



Flying The Colors: The Unseen Treasures Of American Marine Art

By Laura Beach

Sep 15th, 2009

Page 1 of 2

HYANNIS PORT, MASS.: The collecting world is both more transparent and more opaque than ever before. While unprecedented publishing activity has accompanied the art market's global expansion, many private collections remain resolutely off-limits to prying eyes, sometimes for generations at a time.

Bucking the tide, Hyannis Port dealers Alan Granby and Janice Hyland have collaborated on *Flying The Colors: The Unseen Treasures of Nineteenth Century American Marine Art*, lifting the curtain on privately held masterworks, both academic and primitive. Owners' identities remain undisclosed — in the interest of confidentiality, not even photo credits are included — a disappointment offset by the authors' rigorous insistence on accurate photographic reproduction. Measuring more than 1 foot square and weighing six pounds, *Flying The Colors* is, in a word, lavish.

Granby and Hyland's third book is obliquely biographical, suggesting the trajectory of their careers and hinting at some key friendships made and collections built along the way. Former academics who left teaching careers to open an antiques shop in Dennis, Mass., they in 1985 became irretrievably immersed in marine art after buying and restoring the 1849 Hyannis Light overlooking Nantucket Sound, where they now do business by appointment.



"James W. Baldwin" by James Bard, oil on canvas, 34 5/8 by 59 5/8 inches. Private collection.



"American Sublime" by Fitz Henry Lane, oil on canvas, 24 by 36 inches. Private collection, New York City.

Their first book, *The Yachtsman's Eye*, 2005, presented the collection of the late Glen S. Foster.

"Glen trained us to seek out masterpieces and scrutinize the most finite details of each work," write the authors, who were introduced to the fraternity of marine art collectors and dealers at Richard Bourne's Cape Cod auction gallery in the 1980s. Subsequent friendships with the prominent collectors S. Robert Teitelman and J. Welles Henderson, who paved the way for their Philadelphia Antiques Show debut in 1990, set them on their path to the top.

Their second book, *Maritime Maverick: The Collection of William I. Koch*, 2006, showcased the holdings of another leading collector and client who owns a house in nearby Osterville, Mass., and was the last American to win the America's Cup race, a title he captured in 1992. *Flying The Colors* is dedicated to Koch, who contributed in manifold ways.

Flying The Colors is a book that perhaps only Hyland and Granby, with their object files stretching back three decades and their acquaintance with the country's most

active private collectors, could have produced. "On the strength of *The Yachtsman's Eye* and *Maritime Maverick*, roughly 60 collectors generously sent us transparencies or allowed us to photograph their pieces," Alan explains. In all, 55 artists are represented by 218 paintings and objects, most previously unpublished.

Page 1 of 2

Antiques and the Arts Editorial Content



Flying The Colors: The Unseen Treasures Of American Marine Art

By Laura Beach

Sep 15th, 2009

Page 2 of 2

The title, which alludes to marine painting's dual claim to art and history, was suggested by Dr Samuel Laufer, a friend and collector who, along with many others, contributed to the volume published by Mystic Seaport in association with Hudson Hills Press.

Granby and Hyland strove to create "a representative visual reference" of the best marine art of the Nineteenth Century, when, combining form and function, American design reached its zenith in the clipper ships and yachts of the 1850s. A salt breeze lifts these pages, which tell a predominately East Coast tale of America and the sea. A West Coast exception is William A. Coulter (1849-1936), a painter of mostly San Francisco Bay scenes, here represented by the portrait of the *J.M. Colman* against the rugged backdrop of the Farallon Islands off the California coast.

Flying The Colors cleaves between paintings that clearly transcend the marine genre — the "heavy hitters" that easily command six and seven figures at auction — and more primitive works created mainly to document vessels and record events. In the first group, Fitz Henry Lane, Robert Salmon, William Bradford and Francis Augustus Silva are especially admired for their emotionally charged Luminist seascapes.

Hyland and Granby also illuminate accomplished but little known artists, such as H. Forshaw (active 1875-1895), a master of the fogged-in harbor scene whose "Grand Banks Fishery," one of the few known examples of this Newfoundland subject, compares favorably with the better known Alfred Thomas Bricher, whose "A Lift In The Fog, Grand Manan" shares the same deft handling of vaporous light.



Janice Hyland and Alan Granby in the gallery with their Scotties, Tucker and Teddy.



Pair of scrimshaw whale's teeth, height 4½ inches. Private collection, Osterville, Mass.; center, polychrome scrimshaw tooth, height 5¼ inches. Private collection.

James Bard (1815-1897), the creator of nearly 4,000 ships portraits, many of them steamships, is the heavyweight of a section that also includes George Henry Durrie, Isaac Sheffield and Jurgan Frederick Hugs.

James E. Buttersworth (1817-1894) and Antonio Jacobsen (1850-1821), among the most avidly collected marine artists, merit individual chapters. The best Buttersworths — among them the book's cover illustration, "Yacht *America* Off Castle William" — combine famous ships with identifying flags, important races or encounters, diversified backgrounds dotted with well-known landmarks and sublimely painted water and sky. While her husband is drawn to the magical twilight of Francis Augustus Silva's "Calm Sunset," the dynamism of Buttersworth's classic yachting scenes most appeal to Hyland, a devout sailor.

With as many as 6,000 works to his name, the prolific Jacobsen is most widely associated with American ship portraiture. The authors call him the "pictorial historian of the Republic, depicting her commerce and leisure on the high seas as she grew into a great nation...." Most famous for transatlantic steam sail vessels, Jacobsen is beloved for his workaday portraits of tugboats, side-wheelers and pilot boats, as well.

A chapter devoted to foreign painters of American subjects hurriedly covers British artists, mainly the Liverpool school, and touches on a handful of European and Chinese painters of ships and port scenes. "American Ship *Joshua Bates* off Whampoa Anchorage" is one of the best of several oils on canvas by Sunqua, one of the few Chinese port painters to label his work.

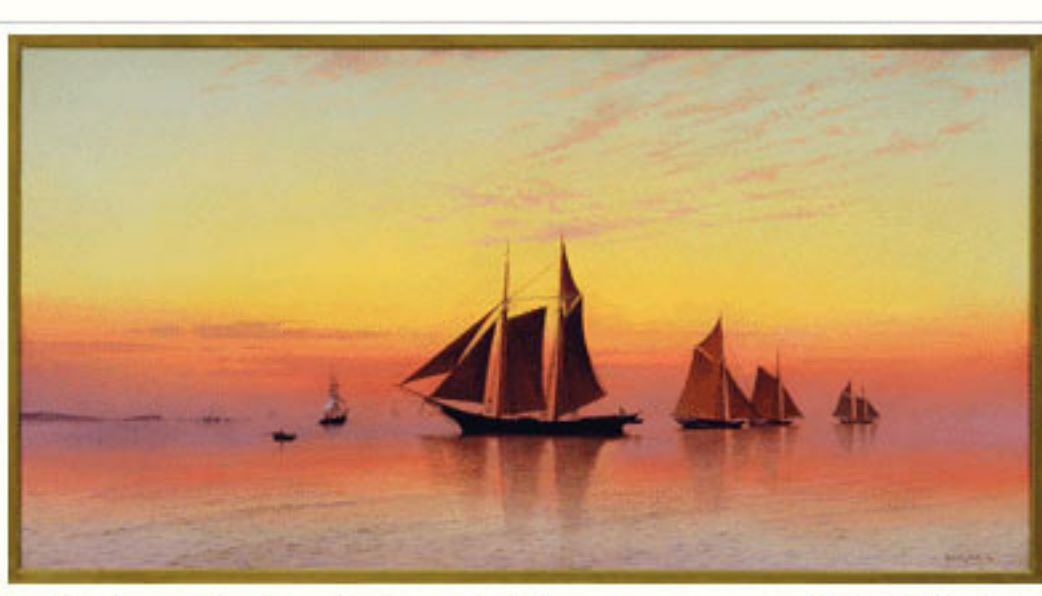
Their appetite for the grueling process of book production apparently undiminished, Granby and Hyland are well along on a fourth volume, one devoted to the art and artifacts of the America's Cup, the oldest active trophy match in international sailing competition. The subject is also touched upon in *Flying The Colors*.

Beginning with Buttersworth, the most famous of the unofficial America's Cup painters, and Frederic Cozzens, whose mastery of watercolor technique issues a credible challenge to Winslow Homer, many American marine artists captured the contest in all its glorious detail. *Flying The Colors* replicates the 1885 match between the American yacht *Puritan* and the English competitor *Genesta*, memorably depicted in an 1887 oil on canvas by Jacobsen, who also painted the yachts singly in a rare matched pair of America's Cup pictures. Another view, in shadow box form, of the *Puritan* is the work of W.H. Green.

Flying The Colors includes treatments of the 1887 race between the New York Yacht Club's *Volunteer* and the Royal Clyde Yacht Club's *Thistle* by Charles S. Raleigh, a primitive ship portraitist from New Bedford, Mass.



"American Eagle with Sunburst," anonymous, 16½ by 18½ inches. Collection of William I. Koch.



"Calm Sunset" by Francis Augustus Silva, oil on canvas, 29 by 50 inches. Private collection.

Fred Pansing's rare New York Harbor scene of the *Defender*, which successfully defended the America's Cup in 1895, contrasts with Joseph Otis Minot's Impressionistic watercolor on paper rendering of the launching of the *Defender* from the famous Herreshoff boatyard in Bristol, R.I.

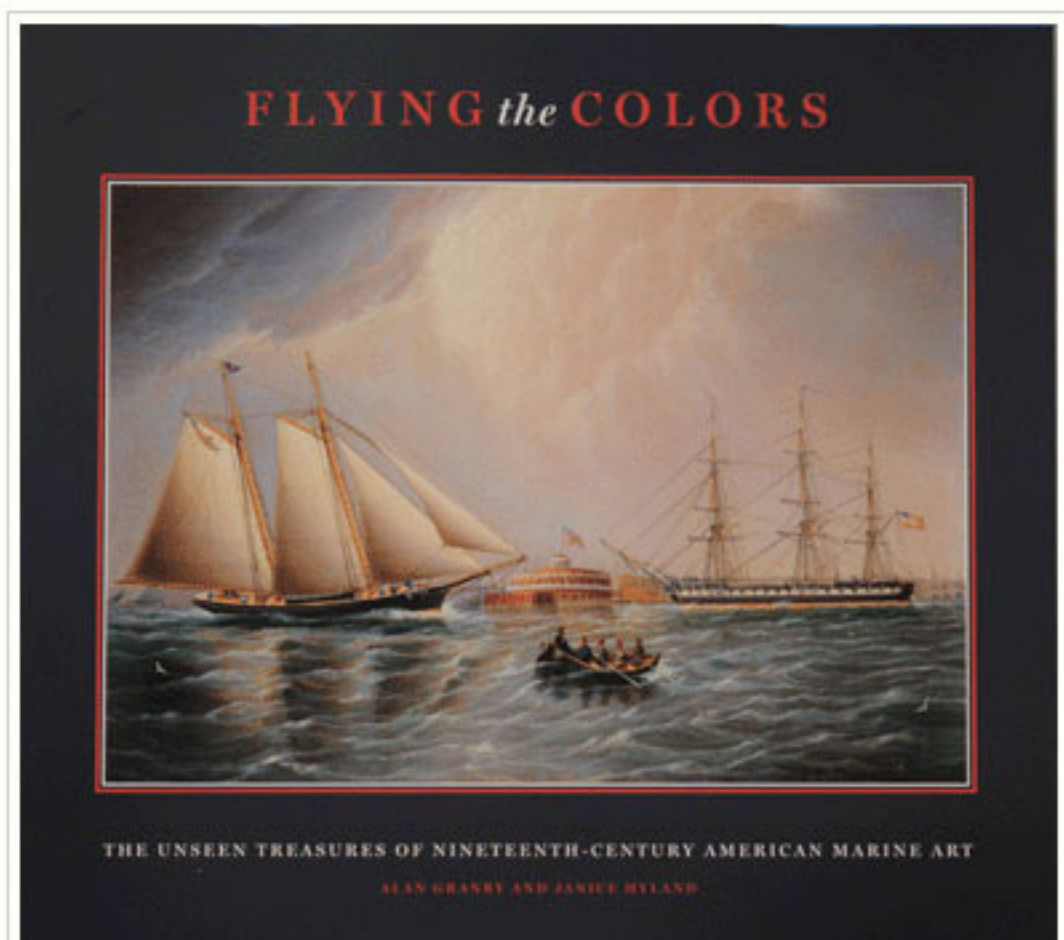
The folk artist Thomas Willis, whose ship portraits bring sun and surf to life with three-dimensional silk sails and embroidery rigging, recreated the 1899 America's Cup race between *Columbia* and *Shamrock* with the Sandy Hook lighthouse in the distance.

Everyone is entitled to a favorite view. My own might be Jacobsen's portrait of *Dauntless* in an America's Cup trial of 1871. Forsyth & Morgan built the yacht in 1866 just down the street in Mystic Harbor, but the ship sunk in a storm in 1915 in Essex, Conn.

Illustrations of marine arts in the round are sprinkled throughout *Flying The Colors*, offering hope that another Hyland-Granby venture will squarely address utilitarian arts. Vying for readers' attentions are Bellamy and Stapf eagles, engraved and polychromed scrimshaw teeth, a Chelsea mariner's clock, a ship's barometer and two exceptional Liverpool jugs hand painted with the sailing ships *General Mercer* and *Vanilia*. The jugs, both just over 10 inches tall, are from the collection of the late S. Robert Teitelman, whose historical pottery prompted furious bidding at Northeast Auctions in August.

"This anthology is thus a showcase for the rarely seen and the newly cherished, a unique treasure trove of revelations and surprises," Stuart M. Frank, senior curator of the New Bedford Whaling Museum, writes in his opening essay. "To have them gathered together and printed so faithfully adds substantially to our appreciation and understanding of the artists, great and small, who produced them, and the sumptuous genre that so eloquently addresses our illustrious seafaring past."

Proceeds from the sale of the \$125 hardcover book benefit Mystic Seaport Museum. To order, contact the museum at 800-331-2665, 860-572-5386 or www.mysticseaport.org.



The most recent book by Janice Hyland and Alan Granby: *Flying The Colors: The Unseen Treasures Of Nineteenth Century American Marine Art*.