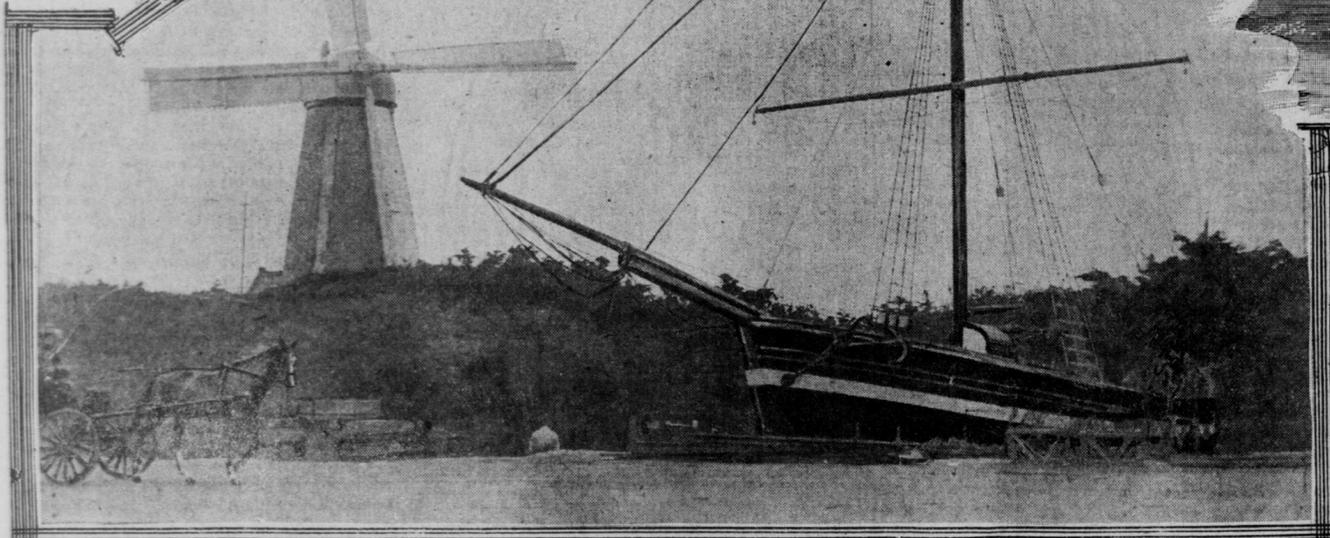


# THE GOOD SHIP GJOA BECOMES ITS OWN MONUMENT



CAPT. ROALD AMUNDSEN

The Bark Which Carried Amundsen Through the Northwest Passage Is Dragged Up the Beach to a Quiet Pool in Golden Gate Park



THE GJOA IN HER FINAL RESTING PLACE IN A CORNER OF GOLDEN GATE PARK

By Richard Drake

LIKE an old Ulysses on the cliff looking out longingly at the ever calling rollers of the sea, Captain Roald Amundsen's exploring sloop, the Gjoa, having ended a career of glorious battles with the waves by working her way among the ice packs to the magnetic pole, will stand facing the ocean in Golden Gate park until her mighty timbers rot. That will be 200 years or more, and it is doubtful whether in that time another vessel comes through the northwest passage—that despair of the hardest voyagers for five centuries.

Not content with being the first and only vessel to make the northwest passage, the Gjoa has surpassed her own record of traveling through ice by taking a voyage among the sand dunes on dry land. After its two experiences, each unique in its way, it now lies in its shallow pond on the edge of Golden Gate park at the most conspicuous point, where the park driveway debouches into the ocean boulevard. Just beyond its reach the waves are pounding on the beach, but though they make the children scurry away before them, they can not care for the Gjoa.

There it must sit at home in its easy seat and see the young and strong pass in and out the Golden gate. And hard it must be, for the pounding of the green water on its decks and the mighty slap of the sea on its forefoot were the joy of life to it.

**The Gjoa's Beginning**  
If the Gjoa had never become famous, and were still back on the coast of Norway, it would not have been retired, but, with lumber stowed tightly away in its hold, it would be pounding through the tempestuous North sea to Denmark, there to get butter and eggs and cheese to take back to the north-land. For the Gjoa was not built for Captain Amundsen. Its great sloop sail first caught the winds off the Norwegian fjords in 1872, after its gallant owner had given it the name of his red checked bride. It was built for tough weather, whirlpools, nasty tide rips, and one continuous plunge through green water among the breaking seas of the German ocean.

It was a seasoned craft, not old, capable of living in any sea that runs. It had already been among the breakers and seen hairbreadth escapes through the night from storm hidden reefs; in a word, it was a fit companion for her Norseman commander, not likely to let him in a lurch and as daring as he. The service was hard, but it was game for it.

Amundsen found it so much to his liking just as it stood that he made no changes, except to lay along its sides heavy oak planking from keel to well above the water line to protect it from the ice. There were no comforts about it and he added none. Its forecabin was a hole, by no means fit for a human being to sleep in, but to the hardy men who sailed with him this was nothing. What did they know of comfort at sea? The black hole in which they slept tells nothing today of the awful monotony and constantly threatening danger through which they lived three years, but even now, another three years having elapsed since they brought the sloop to San Francisco, the smell of it is

there yet. It is in the very timbers and it tells of strong men who went out, not that they cared about the magnetic pole or the northwest passage, but because their quest was something that it took brave men to do. Steamed into the very oak of the Gjoa, to remain there until it falls to pieces, their spirit will live.

Having made the famous voyage of discovery, the Gjoa had come to a part of the world where there were no wild seas to demand a ship of its strength and build. It would not have been profitable to work it. So it lay half forgotten until the Norwegian people of San Francisco made of it a monument to daring. If it had eyes to see, as I am sure it has—sense to feel the proximity of the ocean and the barrier of sand between—it could look out to sea on clear days and watch the lumber schooners going south as it used to do, but under far different conditions. No such high deckloads could have lived through the seas to which it was used. No smooth water slipped along under its forefoot.

It looks fat and clumsy, not nearly so graceful as the trim schooners which carry the lumber along the Pacific coast, but long experience with the sea

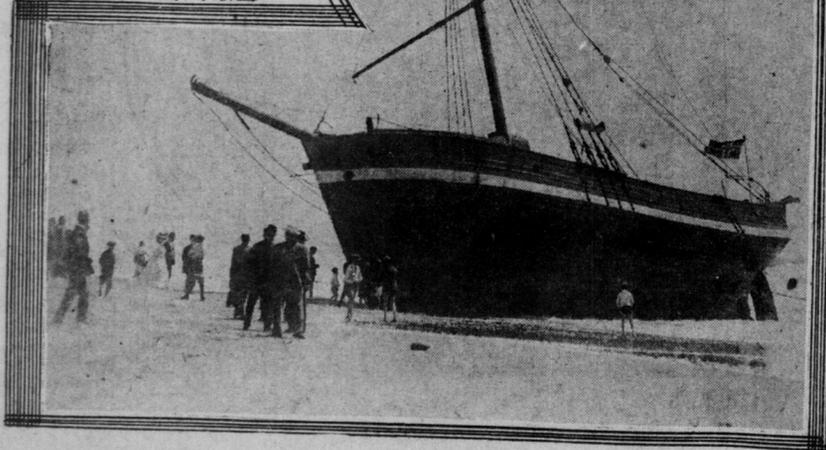
decorum. Then when it was decided to put it in the park, the fourth of July, or, as it fell this year, Monday, the fifth, was chosen as the occasion on which to beach it below the Cliff house. Fully 15,000 people were on hand to witness the event. To do it seemed like chaining an eagle near a summer resort, but heroes must suffer the martyrdom of their fame.

Captain C. F. Klitgaard, a wrecker

standing on the deck of the Gjoa waiting for the tide to turn. All at once the signals flew from the yardarms, the tug cast off the hawser and two stout little donkey engines on shore picked up the slack in the cable.

The time to strike the beach had come and a shiver ran through the stilled crowd. The Gjoa was two cable lengths off shore and was still afloat when it cast off from the tug,

AT LOW TIDE LINE



taught its builders that the short, stocky boat, thick in the waist, can better live through a gale than any craft that floats. Batten it down and the wind may jerk the very mast out of it, but it will roll on unhurt below. The very crudity of its build, the harshness of the lines and the lack of all attempt at comfort above or below decks, is the most striking thing about this small sloop that did what no other boat has ever done. The donors should always use their influence to keep it as it is. Paint must be laid on to preserve it, but let the stained and handworn fo'c'stle remain.

Humble in appearance as it is, the Gjoa has been loaded with honors, particularly when it first arrived on October 19, 1906. When Consul General Lund presented it to the city recently Mayor Taylor and many prominent citizens came to receive it with due

who has beached great ships to keep them out of the ice at Nome and St. Michael, was chosen to do the work. He bid on the undertaking and lost, but when it came to doing the actual work he was the man for the job. The tug Pilot towed the Gjoa out through the heads and to a point 300 yards south of the Cliff house, where it was to be beached. There the Pilot dropped anchor among the white-caps and waited for developments.

Captain Norman Nelson and eight men from the Golden Gate life saving station pulled out through the surf, making a spectacular showing for the delighted crowd and took back a four inch hawser from the Gjoa. To the end of this was fastened a five inch steel cable, which was hauled ashore and fastened to a "dead man," buried deep in the sand.

Captain Klitgaard meanwhile was

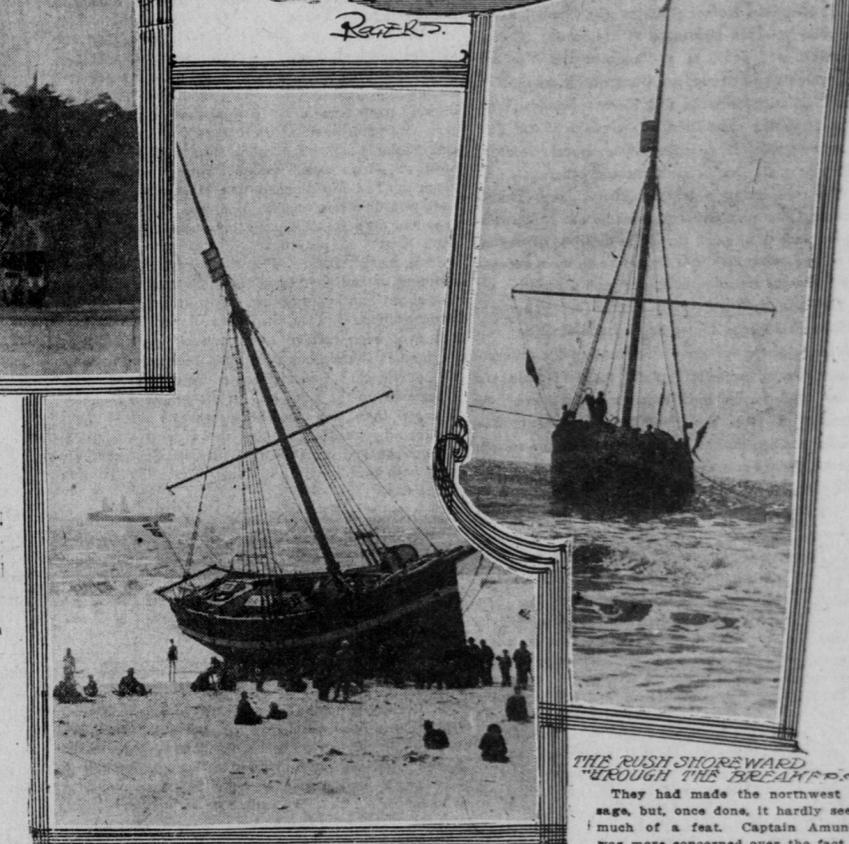
but, it did not advance half a cable's length toward the beach before it hit the bottom with a jar that shook its frame. On the next wave it lifted, moved and grounded, and again it lifted, and then it was a question of swirling with a heavy cable, as the sand spried around its keel in the already fast receding tide.

Two hours later it was standing in a few feet of water and nothing more could be done until the next tide. As the water receded even farther it did not careen, but settled upright on its keel in the sand.

That night the big work had to be done. In a heavy fog, with the sirens whistling plaintively, they lifted it foot by foot to the dry beach, so that in the morning it lay two ship's lengths nearer shore. Again that afternoon advantage was taken of the



REAR



SAY-TO THE SEA WHICH SHE HONORED

THE RUSH SHOREWARD THROUGH THE BREAKERS

They had made the northwest passage, but, once done, it hardly seemed much of a feat. Captain Amundsen was more concerned over the fact that he had located the magnetic pole. He went south over the ice 700 miles to Eagle City on the Yukon, and thence out to the world. The Gjoa was not ready for an overland journey at that time, and with the spring breakup worked her way around to Nome and at last to San Francisco, where she has been ever since.

The crew that made this voyage consisted of Captain Amundsen, Lieutenant Godfred Hansen, Anton Lund, Helmer Hansen, Adolf Lindstrom, Peder Ristvedt and Gustave Wilk. They are now scattered over the seven seas, except Wilk. He died in March of 1904, when they had already completed the northwest passage and were merely coming out.

### Lindstrom the Modest

Lindstrom was the cook, a position always highly regarded at sea, but peculiarly so in the case of Lindstrom because his good humor was of such enduring material that even the rigors of the north could not make him testy. He was with Nansen, who recommended him to Amundsen, and now he is to sail again with Amundsen to discover the north pole itself. Meanwhile he has been working as an ordinary seaman on a freighter running to southeastern Alaskan points. With the spring he will be here to go with Amundsen on the Fram on his five years' contemplated cruise in the Arctic, during which he hopes to cross directly over the north pole.

Amundsen believes that the currents which set to the north beyond the Bering straits cross the top of the earth. Casks and life preservers which were thrown overboard north of Siberia and were finally picked up on the coast of Greenland give him reason for his opinion, and he has such faith in it that he is willing to spend five and maybe more years of his life crossing over. The progress will be slow, the ice breaking up for only a short time in August at that latitude. There the Fram will serve him well, because she will be pushed up like an egg shell to the surface of the ice when two floes crush together. If he succeeds it will be worth the trouble in fame, and anything worse than being snowed up a few years he does not look for. He will take seven years' provisions.

The cruise will start from San Francisco, and as Amundsen turns north from the Golden Gate and looks back he will see the Norwegian flag bravely sailing from the Gjoa, condemned to stay at home but cheering him on his way.

rising waters and by the time high tide came at night they were able to put skids under it, preventing it from sinking in the sand.

It required 48 hours of almost constant work to bring it into shallow water so that the rollers could be used. So far it had come head on, but it was now more convenient to swing its stern around so that it lay side on to the beach, as if cast up by a hurricane.

An inclined plane of heavy timbers had meanwhile been built up to the level of the boulevard, with a donkey engine at each side. So, careened over to one side, the Gjoa was lifted slowly up by jackscrews and rollers, taking a week's time in all to traverse 200 feet. It was used to slow progress among ice floes, but, even then, it never rose 40 feet above the level of the sea, as it did on her overland journey. The feat of lifting a 150 ton ship is no small one.

"The most difficult trick in the landing of the Gjoa," Captain Klitgaard said afterward in discussing the inland cruise, "was to choose the right moment to cast off from the tug. The tide changes so quickly that a few minutes makes all the difference in the world. By watching the seal rocks I could tell when the tide rip turned south; then I gave the signal. But even in the space of five minutes between the time we cast off from the tug and before we hit the beach the tide from running strong to the north was already pulling us to the south. Five minutes later we would have been pulled 200 yards further south before we could have beached it."

### Her Last Resting Place

Once on the boulevard it was comparatively easy to move it across and let it down into the hollow where it is to rest until it leaves its last rib.

Collin Archer, who built Captain Nansen's arctic ship Fram, said of the Gjoa, when Amundsen was fitting it out for the exploring expedition, that he considered it the stoutest vessel he had ever seen with the exception of the Fram.

Amundsen bought the sloop out of his own savings from a hard life at sea, but Nansen and King Oscar, as well as many others, contributed to the outfit. The ship carried delicate scientific instruments and plenty of coarse, wholesome food to last five

years. They sailed from Norway on the night of June 17, 1903, fighting against head seas to Greenland, where, at Dalrymple Island, they found provisions which had been taken in advance by Arctic whalers. Proceeding then in the long summer day to Barclay Island, the compass indicated that they had passed above the magnetic pole, and Amundsen felt certain for the first time that he would be able to locate that elusive spot, if the ice only broke toward the southwest, which, according to the currents, it was bound to do.

August 22 the floes opened and the Gjoa drifted among them toward Prescott island, where, at Peel sound, the compass, all in a flutter at the proximity to the pole, failed absolutely. Then they steered by the stars.

Before the short summer passed and the packs froze solid again, they reached King William's land at latitude 68 minutes 37 seconds, which Amundsen decided must be near the magnetic pole. To get there they had gone with the currents, saving their fuel and letting the great sloop sail catch the sharp breezes off the top of the earth. The icebergs and enormous floating islands of ice, they slipped through, would have caught a bigger vessel fast, but the Gjoa, by its very smallness, escaped. The voyage was full of exciting incidents, but to men used to hard conditions, they were but a little bit worse than the rest.

Frozen tight on King William's land they set about their scientific researches without giving thought to the precarious position they occupied and the uniqueness of their quest. It took two years absolutely to satisfy the demands of exact science, and during that time they were busy. That saved them. Even at that their tempers grew sharp and the north was beginning to break them down, as it does all white men who remain too long, when they again cast off to drift with the currents through the wonderland of icebergs and ice floes to the westward. Again they escaped constantly threatening perils, slipping at last into more open water and to the farthest point reached by the San Francisco whalers. On August 26, 1905, they met with the whaler Charles Hansen, Captain McKenna, and with her they spent the winter at Herschel Island, beyond the mouth of the Mackenzie river.