

Most boys and girls in Grade 8 can read this book themselves.

Those in Grades 6 to 10 will find it interesting.

CLIPPER SHIP DAYS

by JOHN JENNINGS

"She's too sharp!" exclaimed one experienced American seaman. "She'll roll over and sink the minute she's launched!"

"She won't be able to carry half the cargo she should," said another.

This had been familiar talk on New York's waterfront during the building of the *Rainbow*, the first American clipper ship. But when the *Rainbow* was launched in February 1845, she rode proudly, surely, beautifully, and traders learned that her great speed meant higher prices for their cargo.

More and more clipper ships were built. And stern, relentless captains goaded their men on to make the most of wind and tide so they could set new records of time and distance.

With the discovery of gold in California, a new crop of clipper ships—sleeker, swifter, more rakish than any before—began racing from New York around Cape Horn to California. In 1851 one of these, the *Flying Cloud*, set a speed record of 89 days and 21 hours from New York to San Francisco.

It wasn't long before British clippers began competing with those built in America. And as the clipper ships of both nations raced back and forth across the seas, tall tales came back of the fickle ways of wind and weather and the rugged ways of sailors whose loneliness sometimes grew into mutiny. Together they show that clipper ship days were dramatic days in our history, jam-packed with excitement and adventure.

Illustrated by EDWARD A. WILSON