



# **Flying Cloud: The True Story of America's Most Famous Clipper Ship and the Woman who Guided Her**

*David W. Shaw*

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*Flying Cloud* is the riveting and thoroughly researched tale of a truly unforgettable sea voyage during the days of the California gold rush. In 1851, navigator Eleanor Creesy set sail on the maiden voyage of the clipper ship *Flying Cloud*, traveling from New York to San Francisco in only eighty-nine days. This swift passage set a world record that went unbroken for more than a century. Upon arrival in San Francisco, *Flying Cloud* became an enduring symbol of a young nation's daring frontier spirit. Illustrated with original maps and charts as well as historical photographs, Shaw's compelling narrative captures the drama of this thrilling adventure.

In a position almost unheard of for a woman in the mid-nineteenth century, Eleanor Creesy served as the ship's navigator. With only the sun, planets, and stars to guide her, she brought *Flying Cloud* safely around Cape Horn at the height of a winter blizzard, faced storms, dodged shoals, and found her way through calms to make the swift passage possible. Along with her husband, Josiah, the ship's captain, she sailed the mighty three-masted clipper through sixteen thousand miles of the fiercest, most unpredictable oceans in the world.

Shaw vividly re-creates nineteenth-century seafaring conditions and customs, for both the crew and the passengers who entrusted their fate to an untested ship. Including excerpts from letters and diaries of passengers, Shaw recounts *Flying Cloud's* victory in the face of adversity—including sabotage, insubordination, and severe damage to the clipper's mainmast that might have sunk her with all hands lost. But the ship triumphed and would ultimately sail the world. *Flying Cloud* brings to life, for the first time, the glory of one of America's most important seafaring tales and one woman's incredible achievements.

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