

Romance Sails the North Pacific
Raymond J. Krantz

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It's a pretty phrase, and recently it came true as the materialization of the life-long dreams of Captain Ernest Philip Green, R.N.R., of Vancouver, B.C., and former master of the steamship, Empress of Asia, a crack Canadian Pacific Trans-Pacific passenger and mail liner.

Captain Green's dreams began many years ago, when he shipped as sailor on board the English full rigged ship, Thomas Stephens, reputedly one of the loftiest and fastest wind ships ever to leave English shipyards. Captain Green remembers one time when Thomas Stephens was logging 18 knots, and that's going along, as he points out.

It was during those long-gone days aboard Thomas Stephens, when the big ship was cracking on with everything set, complete to her weather stu'n's'ls, that a deep and abiding love developed in the heart of young sailor Green for ships which make their uncertain ways across the trackless expanses of the seven seas. That love never died.

Hundreds of nights as he walked to and fro on the bridges of vessels he has commanded, Captain Green dreamed of his own wind ship, a little yacht, capable and comfortable and able to cope with anything, literally, that Old Man Ocean might have to offer.

And he drew countless arrangements, profile drawings, sail plans, and studied hundreds of engine catalogs. Somehow, he knew that one day he would build the boat, and in a way he lived for the day that construction would commence on the yacht of his dreams.

Finally, after 26 years of service with



Canadian Pacific vessels, the last six months of which he spent as master of Empress of Asia, Captain Green was retired. The time had come to make his dreams come true!

Captain Green left Empress of Asia as master in September, 1934, and one week later he sailed on board the liner as passenger, bound for Hongkong, to supervise the building of his boat. His son, Philip, accompanied him to Hongkong.

Talking over the naming of his projected yacht with his family before leaving, Captain Green's suggested names met with rebuffs from his family.

"See here," the captain said, "this destructive criticism doesn't go. In the Canadian Pacific we have a policy that one must not criticize unless one has something better to offer."

The captain's 21-year-old daughter, Marguerite Montgomery Green, was equal to the occasion. She suggested "Romance."

"Romance it is, then," said Captain Green delightedly. And so was the trim yacht Romance named.

Construction of Romance was started at Ah King Slipway, at Hongkong, the British Crown Colony, in August, 1934, and the yacht was completed by March, 1935. Hongkong, incidentally, is set into the southeast portion of China, and is situated on the South China Sea.

And now that Captain Green's dream ship is afloat, let's study her

Romance is a straight schooner-yacht, when her yards and square canvas on the foremast are not considered. Her schooner sails include a jib, fore staysail, gaff foresail, fore topsail, triatic or fisherman staysail, gaff mainsail, and main topsail.

From the lower yard on the foremast, a square foresail is set, and between the two yards, a square fore topsail. A semi-triangular raffee is set now and then from the top of the topmast to the top yard. Because Romance carries a standing square foresail from a yard on her foremast, Captain Green believes that the yacht should be classified as a brigantine. (He likes the square canvas so well he is considering making the yacht a brig, with yards on the mainmast, also, he confided later to the author.) The total sail area is 1,150 square feet. The two fore-and-after booms are equipped with English patented roller reefing gear. All canvas is No. 2 Woodbury.

Romance's dimensions are as follows: length, stern to forward tip of figurehead, 50 feet; length, on load waterline, 42 feet; breadth 14.5 feet; depth of hold, 9 feet; draft at load waterline, 7.25 feet; gross tons, 27.17; and net tons, 24.62.

The hull of the yacht is full lined, both at the bow and stern, and generous freeboard is another feature. The bow is of the picturesque clipper type, and the stern of a modified double-end design. Construction of Romance is unusually heavy, and of excellent materials, heavy through-bolts being used plentifully, and many wood and metal lodging and hanging knees were utilized.

All scantlings, beams and frames are of yacal, the latter a wood from Borneo which is similar to gumwood, and which is heavier than water. Yacal is noted for its strength and resistance to rot. The hull planking is of 1 ½ inch net teak, and the yacal frames are doubled, 4 by 5 ½ inches, and

spaced on 18 inch centres. The lower and topmasts are of Oregon pine, 11 and 6 inches in maximum diameter, respectively. Romance carries 6.5 tons of lead ballast, three tons being set into the keel, and the remainder is in the yacht's bilge.

The white painted figurehead of a woman at the bow intends to depict romance, and was made by Chinese carvers at Hongkong. Though Captain Green supplied the oriental craftsmen with many pictures of beautiful Hollywood film actresses for guides, the figurehead undeniably shows Chinese influence, as Captain Green himself admits. The figurehead is made from camphorwood, as are the carved panels set into the bulkheads below deck in the yacht's saloon. The panels represent various Chinese legends, and are interesting examples of Chinese art.

Romance was designed by Captain Green, with the exception of the hull, which was laid out by the Ah King Slipway designers. The arrangement begins forward with a peak locker, then two separate one-berth staterooms, to port and starboard, with a portable partition between the two, and large wardrobes situated handily. To port, next, is a bathroom – one of two aboard the 50 footer – with tub, wash bowl and water closet. The galley extends along the port side of the yacht from the bathroom to the saloon aft. The galley features a coal range, a large sink, lockers, an ice box, and other usual equipment found in a small boat galley.

The owner's stateroom has a private bathroom ahead of it, on the starboard side, complete with tub, bowl and water closet, also. The stateroom proper has two berths, one of which can be made into a double on short notice. A gun rack, large wardrobes, and other fixtures feature this cabin.

The saloon aft, which can be entered by two companionways, one to the cockpit and the other to the decks forward, is most interesting as it is studded with interesting Chinese carvings worked from camphorwood. A ballasted table, which will not overturn in rough seas, and port and starboard berths are found here, also. All hardware is fashioned from heavy brass. There is no radio on Romance.

Under the saloon floor is installed a three cylinder Ailsa Craig full diesel engine, of 18 to 30 h.p, the highest rating being developed at 1,500 r.p.m. The engine is a four cycle type, equipped with reverse gear. It works through a two-to-one reduction gear, and turns a three-blade English made propeller of 26 inches diameter. With this engine, Romance is capable of 6.5 knots under favorable weather conditions, without benefit of sails, according to Captain Green. The engine is electric and hand starting. Romance's owner declared after the trans-Pacific voyage that the engine was very easy on lubricating oil, and that diesel oil was consumed at the rate of one gallon per hour. Diesel oil is carried in five tanks, the total capacity being 1.25 tons. Two tons of fresh water are stored in nine tanks, and there are tanks for lubricating oil and paraffine, each of 10-gallon size. Romance has 12-volt electric lights, and a powerful array of batteries.

A 10-foot by 4.5-foot teak tender is cradled on Romance's deck. It has a centerboard, and a permanent lug rig for sailing. The yacht's ground tackle includes two anchors, 125 and 250 pounds, respectively, with special plates on the palms for muddy bottoms as frequently are encountered in oriental waters.

Three times Captain Green started from Hongkong. On the first occasion, the vessel nearly became waterlogged with sea water which entered the yacht through the bilge pumps. On the second attempt, Romance ran into heavy seas, and the mainmast nearly carried away, so Captain Green put the yacht about for Hongkong again.

On May 25, 1935, flying the burgee of the Royal Hongkong Yacht Club, Romance departed for the

third and last time. Aboard the 50-foot yacht were Captain Green, as master; Philip Green, first mate; and Lai Mok, a Chinese paid hand.

The voyage up the Chinese coast was an extremely rough one, and the engine failed with stiff gales howling through the yacht's rigging as great seas hurled themselves at the staunch little ship.

It is approximately 1,600 nautical miles from Hongkong to Yokohama, as Captain Green sailed his boat, and in excess of 600 miles of this total were taken up by the voyage to Keelung, Formosa, or Taiwan Island, which is Japanese territory. The Tropic of Cancer cuts through Formosa's middle. (Keelung is sometimes spelled, also, Ke-lung, and Kelang.)

It was June 5 when Romance logged Keelung, and on the following day the yacht set out for Yokohama, Japan, which port is situated on the Bay of Tokio, south-southwest of Tokio, roughly, on Honshu Island of the Japanese archipelago. Twenty-three days later, on June 29, Romance arrived off Yokohama. Romance tried to lead the way into Yokohama before the oncoming Canadian Pacific liner, Empress of Japan, largest and fastest trans-Pacific liner. However, the yacht's engine failed, so sails were hoisted again. Captain Green decided to drop anchor to keep from being driven ashore by a stiff breeze which was blowing at the time. As Empress of Japan steamed swiftly past Romance, however, Captain Green's friend, Captain L. D. Douglas, of the Japan, ordered the big liner's colors dipped in salute to the gallant little ship and her adventurous crew. A Japanese pilot boat later assisted Romance into Yokohama Harbor. Captain Green was extended every courtesy by Japanese officials, he said later.

Eighteen days' Romance remained at friendly Yokohama Harbor, and during this time, Lai Mok, the Chinese paid hand, decided to desert, which he did. Evidently the big seas and stormy winds encountered during the voyage, especially in Formosa Strait, were too much for the oriental, and he viewed the coming voyage across the notorious North Pacific with too many forebodings for his peace of mind.



John Hunter, 37 years old, and a former resident of Victoria, B. C., employed on the P. and O. liner Rawalpindi, heard that Captain Green was seeking a crew member for the voyage to Canada, and offered his services. They were accepted.

With plenty of oil, water and stores aboard, Romance on July 17, departed from Yokohama, on the 5,400-mile jaunt across the North Pacific Ocean, to Victoria and Vancouver, via Cape Flattery and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Some of the cased oil was stored on deck, and Captain Green's bathtub was filled with stores, he later related. On the trip from Yokohama Breakwater, a lone vessel was sighted, the only one seen during the entire trip across the Pacific.

Watches immediately were set, on a four-on, eight-off basis, as follows: Hunter, 12-4; Captain Green, 4-8; and Philip Green, 8-12. This schedule was adhered to during the long voyage across the big

ocean.

Cooking was done by young Green and Hunter, a can opener being of considerable assistance in this important work. Captain Green had plenty to do on his own account, figuring the yacht's position daily, as well as taking his own watch on deck.

Three days out from Yokohama, the yacht's engine failed, and for the balance of the voyage, Captain Green depended entirely on sail to drive his craft across the Pacific. Continuous east and northeast gales sought to batter the yacht back, but the craft doggedly fought her way eastward. Bad weather developed after the engine went wrong, as described by Captain Green:

"About eight o'clock on the night of September 20, the worst blow started. By the following morning the waves seemed as high as the Woolworth Building. I've spent more than 40 years at sea, and a part of this time on old time square rigged windjammers, but those waves seemed like huge mountains with the snow coming down in a gigantic avalanche!"

"We had the boat snugged down under bare poles, and she rode them beam-on like a duck, taking the great seas in a fashion to warm a sailor's heart."

"I saw one huge sea, and I thought then that all was over – that we were done for. I uttered a prayer. That sea must have been 50 feet high. But Romance rode over that one, also. That wave was the largest I ever saw in all my long experience at sea."

"I opened the companionway after it passed, and asked the boys for two oil bags. One was lashed forward at the fore rigging, and the other at the main rigging. The effect was instantaneous. The seas calmed down right away, and we certainly breathed easier, then," Captain Green said.

For practically the entire voyage, the yacht had to contend with almost continuous head winds. Romance's course across the Pacific was for all practical purposes the same as that indicated by United States meteorological charts, along the 40th parallel of North Latitude, considerably south of the regular steamer lanes.

When Romance reached the meridian of 160 degrees West Longitude, she encountered some of the heaviest weather of the voyage. On the morning of September 20, it began blowing and soon the wind had increased to half-a-gale. On the next day, the wind's strength approached the velocity of a hurricane.

The little yacht was stripped down by her crew to her smallest canvas, and thus she rode out the storm, riding almost beam-to the seas. For two days and nights it continued to blow, with big seas hurling green-gray water at Romance, and the gales whistling weird and sad and high-pitched notes in the yacht's rigging. Occasional seas were of almost unbelievable proportions, Captain Green declared later. But Romance rode this storm out as she had past storms, and as she later was to weather other gales and waves.

Toward the end of the voyage, the biscuit supply was getting low, so the crew went on a ration of two biscuits per man each day. This plan worked out well for there were 12 pounds remaining when the yacht docked at Victoria.

It was a happy day when Captain Green told his hardy crew that land probably would be sighted soon,

if not the next day. It had been a long, hard, and cold voyage.... Land was in sight on October 16, and on the following day, Romance had passed Cape Flattery and Tatoosh Island, on the American side of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Near Neah Bay, the United States Navy battleship Oklahoma was sighted and approached. Captain Green requested the vessel's commander to report him safe, to Victoria and the press, as he knew that friends were anxious about the yacht's crew.

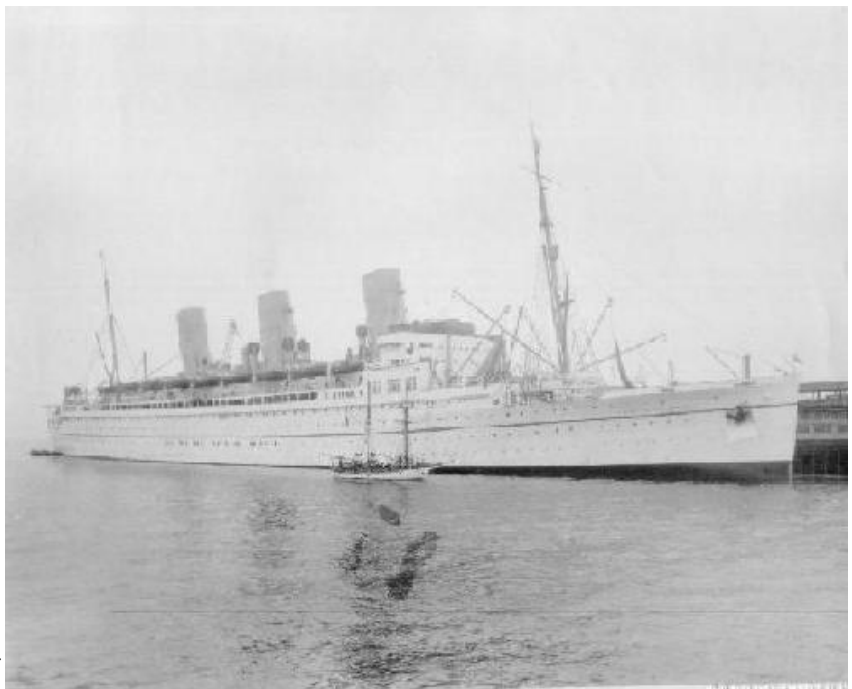
The American commander gladly complied with the request, the Oklahoma contacting the Gonzales Wireless Station almost immediately. This resulted in the prompt dispatching of the 115-foot motorship Adversus, of the preventive service of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, to Romance's assistance, although the trim little yacht was not in distress by any stretch of the imagination.

Romance was near Race Rocks, not distant from Victoria, when taken in tow by Adversus, and on October 19, she was at William's Head Quarantine Station. The same day, Romance moved in to Victoria's inner harbor, finishing a 92-day voyage from Yokohama Breakwater to Cape Flattery. The three sailors were happy to be away from the bouncing, gale-lashed Pacific – at least for a while.

On October 25, Romance entered Vancouver Harbor, groping her way through a dense fog. Hunter had left the yacht at Victoria, to visit with his parents for the first time in 15 years. The remainder of Captain Green's family had joined father and son at Victoria for the jaunt to Vancouver.

Romance had taken 156 days for her voyage from Hongkong to Vancouver, yet there remained one ton of water in her tanks and enough provisions to start back to the Orient again! (Water had been rationed during the voyage at the rate of one gallon per man per day, as this was found to be more than enough.) And now that Romance is safely docked at Vancouver after her arduous voyage, let's make a comparison of the voyage she made with one of Captain Green's trips when he was master of the big Empress of Asia.

Empress of Asia is a 16,900-ton vessel, with a displacement of 30,625 tons, and her length is 590 feet, and her breadth, 68 feet. (Thus, she is greater in breadth than Romance is in over-all length.) The Asia's normal sea speed is 20 to 21 knots, and her engines are rated at 29,000 indicated horsepower. Empress of Asia requires only nine and one-half days to voyage from Yokohama to Vancouver, whereas her round trip from Vancouver to various Oriental ports and back to Vancouver takes only seven weeks – or a little over one-half the time Romance took to sail from Yokohama to Cape Flattery. Romance had sailed 5,400 miles



across the Pacific in 92 days, this giving her an average speed of only 2.4456 nautical miles per hour, or 58.6956 miles per each 24-hour day. (Think of Empress of Asia booming along through heavy seas at 20 knots or better, and logging about 500 miles each day!)

Looking back on the voyage, Captain Green told the author at Vancouver that Romance showed her best point of sailing with the wind between the quarter and abeam. The yacht, he said, heaves-to beautifully under bare poles.

The squaresails were used practically the entire way across.

"I wouldn't be without them," was the captain's appraisal of their usefulness. He said that he sometimes used the raffer in place of the fore topsail.

Captain Green averred that he intends to send the yacht's original log of the voyage to the British Museum. Captain Green, 62 years old, is one of the few living steamship masters who went up to command in sail, although he later switched to steam propelled vessels. He knows barks and ships, and the graybeards of Cape Horn, from first-hand experience.

He has a ready, hearty laugh, and he is enthusiastic over boats and ships of all kinds. His complexion is ruddy and weather tanned, and his light brown eyes are vivid and intelligent. He is a Londoner, and speaks with a Londoner's accent, which to the author, at least, is intriguing, if not fascinating.

Captain Green smiles pleasantly as he talks with one. At first he seems quiet and reluctant to speak of himself and his yacht, but this soon disappears when he gets interested in a nautical conversation.

His dark hair is graying a bit, and though he carries a walking stick at times, he is far from old. One thinks of him, rather, as 62-years-young instead.

He lives at North Vancouver, B. C., but his heart is in England, and there he intends to go in the near future, in Romance, via Mexico and the Panama Canal. He has hazy ideas about a voyage after that to the South Seas and Australia, probably by way of the Suez Canal. He has many friends down under, and he wants to visit them.

On November 8, 1935, at the annual dinner and smoker of the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club, Captain Green was awarded a shield by club members in recognition of sailing Romance across the Pacific from Hongkong.

