

A Water Playground



How did Burlington's industrial waterfront become the recreation center it is today? Even among busy 19th century commercial lake traffic, recreational boating had a place.

In 1887 the Lake Champlain Yacht Club was built at the end of College Street, the site of the present Burlington Community Boathouse, which echoes the spirit of its design. Many of Burlington's wealthy businessmen became members. An organizer and early Commodore of the yacht club was William Seward Webb, whose 117-foot, steam-powered yacht, *Elfrieda*, was the largest pleasure craft on the lake.

Sailing was so popular that private boathouses lined the waterfront in the early 1900s. Burlington's yacht club era began to fade with the advent of the automobile, which made other locations for keeping boats accessible.

The Yacht Club was the foundation for waterfront recreation. Today's small-boat moorings and rentals, as well as sailing lessons, broaden its scope to include many more people.

From skateboarders to scuba divers, countless numbers of people play in, on,

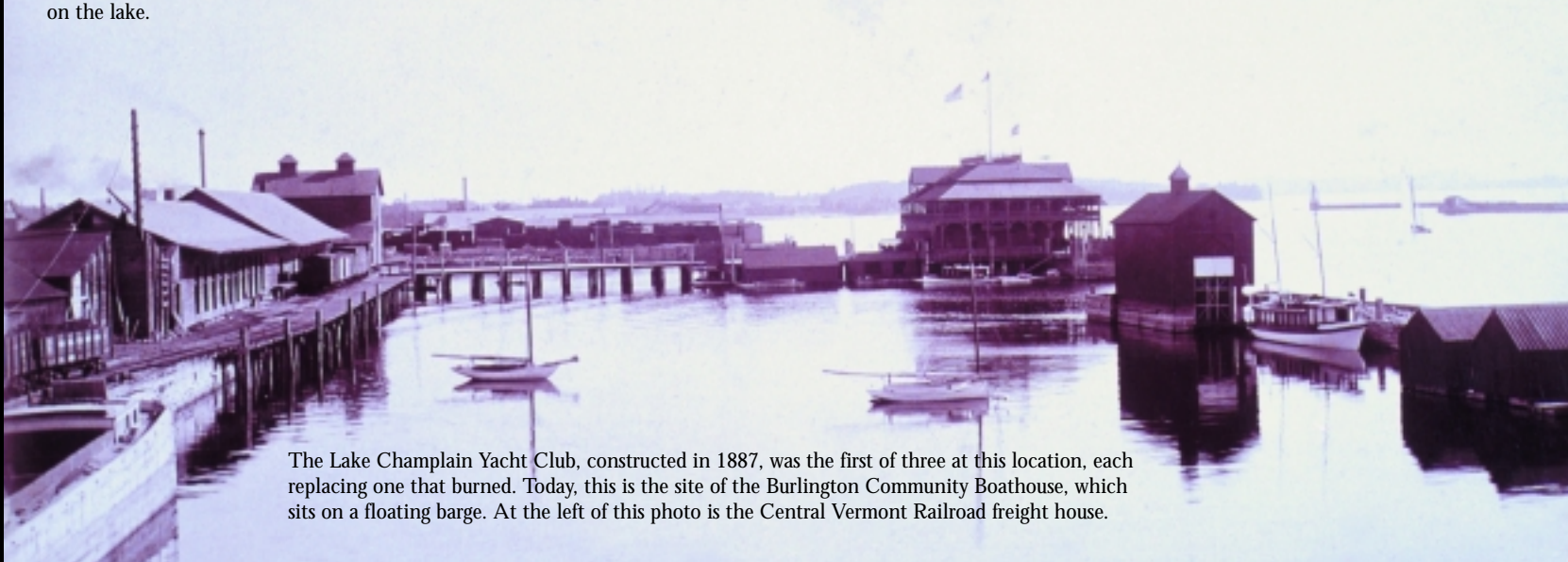
and along Lake Champlain every day. The waterfront path, built in the 1980s, extends seven and one-half miles from Oakledge Park to the mouth of the Winooski River.



Some gentlemen enjoy an afternoon on Lake Champlain in the late 1800s. This yacht, the Sandolphin, was built by its owners in their backyard.



Commodore William Seward Webb's yacht, Elfrieda.



The Lake Champlain Yacht Club, constructed in 1887, was the first of three at this location, each replacing one that burned. Today, this is the site of the Burlington Community Boathouse, which sits on a floating barge. At the left of this photo is the Central Vermont Railroad freight house.