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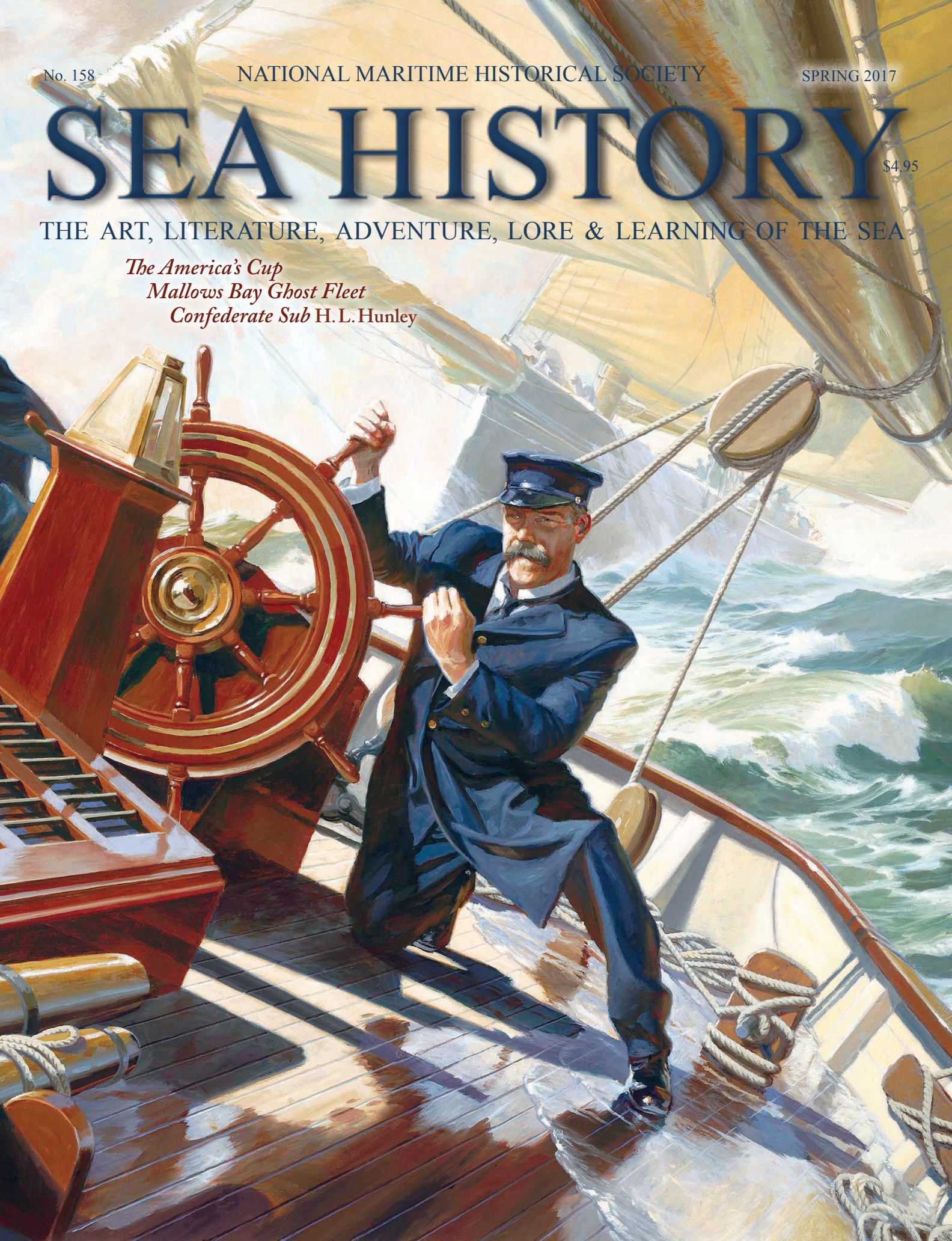
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# SEA HISTORY

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THE ART, LITERATURE, ADVENTURE, LORE & LEARNING OF THE SEA

*The America's Cup*  
*Mallows Bay Ghost Fleet*  
*Confederate Sub H. L. Hunley*





# The AMERICA'S CUP:

by Russ Kramer

## *Personalities, Passion, and Privilege*



This summer in the warm, turquoise waters off Bermuda, men and women of mettle and means will once again challenge each other for the oldest trophy in sports—yachting's most famous regatta, the America's Cup. Today's races, matching hyper-fast, carbon-fiber hydrofoils funded by billionaires and sprawling corporate syndicates, and crewed by people in space suits, bear little resemblance to those once fought by mustachioed gents in yachting caps and wooden schooners when the race was established in 1851. What remains constant, however, is the sense of national pride, individual passion, devotion to the cause and sailing skill necessary to claim ownership of the Cup. Here, through his meticulously researched recreations on canvas, marine artist Russ Kramer introduces us to several of the individuals who defended the America's Cup for over a century.

### 1851 *America Salutes The Queen* 30" x 40" oil on canvas

*America*, "the low black schooner," was commissioned by New York Yacht Club Commodore John Cox Stevens to sail across the Atlantic, challenge common conventions of British superiority in naval engineering and seamanship, and win a few quid from the noble British yachties in the process. Helmed by Dick Brown, New York Harbor's most skillful pilot schooner captain, she was called "a hawk among the sparrows" upon her arrival—and the sparrows avoided racing her at all costs until the national press embarrassed them into it. On 22 August, against the best of the English fleet, and in front of thousands of spectators, she won a 50-mile race around the Isle of Wight. Her prize was an elaborate silver cup that would forever after bear her name. In this painting, *America* ghosts across the finish line with the Royal Yacht *Victoria and Albert* coming alongside. In a gesture of sportsmanship, Stevens, shown at center, has doffed his cap and ordered the crew to dip the ship's colors as a salute to the queen.





# 1885

## Onboard *Puritan*, 1885

30" x 40" oil on canvas

Captain Aubrey Crocker helms *Puritan* in the decisive second race against challenger *Genesta* in the defense of the America's Cup, 16 September 1885. Also shown on board is General Charles Paine (in straw hat), chief strategist of the New York Yacht Club's syndicate. The general, great-grandson of a signer of the Declaration of Independence, made a fortune in railroads before joining the Union army and leading brigades in the Civil War. *Puritan* was designed by Edward Burgess and built in Boston, the first of three Paine-led Boston boats to defend. A radical design, she nonetheless would prove to be the fastest American yacht ever built.



# 1895

## The Foul

27" x 40"

oil on canvas

*Valkyrie III* bears down on *Defender* at the start of the second race of the infamous America's Cup of 1895, her boom swinging over the heads of Captain Hank Haff, designer Nat Herreshoff and syndicate head C. Oliver Iselin. In a moment, the boom will snag *Defender's* topmast shroud, setting off a storm of controversy. Iselin is hollering "We will hold our course!" to *Valkyrie's* owner Lord Dunraven as the two vessels get dangerously close to making contact. The race committee of the New York Yacht Club, after hearing the protest and reviewing the evidence, would award the race to *Defender*. Iselin, a good sport, offered to rerun the race, but Dunraven, who was not so much, declined. Later he would refuse even to race again; he accused the Americans of cheating, and was unceremoniously booted out of the New York Yacht Club.





## 1899 A Thrash to Windward

29" x 44" oil on linen

Captain Charlie Barr helms *Columbia* during the stormy third—and decisive—America's Cup race against *Shamrock*, 20 October 1899. On board is designer Nat Herreshoff (far left), syndicate head C. Oliver Iselin (in yachting wear), and his wife, Hope, the first American woman to sail on a Cup defender. Mrs. Iselin was not about to stay home on this day; a forceful personality with great means of her own and an avid sportswoman, she served as the official photographer of the campaign, just as portable cameras were becoming all the rage. She is shown with her Kodak No. 2 Bullet; her wonderful photo albums capturing the action onboard *Columbia*, which inspired this painting, are preserved in the archives of the Mystic Seaport Museum. By 1901, when the Iselins and *Columbia* defended again, she invited her two teenage nieces to ride along too.



## 1903 The Masthead Men

29" x 44" oil on linen

Members of the crew, high in the rigging of *Shamrock III*, watch *Reliance* cross the start of the third race of the America's Cup, 1903. The wiry daredevils who climbed to the top of these giant rigs to untangle lines or unfurl topsails—before safety harnesses were even considered—were paid more than their mates on deck. It was said of them, “their only obstacle is death.” In this painting I wanted to convey the vast size of *Reliance*, Captain Nat Herreshoff's last and ultimate Cup defender, the largest single-masted sailing yacht ever built. By casting cloud shadows across her sails and pinching her into the composition, my intention was to give the viewers, along with the high-wire crew, a birds-eye view of this enormous “temple to the wind.”





## 1937 A Million Dollar Breeze

44" x 27" oil on canvas

Here, Mike Vanderbilt helms the great J-boat *Ranger* at the start of the third race of the America's Cup of 1937. *Ranger*, whose afterguard included the young duo of Rod and Olin Stephens (shown to Vanderbilt's lee), was unbeatable. This was the start of the truly big-money era in America's Cup racing, and only men like Vanderbilt could compete. Widely respected for his skills behind the wheel, Vanderbilt was also known as a tactical genius, and effective manager and motivator of his crew. Equally popular was his lively and generous wife, Gertrude, shown on the windward rail, who was on board as official observer throughout their campaigns of 1930, '34 and '37.



## 1962 Weatherly, 1962

22" x 36" oil on linen

Bus Mosbacher helms *Weatherly* in a successful defense of the America's Cup against the first Australian challenger, *Gretel*. Mosbacher dominated races as a schoolboy on Long Island Sound, won national college championships for Dartmouth, and took eight consecutive Long Island Sound titles in the International One Design class. After a Southern Ocean Racing Conference (SORC) championship in 1959, he turned his attention to the America's Cup, defending in 1962 and again in '67. When asked the most important factor in determining a winner among closely matched 12-meters, Mosbacher replied simply, "the crew comes first."

*Russ Kramer of Mystic, Connecticut, is one of the nation's leading marine artists, specializing in yachting history and commissioned yacht portraits. Russ has been the subject of a one-man show at the Museum of Yachting in Newport, Rhode Island, and has appeared in WoodenBoat, Yachting, and Sail magazines, and will be prominently presented in the forthcoming series Art and Artifacts of the America's Cup, by Janice Hyland and Alan Granby and sponsored by William Koch. Kramer is a past president of the American Society of Marine Artists and a member of the New York Yacht Club. His paintings, including these here and those of many other America's Cup races, are available as limited-edition prints through his websites [www.russkramer.com](http://www.russkramer.com) and [www.americascuppaintings.com](http://www.americascuppaintings.com), or by calling (813) 748-6470.*

