The Los Angeles Yacht Club, The Pacific Coast Yacht Club, and The Southern California Tuna Club.** He was the first Commodore of **the Long Beach Yacht Club**, and in 1961 at the age of 80 was one of the founders and the first Commodore of the **Seal Beach Yacht Club.**



Born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1881. He grew up on the water, his father was an accomplished yachtsman and as a young man, Daniel, learned to build and race both sail and motor boats. After completing his degree in Marine Engineering from Maryland Polytech he apprenticed for the Marine Department of the Maryland Steel Company. His first job was at a shipbuilding yard in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, then to the Perth Amboy Shipbuilding Company, New Jersey, then to Staten Island, where he became the Chief Draftsman for the New York Shipbuilding Company.

At the age of 37 he accepted a job for the Todd Shipbuilding Company of New York to become the Assistant Naval Architect at their Seattle, Washington shipyard. There he was offered a commission in the Naval Reserve and was appointed Assistant District Manager and Special Representative for the Thirteenth Naval District in charged to oversee the arming of merchant vessels during WW1.

In 1920 Daniel transferred his professional activities to Los Angeles and ultimately to Long Beach opening a private practice, ***D.M. Callis, Naval Architect and Engineer.*** During this time, he focused on his love of racing and pleasure yachting designing private pleasure crafts, both motor and sailing. Between 1920 & 1947 his designs were built at the Wilmington Shipyards, Wilmington California. In his private practice he designed and supervised the construction of over three hundred vessels of pleasure type, both sail and power. His most sought after designs were classic wood-hull Fantail Yachts. Amongst his clients were J. Paul Getty and William Randolph Hearst, Preston Sturges.

In a 1921 publication of ***Pacific Motor Boat***, an article states:  
***Callis's active participation as a yachtsman and the experience gained in the handling of pleasure craft and commercial vessels has given him an intimate knowledge that will doubtless be reflected in all designs prepared by him.***

## **Broader Influence in West Coast Yachting**

During the years between the two World Wars Daniel was active developing and advancing the sport of yachting and yacht racing in the waters off the California coast. In response to State Legislative requests Daniel created an organization known as the ***Yacht Architects, Brokers and Surveyors Association of California***, and served as the first President. The purpose of the organization was to require all naval architects, yacht brokers, and Marine Surveyors before practicing in the State of California to be properly qualified and licensed. State legislation was passed creating a ***State Board of Examination***. He also was one of the organizers of the ***Marine Trades Association of Southern California***, producing national publicity concerning yachting in Southern California.

In 1929, Daniel was part of a small group of Long Beach yachtsman who were in conversation with **The Associated Boating industries of Northern California** about the possibility of a powerboat race between Long Beach and San Francisco. The proposed race would be run during the San Francisco Motor Boat Show, and would provide advertising for the show and the Northern California boating industries. The inquiry was addressed to my grandfather and he was selected, General Chairman of the Executive Committee to oversee all aspects of the race. The race was to start in Long Beach, checking in at Santa Barbara and at Monterey and to finish in San Francisco Bay, approximately four hundred miles, the longest power boat race held anywhere in the world at that time. The race was a great success and as a result the Long Beach Yacht Club was established with Callis was elected as Commodore.

In 1939, just prior to the Second World War, he reentered into contract with the Willamette Iron and Steel Company of Portland, Oregon relocating to Portland in order to reorganize their engineering Department to handle anticipated navy contracts for the Pacific Fleet. In those three years he designed 45 vessels for the Navy's West Coast Fleet including torpedo boats, destroyers, and aircraft carriers.

## **Seal Beach**

In 1943 Daniel returned to the Long Beach area resuming his private practice and in 1948 moved his practice to Seal Beach where he designed and built out the property on Marina Dr and 7<sup>th</sup> St. The complex was named the ***Sportcraft Enterprises Building***. This complex housed Daniel's design studio and drafting rooms, as well as shop spaces for sail makers, marine hardware & rigging, a marine canvas shop, nautical navigation & communications, and a full wood-hull boat construction yard. The wood-hull boat builders, Ken Hill, retired in the 1979 and the yard closed production in 2000.

Daniel was Secretary of the **Seal Beach Chamber of Commerce**, chairman of the **Seal Beach Marine and Shoreline Committee**, and a member of the **United States Navy Institute**.

## **Hollywood/Disney**

Another interesting aspect of Callis' legacy as a Naval Architect was his involvement in the Hollywood entertainment industry. He designed and oversaw the building of numerous historic vessels designs for several major Hollywood studios.

**1935** – MGM Studio, *Mutiny on the Bounty* starring Clark Gable.

**1939** – Paramount Studio - *Rulers of the Sea* starring Douglas Fairbanks Jr. The film's story is based on the voyage of the *SS Savannah*, the first steamship to cross the North Atlantic, from Britain to the United States.

**1940** -Fox Studio - Little *Old New York* starring a young Fred McMurray, tells the story of the hardships of the first successful steam-powered ship in America, which would revolutionize river transportation and then ocean commerce around the world.

**1954** – Disney Studios – Design numerous water vessels to include the historic riverboat, the **Mark Twain** Paddleboat and Jungle Cruise boats.

**1959** – One of his fantail yachts, *The Portola*, was used for the shooting of a scene for the movie, *Some Like it Hot*, starring Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis, and Jack Lemmon.

Two years later in **1961** a group of Seal Beach businessmen headed by Callis gathered to discuss their interest in traditional Corinthian yachting and impressed with the ideal year around yachting location of Seal Beach, immediately incorporated and the group elected Daniel as Commodore of **The Seal Beach Yacht Club**.

His role as Commodore was very short lived. The year before his beloved Irish born wife, Molly, had died after a long struggle with dementia and Daniel's health was fading. This may be one of the reasons for the quick transition in commodore's. He lived another two years and passed away at the age of 83.

Ella Ludwig, wrote of my grandfather in her book, **The History of the Harbor District of Los Angeles**,

***“Boat building in general, and the yacht construction industry in particular, owes a genuine debt to men of the caliber of Daniel Millard Callis, who did so much to popularize pleasure boating on the waters of the Pacific as found off the coast of Southern California. He is one of the pioneers of a great industry.”***

**D.M.Callis Vessels** (known to date as still active)

***Destiny***, Schooner, Torrance Ship Yard 1934

***Discovery***, Cruiser, 1931

***Portola***, Power Yacht, 1929

***Sobre Las Olas***, Power Yacht, 1929

***Wanderer***, Crusier, 1929

***Hermana***, Crusier, Harbour Boat Building, 1929

***Mandarin***, Power Crusier, 1923

***Jo Fran***, Crusier, 1939

***Spanish Rake (was: Marguerite)***, Sail, 1932

***Mary Kay***, Cruiser, Harbour Boat Building, 1929

***Joanne***, Cruiser, Willington Boat Building, 1931