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The Vicissitudes of the Famous Pilgrim

FROM A CONTENDER FOR AMERICA'S CUP DEFENSE TO A GASOLENE FISHERMAN IS THE STORY OF A CRAFT THAT ONCE HELD THE ATTENTION OF THE NATION.

By GEORGE STORY HUDSON.

SELDOM has a sloop built for defense of the America's Cup seen more vicissitudes than the Pilgrim, now a motored craft engaged in the Southern fisheries. This yacht, before being equipped with gasoline, was a steam yacht luxuriously fitted and furnished. Since the days of steam installation she has been knocked from pillar to post most ruthlessly.

The Pilgrim was built in 1893 with three other sloops, the Vigilant, Jubilee and the Colonia, for the purpose of defending the cup against the challenging Valkyrie. She was a deep, fin-keel boat, radical in model, and was designed by Stewart & Binney and constructed by the Pusey & Jones Shipbuilding Company, at Wilmington, Del. Her general dimensions were, 124 feet in length overall, 85.25 feet waterline, 23 feet beam and 22.5 feet draft. At the bottom of the fin was a 10-ton bulb of lead which was subsequently increased to 16 tons.

After an interesting series of elimination races, the Vigilant was selected to defend the trophy and, after she had been laid up some time, the Pilgrim was purchased by Lamont G. Burnham, of Boston, who was willing to experiment with the craft as a steamer. The fin was cut off and with it went the ballast, a skeg was added and other alterations carried out to fit the vessel to new requirements. Two engines were installed and Mr. Burnham had a house mark emblazoned on her funnel. She was used successfully between Boston and Mr. Burnham's summer place on the Essex River,

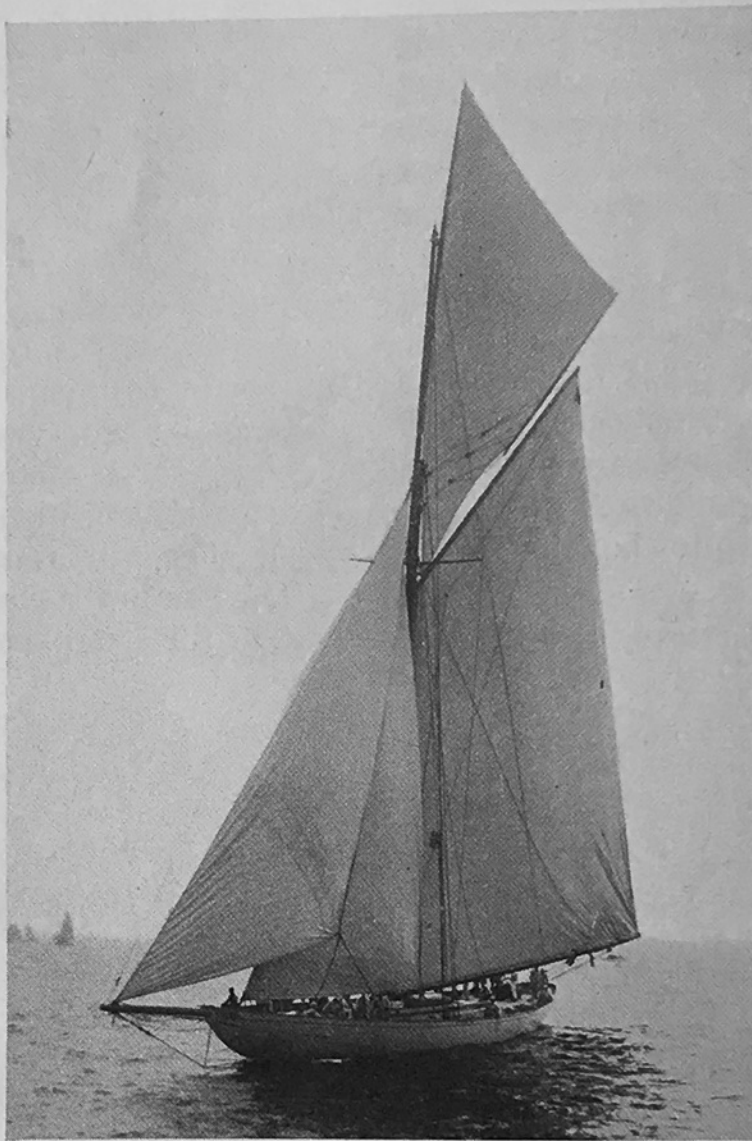
Massachusetts, until her owner's death some time later. The yacht was now laid up in charge of a caretaker and her mahogany structure kept carefully polished for a long time.

Years later, when the Boston Floating Hospital steamer was in need of machinery, Mrs. Burnham gave the power plant of the Pilgrim to that vessel, where it is now doing service moving the hospital at the rate of about four miles an hour, which is considered an excellent performance when the bulk of the ship is considered.

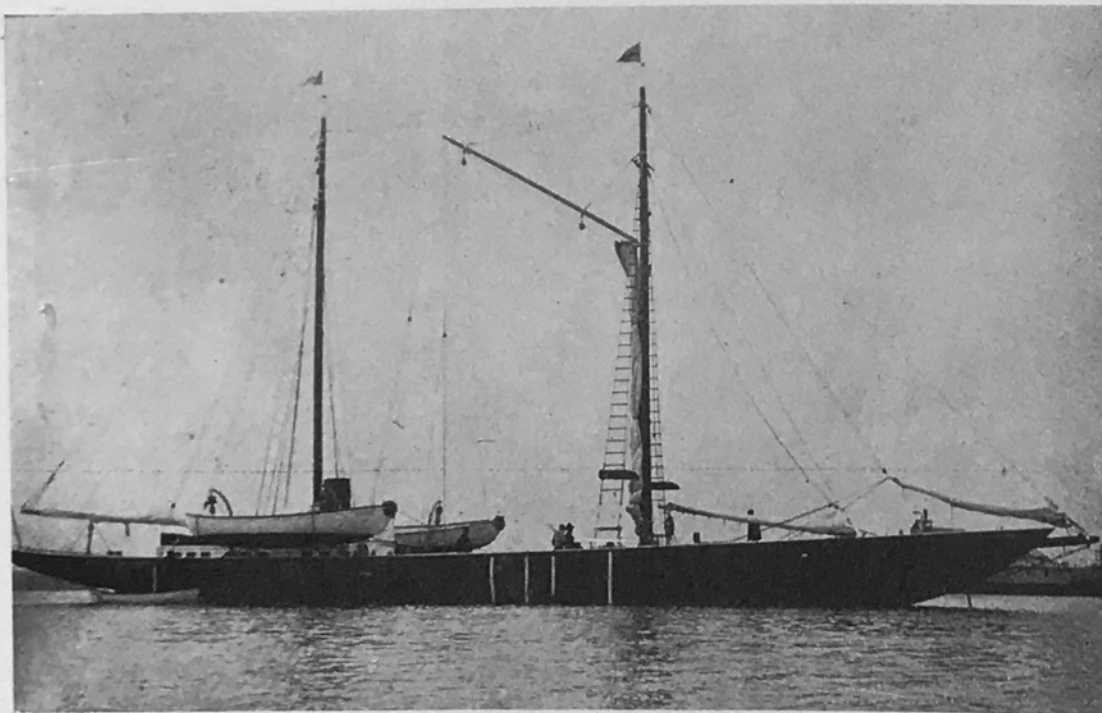
With engines removed and much of her interior gutted the Pilgrim was then placed out of commission at a bridge in Boston, where her top-hamper speedily went to ruin. Nobody appeared to have interest in the yacht—boys used the pilot house for play cruising, and river pirates went through the hull till nothing worth lifting remained. This condition obtained till the once stately sloop became a mass of weather-beaten steel and wood, her masts shaky and gray,—altogether disreputable.

Two or three years ago a man came along who saw money in the Pilgrim as a gasoline tank supply boat. Evidently he banked on the Pilgrim's history to make her worth while. She was hauled out and inspected. Repairs were made and the gas man and his wife made their home in the renovated deckhouse after tanks had been fitted below. The Pil-

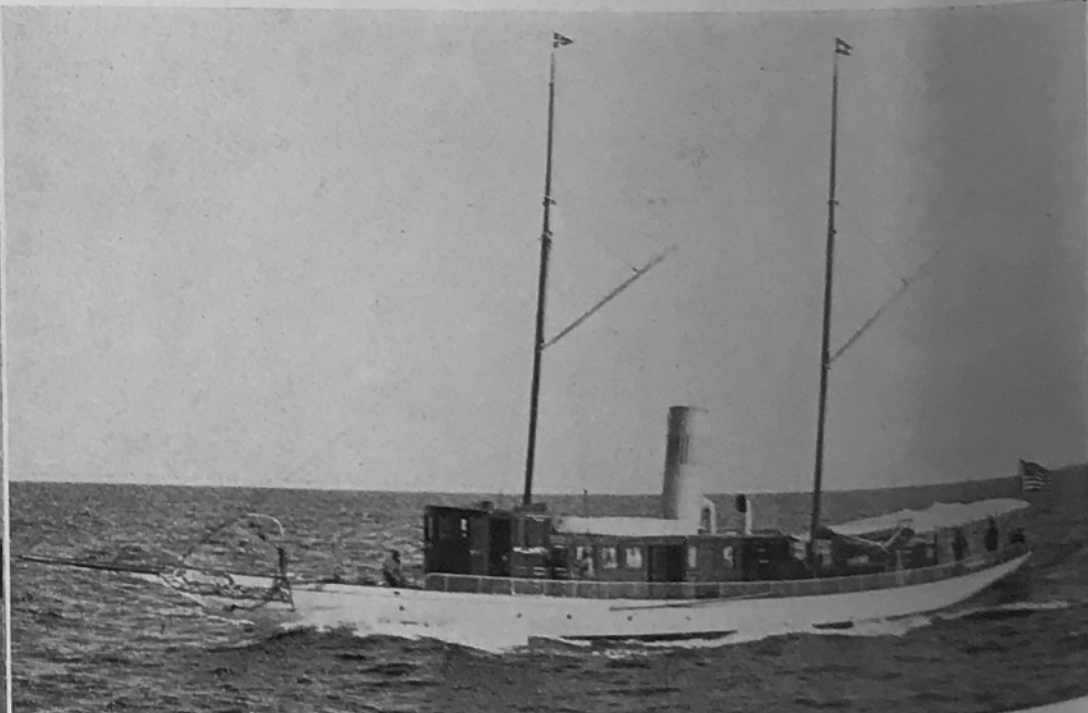
grim was towed to Marblehead harbor, but she did not hang to a
(Continued on page 273)



THE PILGRIM AS WAS WHEN SHE SOUGHT CUP DEFENSE HONORS IN 1893.



NOW AN UP-TO-DATE FISHING CRAFT WITH TWO 4-CYL. GASOLENE MOTORS, ENGAGED IN RESEARCH WORK.



WITH FIN CUT OFF AND ENGINES INSTALLED, SHE WAS A STEAM YACHT FOR MANY YEARS.

The Vicissitudes of the Famous Pilgrim

(Continued from page 220)

mooring in the inner harbor because the authorities were not inclined to grant her permission. So she was towed to the harbor entrance and anchored so far off the town that one might see Half Way Rock and other sea-marks from her deck.

Yachtsmen regarded the Pilgrim with mild interest and commented on the ups-and-downs that had driven her into the fuel business, yet patronage did not warrant the expense of maintaining the craft at "yachty" Marblehead. She was soon taken to Boothbay Harbor, Me., and again posed as a supply boat, anchored well in toward the head of the picturesque harbor.

In the summer of 1911 the Pilgrim went alongside the plant of the Adams Shipbuilding Company at East Boothbay where she was transformed to fit the fishing business. Her owner was a Boston man, who owned a section of South Carolina coast with headquarters at Beaufort. Many alterations were made, till the old Pilgrim measured 128 feet overall, 26 feet beam and 6.6 feet draft. Instead of the original sail area of 10,261 square feet she now carries about 6,000 square feet on two Oregon pine masts each measuring 60 feet in length. Large cargo capacity was secured by opening the deck with two hatches, the deck structures being removed to give room for handling gear. But the Pilgrim, despite these alterations, has accommodations for 20 men and her living quarters are as handsome and comfortable as when she was a yacht.

Two 4-cylinder gasolene engines, developing 35 horse power, were installed and gasolene tanks with capacity of 500 gallons were built into the hull. Two steering wheels were arranged, one being located on a bridge deck directly forward of the mainmast and over the motors, with which she will be steered when under power, the other being aft for use when under sail.


A dynamo furnishes current for 50 incandescent lamps as well as for operating a powerful searchlight and refrigerating plant. There is, also, an 8-horsepower motor for handling seines, boats and cargo booms. Two big boats swing from the davits abreast the mainmast and the fore rigging is a ladder for the use of the lookout who, from aloft, will scan the sea for schools of fish. A conspicuous funnel serves as a ventilator and muffler and gives the vessel the look of a powerful porgy fisherman of the steam type.

Though the Pilgrim still hails from Boston, she will be employed in Southern waters in research work preliminary to the upbuilding of deep sea and coastal fisheries upon modern methods of conservation. She is commanded by Capt. B. H. Spurling, of Boothbay Harbor who has been identified with the New England fishing industry over 40 years.

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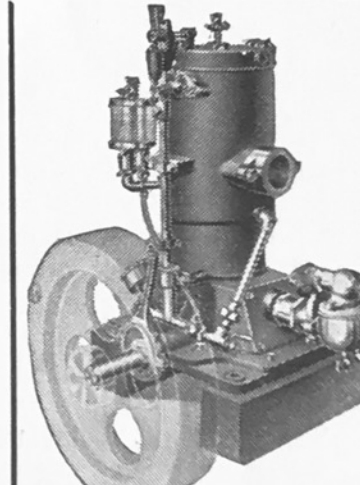
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