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# Yachting

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## TO SWEDEN IN "WINDROSE"

A First-Hand Report of a Rigorous Ocean Passage

By WALLACE E. TOBIN III

*(The race from Bermuda to Sweden for the King of Sweden's Cup was covered by Alfred F. Loomis in the September, 1960, issue. The account below by "Toby" Tobin, a member of the crew of Jakob Isbrandtsen's "Windrose" which finished second in a record fleet of 17 starters, gives an on-board picture of how the race was sailed. His observations should prove helpful to skippers planning ocean races and passages.)*

"Windrose" is a yawl built by Robert Derecktor from Sparkman & Stephens designs in 1959 and is 48' o.a., 32' w.l., 11'6" beam, 6'8" draft, with 1037 feet of sail. Aboard her on the 3500-mile race which started from Bermuda June 30, 1960, were Jakob Isbrandtsen, owner, skipper, navigator and cook; Vic Romagna and Don Browning, watch officers, Les Commons, Kurt Carlsen, Steve Corkery, "Ranzo" Tompkins and "Toby" Tobin. Kurt Carlsen will be remembered as the skipper who stuck with the sinking Isbrandtsen-line freighter "Flying Enterprise" in a stubborn attempt to save her in the English Channel a few years ago.

The course was from off St. David's Island, Bermuda, south of Point Able, described below, north of the Orkney Islands, to finish at the Skagens Lightship in the Skagerrak between Denmark and Sweden.—ED.)

WINDROSE is a big little boat, showing the value of a great deal of time spent in planning accommodation, stowage, and working areas. Her flared clipper bow makes a spacious foredeck that is a pleasure to work on, and the layout below is roomy. Such things as overhead lockers, visible flag bags, planned tool stowage, bilge lockers, and the utilization of often-wasted space help make her seem bigger than most 48' o.a. boats. Her gear and spare parts are stowed neatly and methodically. Each article has a home—a container, a Dacron bag, a sub-divided plastic box, a locker, a string to tie it down, a label—whatever is appropriate to stow it in the minimum space with maximum accessibility.

The pedestal winch, the three-size Nico press set, the extensive radio gear, and the 110-v. a.c. current are items

not often found on a boat of this size. The 110-v. current allowed us to use power tools. A ¼" electric drill earned its passage when a stainless steel spinnaker pole end had to be drilled, a virtually impossible job by hand in a sea-way. The soldering iron was used to make spare parts for the percolator when the author demonstrated great agility by dropping the original ones overboard instead of washing them. There could have been other uses for it, but none as important as keeping the crew in coffee.

Windrose, thanks to the Bermuda race storm, needed a new headstay fitting and several other items that gave the crew a busy week in Bermuda preparing for the trans-Atlantic race.

June 30th dawned with a cold drizzle and light wind, but by the time of the start the rain had stopped. Class B made good starts, though *Figaro* and *Palawan* were recalled. The smallest boat in the class, *Windrose* was at the lee end of the line with free air, keeping

up well with the larger boats. The fleet spread out slowly as the wind died, and by 1600 we were becalmed. Our course of 065° magnetic had been maintained by dint of various sail changes, and more followed as we tried to catch the zephyrs. By 2200 we were underway again with the wind just forward of the beam, carrying a light reacher and a mizzen staysail. The rest of the night, and several following, were extremely pleasant sailing. We were under spinnaker by 0200. The boat flew, the air was warm, and we enjoyed a long downhill slide.

Our first day's run was only 132 miles. We logged 168 the second day, and during the following five days we made 963 miles, with two days' runs over 200 miles. To sustain an average of over eight knots in a 32-foot waterline boat is a rare thrill. Steering became difficult as the seas grew larger, and the hiss of coming down a wave became a continuous roar.

Our anti-tripping reef proved ef-

"Windrose" at sea in full regalia of "all five"

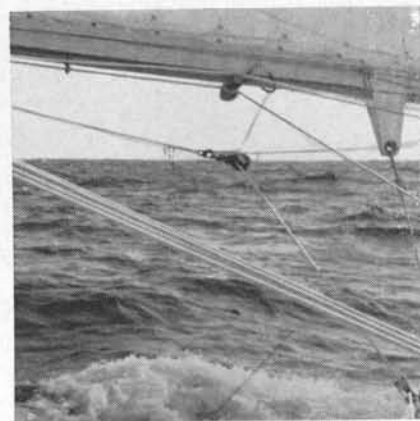
Bermuda News Bureau







The author at the wheel (left). "Columbia" sweater is for the 12-Meter, not the college. The anti-tripping reef (right) when in, with boom sheet, boom vang and preventer also rigged



fective under these conditions. After *White Mist* broke her boom in the 1957 race to Spain, Vic Romagna invented an anti-tripping reef to keep the boom from dipping in the water when running in a seaway. A simple device, it can be set in without ever changing the trim of the sail. It consists of a leech cringle half way up to the first regular reef cringle, and a row of lacing holes from there to the tack. By means of appropriately located cheek blocks at the boom end, and a clewline led inboard, one merely has to winch in on the clewline and set up on the

pre-rove lacing to put in the reef. This lifts the boom enough to clear the seas, yet sacrifices little sail area. The halyard needs no adjustment, and the reef comes out as easily as it goes in.

The first week confirmed our suspicions that chafe would be our greatest problem. We arranged boom sheets to keep the spinnaker sheets from chafing on the underside of the boom. These consisted of lines through blocks at the boom end. Each of these lines carried a snatch block which could be run in and out underneath the boom. The spinnaker sheet ran through this snatch

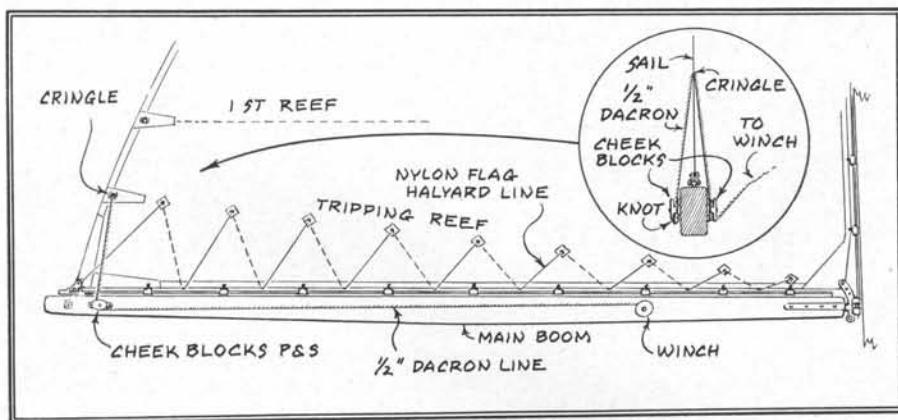
block, then to a block on deck. The block on the boom sheet allowed us to vary the lead, while the block on deck gave a downward angle to the sheet sufficient to clear it from the boom.

Much of our spinnaker gear was inadequate for ocean racing, though quite suitable for Long Island Sound. We had considerable trouble with pole and fittings, in which the plungers either jammed or worked too easily because the springs were not strong enough. It became necessary to lash the plungers closed to prevent the spinnaker from becoming detached every few hours. The end broke right off one bronze fitting, which we then replaced with a stainless steel spare.

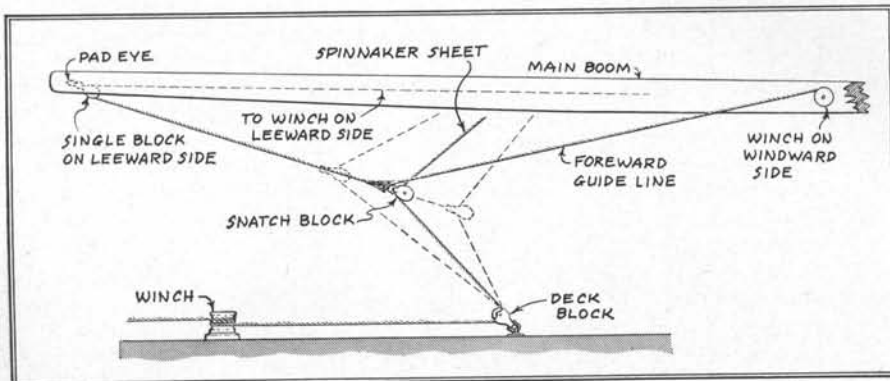
The spinnaker clews were not nearly hardy enough—their brass grommets chafed through readily. This was solved by using expendable Dacron sail tape as an intermediate linkage between clew and snap hook, but the exposed steel D-ring clews such as are used on the West Coast would have been much better. We also pulled the head swivel out of a spinnaker. There was no damage to the cringle, and the incident could have been avoided had a few more turns of seizing wire been put in originally.

After a week-long starboard tack we found that each seam of the mainsail had chafed off some stitches on the lee rigging. The damage amounted to a two-inch fraying of each seam. Lowering the sail for repair, we were quite surprised to lose only a tenth of a knot in a moderate breeze on a beam reach. We had three palms aboard, so Vic Romagna, Kurt Carlsen and Jakob Isbrandtsen went to work while others loaded needles and waxed twine for them. The entire job took only 49 minutes.

Kurt was our chief sail repair man, and we kept him busy most of the way across. The mizzen staysail was the first to go—five days out of Bermuda the clew pulled out. We used an inverted spinnaker staysail to good effect while it was being repaired. Then the large reacher, during a sail change,



The arrangement for the anti-tripping reef developed by Vic Romagna to keep the boom out of the seas (see text)



The boom sheet rig, with the spinnaker sheet led through the snatch block to prevent chafe on underside of main boom

went over the lee rail, filled with water, bent a Monel stanchion 45°, and made several large holes in itself. The spinnaker clews were a constant problem, and the mizzen staysail clew pulled out again, this time with four feet of leech and foot. Later on we tried to carry the #1 genoa too far off the wind, and the weight of the water it scooped eventually ripped it from foot to mitre. Aside from a few small holes in light sails, the only other repair was to the large reacher, the clew of which pulled out shortly after rounding North Ronaldsay.

On the next to last day of the race we had an amusing false alarm. Running before a strong northwester at hull-speed-plus, expecting something to go at any moment, we heard a noise that sounded exactly as if our spinnaker had taken abrupt leave of us. The startled watch was relieved to see a low-flying jet plane disappearing into the distance.

The night of the 5th of July marked the end of summer. The water temperature dropped from 70° to 60° in two hours as we left the Gulf Stream, and the cold, foggy air made life on deck less than pleasant. We later regained the Stream for a brief period, but there was no real return of the warm weather. The last on-deck bath was taken amidst jeers of disbelief at such foolhardiness, and the martyr's cleanliness scarcely atoned for his frozen limbs. On the 6th, we passed Point Able (43N, 45 W, established as a safety measure to avoid ice) at 1747, and treated ourselves to mild celebration with a rum concoction which the skipper dubbed Point Able stew.

On the 8th it seemed that late fall had rapidly succeeded—the temperature never went above 60°. The previous day had brought hard rain and wind enough to make us set a jib as a storm spinnaker. Our recompense for this discomfort was overtaking *Cyane*.



Ranzo Tompkins at mid-ocean bath

Skipper Jakob Isbrandtsen at the wheel of "Wind-rose"



Early on the 8th we had been running before a southwest wind which suddenly changed to a northerly squall. It happened slowly enough so that the helmsman could follow it around with the spinnaker, but too quickly to make a sail change before we were headed south, running at eight knots into a steep head sea. The motion was violent and made difficult the ensuing sail change, jibe, and re-trim, but we eventually squared away on a close reach.

On the 10th we reached the half-way mark, but the next day was so calm that we dropped the mainsail to fill the spinnaker. That afternoon we came into our first headwind storm. We reduced sail to a single reef, to a #3 genoa, to a double reef, and were uncomfortable for about 24 hours. The weather cleared on the 13th, and we saw another boat for the first time in several days, which we tentatively identified as *Cyane*.

The often-broached question of what one does on an ocean race is easily answered. There was little spare time. If a man is to stand watch 12 hours a day, sleep eight, and cook, eat, and clean up too, there are only two hours left. In those two hours he will read, eat, sleep, change sails, or repair gear. Conditions at sea are rarely so steady as to allow a slack watch, and if gear is damaged, all have to do their part in repairing it. At one time, we were simultaneously repairing a reacher, replacing a spinnaker pole end, and renewing a spinnaker head swivel. Time does not hang heavy on one's hands!

There is always plenty of ship's work to be done, and few of us found much time for reading. One soon falls into the routine, and time flies by. We had pools on our daily runs for diversion, but the navigator's inordinate success dictated their abandonment amidst cries of "rubber rulers" and "fudgy fixes." The weather provided plenty of variety, and our charcoal heater became a welcome friend, keeping the damp-

ness out of the cabin, and affording pleasant warmth.

We started to receive the European Consol stations on the 14th. They were clear and accurate, and a great help in making our landfall under conditions in which celestial observations were impossible.

During the afternoon of the 15th, becalmed in a warm sun, we amused ourselves by trying to prevent the boat from drifting in circles, and watched the barograph drop precipitously. During the night the wind increased steadily, and when it reached 22 knots at 0300 we changed from our light reacher to the more durable oversize working jib. We had to use a high-clewed sail, as we were still reaching and a genoa would have scooped too much water.

The wind went ahead, and under a curiously green sky we progressively shortened sail as it built up to 40 knots. After a double reef with the working jib we went to jib and jigger, and finally to a small jib and jigger—the last change made in the lee of our landfall, St. Kilda. A bleaker, more desolate outpost would be hard to imagine. This clump of barren gray rock rises 1200 feet out of the sea, and is craggy and foreboding even when the elements are not combining to make men in small boats miserable. When we saw it, rain and spume were blowing horizontally off the top of it, and it appeared to be spitting at us. In honor of our gracious reception we had Dundee Scottish shortbread for dinner.

Possibly the most amusing pantomime I have ever seen was the relieving watch preparing to come on deck during this storm. Lurching back and forth as they donned layer after layer of futile protective clothing, they bumped into each other, and everything else, caroming ludicrously about. The show lasted at least 20 minutes, and became funnier as their control was further impeded by garments stuck

(Continued on page 100)





Whenever sports enthusiasts get together, shop-talk is the order of the day. I'm sure you will agree that it would be difficult to find a group of competitors more willing to shoot the breeze than dedicated boating enthusiasts. Whether they are faked down in the lee of the long boat, or trying to outguess the weather and complete a fitting-out job, the conversation will be "boats" and all that word implies.

When the talk is about modern marine electronic navigational aids, I know of no better way to sound out your needs than to discuss the matter with the skipper who owns a boat similar to yours, used for the same purpose and outfitted with the kind of gear that you have in mind. Participants in off-shore races, predicted log races, cruises, sport fishing—in fact, all boating recreation—can make good use of electronic equipment and get more enjoyment out of boating by eliminating the "by guess and by God" practices of navigation.



Fred E. Lawton

Once you have determined your needs, select your equipment carefully, remembering that, in the long run, price is often less important than durability and performance. Then see that it is installed properly. And most important of all, it's still up to you to learn how to operate it efficiently and obtain maximum benefits, be it a depth sounder, radio telephone, direction finder or gas detector.

You can do this by discussing with your marine dealer the "do's" and "don'ts" of your equipment, and by talking over its practical applications with the many skippers who have used electronic navigational aids for years to increase their safety and pleasure afloat.

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*Fred E. Lawton*

Fred E. Lawton, Professional Sailing Master of America's Cup winner COLUMBIA, is a veteran of 30 years at sea. He is a popular speaker on marine safety to boating groups throughout the country.



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South San Francisco, California

Crew members (l. to r.) Capt. Kurt Carl- sen, Vic Romagna, Jakob Isbrandtsen, Warwick Tompkins Jr., Don Browning and rear top views of Dr. Lester Commons and Steve Corkery



## TO SWEDEN IN "WINDROSE"

(Continued from page 55)

halfway on. The irony was that even the best precautions usually failed to keep out the water.

The storm subsided rather suddenly the following morning, and we were back to full sail by 0500. We rounded North Ronaldsay on the evening of the 18th after one good day's sailing, and one unpleasant day of light airs in which we made good only 115 miles. We had been caught on the wrong side of a windshift, and after sailing around a circle we had to claw our way around the Orkneys in a most tedious fashion. Off North Ronaldsay we saw the first man since Bermuda. He brought his fishing craft *Surprise* alongside in the light air, and sold us some delicious, though unidentified, fish.

We entered the North Sea in high spirits. We were on the last leg, and were aware from radio reports that we were in a good position in the fleet. The wind was light at first, but early on the 20th we caught a strong north-wester that pushed us along at better than hull speed. We had had reports of a strong high pushing out over northern Germany but the wind we had seemed well capable of carrying us all the way in.

It was a glorious day, with bright blue water and a sparkling sun, and we started counting our chickens a little too soon. We disputed as to whether steambaths or haircuts should have priority, and began to speculate on the feel of clean sheets and the taste of fresh milk. We started talking about the boats we were going to beat, and this jinxed us.

Our speed went from nine knots to one in an hour and a half, and in the next 12 hours we made only 50 miles. We worked painfully in on the west coast of Denmark, where we finally caught a hard reaching breeze that brought us along the remaining 20 miles to the finish at Skagen lightship, too late to save our time on *Figaro*.

One thing we proved was that there is no reason to lower one's gastronomic standards in a long ocean race. We

were stocked for 35 days of extremely solid eating, and had only slightly less appetizing edibles as emergency rations. If eggs have never been refrigerated they will keep over three weeks in temperate conditions, and in Marstrand we were still eating eggs loaded before the race. We took on fresh fruit in Bermuda—apples, oranges, lemons, melons, and a bunch of green bananas. The melons lasted four days, the other fruit a week more. The oranges were still fresh when an impudent sea overturned their bucket, secured to the after pulpit.

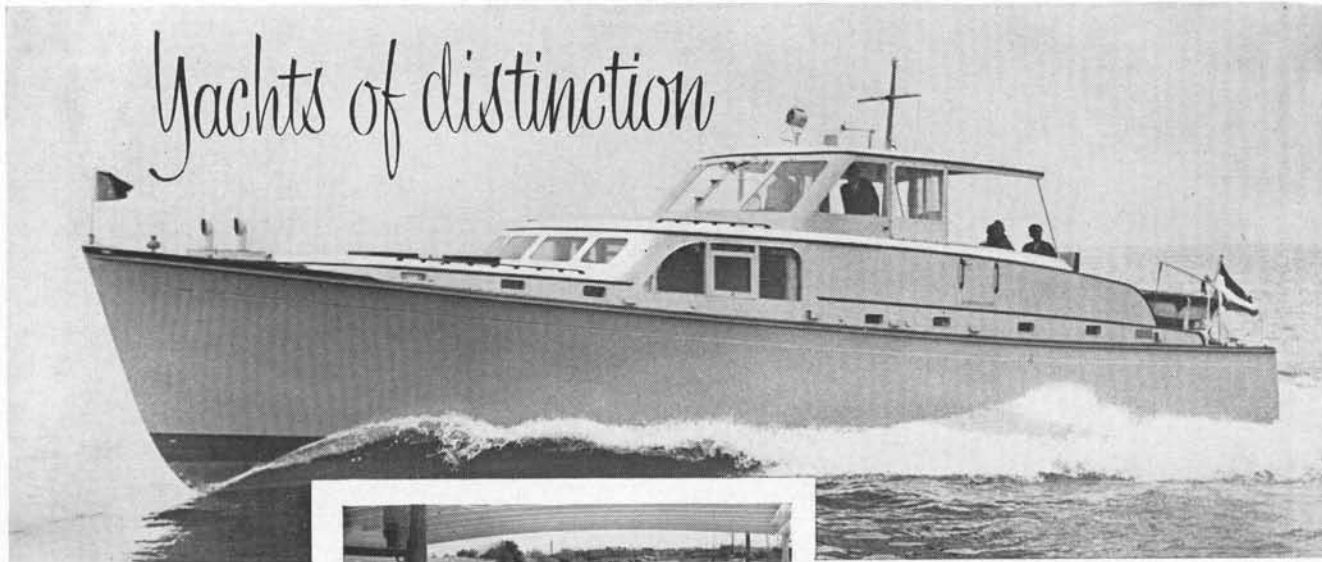
Potatoes, onions, carrots, turnips and cabbages loaded in Bermuda lasted all the way across. The remainder of the stores were canned, and it was a pleasant surprise to discover how good they were—especially the meats. The skipper's family had spent all winter experimenting with different brands of canned goods, and the result was well worth the effort. The product was barely distinguishable from fresh food.

Our greatest treat was fresh bread, which the Pepperidge Farm Co. prepared for *Windrose* and *Palawan*. We received tinned loaves of partially baked bread, and we had merely to cook them another 40 minutes to obtain delicious white bread. We baked nearly every day throughout the race.

Our fare was enhanced by the culinary proficiency of the skipper, who took time off from his navigation and skippering to overfeed us qualitatively as well as quantitatively. Some time ago he had decided that, as he had never had anyone on board who would cook decently, he would do it himself. Our gimbal table sagged under the strain.

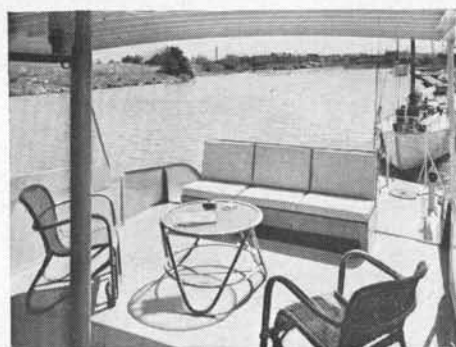
The problem in supplying for an ocean race is calculating to close tolerances the quantities of various items likely to be used. Expendable goods for eight men for over a month amount to a tremendous weight, and a miscalculation in either direction can be embarrassing. Superfluous items must be avoided, but so must running out of food. A man's daily consumption of every article from toilet paper to canned bacon has to be multiplied by eight, and again by the number of days

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one expects to be at sea. A small error becomes enormous when multiplied 250 or 300 times. *Windrose* took on about 1800 lbs. of stores in Bermuda, and lockers were packed so tightly that, during the race, if one inadvertently removed one can too many, it was usually impossible to put it back.

We were fortunate to have with us Kurt Carlsen, who reads Morse code as if it were plain English. He copied weather reports from Washington and from merchant vessels at sea, and made a daily weather map of the North Atlantic.

*Windrose's* radio equipment qualified her as the fleet message center. Kurt operated his ham set, and with the single side band unit we were able to maintain contact with the United States until very late in the race. Even then the operation was curtailed by meteorological conditions rather than distance. We transmitted messages from other racers through Ben Stevenson in New Jersey, and our own crew enjoyed direct conversations with home.

The two West Coast boats, *Escapade* and *Constellation*, pioneered a campaign for a daily position report from each boat. This, we felt, added zest to the race and provided an extra safety factor. No secrets are given away by the reports as it is impossible at a moment's notice to whisk a boat away to where a competitor seemed to do well the day before. However, only a portion of the

fleet approved of the idea. Some seemed to feel that the mystery of not knowing how they were doing was an integral and enjoyable part of an ocean race.

### From Frisco Felucca to Monterey

*(Continued from page 60)*

way of marine motors but two or three decades ago no engine was considered right for these boats except the old slow-running West Coast type one-lunger; that faithful combination of ballast and engine with its great fly-wheel.

The history of the Monterey prototype is relatively obscure; its evolution to the contemporary vessel presents little difficulty. The breed came from southern Italy, the Bay of Naples and Sicily. The old popular belief that the Frisco Felucca, or Italian fishing boat arrived with the large influx of Italian immigrants around the 1880s is disproved by the fact that the boat is mentioned as early as 1854 in San Francisco newspapers. There are also records of the Italian fishing boat participating in a regatta on San Francisco Bay in 1856. Perhaps a few Italian gold seekers in the '49 days found fishing more profitable than the gold fields.

These boats apparently changed very little from their arrival in this country until the conversion to power which began about 1907. The old Felucca

was a true double-ender with plumb stem and sternpost, the former often tumbling inboard a little. They were decked, with a small cockpit aft and a large fishhold amidships which also served as a place to stand while rowing, facing forward. The rig consisted of a large lateen sail, often brilliantly patched in many colors when old, and a small jib set to the end of a bowsprit. The mast raked forward and could be altered to any desired angle. Often when running before the wind the hal-yard was two-blocked, the yard made to set almost horizontally and lines from the tack and head served as braces. Thus, with a sheet and the two braces the lateen was used much as a square sail. Old timers who have seen these boats under sail, testify to the skill of the Felucca men in handling their lateeners.

These boats were built in lengths ranging from 18 to 36 feet and manned by two to six men. Some of the building practices in the Frisco Felucca are interesting. When planking, the garboard strake was fastened, then every second plank up to the sheerstrake, leaving space between to accommodate the filler planks. These were then bent around the outside of the hull and scribed from the inside, then removed, cut, replaced and fastened. They were planked without calking, depending on close fitting and the swelling of the wood to keep them tight. Just before