THE HONOLULU RACE

Part II — From 1934 to 1941

By H. B. WARREN

THE RACE really took hold in 1934, with twelve starters off Los Angeles Light. Space does not permit a description of them all. The favorite was the Honolulu contender, Harold Dillingham's 61′ Schock-designed schooner *Manuiwa*. The fans who shoved her stock up against the roof were right; she finished some nine hours behind H. T. Horton's 80′ ketch *Vileehi*, also Schock-designed, but on corrected time nobody came within 10 hours of her. Second place went to the wholesome and handsome Alden 43′ ketch *Burrapeg*, owned by Bill Candy, of the California Yacht Club, and third to the Schock-designed 45′ schooner *Monsoon*. This seemed to be a Schock year.

Notable among the entries was the 27′ sloop *Common Sense III*. She carried away her mast on the sixth day and finished under jury rig. Her showing was rather good in spite of this, making many of us wonder how she might have done if her stick had held out. Next time, though, boats less than 30 feet on the water line were barred, probably a good idea.

The *Viva*, which started all the excitement in 1923, finally went along this time. The result confirmed Commodore Pedder's judgment when he substituted *Diablo* for her in 1923, for *Viva* was next to last in 1934. Still, there was nothing wrong with the spirit of her 63-year-old owner, Stephen I. Miller, of the San Diego Yacht Club. After the race he went on a little cruise to the Society Islands before heading for home.

The *Queequeg*, a wholesome 34′ double-ended ketch by Phil Rhodes, was first in Class C, and made a most favorable impression upon everybody. Manned by Professor Burton M. Varney, his two teen-age sons and a schoolmate of theirs, she made a fast, comfortable trip of it. One likes to see such a sensible craft do so well.

The next race, in 1936, marked another era in the history of the classic, as it should now be permissible to call it. Up to that time the entries were just boats that had been built as good able cruisers and, having them when the race was announced, the owners joined the fray. It is true that two boats, the *Hawaii* in 1908, and the *Mollilou* in 1910, had been built especially to win this particular contest. Actually though, they were not a bit different from any other cruising boat of their day. This time there were six entries that had been designed for speed. This is not to say that they were racing machines, or of an unwholesome type; I am simply trying to say that the era of fast offshore racing boats had arrived.

A few years before this the men, mostly in the East, who had been building strictly racing craft, such as the "Rs," "Sixes," "Eights," "Tens," "Twelves," Ms and America's Cup defenders, had turned to ocean racing. This turn of events began to produce the so-called "gold-plated" racing-cruisers, built to win such events as the Bermuda, Gibson Island, Transatlantic and Fastnet races without regard to expense. Such boats as *Dorade*, *Santana*, *Circe*, *Paisano*, *Flying Cloud*, *Brilliant* and *Zoe H*, which came to the starting line in 1936, were not gold-platers, but they were the forerunners of them.

Another change came in 1936; the race was started from Santa Monica. The breeze fooled everybody. It came in from the south, as it was supposed to do. Then it stayed there, instead of shifting to the westward as it should have done if it had studied the wind charts. The result was that dusk found most of the fleet away down off Point Vicente, instead of Point Dume. Then a shift blew in from the northeast, another unexpected event. *Dorade*, cleverly sailed by Myron Spaulding, of the St. Francis Yacht Club, elected to sail the great circle and the wind almost permitted her to do it. The winds were strongest to the northward that year, and the little flyer actually led the fleet to the finish line, her elapsed time being 13 days, 7 hours, 20 minutes.

Kit Carson

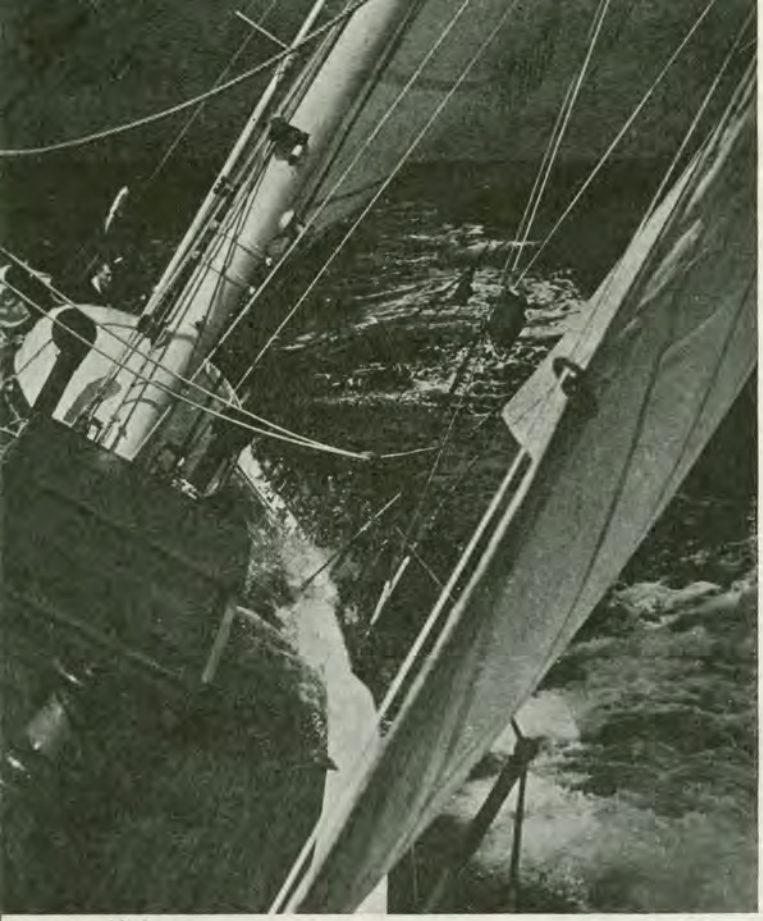
When the time allowances were figured in the 1941 race, Dr. A. A. Steele's 54-foot ketch "Stella Maris II" dropped to fourth place

This gave her a clean sweep of the Bermuda, Transatlantic, Fastnet and Honolulu Races!

The finish was the most exciting witnessed off Diamond Head up to that time. Ray Cooke's 60′ Seaborn-designed cutter *Circe* was coming up fast and failed to catch *Dorade* by only 13 minutes, 49 seconds. Another Sparkman & Stephens design, W. L. Stewart's 55′ schooner *Santana*, took second place, relegating the 1934 winner, *Manuiwa*, to third, while Ray K. Person's 58′ schooner *Zoe H* was fourth, and *Circe* fifth. These first five were all in Class B, Cruising Club Rule, which had been used for the first time. The sixth yacht, the 45′ Schock yawl *Flying Cloud*, was first in Class C. In the light of this and later races, it would seem as though the Class B or C boats are practically certain to win the Honolulu Race unless the rule is altered somewhat.

Dorade had seemed unbeatable in 1936. Her supporters were not alarmed when some pure-gold-plated yachts were entered in 1939. Topping the list was *Blitzen*, a nearly new Sparkman & Stephens cutter 54′ over all. She had taken the Class B prize in the Bermuda Race the year before and lost first in the fleet to the Class A winner, *Baruna*, by only a small margin. Bill Stewart had shipped *Santana* back East in 1938 for the Bermuda Race. While he made the best corrected time among the schooners, he was only ninth in the fleet. He realized that such steppers as *Dorade* and *Santana* were no longer tops. So he placed an order with Sparkman & Stephens for a new yawl, *Chubasco*, which was completed by the Wilmington Boat Works in time for the 1939 Honolulu event. Then there were two fast ones by Stephens Brothers, of Stockton, which threatened anybody with serious intentions. These were H. G. Steele's 59′ yawl *Odyssey*, skippered by the redoubtable Myron Spaulding, and Ted Stephens' 44′ cutter *Pajara*. Cyril Tobin's 72′ schooner *Seaweed* was also on hand. She is a Frank Paine design with a hull much like that of a Twelve-Metre. Topping the list of steppers was Ray Cooke's *Circe*, a boat that will always give bad dreams to those skippers who are racing for blood.

This time Clarence MacFarlane's original plan of starting from San Francisco was carried out and there wasn't a yachtsman on the coast who didn't expect to see the elapsed time record go by the board. The great circle from San Francisco is only 2089 miles, while it is 2225 from Los Angeles and 2139 from Santa Barbara. Moreover, you can sail the great circle



John Swope

A foremast hand's view of "Dorade," winner of the 1936 race. Jim Flood, her owner, is at the tiller

from the Golden Gate under normal conditions and you must add another 100 miles or so to the above distances from the southern cities. The courses from there always fall away to the southward as long as the boats are in the westerly winds. Again, the prevailing winds are generally stronger over the northern course.

Then the weather stepped in, just to prove that we didn't know as much about it as we let on. The ordinarily raging Golden Gate was as mild as Caspar Milquetoast's displeasure, and the fitful breezes remained light almost to the bitter end. Great circle courses were out of the question. The close-winded fellows could hold the rhumb line, just barely, while most of the fleet dropped away to the south. Almost everybody had a radio-telephone, so everybody reported his position to the *Contender*, now owned by Dick Loynes, of the Long Beach Yacht Club, and she gave them out in a broadcast once a day to the fans on shore. This added tremendous interest to the contest. To our pop-eyed surprise the 85′ *Fandango*, an extremely heavy gaff-rigged schooner, went into the lead on July 5th, the second day. What's more, she stayed there almost to the finish. We all supposed that because she was unable to point, she had fallen off in an effort to make up in speed what she lost to windward. Then somebody started a report that she had received a weather forecast from Dr. Krick, of Caltech, the man who later made such a tremendous contribution to the war effort with his phenomenally accurate forecasts to the Navy whenever they were about to enter some action. Whatever the reason, *Fandango* worked into an area of stronger winds, gaining a commanding lead. It was only at the tail end that *Contender* and *Blitzen* got by her. With the latter she staged the closest finish ever recorded in a Honolulu Race. *Blitzen* crossed just 51 seconds to the good. *Contender* had arrived about three hours earlier, but *Blitzen* was an easy winner on time allowance.

The results of this race must be disregarded in any appraisal of the men and boats. The conditions were so fluky that no conclusions can be drawn. The fact remains that *Blitzen* probably would have won in any weather, but this race afforded her little chance to show her real speed. For many days she remained in close company with the 50′ cutter *Jorie* (which finally took second place), *Pajara*, *Stella Maris II* and *Brilliant*, yet she undoubtedly had greater speed than any of them in steady breezes. This was the lightest weather contest of them all. *Contender* took nearly 14½ days to cover the shortest distance she had sailed in her three attempts. The other two elapsed times on a longer course were 12 days, 16 hours in 1926, and 13 days, 2 hours in 1930.

Twenty-six yachts started and finished in 1939. This was the high water mark, for in 1941 only seven boats could be mustered at the starting line at Los Angeles Harbor. Too many owners felt that war was imminent. This time Dr. A. A. Steele's 52′ ketch *Stella Maris II* was scratch, *Pajara* and *Jorie* were back in the fray, and *Escapade*, a California Thirty-Two designed by Nick Potter and built by Fellows & Stewart, was the favorite. Frank Kent's 38′ double-ended ketch *Magic Carpet* was making her second bid, and Rad Pratsch's *White Cloud* and Fred B. Hunie's *Indifferent* completed the entries.

Stella Maris and *Jorie* had a hammer and tongs battle all the way, seldom being out of sight of one another. The former led the way by 19 minutes. Within two hours *Escapade* and *Pajara* had also finished, the former taking the race by quite a margin on corrected time. *Pajara* was second, *Jorie* third and *Stella Maris* fourth. The time of the leading boat, *Stella Maris*, was 11 hours faster than that of the big *Contender* in the previous race, and nearly three days better than her own time in 1939. Analysis of all races leads to the conclusion that the best breezes were encountered in 1906, 1923, 1930, 1932 and 1941. Perhaps the best and steadiest winds of all were those of 1932, when the 44′ ketch *Fayth* made the amazing time, for a vessel of her size and type, of 13 days, 14 hours, 48 minutes. It should be noted that two races have started from Santa Barbara, in 1923 and 1932, and both times the weather was most favorable for fast passages. Remember that weather conditions are local, even out on the open ocean. Logs of contending yachts show plainly that vessels only ten or twenty miles apart may meet widely different breezes.

Of all the rating rules used thus far in the Honolulu Race, it is the opinion of race committees and competitors alike that the Cruising Club Rule is by far the best. It seems to take into account more fairly than the others those factors that make for speed and to penalize more accurately those that are unwholesome. Naturally the perfect rule will never be found, which means that all handicap racing must remain to a great extent a hit-or-miss affair, but this rule is certainly a good one. The Transpacific Yacht Club, the body which had controlled the Honolulu Race for many years, composed of amateurs who have taken part in a race to Honolulu or Tahiti, seems well satisfied with this rule. Sometimes one hears the statement that the Cruising Club Rule has killed the schooner rig in

A reception committee greets the first two yachts to finish the 1936 race. Left, "Circe," whose elapsed time was 13 days, 7 hours, 33 minutes and 53 seconds. "Dorade," at right, crossed the line 13 minutes and 49 seconds earlier

Pan-Pacific Press

W. C. Sawyer

William Merry's "Viking Childe" was last to finish in the 1939 race

America.* There may be some truth in this claim, for schooners do not seem to rate well enough to overcome the handicap of their rig, in the Honolulu Race at least. This contest is mostly a run, where a schooner has to set her spinnaker on the foremast which is generally much shorter than the main. Also, there is a lot of measured area that is not actually used on a run. It would be easy to answer that one could design his schooner with a taller foremast, but that is no solace to owners of existing boats, who could only put in new foremasts at great expense. It might be well if the Cruising Club would increase the rig allowance of schooners. They need it for the Bermuda Race too, which is often a close haul, where single stickers and yawls have a big edge on schooners. Unquestionably it would help to bring schooners back into the racing, but whether it would result in the building of more schooners is questionable. The staysail schooner rig is responsible for much of the unpopularity of this particular type, for it undoubtedly is a "work boat." The *Advance* staysail is a great nuisance and, when the breeze makes up a bit, has little drive, tending only to heel the ship and thus to slow her down.

One criticism often voiced against the Cruising Club Rule on this coast is that it permits dangerously large spinnakers, at least for the Honolulu Race. Some of the tents spread in the last two events have been too large for blue water work. The point is often reached where it is dangerous to take them in, equally dangerous to continue carrying them. One 50′ cutter was knocked flat twice in the 1939 race. She became unmanageable because of her immense spinnaker, broached to, and stuck her spreaders in the water. Both times the crew took in the big sail, squared away on their course and set it once more. This speaks well for the strength of the gear. Luckily, nobody went overboard. With a smaller sail, this might not have happened at all.

No fatalities have ever occurred in a Honolulu Race; only minor casualties. It would be well to keep it that way.

The question is often asked as to why this particular event has such a tremendous appeal over and beyond that of other yachting events. The answer must be that to all and sundry it spells romance. Few yachtsmen go offshore often enough to have it become commonplace. They are not like many of the boys recently returned from the Navy and Coast Guard, who seem agreed that "there is nothing they care about seeing again west of Catalina." Yet it is a safe bet that before many years every one of them will have been in the Honolulu Race.

The very emptiness of the ocean stimulates the imagination. There is something smacking of a sleight of hand performance about navigation. They travel for days and weeks at the center of that same old circle of sea and sky, always carrying the circle with them until they do not seem to be moving at all. Finally comes the momentous instant when the navigator announces that "we ought to pick up Molokai Light about 0230." Bets are made that it will be Hong Kong or Singapore rather than Hawaii, for they seem to have been out on that empty sea for æons, with life ashore dropping into the limbo of half-remembered experience. Some have almost come to believe that all the land in the world has sunk beneath the water, that they are doomed to eternal wandering, like an asteroid lost in limitless space.

There is a thrill of danger too, but it is not too real, just a spicy dash. Similarly, there is a certain amount of discomfort, but not too much. The first afternoon there is usually some stimulating windward work in a good whole sail westerly. Then follow three or four days of slamming along on a close reach in a 35-mile wind. At this stage long underwear and wet weather clothing are necessities. Then the cold breeze turns warmer, starts coming over the quarter. The sun comes out and stays there, excepting when a Trade Wind squall obligingly gives the ship a nice lift. The air is warm, but not too much so. It flows, a soothing current to keep everything fresh and cheerful below. Shorts are the perfect costume on deck, if a good tan has been acquired, and at night ordinary summer clothes are just right. Appetites are huge, sleep is instant, continued and refreshing. The breeze may fall light at times, but never dies. Soon the life is so delightful you find yourself hurrying only because you are racing. You begin to regret that your destination is not Tahiti or Sydney. The race ends far too quickly, and you are sorry that you are not in a slower ship. Not for long, though, for this is a land of hospitable people. No wonder all hands are so eager to go again!

The clamorous desire for a Honolulu Race in 1946 could not be satisfied. The directors of the Transpacific Yacht Club had expected to enter their own boats. But the cold fact stared them in the face that there is no space for yachts in or near Honolulu and will not be until 1947. The Navy has taken over

(Continued on page 126)

K. G. Olfar

Rad Pratsch's "White Cloud" was a contender in 1936 and 1941. In the former race she was rigged as a cutter; prior to the latter race her owner lengthened her by six feet, rerigged her as a yawl and added the doghouse

* *Editor's Note:* There is no reason why a Race Committee cannot change the provisions of the Cruising Club Rule of 1940 to suit special conditions. For example, the Cruising Club, for the Bermuda Race of 1946, has included the following special provisions for schooners:

In determining rating, yachts shall be measured under the rule of the Cruising Club of America adopted 1940.

For this race the final ratings for schooners will be a percentage of the 1940 rule ratings as follows:

98 per cent for jib-headed staysail schooners;

96 per cent for schooners with jib-headed main and a gaff foresail;

92 per cent for gaff headed schooners.

The purpose of this is to slightly increase the time allowance of schooners, for this race only, without making any change in the basic 1940 measurement rule.

MOORINGS AND GROUND TACKLE

(Continued from page 92)

the following suggestions to offer (fully expecting to receive a number of letters pointing out the error of my ways). Use two mushrooms of different weights shackled to a heavy anchor chain as shown in the sketch. The heavier anchor to be at the far end of the chain with a scope of 10:1 or more, and to be called upon only in extreme emergencies. The lighter anchor to be only of sufficient holding power to carry the load in ordinary winds. The scope from the latter to be such that swinging room will be limited to the requirements of the harbor, under normal conditions. The anchors to be laid in the direction usual for storms. When the wind pipes up to, say, 60 m.p.h., all the boats are bound to stream out in the same direction and the lighter anchor would then drag and act as a weight upon the chain, allowing the heavier mushroom to take over. The combination of the increased scope provided by this plan with the snubbing effects of the weight of the light anchor should considerably increase the effective holding power of the ground tackle.

Clubs should adopt adequate standards for moorings and put a member in charge of seeing that they are lived up to. There is small satisfaction in knowing that your mooring held if some neighbor dragged down and ruined your boat.

To summarize: know the nature of your holding ground and the maximum depth of water to be anticipated, use a mushroom of the correct weight for your boat. Use a length of heavy chain at least equal to 1½ times the depth of water and have a swivel of ample strength between this chain and a smaller one which should be as long as harbor conditions permit (up to a scope ratio of 10:1). Be sure that your pennant is strong enough for the job and in good condition. Protect it well from chafing and from excessive bending. If you have a buoy in the line, be sure that it is as strong as the chain, or else shackle the pennant directly to the chain below the buoy. If using a manila pennant, change it about September 1st each season, not when going overboard in the spring. Lash the pennant to prevent its jumping out of the bow chock in a heavy sea. Be sure to inspect your whole mooring rig at least once a year. When storm warnings are given, lead the pennant around the mast or, if a power boat, carry a bight of heavy line right around the stern and make fast the pennant to this line. It will, of course, have to be supported by suitable smaller lines and protected from chafing. Rig an extra emergency pennant when storm warnings are given and run a weight down the anchor rode to take up slack and cushion the surges of the boat. Finally, carry plenty of insurance and say a prayer to the god of storms.

THE HONOLULU RACE

(Continued from page 83)

Pearl Harbor completely and it is closed to civilian vessels. Ships are three and four deep at all Honolulu docks and things will be that way for many more months. That leaves only little Ala Moana Basin, which is wholly inadequate. Also, it is evident that the families of the racing men, and the men themselves, for that matter, will not be able to find places to stay during 1946. Food will remain a scarce article all this year. Under these circumstances, the Transpacific Yacht Club had no choice; it decided to start the next race on July 4th, 1947.

So the pent-up desires for the race will become penter-upper, and what a whale of a race we shall have in 1947! This will give plenty of time for would-be winners to buy or build high-stepping ladies which will glide down to the islands with a whoosh. And the men who have boats capable of making the trip will enter them by the scores, regardless of whether they have a chance to win or not. For they have discovered the big secret of the Honolulu Race: it isn't winning or losing that matters, it's the marvelous time you have, provided your ship is sound and your crew congenial.

A summary of all races from 1906 through 1941 follows: