

Tuesday, September 23, 2014 - 6:00 PM

Community Church Assembly Room, 40 East 35th Street, Manhattan

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS MONTH'S MEMBERSHIP MEETING IS ON A TUESDAY EVENING!**

## **RMS TITANIC: A Lesser Known Episode & RMS QUEEN ELIZABETH 2: A First-Hand Accident Account**

**By Richard Wagner**

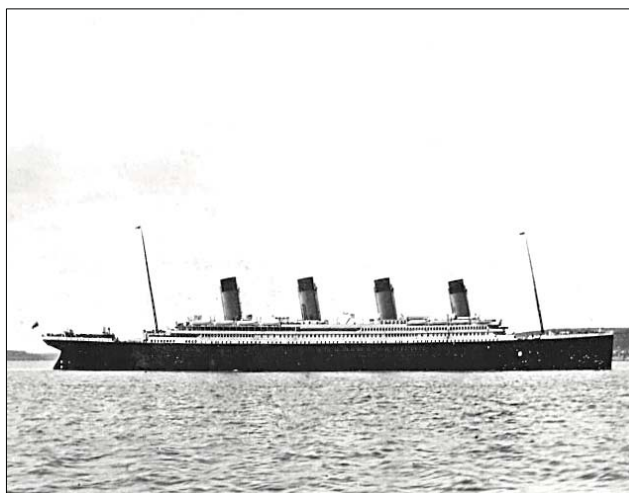
Alexis de Tocqueville, a nineteenth-century French historian, observed that everything in America eventually becomes a court case, and the TITANIC was no exception. Indeed, the TITANIC case went all the way to the United States Supreme Court, where the decision was rendered by Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., a judge many consider to have been America's finest legal mind - and a man who also happened to have sailed on numerous Cunard liners in his spare time. We shall hear about who brought the suit, the reason why the case made it all the way to the Supreme Court, Justice Holmes's unexpected resolution of the legal issues, and the eventual outcome.

In August 1992, Cunard's QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 collided with two underwater rock pillars off Martha's Vineyard causing a 74-foot-long gash in her hull. The passengers had to abandon ship and eleven voyages were canceled. Like the TITANIC disaster, this collision was the result of a pyramid of events involving such unrelated things as scheduling decisions in Bermuda, late returning shore excursions and flawed navigational charts. We shall also hear our speaker's first-hand account of what it was like to abandon ship.

Richard Wagner practiced law for 20 years. During that time, he wrote a series of articles for the U.S. Supreme Court Historical Society on the life of Justice Holmes. Richard also sailed no less than 71 times on QE2 and has written extensively about that ship.

He studied journalism as an undergraduate at Cornell University (BS); studied law at Cambridge University; has a law degree from Pace University (JD) and an MBA from Iona College. He worked as a Senior Litigation Counsel for Verizon and served on the board of directors of the Navy League and was the editor of the *Navy League Log*.

He is currently editor of *Beyondships*, a website about cruise ships, ports and destinations as well as military ships and particularly the US Navy. In 2013, the site had over four million page views. <http://www.beyondships.com/>



Accidents involving QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 (left) and TITANIC (right) will be the subject of this month's talk. (Richard Wagner collection)

**NEXT EVENTS:** **Ocean Liner Bazaar** on Saturday, October 18; **Membership Meeting** on Friday, October 24 – Bill Miller presents "The Fabulous Normandie"; **Luncheon** aboard Princess Cruises' ROYAL PRINCESS, Saturday, October 25; **Membership Meeting** on Friday, November 21 – Program TBD; **Holiday Party**, December, date and venue TBD.

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THE PORTHOLE, published by the Port of New York Branch, World Ship Society, welcomes original material for publication. Address to the editor, Bob Allen, at [oceanvoyag@aol.com](mailto:oceanvoyag@aol.com) or via the PONY mailing address.





## OCEAN LINER BAZAAR

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2014**

**10:00 AM through 2:00 PM**

The Port of New York Branch of the World Ship Society will sponsor an Ocean Liner Bazaar for members and friends at:

Abigail Adams Smith Auditorium  
417 East 61st Street, New York City  
(Between First and York Avenues)

Dealers and collectors of ocean liner memorabilia will offer for sale pins, pendants, prints, posters, paperweights, medallions, models, deck plans, brochures, postcards, china, silverware, ashtrays, key chains and many more rare and unique collectible items from passenger liners past and present.

Admission is \$5.00 per person, payable at the door.



For more information, contact David Hume by telephone at (914) 761-6372 or by email at [dghume@aol.com](mailto:dghume@aol.com).

## MUSEUMS, LECTURES AND HARBOR CRUISES

**CONTACT THESE INSTITUTIONS BY EMAIL OR PHONE FOR CURRENT EVENTS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

**SOUTH STREET SEAPORT MUSEUM** [www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org](http://www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org) or 917-492-3379.

**MYSTIC SEAPORT** [www.mysticseaport.org](http://www.mysticseaport.org) or 860-572-0711.

**VANCOUVER WSS & VANCOUVER MARITIME MUSEUM** [www.worldshipsocietyvan.ca](http://www.worldshipsocietyvan.ca) for information or if you visit, contact Glenn Smith: 604-684-1240, email [glenn.smith@worldshipsocietyvan.ca](mailto:glenn.smith@worldshipsocietyvan.ca). The next meeting is on Wednesday, October 8, 2014.

**NEW SOUTH WALES WSS:** Meetings are held at the Uniting Church Complex in Lord Street, Roseville at 8:00 PM. Contact the branch at PO Box 215, Strathfield, New South Wales 2135, Australia.

**THE NATIONAL LIBERTY SHIP MEMORIAL, INC.** [www.ssjeremiahobrien.org](http://www.ssjeremiahobrien.org) or [liberty@ssjeremiahobrien.org](mailto:liberty@ssjeremiahobrien.org) or 415-544-0100. 1275 Columbus Avenue, Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94133-1315.

**PROJECT LIBERTY SHIP** [www.liberty-ship.com](http://www.liberty-ship.com) or 410-558-0164

**NEW YORK WATER TAXI**, [www.nywatertaxi.com](http://www.nywatertaxi.com) or 866-989-2542. Harbor cruises departing from both South Street Seaport Pier 17 and Pier 84 at West 44<sup>th</sup> Street. Hop on – hop off service throughout New York Harbor is offered as well. Contact via website or telephone for departure times and prices.

**CIRCLE LINE DOWNTOWN**, [www.circlelinedowntown.com](http://www.circlelinedowntown.com) or 866-989-2542. Harbor cruises on the ZEPHYR from April to December, and aboard New York Water Taxi from January to March, departing from Pier 17, South Street Seaport.

**CIRCLE LINE**, [www.circleline42.com](http://www.circleline42.com) or 877-731-0064. Circle Manhattan and other harbor cruises, departing from pier 84 at West 44<sup>th</sup> Street.

**NEW YORK WATERWAY**, [www.nywaterway.com](http://www.nywaterway.com) or 800-533-3779. Trans-Hudson ferry service and special-event cruises.

**THE NATIONAL LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM** [www.lighthousemuseum.org](http://www.lighthousemuseum.org) or 855-656-7469. Contact for upcoming schedule of cruises and events.

**THE WORKING HARBOR COMMITTEE** [www.workingharbor.com](http://www.workingharbor.com) or 212-757-1600. Cruises to both remote and well-travelled parts of New York Harbor, such as the Hudson River to view tugboat races, Gowanus Bay and Erie Basin in Brooklyn, and a circumnavigation of Staten Island.

**THE NOBLE MARITIME COLLECTION**, [www.noblemaritime.org](http://www.noblemaritime.org) or 718-447-6490. Maritime lectures and art exhibits at the Sailor's Snug Harbor Cultural Center on Staten Island, NY

## CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF STATEN ISLAND, INCLUDING SEVERAL LIGHTHOUSES!

The working harbor committee is offering a cruise around Staten Island on Sunday, October 19. Departure will be from the World Financial Center Ferry Terminal at 1:00 pm, returning at 5:00 pm. The Working Harbor says that in addition to the lighthouses, the cruise will offer wonderful views of tug yards and dockyards, giant shipping terminals, ship graveyards, the former US Navy Homeport, the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. Tickets are \$55, or \$45 for seniors and children under 12. For additional information and to purchase tickets, visit the website at [www.workingharbor.com](http://www.workingharbor.com), or call 212-757-1600

## ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

SHIP	FROM	TO	VOYAGE	PASSENGER(S)	DATE
VIKING GULLVEIG	Amsterdam, Holland	Basel, Switzerland	Rhine River Cruise	Roger Szymanski	07/14
ALLURE O/T SEAS	Ft. Lauderdale	Ft. Lauderdale	Caribbean Cruise	Stuart Gewirtzman	07/14
RUBY PRINCESS	Dover, UK	Dover, UK	Circle Great Britain Cruise	David Hume & Marjorieann Matuszek	07/14
MARCO POLO	London Tilbury	London Tilbury	English Channel Ports	Charles & Cathy Crawford	08/14
MARCO POLO	London Tilbury	London Tilbury	English Channel Ports	Bill and Laura Donall	08/14
CELEBRITY SUMMIT	Bayonne	Bayonne	Bermuda Cruise	Tom O'Reilly and family	08/14
SEABOURN QUEST	Boston	Montreal	New England/Canada Cruise	Ted & Suellyn Scull	09/14

**Where did you cruise to this summer? Email or Snail Mail your itineraries to The Porthole for our September roundup of members' summer cruises.**

## SHIP'S LOG

SHIP'S LOG will return in the October issue of The Porthole.

## ELECTION SEASON IS HERE!

It's time for the election of officers for The World Ship Society, Port of New York Branch. Please submit your nominations for Chairman, Vice Chairman, Branch Secretary, Membership Secretary and Treasurer. Send your nominations to World Ship Society, PO Box 384, New York, NY 101085-0384, Attention: Nominations. All nominations must be postmarked by September 30, 2014. Ballots will be sent out with the October issue of The Porthole.

## PONY CRUISE SHIP LUNCHEON SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 25

PONY World Ship Society is pleased to announce their first cruise ship visit of the season. We will enjoy a luncheon and tour on board Princess Cruises' new ROYAL PRINCESS on Saturday, October 25. If you have not already done so, make your reservation before it's too late. PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ROYAL PRINCESS WILL BE DOCKED AT THE BROOKLYN CRUISE TERMINAL, NOT IN MANHATTAN AS INDICATED IN THE FLYER SENT WITH THE SUMMER PORTHOLE.



Princess Cruises' new ROYAL PRINCESS

(Princess Cruises)

### SHIP NEWS

**MEGA-MERGERS ARE CONTINUING:** Norwegian Cruise Line has announced their intent to purchase Prestige Cruises International, owners of upper premium market Oceania Cruises and luxury brand Regent Seven Seas Cruises. Norwegian and Prestige are already related: private equity firm Apollo Management owns 20% of NCL and 59% of Prestige. The combined fleet will consist of 26 vessels – 13 in the current NCL fleet, with 4 on order, and 8 in the current Prestige fleet, with one on order for Regent Seven Seas. It has been 30 years since NCL (under different management) purchased luxury operator Royal Viking Line in 1984, followed by boutique-style Royal Cruise Line in 1989, and destination specialist Orient Lines in 2000; all three were ultimately dissolved. NCL has stated that after the merger, Oceania and Regent Seven Seas will continue to operate as separate products.



Norwegian Cruise Line will consolidate their fleet with upscale operators Regent Seven Seas and Oceania. Two Oceania vessels are seen here in New York in 2013: REGATTA, ex-R TWO of 2003 (above left) and MARINA of 2011 (above right) (Bob Allen)

**THE NIGHT SKY ON PRINCESS COMES AT A COST:** Princess Cruises' latest megaship REGAL PRINCESS will offer passengers the Night Sky Lounge, a poolside nightclub that will be set up once per cruise. Special pool and furniture lighting, glowing drinks, bartending demonstrations and private cabanas for rent will be featured. Naturally, a DJ will be spinning tunes to create a Miami South Beach atmosphere. Princess has announced that there will be a "nominal charge" to enter the venue.

**QUANTUM LOUNGE COST MORE TO BUILD THAN THE FIRST RCCL SHIP:** In a series of seemingly never-ending innovations and staggering statistics about the new Royal Caribbean QUANTUM OF THE SEAS, the latest is a real surprise. The aft-facing, double-deck lounge Two70 (so named for its 270-degree views) cost \$13.5 million to build – more than the total price for the SONG OF NORWAY (1970), Royal Caribbean's first cruise ship. The ship was presented to the media in late August when the 167,000-tonner was floated out of her builder's hall in preparation for delivery to RCCL. Two70, the ship's 500-seat "living room" - according to RCCL Chairman and CEO Richard Fain – will be an observation lounge, entertainment venue and café all in one. The room features

six huge LED screens attached to robotic arms that will offer special effects generated by high definition projectors, a complex entertainment system that has never been seen at sea. Aerial acrobats will perform in the venue, using not only the room's audio-video capability, but also stage lifts that rise from the deck below, locations around the room, and fly positions at the top of the space. In order to create Two70, 2,000 tons of additional steel was required, as was an increase in the width of the ship by 20 centimeters. According to RCCL EVP Maritime, Harri Kulovarra, the room took a year to design and build.



Night and day: An expansive observation lounge and café by day, the \$13.5 million Two70 Lounge on QUANTUM OF THE SEAS will transform into a dramatic nightclub and entertainment venue, with acrobats above and almost unlimited computer-generated 3D-illusions projected on giant robotic LED screens. High Tea in the Palm Court is no longer the preferred shipboard distraction for most 21<sup>st</sup> century cruise passengers. (RCCL)

## **SS UNITED STATES – PARTHENON ON THE DELAWARE**

By Doug Newman

I am an ocean liner enthusiast, but I was born in 1988, long after ocean liners had largely disappeared. Of those few that did survive in some form into my lifetime, I would consider four to be true superliners: QUEEN MARY, UNITED STATES, FRANCE, and QUEEN ELIZABETH 2. I have had the good fortune to visit QUEEN MARY in Long Beach several times, to sail on QE2 twice before her retirement, and to visit her several more times as well. I narrowly missed out on sailing on FRANCE as NORWAY, or otherwise getting aboard, despite having seen her many times in Miami; the tragic boiler explosion that abruptly ended her career in 2003 made me redouble my efforts to sail on QE2 while I still had the chance. But UNITED

STATES was always by far the least accessible of the four. The last time the ship was, in some sense, open to the public was at the auction of her contents in 1984, before I was even born. So when, this past June, I was presented with the opportunity join a small group on a visit to the ship at her pier in Philadelphia, I didn't hesitate to seize it. Although I hope she has a long life ahead of her, that outcome is still far from assured, and I knew this first opportunity could also sadly be my last.

Before my visit, I described it to my non-ship-enthusiast friends as being the ocean liner equivalent of visiting the Parthenon. My primary intent with this metaphor was to convey to them the importance of a ship most had probably never even heard of before, but which I believe deserves attention far beyond the usual ocean liner enthusiast circles. But I also chose the metaphor because one way to see UNITED STATES in her current form is as, like the Parthenon, a magnificent ruin.

I experienced QUEEN MARY as a hotel and QE2 as an active ocean liner. These are two very different roles, but both ships were nevertheless in somehow in use. UNITED STATES, on the other hand, has spent a staggering 45 years as a dormant ship, after only 17 years in service. With her furnishings having been auctioned off in 1984 in Newport News, and what remained of her interiors stripped bare for asbestos removal in Istanbul and Sevastopol from 1992 to 1996, she is, at first glance at least, an empty shell of aluminum and steel.

Even from a distance, as I had already seen her, the ship's exterior looks severely weathered, but up close one gets a more detailed view of what 45 years without maintenance has done. The steel hull is covered in rust and peeling, bubbling paint, with peaks and valleys worthy of a relief map of a mountain range. The aluminum upperworks are naturally not rusty, but paint has peeled off in huge sheets, in some cases exposing bare metal, such as on the funnels. But save for the removal of the lifeboats and davits, the ship's exterior is fundamentally intact. Blast it and repaint it in the same livery, and the ship would look practically as she did on her maiden voyage 62 years ago.

On board, things are very different.

UNITED STATES is berthed at a cargo pier, so one boards on B Deck, through a shell door originally used for the loading of stores, rather than one of the passenger entrances. My first impression was of pitch darkness; there is no artificial light inside the ship, and visitors are advised to carry two flashlights, a primary and a backup. Once on board, we immediately climbed two steep ladders, built for crew use, up to Main Deck, emerging in what was once first-class passenger accommodation. Here light streamed in through the portholes, and I was able to get my first impression of the state of the ship's interiors.

Their condition can most succinctly be described by this formula: structural elements remain, while almost everything else has been removed. The result is that the ship's interiors consist of a series of empty spaces of varying shapes and sizes, all defined by metal bulkheads still coated in their original yellowish primer. But these empty spaces, because of the lack of structural alteration, are still fundamentally the same ones that existed when the ship was built, just denuded of nearly everything they once contained.

In areas that were formerly cabins, this means the Marinite (asbestos) cabin walls themselves are now gone, but their outlines remain on the deck. The ease with which one can see the former locations of walls and doors, the outlines of furniture fastened to the deck, the attachments for plumbing fixtures and the like make walking through these spaces rather like walking on a life-size deck plan. It is a slightly surreal experience.

Overhead, the ceilings are all gone, but the occasional recessed lighting fixtures remain, looking thoroughly out of place given the absence of the ceilings that formerly surrounded them. Wiring trays are omnipresent, still with their thick bundles of now useless wiring, a rather odd omission in the otherwise nearly complete stripping of the interiors. The most obvious signs of the former interiors are underfoot: throughout most of the ship, the original linoleum remains, the original colors and patterns still faintly visible beneath decades of grime that has turned it uniformly dark gray at first glance.

Whereas the former locations of individual cabins are now discernible only by looking carefully at the decks, the shape and size of each of the public areas were built into the ship's structure, so each remains readily identifiable albeit almost completely empty. Even as mostly bare metal voids, one can easily get a sense of the scale and layout of each space, if not its decor or furnishings. Bits and pieces of original decor do remain, however: the Tourist-Class Smoking Room still has its bar, the First-Class Ballroom/Lounge its dance floor, the First-Class Grill Room a pair of entrance vestibules that retain their original wall and ceiling finishes. Throughout the ship some pillars retain their original paint, now peeling, and many rooms still have the fittings where tables were once attached to the deck.

But it is really the scale of the rooms, their layout, and the way in which they relate to each other that one is uniquely able to experience from actually visiting them. One thing the experience of walking through the interiors really drove home for me is the extent to which, despite UNITED STATES representing the absolute height of technology at the time, the arrangement of her accommodation was fundamentally conventional. UNITED STATES was, after all, a very early post-war ship, and the layout of her accommodation is much more QUEEN MARY than QE2. I already knew this, of course, as it is obvious just from looking at deck plans, but I still found it striking in person. In particular, the horizontal separation of classes (first class amidships, cabin aft, tourist forward) and the many public rooms with double-height center sections surrounded by single-height peripheries follow patterns that had been established for many decades by the 1950s. Of course, none of this was actually out of date when the ship was introduced; it would be several more years until ships like FRANCE and QE2 eschewed such features. Nevertheless, it seems slightly incongruous perhaps, given all the ways in which UNITED STATES broke with convention.

The final part of our visit, after touring the Main Deck, Upper Deck and Promenade Deck interiors, was to see the ship's outer decks, and this part of our tour was perhaps the most monumental, or to reprise my earlier analogy, the most Parthenon-like. In particular, walking the upper decks beneath those giant, iconic funnels faded and peeling though they now are, was nothing short of exhilarating. Here one truly gets a sense of the greatness and power of one of the greatest and most powerful of all ships.

With UNITED STATES facing, as ever, an uncertain future, I am tremendously grateful to have had the opportunity to spend time aboard. I wish she had never fallen into her current state, and I certainly hope she is restored in the future. But even if I someday tour a revitalized UNITED STATES — and I certainly hope I do — her current state will still be a part of her history as much as any other, and I will remain grateful for the chance to see it first-hand.



An imposing sight next to her pier in Philadelphia, the UNITED STATES has not sailed since 1969. (above left) Stripped of lifeboats and davits, the Boat Deck affords magnificent views of her towering winged funnels. Although badly faded and peeling, they still sport the red white and blue colors of the United States Lines. (above right) (Doug Newman)



Bulkheads, ceilings and fixtures have been removed, but tracks on the deck clearly indicate the layout of staterooms and en suite baths. (above left) A vestibule just aft of the First Class Ballroom managed to escape total demolition – ribbed bulkhead paneling, blue paint finish and a trio of recessed light fixtures survive, giving a hint of what the mid-century interiors of the UNITED STATES looked like. (above right) (Doug Newman)



The First Class Promenade Deck had plenty of room for deckchairs and strollers, all of whom could gaze over the Atlantic Ocean through full-height windows. The glazing was fitted with escape doors, for boarding lifeboats in case of an emergency. (Doug Newman)



The circular linoleum dance floor of the First Class Ballroom is directly below the void where the domed ceiling once hung. (above left) A stylish aluminum handle with etched instructions is still on the door separating the Promenade Deck from the First Class Foyer. (above right) (Doug Newman)

### SHIP OF THE MONTH

Ship of the Month hopefully will resume with the October 2014 issue of The Porthole.

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