

The America's Cup

Although it's technically the property of the New York Yacht Club (at least for the moment), Rhode Islanders can claim a large share of the old mug.

By GARRETT D. BYRNES

THE FIRST RACE in what was to become the America's Cup series was sailed around the Isle of Wight on August 22, 1851 but Rhode Islanders had to wait until the morning of September 4 to

learn the outcome. The news had come across the Atlantic in a ship which arrived at Halifax on the 3rd. Then by telegraph, the word came to Providence and *The Journal* informed its readers that the schooner yacht *America* had taken The Cup by outsailing a fleet of British rivals.

The schooner first sailed into Rhode Island waters in late May, 1863 and by that time she already had quite a history as a yacht under British colors and a Confederate naval vessel. She was scuttled by the Confederates in the St. John's River in Florida, raised and repaired by the Yankee navy and was ordered to Newport when the Naval Academy was transferred from Annapolis. The swift schooner served as a training vessel for the midshipmen and in the summer of 1864 sailed out of Newport, patrolling the eastern approaches to Long Island Sound.

After *America* became one of the yachts owned by General Ben Butler of Massachusetts, his son Paul and later his grandson Butler Ames, *America* was in and out of Newport on occasion for New York Yacht Club cruises and races off Newport.

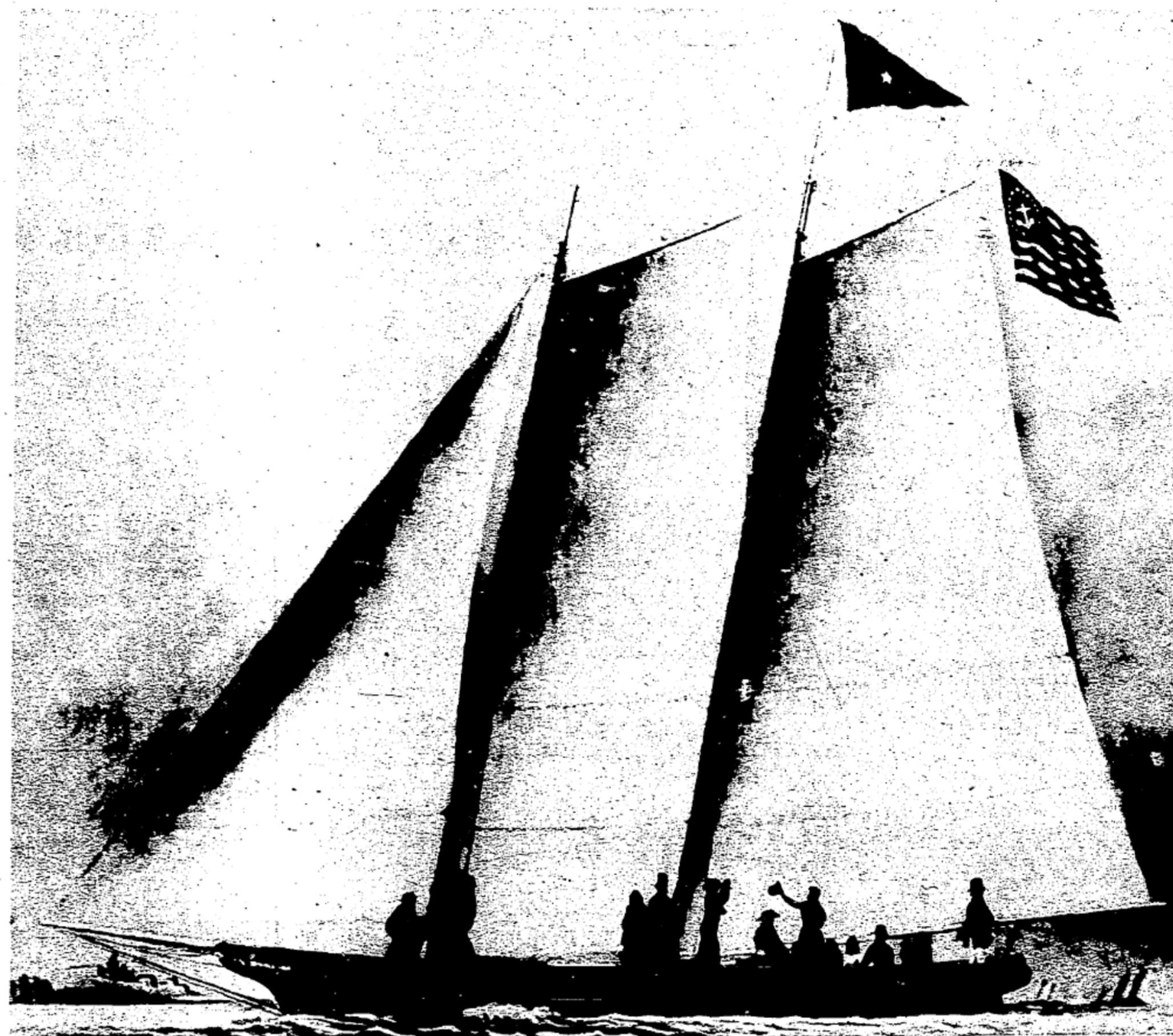
The yacht's last visit to Rhode Island came on September 15-16, 1921. By that time, she was not an old hulk, exactly, but certainly showing her years. She had been laid up in Boston, nearly sold for service as a Cape Verde packet, and then William U. "Duck" Swan, who covered yachting for the Associated Press in Boston, suggested that she ought to be given to the U.S. Naval Academy which had had her briefly at Newport during the Civil War. A restoration fund committee of prominent — and wealthy — yachtsmen in Boston and New York picked up the Swan idea and

Garry Byrnes is the Journal-Bulletin's special features editor.

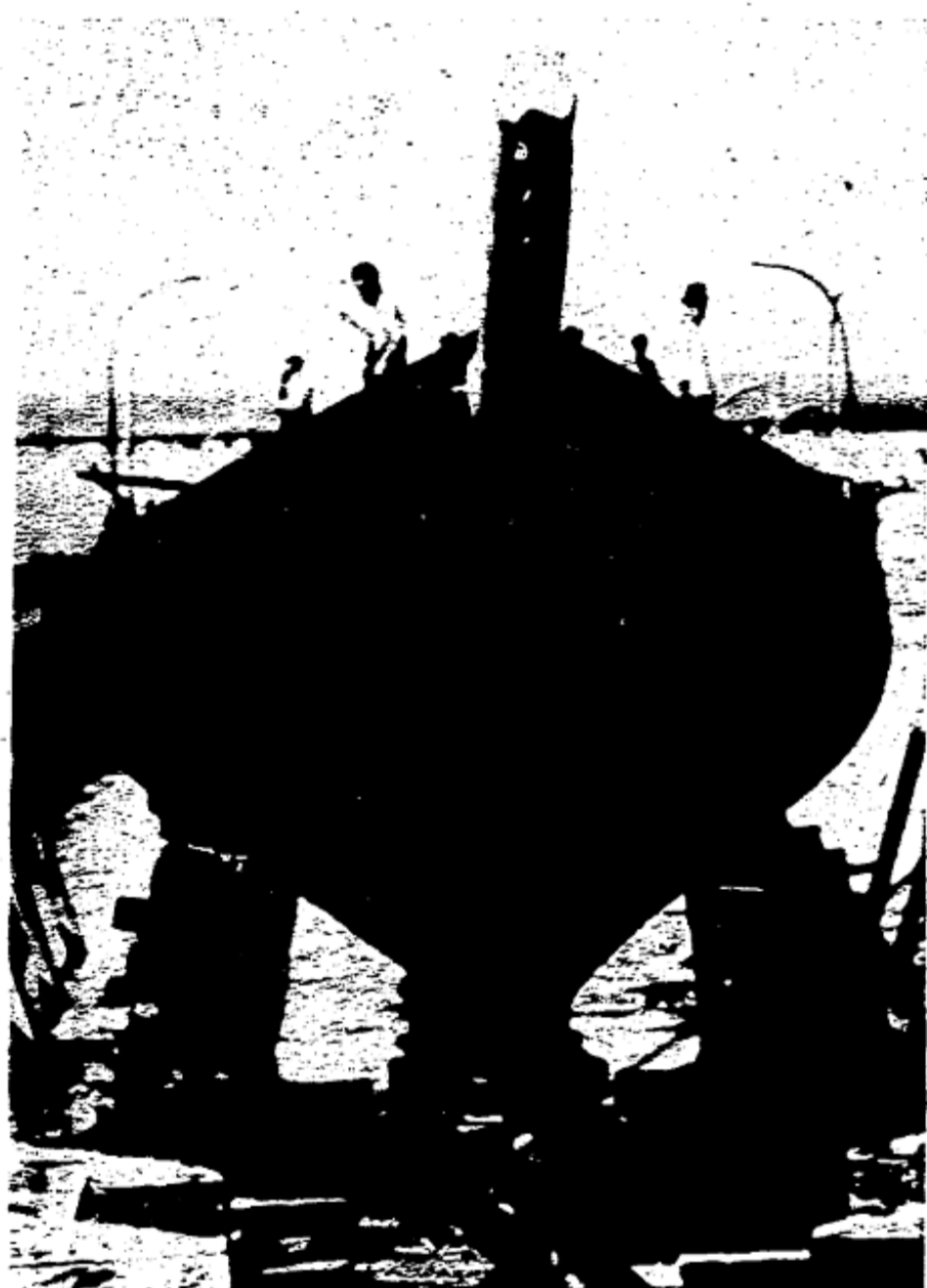
raised money to put the schooner in shape for the trip down the coast to Annapolis. As a money-raising gimmick, the committee promised that on the voyage, the yacht would pay a courtesy call at any town or city contributing \$200. Newport came up with the money and so did Fall River, but Providence didn't and it remained for members of the Rhode Island Yacht Club to raise the \$200 which would bring her here.

Towed by World War I sub-chaser 408, *America* called at the Tiverton station of the Fall River Yacht Club where a group of notables boarded for the trip to the Rhode Island Yacht Club. Her spars had been removed but she carried a single stub mast from which flew a very long homeward bound pennant. Several of the larger yachts from the Rhode Island Yacht Club — Jessie H. Metcalf's *Felicia*, *Secor* and *Roamer* — and a whole fleet of lesser craft served as escort. After rounding Common Fence Point, *America* was towed through a full circle in Bristol harbor as a salute to Nathanael Greene Herreshoff, the wizard who had designed a whole series of boats which kept The Cup in this country.

Coming up the river, *America* got a salute from the outward-bound Fabre liner *Providence* at Conimicut Light and when the flotilla arrived off the Rhode Island Yacht Club, the tankers on the East Providence shore tied their whistle cords down and let them blow long and loud. At this



PAINTING, artist unknown, of original 'America' is owned by the New York Yacht Club which also has the eagle from her transom and, of course, The Cup.



AMERICA being readied for her last cruise.

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Providence Sunday Journal

point, the old schooner ran aground. The sub-chaser worked her off and she anchored in deeper water and then, at half tide, she was tied up to the yacht club wharf and more than 1,000 visitors came aboard during the afternoon while an orchestra played in the club house. That night, there was a vaudeville show. The crew of *America*, skippered by Bill Swan who thought the whole thing up in the first place, and the crew of the sub-chaser were taken over to Jim Smith's Inn for a steak dinner. They returned with a piping hot dinner for the man who had been left aboard as the watch.

On the morning of the 16th, escorted by the destroyer *Rodgers*, *America* was towed to Newport and berthed at Sullivan's Wharf. The Chamber of Commerce gave a luncheon, there were more speeches, Admirals William Sowden Sims and A. H. Robertson received belaying pins turned from wood from the schooner's spars, and then she was towed out of Rhode Island waters forever. At Annapolis, the naval academy kept her as a museum piece of sorts, a rotting hulk which was finally broken up during World War II after an improbable snowstorm crushed her in her shed.

WAVES WASH AWAY the passage of a boat and so it was with the rakish schooner which

brought The Cup to America. She came and went over many years, leaving nothing but memories.

Much more tangible was Rhode Island's involvement in this greatest of all sailing classics when the yachtsmen of New York began to look to the "genius of Bristol" for defenders well found and fleet enough to keep The Cup in the possession of the New York Yacht Club.

The Herreshoffs have always been a remarkable tribe. A matter of genes, perhaps. The acknowledged master was Captain Nat, the one who took the salute from the original *America* on her last visit to Rhode Island.

When Captain Nat began to design and the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company began to build Cup boats, Rhode Island really became involved in the game.

America's sailors sat up and took notice when, in 1891, the Herreshoff yard put over a 46-foot waterline sloop with vast overhangs fore and aft. *Gloriana* was an instant success. Other and larger boats to the same general mold followed and when the Earl of Dunraven made the eighth challenge for The Cup, two New York syndicates came to Bristol for defenders. Captain Nat came up with *Colonia* and *Vigilant* and the latter kept The Cup in the matches of 1893, with the designer himself at the helm during much of the sailing.

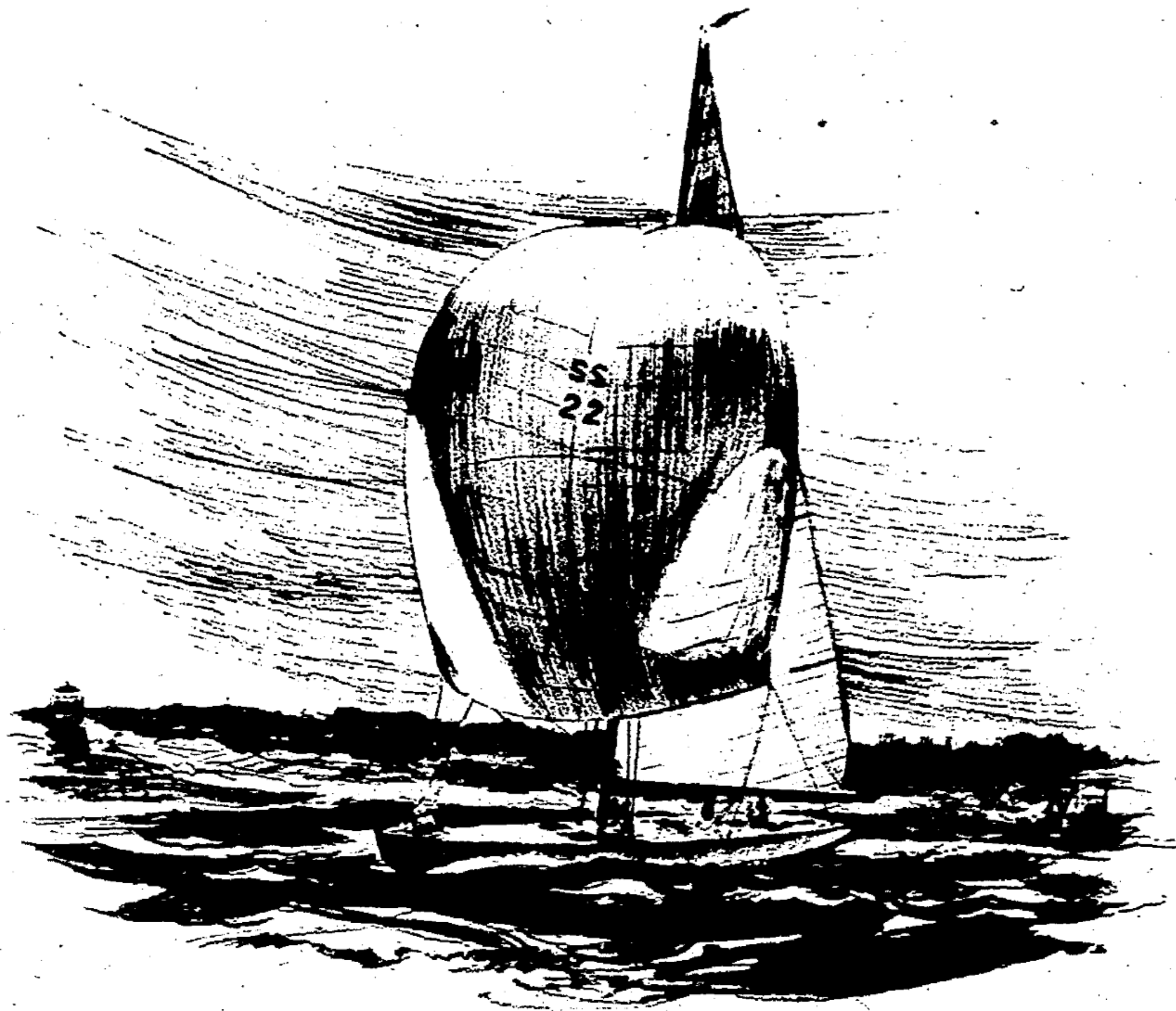
It was only natural that when Dunraven challenged again, Captain Nat would be asked to

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THE WIZARD, Nathanael Greene Herreshoff.

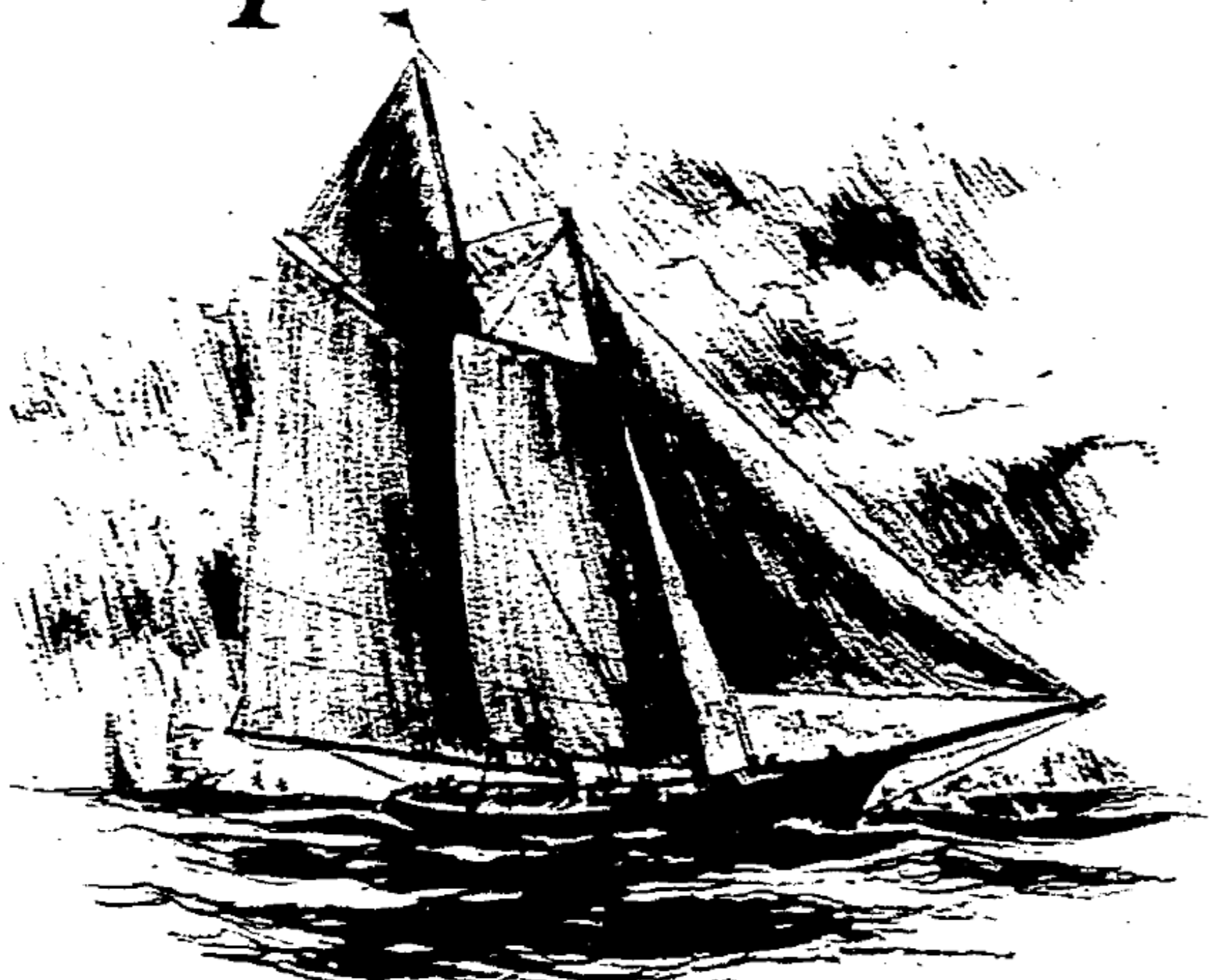
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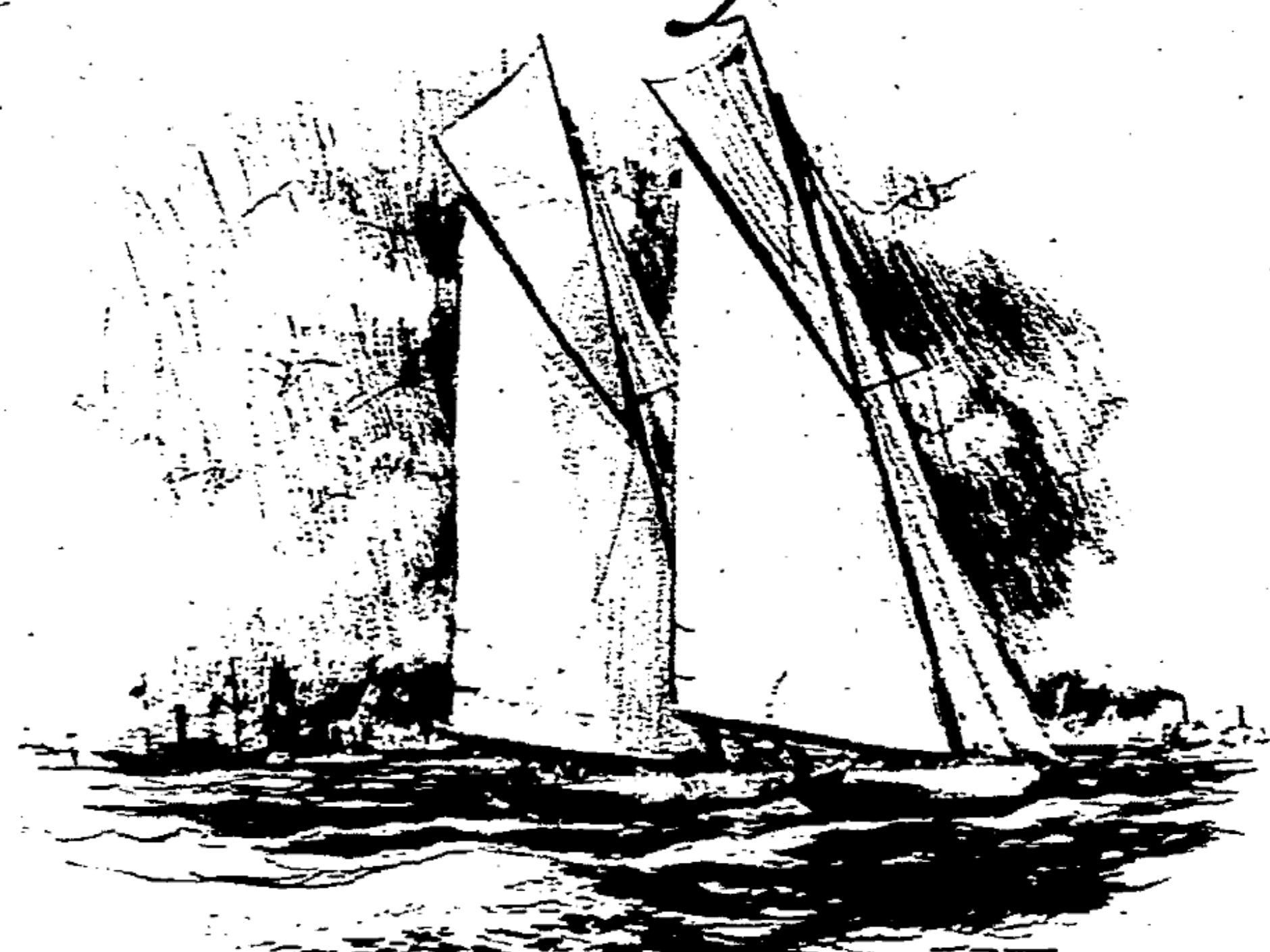
INTREPID, at left, kept the Cup here in 1967. An era ended, facing page, in 1937 when Harold Vanderbilt's Ranger (J5) turned back Endeavour II (J-K6). They were the last of the J boats.

Illustrations by ROBERT J. PAILTHORPE

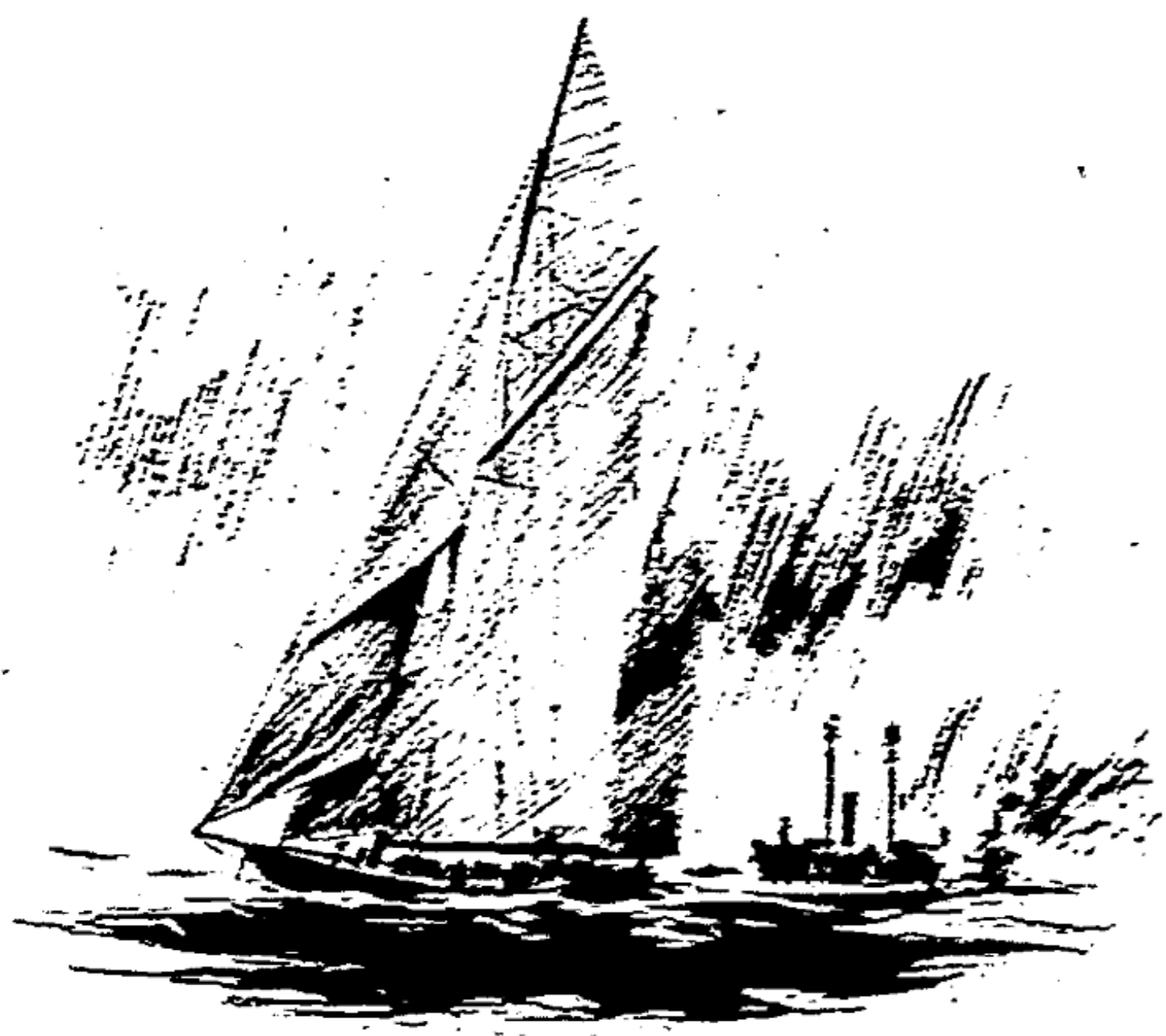
Cup boats down the years



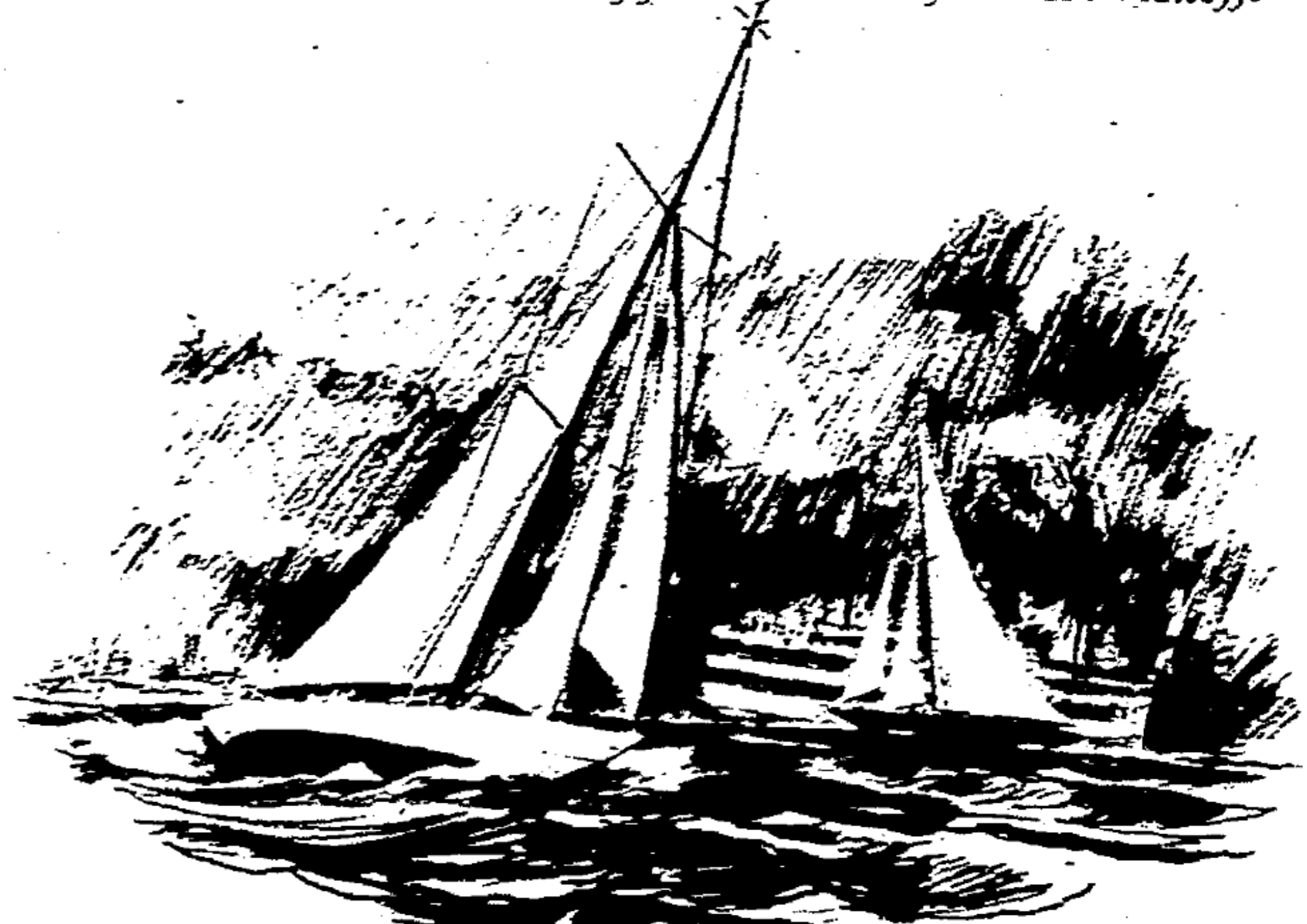
AMERICA defeated a fleet of British yachts around the Isle of Wight in 1851, brought The Cup home. Schooner was in R.I. waters often.



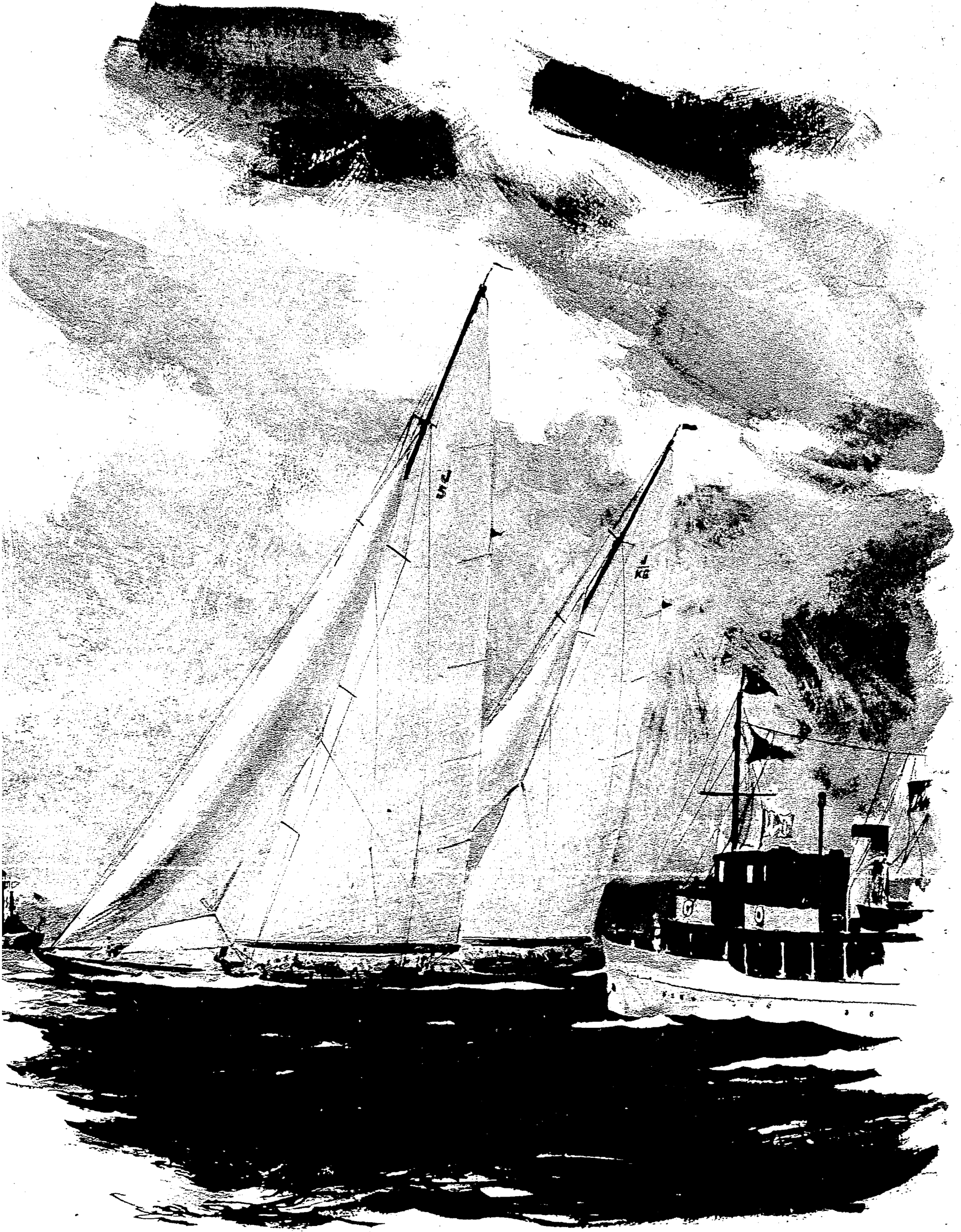
RELIANCE defended successfully against Lipton's third Shamrock in 1903. The American boat was one of five defenders by Nat Herreshoff.



RESOLUTE, last defender designed by the Wizard of Bristol, took the measure of Shamrock IV off Sandy Hook in the matches of 1920.



THE CUP RACES moved to Rhode Island in 1930. This match, the first one sailed by the towering J-boats, was between Enterprise. Shamrock V.





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AMERICA'S CUP

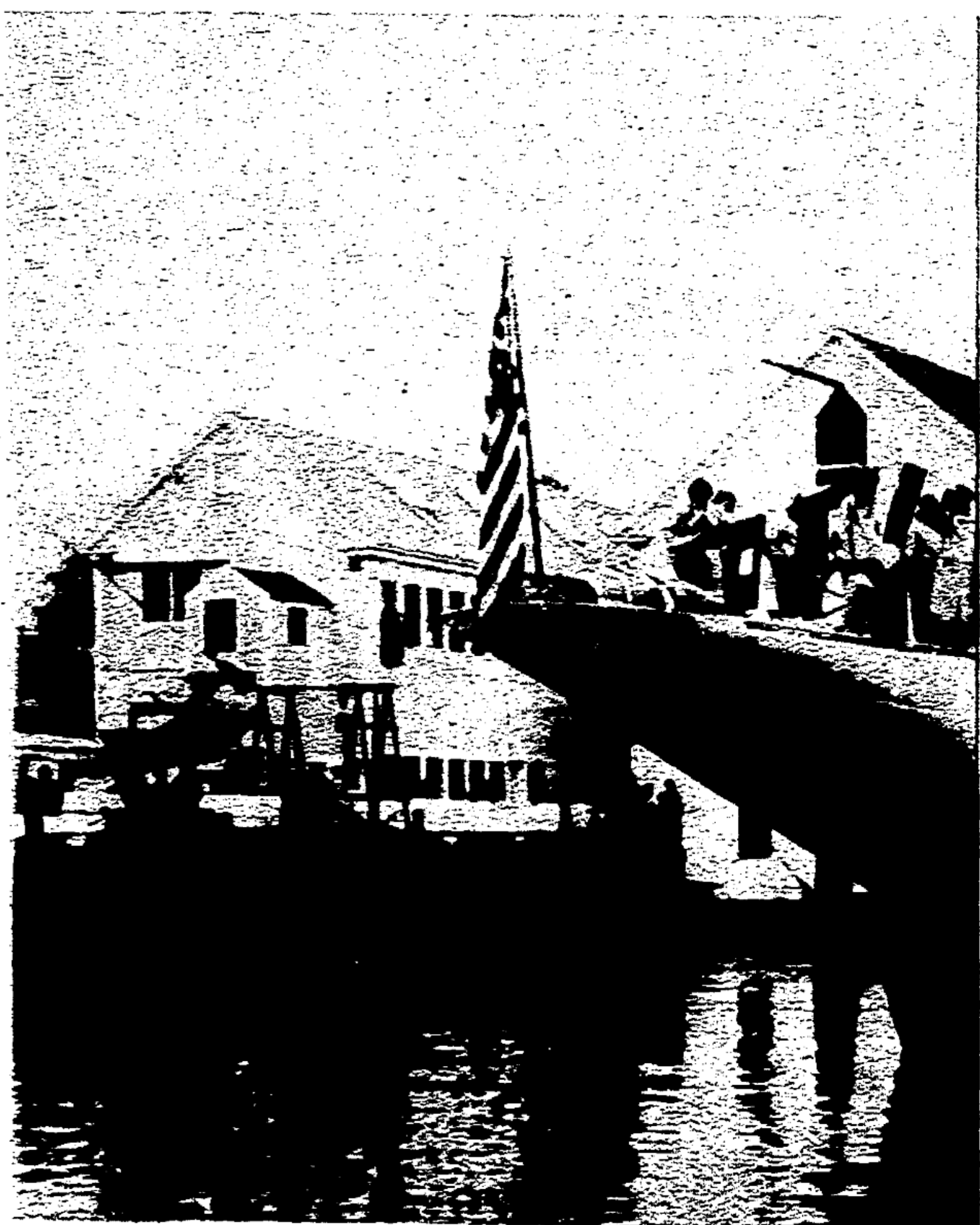
The Earl nearly

build another defender. The boat was *Defender*, victorious in the races of 1895, made so unpleasant by the behavior of the challenging earl that the competition nearly came to an end right there.

Then a wonderful thing happened. The Irish-Scottish merchant Thomas Lipton, amply endowed with money, good humor and good sportsmanship, challenged in the name of the Royal Ulster Yacht Club of Belfast, and that was sufficient to keep the Cup races going. Against Lipton's first *Shamrock*, a New York syndicate headed by J. Pierpont Morgan and C. Oliver Iselin put another Herreshoff boat in competition. This was *Columbia* and she was so successful that she defended not only against *Shamrock* in 1899 but *Shamrock II* in 1901.

Reliance of 1903 defeated *Shamrock III*. Again the American boat came from the drawing board of Captain Nat and the Herreshoff yard at Bristol. Another Lipton challenge came from across the water but World War I intervened and this match, between *Shamrock IV* and *Resolute*, the latter another Herreshoff creation, wasn't sailed until 1920. Again The Cup stayed here.

Sir Thomas, although eighty, had one more shot in his locker and challenged with *Shamrock V* for the races of 1930. Captain Nat was 82 and the syndicate which built the winning defender, *Resolute*, went to W. Starling Burgess for the design.



scuttled the race

She was the first defender in 37 years not designed by the Wizard.

Resolute was Bristol-built and so was the towering *Rainbow* of 1934. From 1893 to 1934, seven defenders came from the Herreshoff yard and kept The Cup in eight challenges (*Columbia* defended in 1899 and 1901) and 1937's *Ranger*, built down in Maine, came to Bristol for rigging and fitting out. In other words, Bristol for more than four decades was America's Cup-boat capital.

BECAUSE the America's Cup Races have been the special concern of the New York Yacht Club since 1870 — when the original *America* was one of the defending yachts and finished ahead of the British challenger — the races through the matches of 1920 were sailed in the New York club's home waters, that is in the busy seaway off Sandy Hook at the entrance to New York Harbor.

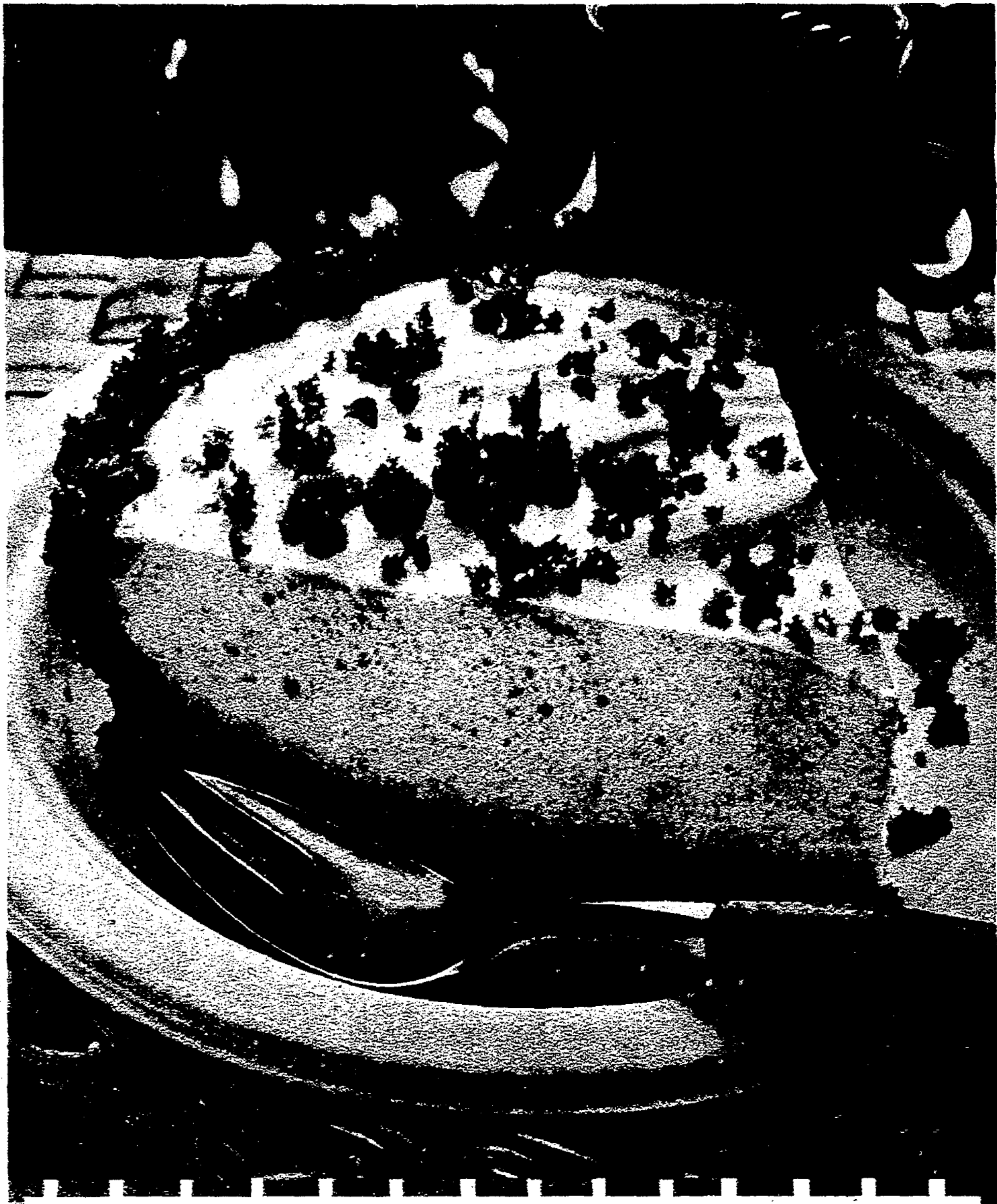
The winds were fluky and traffic congestion got worse and worse. Skippers of commercial shipping, especially those with long tows, took a dim view of the importance of the men out there in their highway playing with sailboats.

After the Lipton challenge for the 1930 matches was made, Rhode Islanders on June 18,

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LAUNCHING of *Rainbow* in 1934, last Bristol-built Cup defender.



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- 1 1/2 teaspoons unflavored gelatin
- 2 eggs, separated
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1 can Borden Eagle Brand® Sweetened Condensed Milk (Sweetened Condensed Milk must be used).

1. Combine Corn Flake Crumbs and margarine in 9-inch pie pan. Reserve 2 tablespoons for topping; press remainder firmly and evenly in pan to form crust. Chill.
2. In small saucepan combine ReaLemon Lemon Juice and gelatin. Place over low heat and stir until gelatin is dissolved; cool.

3. In mixing bowl beat egg whites until foamy; gradually add sugar. Beat until stiff and glossy. Set aside.

4. Beat egg yolks in mixing bowl until thick and lemon colored. Stir in Sweetened Condensed Milk and gelatin mixture; gently fold in egg white mixture. Spread evenly in Corn Flake Crumbs crust; sprinkle top with reserved crumbs. Refrigerate 2 hours or until firm. Cut into wedges. Yield: 8 servings





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AMERICA'S CUP

The races
 came to
 Newport in
 1930

1929, learned in *The Evening Bulletin* that The Cup races henceforth would be sailed in the open water off Newport where you usually don't have to whistle for a wind.

Shamrock V and the successful *Resolute*, built by Herreshoff in Bristol but designed by W. Starling Burgess, were the first J sloops in Cup competition. They introduced a short but wonderful era in which Harold Vanderbilt's *Rainbow* and *Ranger* took the measure, sometimes just squeaking by, of T.O.M. Sopwith's *Endeavours I and II*. The J boats were, without question, the tallest, most powerful and most exciting sloops in the whole history of Cup competition and the Herreshoff yard was able to cosset them when they needed attention.

AFTER the *Rainbow-Endeavour II* matches of 1937, sheer cost put an end to the J-boat era and World War II introduced a long period when The Cup stood unchallenged in the New York Yacht Club.

The cheaper but still extremely costly 12-meter yachts began competition in 1958 with matches between *Columbia* and *Sceptre*. Facilities for the twelves in Newport through the years have been improved and now Newport is to the Cup boats what Bristol used to be.

Granting that the New York Yacht Club continues to run the show and will until some challenger lifts The Cup, the races are by all odds Rhode Island's most important sports event.

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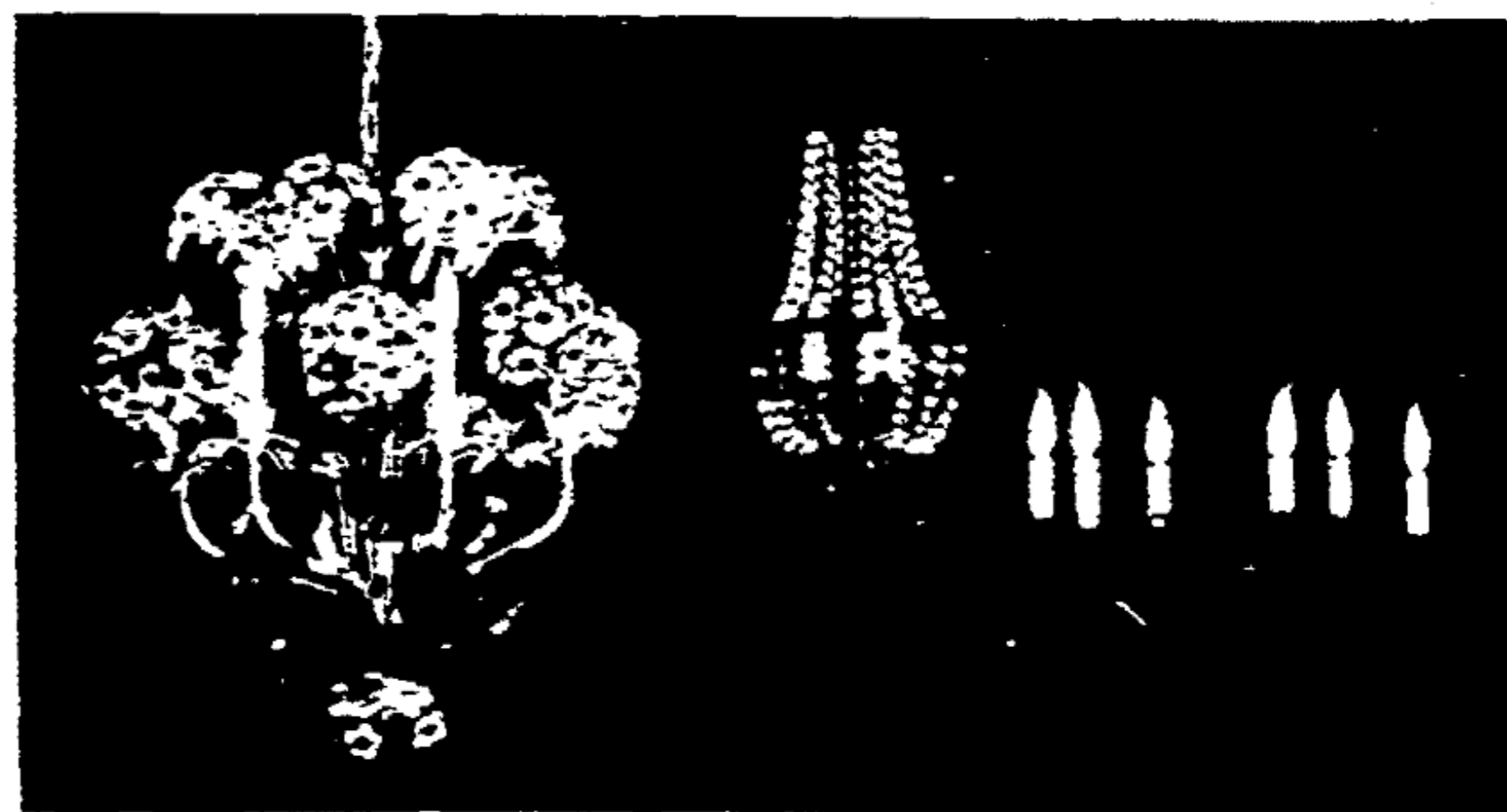
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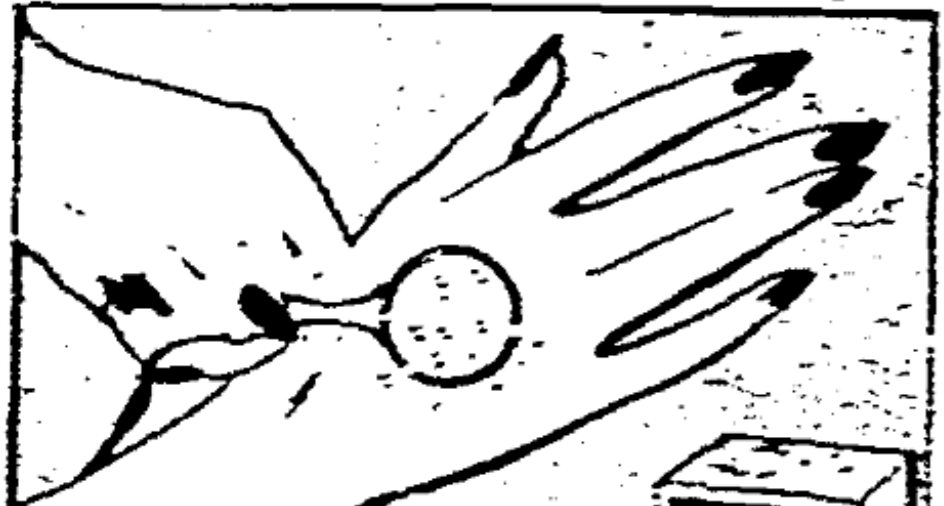
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The America's Cup is a 134-ounce mid-Victorian horror, it has a hole in its bottom, and several score of the world's best sailors would give their right arms to win her.

An improbable

YACHTSMEN in a casual and deprecatory way often refer to the trophies they race for as hardware. Coming up for decision this week is an extremely ugly example of such hardware which is also the most prestigious trophy in the whole history of sports.

For more than a century, it has been called variously the Queen's Cup, the Royal Cup, the 100 Guinea Cup, the Lipton Cup, the \$30,000,000 Cup, the old mug. It is best known as The America's Cup.

It isn't a cup at all. It's a pitcher of silver, 27 inches high, and weighs 134 ounces. In design, it's a mid-Victorian horror with curlicues and bulges, flutings and whorls all over its Baroque and ungainly configuration.

The Royal Yacht Squadron of England got it in the first place from the London silversmiths, R. and S. Girard, and put it up as the trophy to go to the winning boat in the squadron's race around the Isle of Wight in August, 1851. The winning boat was the

schooner *America*, entered in the race by a syndicate of New York Yacht Club members headed by Commodore John Cox Stevens.

For a while after The Cup came to America, it was displayed in the commodore's drawing room in his house on Washington Square. Other members of the syndicate took turns showing it. It was suggested that The Cup be melted down and the silver struck off as medallions which would be cherished as heirlooms by the descendants of the men who won the trophy in the first place. Nothing came of that. The Cup was also displayed in the first club house of the New York Yacht Club, a modest structure on the Weehawken Flats, across the North River from Manhattan.

In July, 1857, the syndicate gave The Cup to the New York Yacht Club and it went into a locker to gather dust, all but forgotten. A decade or so later, The Cup went into the vaults at Tiffany's.

SOME Scottish yachtsmen, under the burgee of the Royal Clyde Yacht Club, challenged for The Cup in 1887 with a big sloop *Thistle*. The yachtsmen themselves came over in a large steam yacht, complete with a pipe band and the hold full of Scotch which they said they'd drink from The America's Cup. But when it was explained that The Cup had a hole in its bottom, the challengers drank from glasses.

Tiffany's in 1895 put The Cup on display in its establishment on Union Square in connection with the races in which the Earl of Dunraven challenged with *Valkyrie III*. The earl's behavior was outrageous — he screamed foul — and those races left such a bad taste that the New York Yacht Club suggested that Tiffany's put The Cup in its deepest vault and forget it. There never would be another cup race.

But then along came Sir Thomas Lipton, the British tea merchant, to

usher in an era of good feeling, and it was at the time of his fourth try, in 1920, that people began referring to the old mug as the Lipton Cup, even though he couldn't seem to lift it. And in 1930, when Sir Thomas made his fifth and last challenge, Will Rogers suggested that Americans send one dollar contributions, care of New York's Mayor Jimmy Walker, to give Sir Thomas a cup. Within a week, \$16,000 came in and Tiffany's came up with a magnificent 18-carat gold mug, complete with Sir Thomas' insigne — shamrocks — the burgee of the Royal Ulster Yacht Club and the inscription, "to . . . absolutely the world's most cheerful loser."

The actual cup came out of the vaults at Tiffany's sometime after Thomas O. M. Sopwith's two challenges in the 1930s and was installed in the trophy room of the New York Yacht Club on West 44th Street. A special wrench was used to bolt The

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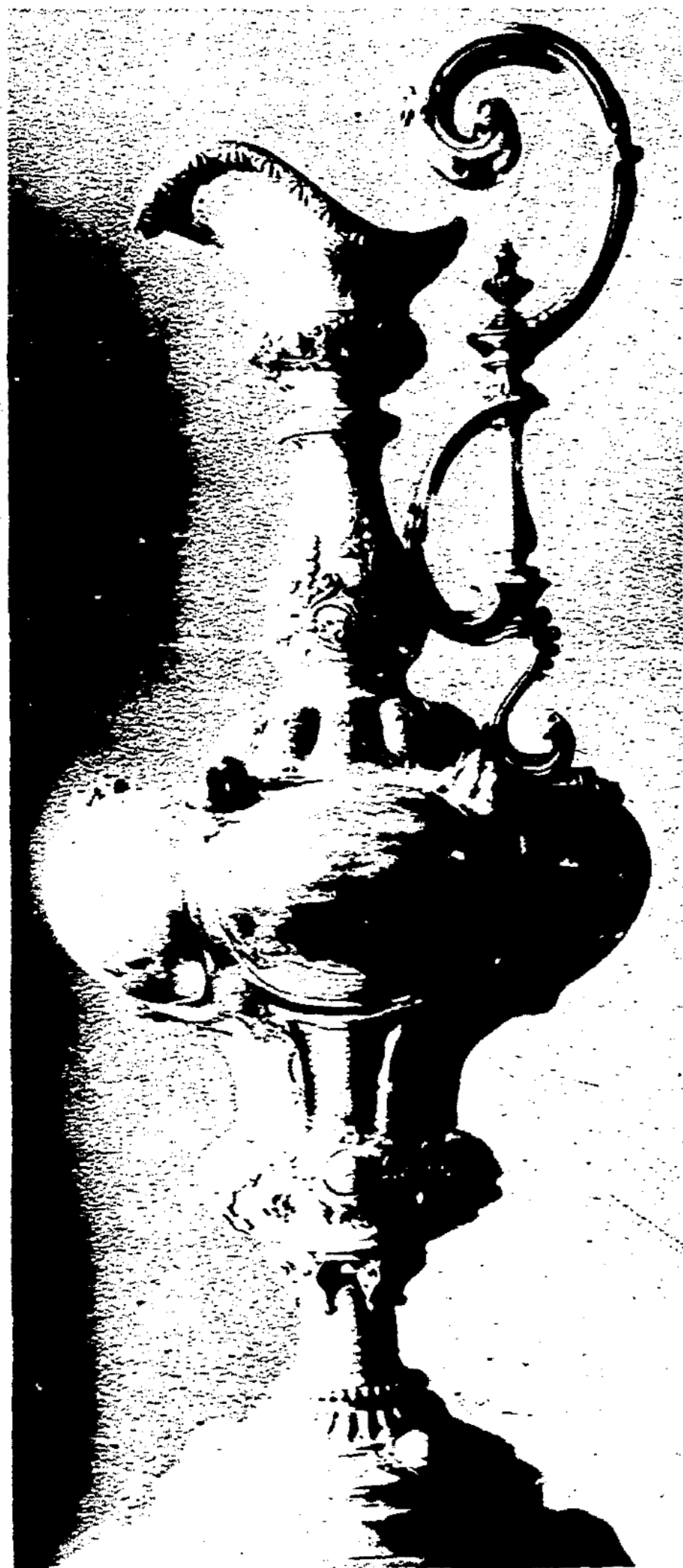
Holy Grail

Cup to an old oak table. The wrench, according to legend, is the only tool which can get The Cup from the table, and the wrench is in a carefully guarded vault.

THE New York Yacht Club sent America's Cup back to London in 1951 to be displayed during the Festival of Britain and, perhaps as a sweetener on that centennial of the race around the Isle of Wight, the club also sent the Royal Yacht Squadron a handsome Paul Revere bowl.

If the challenger wins, the New York Yacht Club will have to get out that special wrench, unscrew the old mug from the oaken table in the trophy room, say goodbye to the club's most cherished possession, the Holy Grail of sailors, and then challenge immediately to get it back.

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MIDDLETOWN
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How to design a 12-meter

(P.S. Don't try it)

IF YOU EVER are asked to design a boat for the America's Cup races, you'd better say no. Unless you are a skilled mathematician with complete mastery of the metric system, a marine architect capable of coming up with the fastest possible combination of boat and sails, and a scientist right up to the minute on the weights and tensile strengths of metals and plastics.

But as we sail into a challenge which just may put The Cup in its gravest jeopardy ever, it is useful to know precisely what a 12-meter boat is.

The Cup boats at Newport this year are the costliest bits of sporting equipment in the world and although they are all Twelves, they are not identical, cookie-cutter boats like the one-design classes, with Shields, Solings, Lightnings and 5-0-5s as examples.

THE TWELVES are designed according to rules, which fill 50 pages, laid down by the International Yacht Racing Union, plus some regulations by Lloyds Registry of Shipping, plus certain

subtle alterations decreed by the New York Yacht Club, possessor of The Cup.

Basically, however, the boats conform to the rule set forth more than 60 years ago by the International Yacht Racing Union, a complex equation.

A meter is approximately 39.3701 inches and 12 times that is, also approximately, 39 feet 4 inches, and you'd think that the boats would be of that length. But that isn't so, and that's precisely why you ought to leave all this arcane stuff to the experts.

The ruling equation looks like this:

$$\frac{L + 2D + \sqrt{SA} - F}{2.37} = 12 \text{ Meters}$$

L stands for length, not overall or at the waterline, but somewhere in between. D is girth measured two different ways around the hull, gunwhale to gunwhale. S—and you take the square

root of that — is sail area, the sum of the mains'l and the fore triangle or working jib. F is the freeboard measurement or distance between the water and gunwhale. These components are divided by the mystical number 2.37 and the result, ideally, should come as close to 12 meters as possible. If you're over 12 meters, you don't race.

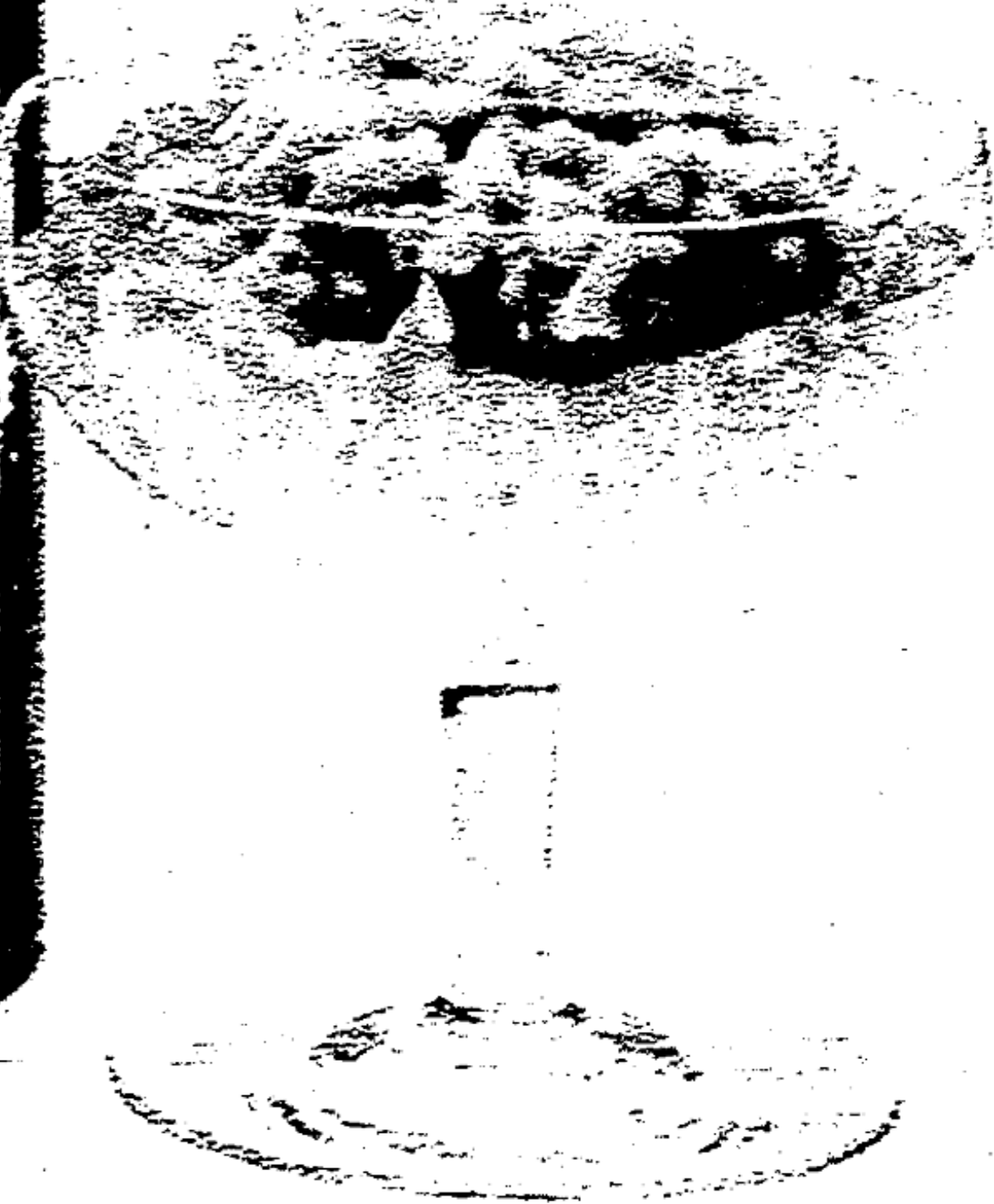
ON TOP OF the basic equation, you have a lot of other conditions. The height of the mast above deck is limited to 82 feet; the mast must weigh not less than 1,000 pounds; waterline length can be not less than 45 feet; the overlap of the Genoa jibs aft of the mast can be no more than 15.7 feet; and the whole boat must weigh not less than 54,848 pounds. The list of controls goes on and on.

If you take more here, you must take less there. And that's why the Twelves aren't identical. Within the International rules, there's sea room for variation and that's what makes The Cup boats so fascinating.

"I wouldn't make rice pudding if I could buy one George liked."



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