

# A Brief History of the Ossining Boat & Canoe Club 1915-2020



OBCC prides itself on helping the community and giving back. The Club helps to maintain the public launch for the Town of Ossining and hosts the boats for the Ossining Community Sailing Club. It promotes the preservation of the Hudson River through summertime talks and seminars, hosts training classes in navigation and boater safety, stores training materials for the Coast Guard, and has partnered with the Ossining Fire Department for its annual Toy Drive. The Club also hosts several key social events which are open to the public throughout the season: the Donald "Hot Pie" Zerrilla Memorial Scholarship Breakfast, Kids Fishing Day, the OBCC Photo Expo, and both the Annual Clam Bake and Rib-Off extravaganzas.

The Ossining Boat & Canoe Club is a special place, but it's really the people who call OBCC home that makes it an amazing place. Its members come from all walks of life, all incomes, and all levels of boating knowledge and ability. It's a great mix of young and old, with members that have been calling OBCC home every season since 1968, multi-generational family memberships, and several new additions still in their nautical onesies.

For anyone looking for some of the best wind and water on the Hudson, incredible fishing, breathtaking views – including spectacular sunsets - and unbelievable comradery, OBCC is always looking for new boaters - whether you have a kayak, canoe, power boat or sailboat. The club has no permanent slips, only river moorings, and allows power and sailboats up to 28'. There is a dock for members to keep dinghies up to 10' to row out to their boats, as well as a Club dinghy that can be used by members as a tender. For more information, please visit our website: [www.obcc.org](http://www.obcc.org).



**E**stablished in 1915, the Ossining Boat and Canoe Club (OBCC) is the only original boathouse remaining in Ossining. The club is a volunteer-based organization and prides itself on being affordable. Boating members are expected to volunteer 30 work hours each year, with Associate members contributing 10 hours, all in order to keep the place functioning. Whereas other clubs pay for maintenance and service through high dues, OBCC can keep its dues low because members do all the work.

OBCC is situated on the Ossining waterfront, between Engel Park to the south and Gourdin Park to the north. The clubhouse was built in 1922 by club members led by one-time Commodore Mike Johnson. A 1925 account in *The Ossining Citizen Sentinel* described the clubhouse as "a right smart and comfortable clubhouse provided with every necessity for things nautical, social and other attributes of a life on the ocean waves."

The paper continues, "in front, facing the river, is a wide porch, extending the full length of the building, from which a runway leads to the landing float. Upon the runway swing is a block and tackle for emergency repairs to motor craft. A broad piazza from which the broad reaches of the Tappan Zee may be enjoyed as one tilts back in capacious rocking chairs." Not much has changed.

In 1929, membership was sixty-five, with a long waiting list of applicants. The club housed thirty canoes and a mooring field with fifteen outboard motorboats. Today OBCC hosts more than 110 families across Working and Associate members, and they are always looking for new members who don't mind getting their hands dirty and pitching in. And even with all that has happened in 2020, they finished the season with more than 35 kayaks, canoes, sailboats and power boats in their field.

OBCC's members help maintain the buildings, the grounds and the docks. They can be seen at work parties every Saturday at the beginning and end of each boating season driving pilings, floating the docks, launching moorings, and more. Everyone helps out, from mowing the grass, planting flowers and touching up the paint to mopping the floors or anything else to help keep the place looking great.