

# The True Story of America's Most Famous Clipper Ship and the Woman Who Guided Her

In the annals of maritime history, few vessels have captured the imagination like the Flying Cloud. Launched in 1851, this clipper ship became legendary for her record-breaking speed and her role in the California Gold Rush. At the helm of this extraordinary vessel was a remarkable woman named Eleanor Creesy, who defied convention to become one of the most celebrated captains of her time.

## The Birth of a Clipper

The Flying Cloud was built in East Boston, Massachusetts, by Donald McKay, a master shipbuilder renowned for his innovative designs. McKay's clippers were characterized by their sleek hulls, towering masts, and vast expanses of sail, allowing them to harness the power of the wind like no other ships of their time.



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

by David W. Shaw

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 336 pages





The Flying Cloud was a marvel of engineering, measuring 238 feet in length with a displacement of over 2,000 tons. Her hull was constructed from live oak and white pine, providing both strength and flexibility. Three towering masts, each over 100 feet tall, supported a vast network of sails totaling over 20,000 square feet.

### **The Woman at the Helm**

In an era when seafaring was dominated by men, Eleanor Creesy emerged as an extraordinary exception. Born in 1819 in Maine, Creesy developed a

passion for sailing at a young age. Despite societal expectations, she pursued her dream, eventually obtaining her master mariner's license in 1849.



Creesy's appointment as captain of the Flying Cloud in 1851 was met with a mixture of curiosity and skepticism. However, her exceptional skills and leadership qualities quickly silenced her critics. She possessed an uncanny ability to read the wind and navigate the treacherous seas, inspiring both awe and respect from her crew.

### **Record-Breaking Voyages**

Under Creesy's command, the Flying Cloud embarked on a series of legendary voyages. In 1851, she set a new record for the fastest transatlantic crossing from New York to Liverpool, completing the journey in just 13 days. This record stood for nearly two decades.



The Flying Cloud's most famous voyage began in 1852, when she was chartered to carry gold seekers to California during the Gold Rush. Despite facing treacherous storms and pirates, Creesy guided her ship and its precious cargo safely to San Francisco in 89 days, setting another record.

### **Legacy of the Flying Cloud**

The Flying Cloud's extraordinary career came to an end in 1874 when she was wrecked in a hurricane off the coast of North Carolina. However, her legacy lives on as a testament to the ingenuity of American shipbuilders and the courage and determination of a remarkable woman who defied societal norms to achieve her dreams.



Today, the Flying Cloud is preserved at the South Street Seaport Museum in New York City, where visitors can marvel at the grandeur of this iconic vessel and learn the story of the woman who guided her through the oceans.

### **Additional Information**

- The Flying Cloud was the first American clipper ship to circumnavigate the globe.
- Creesy was the first woman to obtain a master mariner's license in the United States.
- The Flying Cloud was the fastest sailing ship of its time, capable of reaching speeds of over 20 knots.

- The ship carried over 100,000 ounces of gold during her voyage to California.
- Creesy retired from sailing in 1866 and lived in Massachusetts until her death in 1899 at the age of 80.

The story of the Flying Cloud and Eleanor Creesy is an extraordinary tale of innovation, adventure, and the human spirit. It is a testament to the transformative power of breaking down barriers and pursuing one's dreams, regardless of gender or societal expectations.



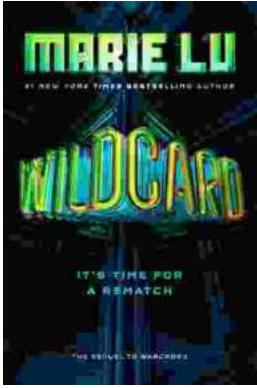
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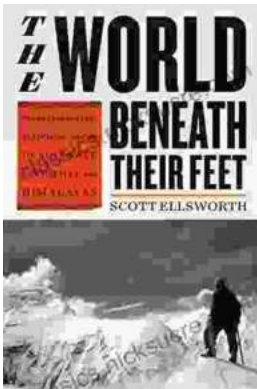
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