



SANTA BARBARA

YACHT CLUB

Louis Jones, 1913

(1868-1914)

A remarkable man, Louis was originally from a well-to-do family of Gramercy Park in New York. Like many young men, he eschewed his restrictive upbringing to seek a carefree lifestyle. He sailed to Argentina and worked on a ranch with a friend, raising grain. Neighbors there accused him of rustling their cattle and had him arrested and hanged. Louis Jones, who was a very tall man, outstretched his gallows lengthwise and lived! (The stunned Argentineans took it as a sign to set him free.) Louis came to Santa Barbara in 1888 and worked on Francis Underhill's El Roblar Ranch. Next, he served as part owner and business manager of the Santa Barbara Press. Louis returned to New York to enter the finance world with his grandfather, and then came back to Santa Barbara in 1907 to work as a bank president. Louis became president of the Chamber of Commerce and it was said that during his administration, the Chamber had accomplished more than at any previous time. The membership was at 4,000 (in a town of about 13,000!) and while the directors met twice a month, they always had a quorum. His board members insisted he run for a second term, although he had wanted to step down at the end of his term. Louis Jones and his wife were tragically drowned during the horrific Floods of 1914. Around this time, the Yacht Club consortium sold their boat Alert and the club went on hiatus, because they had no flagship to race in the regional regattas. Since local yachting activities were centered around pleasure cruising and no organized racing took place, there was little use for an organized Yacht Club at that time. Ed Gourley served as a de facto leader.