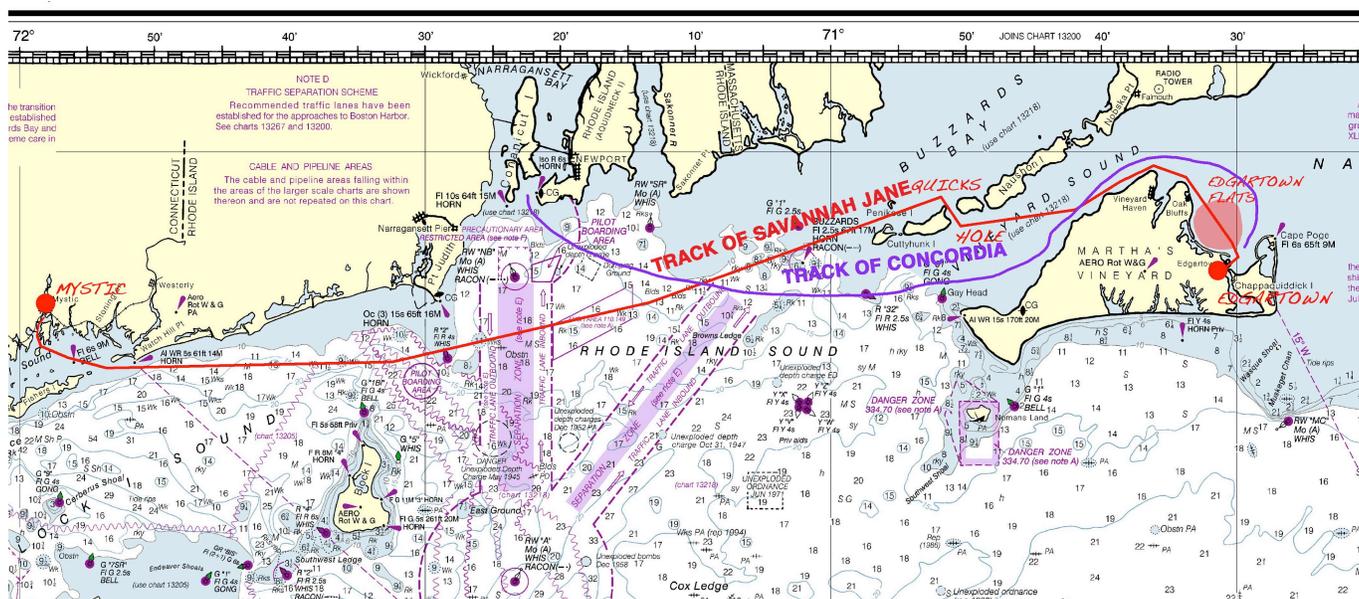


July 1980

We are up earlier than I am used to, before dawn, because we have a long way to go. My 11 year old son, Matthew, and I are sailing Jimmy Buffet's SAVANNAH JANE, ACS#6, now EQUITY, home to Nantucket from the Small Craft Exhibition at Mystic where she has opened a few eyes. We get away through the bridge and out into Fishers Island Sound as the sun comes up bright with a bit more west wind than one might expect at a summer sunrise.

Leaving the Sound I take in a reef. It is clear by now we will have a strong fair wind for Nantucket. There is forty-five miles of open water ahead of us, across Block Island and Rhode Island Sounds, before we will reach the slightly more protected waters of Buzzards Bay and Vineyard Sound. We are sailing full speed the wind a strong force 6. Our bow wave pushed up ahead and is slurping through the bow chocks wetting the deck. The stern wave was doing the same at the stern chocks. And all along the sheer, in between, we have an inch or two of freeboard. It looks as if SAVANNAH JANE has molded a hole in the water just her shape. I pull down the second reef, our speed does not change.



Now a fun thing happened. In the distance to windward we see a reefed yawl coming out of Newport. Sure enough, it is a Concordia, and she passes ahead of us a couple hundred yards rolling hard. By now I have decided to go up Buzzards Bay, rather than south and east of Cuttyhunk, both to stay in smoother water and to use the more favorable current Buzzards Bay offers. The Concordia has chosen the other route and so has crossed us sailing a little further off the wind. Both boats are going hull speed and the Concordia, half again as long as us is moving a little faster.

No worry, we have our hands full and we're looking forward to getting through Quicks Hole and into the lee of the Elizabeth Islands. What I did not plan for was the funneling of the wind between Pasque and Nashawena Islands. As we enter Quicks

Hole, the wind increases force 9 gusting to 10. SAVANNAH JANE has a wind meter that goes up to 50 knots and we use the whole thing. Fortunately, inside the Hole the sea is small and as we come out the east end, the funneling stops. The wind drops back to force 7/8. 11 year old Matthew comes into action now, taking the helm and holding her on course while I, crawling from hand-hold to hand-hold, reach the bow, pull down the jib, get a stop around it and get back to the cockpit. SAVANNAH JANE is broad reaching under double reefed main only, still going full speed.

After this excitement, and now in Vineyard Sound, looking a little ahead and to leeward we see the Concordia over on the Vineyard shore. And lo, they are striking their main. Under just jib and jigger they slow down and SAVANNAH JANE sails right passed them. At West Chop we are half mile ahead. Three things then occur: the wind drops to force 5/6, we put up the jib and shake out one of the reefs, and acknowledging our fatigue, we decide to put into Edgartown for the night. The Concordia puts her main back up and begins to overtake us. We do not care. She is a much bigger boat and this man and his boy have better things to do than race her on a day like this.

Taking advantage of the ALERION CLASS SLOOP's shoal draft, rounding East Chop we go hard on the wind and sail directly across Middle Flats for the Edgartown entrance. We're tired, we want to get in. We do, and we sort of crash land at the town pier 12 hours and 75 miles from Mystic. The full draft Concordia has had to go around the flats and enters Edgartown five minutes after us. Seeing us tied up at the Town pier, they make a circle to get a better look. What is this little boat that passed them twice and arrived ahead on such a day?