WORLD SHIP SOCIETY
PORT OF NEW YORK BRANCH

50 YEARS
1965–2015

WORLD SHIP SOCIETY–PORT OF NEW YORK BRANCH: 50 YEARS 1965–2015

Editor
Douglas Newman

Contributing Editors
William H. Miller
Theodore W. Scull

Contributing Writer
Stuart Gewirtzman

Published by the **World Ship Society–Port of New York Branch**
PO Box 384, New York, NY 10185, USA
www.worldshipny.com

WORLD SHIP SOCIETY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

50 Years of the World Ship Society–Port of New York Branch
Part I: 1965–1990 by William H. Miller 4
Part II: 1991–2015 by William H. Miller and Douglas Newman 7

50 Years of Ocean Liners in the Port of New York: A Personal Reminiscence by Theodore W. Scull 10

50 Years of Cruising in the Port of New York by Douglas Newman 20

Pier A: A Brief History by Stuart Gewirtzman 26

Above: The *Queen Mary 2* (left) and *Queen Elizabeth 2* (right) in Upper New York Bay in October 2008. Photo by Douglas Newman.

Front Cover: The *France* in Upper New York Bay in July 1973. Photo by Marya Klee.

Back Cover: The *Queen Mary 2* in Upper New York Bay in October 2008. Photo by Douglas Newman.

50 YEARS
OF THE WORLD SHIP SOCIETY PORT OF NEW YORK BRANCH

PART I: 1965–1990
BY WILLIAM H. MILLER

New York harbor in the 1960s was the perfect show for ship enthusiasts, featuring ships of every size and type. A glorious cast of over 100 great ocean liners came and went with predictable regularity: the fabled Cunard Queens *Mary* and *Elizabeth,* for example, almost always sailed on Wednesdays; Grace Line's *Santa Rosa* and *Santa Paula* on Friday afternoons; on Saturday afternoons, Furness Bermuda Line's *Queen of Bermuda* and her smaller consort, the *Ocean Monarch*. But there were also the countless freighters, coming and going at all hours, from otherwise quiet Sunday afternoons to arrivals or departures deep in the night. It was like a huge stage production with a well known but ever-changing cast.

Against this exciting backdrop, the first meeting of the World Ship Society–Port of New York Branch took place on December 3, 1965. 32 of us gathered aboard Norwegian America Line's newest ship, the *Sagafjord*, berthed at Pier 45 at the foot of West 10th Street and glowing in lights. We moved slightly south, to Pier 40 at West Houston Street, for our next meeting, in January 1966. Ted Scull, then working for Holland America Line, led a tour of the beautiful *Rotterdam*. Attendance jumped to 90.

The first regular meetings were held at Academy Hall on Broadway at East 14th Street; later, we moved to the Norwegian Seamen's Center on East 15th Street near Irving Place. Regardless of location, on the third Friday of month, we gathered for the first examples of the slide-illustrated programs on varied topics that are our mainstay to this day. At those first meetings, almost everyone seemed to have a particular maritime interest—liners of course, but also freighters, ferries, or even tugboats. Others liked postcards and deck plans. It was all fantastic fun—and immediately addictive. There was instant camaraderie. Here were people who knew ships and knew them well—and liked them and even loved them. The first addresses—and then the spare brochures and postcards—were exchanged.

Informal groups within the group formed. I joined one, dubbed the "Saturday Club," which held excursions—no matter the weather or temperature—to those still busy West Side piers, the famed Luxury Liner Row. Our outings tended to be all-day affairs: a morning sailing—the maiden outbound trip of North German Lloyd's *Europa* (ex *Kungsholm*) was one of the

The first meeting of the World Ship Society–Port of New York Branch took place in December 1965 aboard the *Sagafjord*, seen here berthed in New York in 1978. Photo by Robert Allen.

first—then lunch at the old Market Diner on 12th Avenue, then afternoons aboard two fixtures, the Furness liners *Queen of Bermuda* and *Ocean Monarch*, which always sailed at 3:00 pm. Later, I recall 12-hour sessions that took in dinner back at the diner, and then back across the street for a nighttime sailing—9:00 pm for the mighty *France* on one occasion, 10:00 for the *Franconia* on another.

There were day trips, too, up the Hudson to the "mothball fleet," and over to Todd Shipyards in Brooklyn and the Lipsett scrapyards in Kearny. Fred Rodriguez organized all-day Saturday harbor cruises aboard which we poked into the backwaters of the port; ship photographers were in maritime heaven. We made the last crossing of the Hoboken ferry, bussed out to Sea-Land container headquarters in Port Newark, sailed the upper Hudson on the sidewheeler *Alexander Hamilton*, lunched aboard the likes of P&O's *Chusan* and *Canberra*, and had guided tours of the liners such as the *France*. We even offered a charter bus trip to Montreal's Expo 67—$200 for five days—while some members opted for the alternative of a round-trip cruise on Moore-McCormack's *Argentina*.

On Friday morning, September 22, 1967, the branch chartered a Circle Line vessel to see off one of the grandest of all Atlantic liners, the *Queen Mary*, on her farewell sailing. We began with the undocking, then followed the procession downriver—tugs, fireboat sprays, helicopters overhead, almost deafening whistle and siren salutes—and stayed with her out to the Narrows. We were booked to capacity, some 600 in all, the mood made even more sentimental by the appearance of twin Scottish bagpipers. Never again would there be such a send-off—not even for the *Queen Elizabeth* a year later, which we again saw off using a chartered Circle Line craft.

In 1968, the branch, with 128 members, become the largest overseas branch of the World Ship Society. The following year we welcomed the maiden arrival of the *Queen Elizabeth 2*, again on a specially chartered boat, and held "the Great Christmas Ship Visit," when in one day some of us visited seven liners bound on holiday cruises to the sun: *Empress of Canada*, *Gripsholm*, *Leonardo Da Vinci*, *Homeric*, *Oceanic*, *Nieuw Amsterdam*, and *Rotterdam.*

We began 1971, now 175 members strong, with a tour of a big but out-of-work luxury liner, billed as the "Mystery Ship." This was the *Caribia*, formerly Cunard's ultra-posh world cruise ship *Caronia*, now in Greek hands and slowly decaying between Piers 84 and 86. Other activities included a visit to the combi-liner *Oriental Ruler* docked in Brooklyn Heights, a tour of Governor's Island, a bus ride to Baltimore, and a boat trip for Maritime Day's "Parade of Ships."

By 1972, we were holding two meetings a month at NYU's Loeb Student Center. We also produced a traveling program—400 slides with a taped narration, entitled *Port of New York*. We gave it a gala launch at the April meeting and then sent it off on a world tour that took over two years, via Britain, Europe, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. We even dabbled in publishing: the branch published my very first book, *Guide to North American Passenger Ships 1972*, 125 pages with over 90 photos detailing approximately 100 passenger ships.

In February 1973 we staged our first all-day "Seminar of the Sea." It featured speakers John Maxtone-Graham, Bill Schneider, and Frank Cronican; a catered lunch; and a mini flea market. Postcards sold for 10 cents, while vintage brochures changed hands for as much as $1. Most of us were startled when an ashtray from the 1930s superliner *Rex* fetched $15.

In April of that year, we produced the first issue of a quarterly journal, aptly named *P. O. N. Y. Express*. Regular columns included "P. O. N. Y. Teletype" (the news and notes of the day—name changes, scrappings, and pier and route shifts), "Book Shelf" (in the first issue, a review of John Maxtone-Graham's superb *The Only Way to Cross*), "Three Blasts" (travel pieces—the first was Vincent Messina's trip on "the Cape Route"), "On the Move" (announcing the travels of the membership), and a full-page sailing list. Features in the first issue included a piece on the Louisiane Grill Room on the luxurious *France*; "The Passing of the *Iberia*;" "The Russians Are Coming," about the arrival of the freighter *Novogrod* in Brooklyn, the first of a Soviet merchant ship in New York in 25 years; and "A Date with the Wreckers," detailing the dismantling of the fire-gutted, capsized former *Queen Elizabeth* in Hong Kong. We produced 15 more issues

before discontinuing publication in 1977 due to rising production costs.

In 1974, we moved to yet another new home: the library at the Greenwich Village School on West 11th Street at 6th Avenue. To commemorate our 10th anniversary, we held a celebratory dinner aboard the floating restaurant *Robert Fulton* at South Street Seaport in 1976.

The 1970s brought change to the face of New York harbor, as jets continued to steal passengers from increasingly empty Atlantic liners and the age of efficient containerization in cargo shipping began. One by one, liner companies withdrew, some closing down completely. Some freighter companies joined the container age, while others disappeared as well. The once-busy piers lost their tenants and then closed. Shipyards, tugs, barges, and assorted craft declined drastically. I recall a summer afternoon in 1975 aboard the Soviet liner *Mikhail Lermontov*, returning from a cruise to Quebec City, the Canadian Maritimes, and Boston. As we sailed into Lower and then Upper New York Bay and up the North River, I was taken aback—in fact, all but shocked. The busy, pulsating, electric port that I had known for over 20 years was gone. There were few other ships in the port, the likes of the once crammed Hoboken shipyards were all but empty, and the clutter of small working craft on the river was gone as well. Fortunately, the branch kept ships and shipping alive and well!

During the 1980s, we moved uptown to the Swedish Church on West 48th Street. Monthly programs continued with the likes of the incomparable Frank Braynard on the *Leviathan*, the *United States*, and the *Savannah*; Frank Cronican on the Cunard Queens; John Maxtone-Graham on the delivery voyages of the *Seaward* and *Sovereign of the Seas* and the newbuildings of the future; and Ted Scull on his travels to China and Africa and up the Turkish coast, and on 150 years of P&O history. Capt. Eric Ashton-Irvine reminisced about the great Cunarders, and Vincent Messina took us "behind the scenes" aboard a Soviet cruise ship. Travelogues were plentiful, like Marge Dovman's freighter cruises, Milton Watson's voyages along the Indian coast and Persian Gulf, and countless others from the Aegean to the Amazon, the Nile to New Zealand.

All-day outings continued. In 1983 there was a harbor cruise; in 1984 bus a trip to Kingston, New York for a river cruise; in 1985 one to Essex, Connecticut for a visit to the local museum and an excursion cruise. In 1986 we visited Baltimore, and in 1987 Philadelphia, with a visit to the local maritime museum and a luncheon aboard the *Ocean Princess* (ex *Italia*). In 1988 there was a triangular bus trip to New York's "maritime fringe"—Fort Schuyler, Port Jefferson, and Kings Point—and in 1989 another harbor cruise.

Group cruises were also popular: a three-day cruise to nowhere aboard the *Britanis* (ex *Monterey*) in June 1982; four days up to Fall River and the Cape Cod Canal aboard the *Veracruz I* (ex *Theodor Herzl*) in October 1983; a four-day run to Bermuda aboard the *Britanis* again in 1985; a weekend at sea aboard the *QE2* in June 1986, followed by two nights aboard the exquisite *Sagafjord* in December of that year; and four days back to Bermuda on the *Homeric* in October 1988.

We kept members informed of branch events and maritime industry news via a two-page newsletter in the early 1980s, expanding to a four-page format by the middle of the decade. By September 1983, Herb Frank and Marge Dovman co-edited the newsletter. After Herb's death in 1984, Marge became sole editor of the newsletter, known since 1988 as the *Porthole*.

In 1990, the branch celebrated its silver jubilee—25 years of meetings, outings, cruises, and most of all, long-lasting friendships. In June of that year, there was a cruise up the Hudson out of Peekskill aboard the *Commander*, a converted ferry dating from 1917, followed in July by our longest group cruise yet, 14 nights to the British Isles aboard the *Vistafjord*, celebrating Cunard's 150th anniversary as well as our 25th. The branch's first organized ship tour and luncheon took place that year aboard the *Nordic Prince*, docked on Manhattan's West Side. In October, we celebrated our anniversary aboard the dinner cruise boat *Tampa VI*, a converted fishing boat, cruising round-trip from Sheepshead Bay to Manhattan's Passenger Ship Terminal to see the day's cruise ship departures, with dinner en route.

PART II: 1991–2015

BY WILLIAM H. MILLER
AND DOUGLAS NEWMAN

By the 1990s, the Port of New York had changed dramatically from that of a quarter-century before. The old passenger liners, railroad ferries, and freighters that were so prolific in the branch's early days had long since disappeared, victims of economic and technological change. But the port remained a busy place. Some of the old liners had found new lives in the burgeoning cruise trade, and now they were being joined—and eventually replaced—by a growing fleet of ever larger and more elaborate purpose-built cruise ships. A revival of ferry service, beyond the stalwart Staten Island Ferry, had begun in the 1980s, and jaunty new fast ferries zipped across the North River filled with commuters to Manhattan offices. Massive amounts of cargo were still handled, now almost completely containerized and overwhelmingly in New Jersey where there was space for the vast container yards. New Yorkers began to rediscover the formerly industrial waterfront, with the shift of most commercial shipping to outlying areas clearing the way for new parks and luxury residential development as a real estate boom got underway.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, as in previous years, the branch sponsored cruises on some of the magnificent old liners that had been converted for cruising, among them a cruise to Canada and New England on the *Enchanted Isle* (ex *Argentina*); a two-night cruise to nowhere on the *Regent Sun* (ex *Shalom*); a three-night cruise to nowhere and a seven-night cruise to Nassau and Freeport on the *Regal Empress* (ex *Olympia*); two-night cruises to nowhere on the *IslandBreeze* (ex *Transvaal Castle*), *OceanBreeze* (ex *Southern Cross*), and *SeaBreeze I* (ex *Federico C.*); and back-to-back seven-night cruises from New York to Montreal on the *Rembrandt* (ex *Rotterdam*). Cruises on the venerable *QE2* attracted some of the largest crowds, with a five-night cruise to Bermuda in 1996 and a seven-night cruise to Bermuda and the Bahamas in 1999 each attracting approximately 100 members. Members of the branch and co-sponsoring maritime organizations—around 600 in all—filled more than a third of the ship on both occasions.

We also sailed on some of the newer purpose-built cruise ships, with seven-night cruises to Bermuda on the *Horizon* and *Song of America*, and a 10-night cruise to Canada and New England aboard the *Westerdam* (ex *Homeric*). There was even a four-night cruise to Halifax on the brand-new megaship *Carnival Triumph* in 1999; by far the largest cruise ship ever based in New York, she was a harbinger of the many gargantuan vessels that would arrive in the years to come.

Shipboard luncheons and cocktail receptions also remained popular branch events. We had the opportunity to visit both former liners, like the *Rembrandt* and *Norway* (ex *France*), and more modern cruise ships, like the *Nordic Empress*, *Zenith*, and *Norwegian Sea* (ex *Seaward*).

Some of our special events took place aboard much smaller vessels than the big cruise ships. We gathered for a day aboard the historic steamer *Yankee* to view the Op/Sail 2000 Parade of Ships, and took harbor cruises, such as one in 2002 to Fort Schuyler, where we visited the Maritime Industry Museum. Monthly meetings continued to feature programs on a wide variety of subjects, moving again to our current location at the Community Church of New York on East 35th Street.

The branch entered the internet era in 1999 with the launch of its first website. David Sykes, Hans Segboer, John McFarlane, and Ted Scull were among those who worked on the site in its early years. The site grew through the 2000s with feature articles and photo essays, continually updated news of past and future branch events, and the highly popular annual schedule of passenger ship arrivals and departures in the Port of New York. The advent of the website did not mean traditional printed communications were neglected, either, with Marge Dovman continuing to skillfully edit the *Porthole*.

A new event on the branch's annual calendar beginning in 2003 was the Ocean Liner Bazaar, previously organized by the Ocean Liner Museum. To this day, it continues as a highlight of the year not only for members, but also for buyers and sellers of ocean liner memorabilia from up and down the East Coast.

The maiden call of the *Queen Mary 2* in New York in April 2004 was the biggest event in the port since that of the *QE2* in 1969, and in cooperation with the Steamship Historical Society of America–Long Island Chapter, we chartered a boat to witness the two ships depart together for Southampton on April 25. We reprised the same arrangement for the departure of these two ships plus the new *Queen Victoria,* on her maiden call, in January 2008—the first-ever rendezvous of three Cunard Queens—and again in October 2008 for the much sadder occasion of the beloved *QE2*'s final departure from New York, accompanied by the *Queen Mary 2* and a flotilla of small craft. These charters recalled the similar cruises we ran in the 1960s, bidding farewell to the original *Queen Mary* and *Queen Elizabeth* and welcoming the *QE2*, herself now at the end of her long career.

In the 2000s, our ever-popular shipboard luncheons continued, though new post-9/11 security restrictions meant they now required more advance planning. Undeterred, we organized tours and luncheons aboard ships such as the *Caribbean Princess*, *Carnival Miracle*, *Carnival Triumph*, *Carnival Victory*, *Eurodam*, *Explorer of the Seas*, *Norwegian Dawn*, *Norwegian Spirit* (for our 40th anniversary in 2005), and *Queen Mary 2*, taking advantage of the boom in new cruise ships visiting New York. Very different from those modern megaships was *The Topaz* (ex *Empress of Britain*)—a ship that had last visited New York as the *Queen Anna Maria* in the 1970s. Her last charterer, the Japanese non-governmental organization Peace Boat, graciously invited us aboard for a tour and reception three years in a row, from 2004 to 2006. By 2009, Peace Boat had replaced her with an old New York favorite, the *Oceanic*, and we were again welcomed aboard for a tour and reception on that ship's first call in New York since 1985.

Branch-sponsored group cruises continued as well, among them a seven-night cruise to Bermuda on the *Pacific Princess* (ex *Sea Venture*) in 2002; a six-night cruise to Bermuda and Newport on the *QE2* in 2003, her last year before switching to a UK-based cruise program; and in 2005 a seven-night cruise to Nassau and Florida on the *Norwegian Dawn,* New York's first year-round cruise ship in decades. Like the *QE2* before her, the *Queen Mary 2* became a favorite, hosting members on a four-night Labor Day cruise to Halifax in 2007 and a five-night Independence Day cruise to Halifax and Boston in 2010.

Monthly programs continued to feature a wide range of maritime topics, especially related to ocean liners and cruise ships, with many speakers returning year after year. Among many others, Anthony Cooke visited many times from London to present on topics as varied as "Immigrant Liners" and "Famous People, Famous Ships;" Allan Jordan gave programs on cruising history; John Maxtone-Graham delivered several presentations in his inimitable style; John McFarlane shared his films of passenger ships over the decades; Bill Miller gave both personal reminiscences and historical accounts; Ted Scull regaled us with tales of his many voyages; and Karl Zimmerman recounted his travels on historic vessels both inland and ocean-going. Some programs connected with current events in the maritime world, like John Maxtone-Graham's "Our Man aboard *Queen Mary 2*" and Ben Lyons' "View from the Bridge of *Queen Mary 2*" in 2004, the ship's inaugural year; and "A Tribute to the *Queen Elizabeth 2*" by Bill Miller and Ted Scull in 2008, just a few weeks before that ship's final call in New York.

Our internet presence received a major upgrade in 2009–10 with a complete redesign of the website, and the branch joined the world of social media as well in 2011 with the founding its Facebook page. Stuart Gewirtzman has ably managed both since 2013. Meanwhile, Marge Dovman retired as editor of the *Porthole* in 2010, with Bob Allen, who filled in for Marge during her vacations late in her tenure, becoming editor upon her retirement. Bob has made his own imprint on the newsletter, adding well-researched "Ship of the Month" articles and a member photo of the month. Archived issues of the *Porthole* are now available on the branch website as well, merging traditional and modern methods of communication.

In January 2011, the branch and the Seaport Museum New York chartered NY Waterway's *Robert Fulton* for a sell-out crowd of 150 members and friends to witness yet another meeting of Cunard Queens. This time it was the *Queen Mary 2*, the *Queen Victoria*, and, on her maiden call, the new *Queen Elizabeth*. Another highlight that year was a trip to Baltimore on National Maritime Day for a

tour of the preserved nuclear passenger-cargo liner *Savannah*.

Our popular tradition of shipboard luncheons continued on a new generation of cruise ships such as the *MSC Poesia*, *Norwegian Breakaway*, and *Royal Princess*. We also continued to sponsor cruises, such as a nine-night westbound Atlantic crossing from Rotterdam to New York on the *Rotterdam* (VI) in 2011—which many members paired with a pre-voyage stay aboard the preserved *Rotterdam* (V) in her namesake port—and a seven-night cruise to Bermuda on the *Norwegian Breakaway* in 2013.

Monthly programs, too, continued in their established pattern, with long-established presenters like Bob Allen, Anthony Cooke, Allan Jordan, Ben Lyons, Bill Miller, Tom Rinaldi, Ted Scull, and Karl Zimmerman returning to us again and again, along with new additions to the lineup like Greg Fitzgerald and Doug Newman. The late John Maxtone-Graham was a regular presenter, giving his last program, "SS *United States*: American-Made Excellence," in February 2015 to a typically large and rapt audience. Other recent guests have included author Steven Ujifusa, who spoke about William Francis Gibbs and the SS *United States* in "A Man and His Ship," and travel journalist Valerie D'Elia, who recounted her lifelong connection with ships.

2015 is our 50th anniversary year, and many of our programs and events have been geared toward celebrating this important occasion. Programs such as "The Way We Were: Passenger Shipping in 1965" by Greg Fitzgerald and "Cruising Miami Style: The Birth of the Modern Cruise Industry and the Ships That Led the Way" by Allan Jordan looked back at the era of the branch's founding. Our choice of a seven-night cruise to Canada and New England on the *Regal Princess* in October honors the dual 50th anniversaries of both the branch and Princess Cruises. Our celebration at Pier A, also in October, is the culmination of our anniversary events, and will feature presentations by two of our longest-standing members, Bill Miller and Ted Scull. And of course, the publication of this history reflects our desire to preserve the memory of our first half-century for posterity.

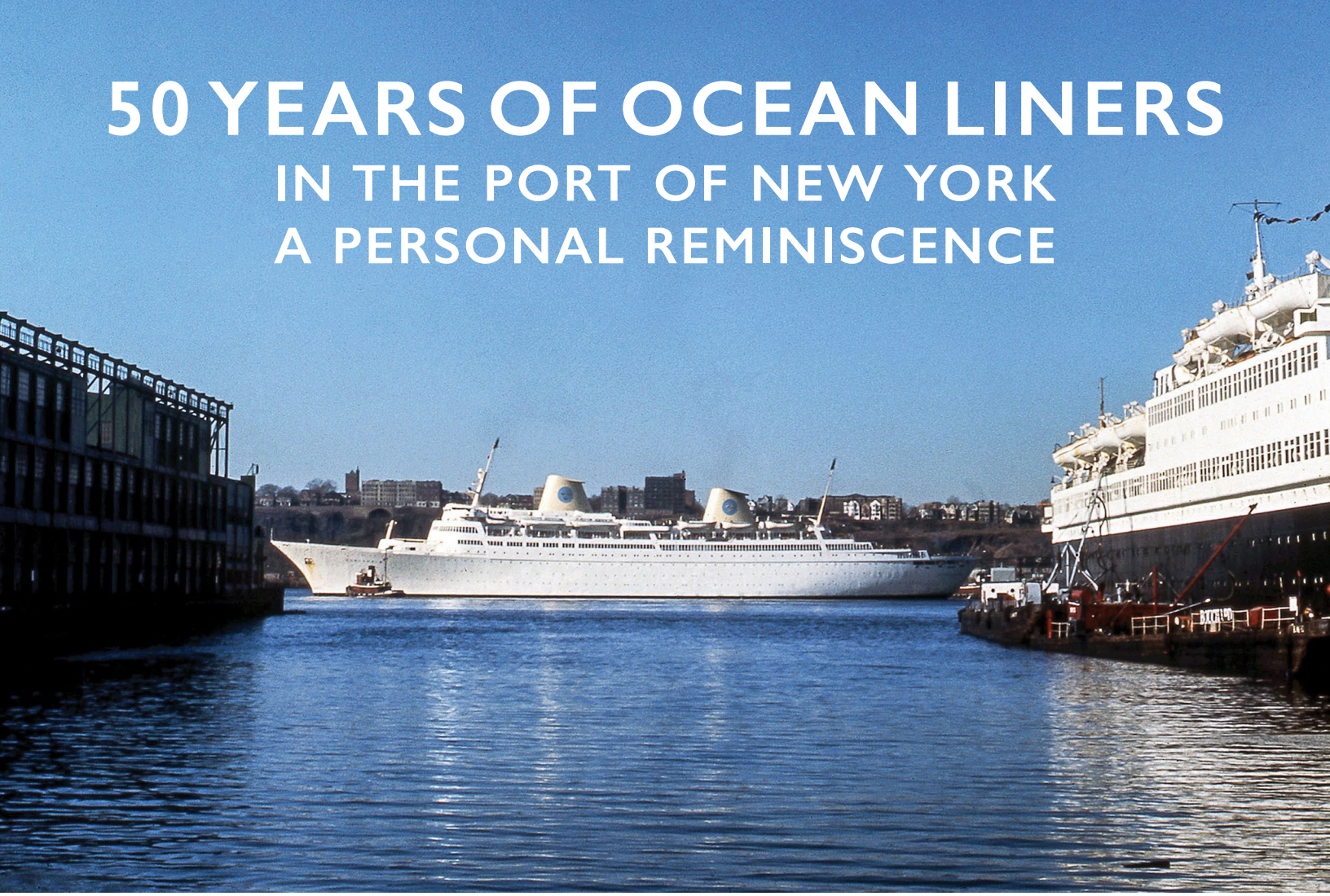
After 50 wonderful years, the branch is as great and strong and productive as ever. Membership stands at 296 as of October 2015, special events regularly attract over 150 attendees, and our website and Facebook page attract hundreds of visitors from every continent each month. With excellent programs and special events, sound leadership, and continually high attendance and participation, the branch continues to have a bright future.

But for now, *Happy 50th Anniversary to the World Ship Society–Port of New York Branch!*

The authors thank Brad Hatry, David Hume, and Marjorieann Matuszek for their invaluable help in compiling this history.

The World Ship Society–Port of New York Branch 50th anniversary cruise in October 2015 took place aboard the *Regal Princess.* Her older sister, the *Royal Princess*, is seen here berthed at the Brooklyn Cruise Terminal in October 2014. Photo by Douglas Newman.

50 YEARS OF OCEAN LINERS
IN THE PORT OF NEW YORK
A PERSONAL REMINISCENCE



BY THEODORE W. SCULL

As I sit down to write this reminiscence on a weekend near the end of summer 2015, I begin thinking back 50 years to 1965. Although none of us knew it yet, the seedlings for the World Ship Society–Port of New York Branch were already sprouting. If it was a weekend, a bunch of ship enthusiasts were down at the West Side piers visiting the liners. 50 cents, paid to a seamen's charity, got you aboard for the three-hour embarkation period.

In the West 40s and 50s, the world was our oyster with ships belonging to American Export Lines, Cunard, French Line, Greek Line, Home Lines, Italian Line, Norwegian America Line, Swedish American Line, and Furness Bermuda Line lining up to be boarded. If there was nothing we hadn't already inspected several times over, Pier 66 might have a Moore-McCormack ship taking on passengers and cargo for South America; Pier 57 had weekly Saturday sailings by a Grace Line *Santa* sailing for the West Indies and South America; Holland America Line called a relatively new Pier 40 home; and Zim Israel Lines berthed at Canal Street.

The varied stacks, tightly packed when looking from the south, were a feast for the eyes; and down at street level, the bows pointed toward the city they served. The gaps between the ships and piers were crisscrossed by many angled mooring lines and multiple gangways for the different classes and the crew. There was not a lot of room at the pier heads for cars and cabs to drop off and pick up; but, unapparent to the uneducated eye, the perceived chaos had worked for decades.

Back then, Americans often bought European cars in Europe and had them shipped home aboard the same ship they sailed back on. Customs duty would have to be paid, and the better informed imported the cars used, which simply meant driving 1,500 miles over there. Once ashore, the owners then had to reactivate their driving skills, including using a stick shift, to negotiate the maze of New York City

streets that would take them to the nearest gas station, and then out of the city and the open road.

1965 was a bumper year for outstanding new ships—Home Lines' *Oceanic* in April; Italian Line's *Michelangelo* in May and *Raffaello* in August; and the ship that became our branch birthplace, Norwegian America Line's *Sagafjord*, in October. The debuts of the two big new Italian liners resulted in the withdrawal of the venerable *Vulcania* after 37 years and *Saturnia* after 38. 10,000 curious visitors would board the *Michelangelo* during her first turnaround.

The Italian pair were definitely designed to perform as transatlantic liners. So too was the *Sagafjord*, but she made only the occasional summer crossing. The *Oceanic*, though also designed as a liner, immediately went into cruise service and remained a hugely popular New York ship for the next 20 years.

In 1965, I was directly connected to the waterfront during the workweek, and often on Saturday or Sunday as well. On Monday mornings, I boarded the crosstown bus on East 72nd Street and stepped off near the General Motors Building, to then drop into the subway at 57th Street and Broadway for the West Side IRT local. The fare was 15 cents, the same as a slice of pizza, and about 15 minutes later I stepped off at West Houston. I walked east toward the river, passing the Munson Diner, an occasional lunchtime break, and then under the St. John's Truck Terminal and the end of the New York Central's elevated freight line, which came down the West Side after leaving the Water Level Route at Spuyten Duyvil. Once under the elevated West Side Highway, Pier 40 stretched before me.

Pier 40 was unlike any other in the Port of New York. It was not a typical slim finger pier, but square with a square donut hole in the center. When completed a few years before, it was designed to save longshoremen's jobs on the Manhattan waterfront. There was considerably more space to handle the steady stream of trucks that were now carrying big steel box containers in addition to the conventional palletized cargo. A revolution in shipping was well underway that would, sooner than anyone imagined, completely transform the way almost all freight would be handled, and doom New York's waterfront in favor of the large acreage available over in New Jersey.

Holland America Line had had its cargo and passenger business based in Hoboken before moving across the river to spanking-new Pier 40 in 1962. The company's North American headquarters at 39 Broadway moved to the pier, with offices mostly facing West Street.

Before entering, I would look up at the huge model of the *Rotterdam* on the roof, better seen from the West Side Highway and lighted at night. The street-level lobby was a plain-looking space, but on the far wall, a tiled mural depicted four *Rotterdams*, the second of five not shown because it was built for another shipping line and then purchased second-hand.

Climbing to the second floor, I greeted the receptionist and entered my office space in the newly formed sales promotion department. Six months earlier I had worked at HAL's 5th Avenue street level passenger office, until I was asked to join this new department of three.

Left: The *Michelangelo* on her maiden call in New York in May 1965. Photo by Theodore W. Scull.

Opposite Page: The *Kungsholm* slides past the docked *Bremen* in December 1969. Photo by Theodore W. Scull.

My office view was to the north to the Norwegian America Line pier, where the *Oslofjord* and *Bergensfjord* berthed along with the tiny NAL freighters, some ever so Scandinavian with their lovely wooden bridge fronts. I could also see up and across the North River, where the most regular traffic was the Lackawanna Railroad ferry plying between Hoboken and Barclay Street, the latter terminal located some distance to the south.

Several times a month, my window onto the river was blocked by the bow of the *Rotterdam* or *Nieuw Amsterdam*, because they were so much longer than the *Maasdam*, *Ryndam* and *Statendam*. Their looming presence lasted from the morning of their arrival to midday the next.

August 1965 was a typical summer month that would see six HAL sailings for Europe, with the *Rotterdam* making two. All inbound ships from Rotterdam and the Channel ports would be full. Then, in September, sailings from New York would drop to four, then three in October, as some of the fleet switched to cruises. Both November and December would see two crossings, and that pattern would continue through the winter.

One of the regulars was the *Prinses Margriet*, carrying cargo and up to 111 first-class passengers on a 10-day passage directly between New York and Rotterdam. The three-year-old ship came from the Oranje Line, another Dutch shipping firm that operated passenger-cargo services between Rotterdam and the Great Lakes following the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway. The passenger side, with three combination ships, soon failed.

I had three favorite places to have lunch, taking a brown bag from the company cafeteria to the tiny first-class lounges on the *Maasdam* and *Ryndam* and the observation lounge on the *Prinses Margriet*. I imaged sailing transatlantic on those ships in the dead of winter. It was a quarter-century before that dream unfolded, and it was aboard the *Stefan Batory*, the former *Maasdam*. It was every bit as wonderful as I had imagined, though the sailing was in August, not a winter crossing. Other times, I watched the cargo handling, with five holds each assigned 25 men chosen at the early morning shape-up.

In July 1965, the *Seven Seas* of Europe-Canada Line, with 600 passengers and 210 crew aboard, was crippled by a fire while on a passage from Rotterdam to New York. Holland America served as passenger agent and major owner of the line. When it became clear that everyone aboard was safe and the ship was to be towed by a Dutch tug some 500 miles to St. John's, Newfoundland, the big boss, Mr. Roberts, came to me and said, "A number of passengers won't accept a flight to New York, and I understand you know something about trains. How the 'H' do we get them here?"

I quickly laid out the itinerary: Canadian National's *Caribou* ("The Newfie Bullet") from St. John's to Port aux Basque (roughly 24 hours), connecting to CN's overnight boat to North Sydney, CN's *Scotian* to Montreal (roughly 20 hours), and finally Canadian Pacific's *Montreal Limited* to Grand Central (overnight). HAL phoned CN in Montreal and set it all up. My reward was to put on my green Holland America blazer and meet the passengers as they detrained about four days later! Many thanked me.

960 students were due to sail from New York, and 405 took a train to Montreal and boarded the *Ryndam*. Several months later, that ship would replace the *Seven Seas*' sailing program that included student semesters at sea. The rest of the students went over on charter flights.

One day a Holland-Africa ship arrived from Walvis Bay, South West Africa, with a cargo of zoo animals—giraffes, lions, rhinos and other four-footers. All were caged when off-loaded, except the giraffes. Animal handlers from the Bronx Zoo were called in to deal with the incredibly awkward logistics and truly terrified animals. I was not able to watch the entire exercise as office hours called, but I heard the transfers were ultimately successful.

Longshoremen's strikes occurred with a certain frequency in the mid-1960s as the unions fought for a minimum annual wage, based on 1,600 hours a year, rather than the haphazard and often unfair shape-ups—no work, no pay. When strikes happened, the cargo handling stopped altogether, but the passenger ships, at least at Pier 40, came and went. The longshoremen would not handle the baggage, so the office

personnel were asked to volunteer (and paid a $25 bonus) to move the baggage from the conveyor belts to the lettered (first letter of the passenger's last name) locations. An XYZ sticker meant expedited service. Most did so happily; it was extra money and a chance to get out of the office.

When the passengers began streaming off and found their baggage, they hailed us, and we put it on a dolly for the short trip to a taxi, limo, or car. Transatlantic passengers did not park cars on the pier, but cruise passengers often did, either inside (at higher rates) or up on the roof deck. The worst impedimenta to handle were the wardrobes, basically rented closets that were packed at home then trucked to the pier to be fitted into a specially designed space and strapped down, as were standing steamer trunks.

Most passengers tipped us, though we were not supposed to accept the money. One never knew who would tip big and who might stiff us. It was a game guessing, and we had lots to share afterwards in the company canteen. When the *Maasdam* and *Ryndam* arrived, there were many immigrants, and I recall some wanting to tip me, apologizing and handing me a few foreign coins. I never accepted any money from them, just wished them good luck in their new country. Back then you could cross the Atlantic with no money unless you rented a deck chair or drank. The going rate for tips was $1 a day in tourist, and the stewards expected that some would not have much to give them.

Tug strikes were another disruption. Most regular liners had captains that knew how to handle their ships even under the most difficult situations that the North River could produce—strong tides and the Hudson's natural flow coupled with the narrow space between the finger piers, especially when another ship might already be in the same slip. However, they had to wait for slack tide, a short window of 35 minutes, and if it was missed, there was a six-hour wait before the next try. Wind could also be a game-changing factor.

During the strikes, it was theater time down at the North River drawing hundreds, and the action was reported in the dailies. The *New York Times* had two shipping reporters, George Horne and Werner Bamberger, and they had a field day with the news and everything else that was happening in the industry. The dockings made for fascinating reading because every landing was different; some first tries were successful and some not. Very occasionally, an errant bow might break a few pier windows and dent the structure, such as happened with the giant *Queen Elizabeth*.

Strikes by American seamen frequently affected the US-flag liners and that period of unrest certainly played a part in their early and ultimate demise. The lengthy mid-1965 strike affected the passenger-carrying United States Lines, American Export, Moore-McCormack, and Grace Line at the height of the season, and most passengers would be unable to switch to other ships or air, as the alternatives would likely be full.

In late August, it was announced by American Export that the last of the Four Aces, the combination passenger-cargo ships *Exeter* and *Excalibur*, would be sold and transferred to Liberian registry. This type of ship was fast disappearing, here with a crew of 125 serving 125 passengers.

During this period, the very brief transatlantic career of Zim Israel's beautiful *Shalom* ended abruptly, a year after entering service in 1964. After two years cruising, she was sold in 1967, a year following the withdrawal of the *Zion* and *Israel*, the mainstays since the early 1950s. Zim completely exited the passenger business when the *Moledet* docked in Haifa in late March 1970.

In April 1966, the *Michelangelo*, en route from Genoa to New York, had a large wave slam up against the bow and stove in the forward-facing superstructure, killing two passengers in their cabins and a crewmember who later died of his injuries. 12 others were injured. Werner Bamberger wrote in the *Times*, "If a huge wave strikes a ship while in the trough, the effect is likely to be much more serious than if the vessel were otherwise situated."

A follow-up article in the *Times* three months later reported that Dr. Richard W. James, who had started a weather tracking service, said, "The wave that hit the ship was twice as high as average, inundated

the entire forward half of the ship, peeled steel flaring on the bow, and broke windows on the bridge (81 feet above the water). Yet the chances of such a wave were predictable, and it could have been avoided. If 1,000 waves pass the ship, there is a chance in 20 that one of them will be 2.22 times taller than the average, so the *Michelangelo* faced a wave more than 66 feet high."

When the ship arrived in New York with a large piece of canvas covering the 30 by 60 foot hole in the superstructure, the captain stated that he was using the United States weather and oceanographic services. I pedaled down to the pier to see the damage.

18 months later, the *Times*' George Horne reported that the ship was hit by "two storms on December 2 and 3, with hurricane winds of 100 miles an hour and waves 60 to 70 feet high according to Captain Cario Kirn." 30 passengers and crew were treated for minor injuries, and this time there was no damage to the ship. She arrived in New York a day late. Five British seamen were washed overboard and lost in the same storm.

On May 2, 1966, New York welcomed the most handsome Swedish American liner *Kungsholm*, the last passenger ship the company would build (at John Brown, Clydebank); and while a liner with a capacity of 750 passengers, she made only the occasional crossing and mostly cruised with 450. She and her running mate *Gripsholm* would vie with the Norwegian America Line and Cunard's *Caronia* for the top end of the long cruise market.

Mail was big business for the liners, and the daily *New York Times* "Shipping and Mails" notice listed what ships carried mail bound for what countries. The Cunard Queens served the most diverse letter and parcel destinations, because they connected with British ships that plied routes to Africa and Asia.

One tidbit I found in the *Times* stated that on one eastbound mid-1960s December sailing, Holland America's *Statendam* carried 1,750,000 letters and 88,000 parcels. That was not bad, considering that the *Queen Mary*, the final ship to be able to deliver mail in time for Christmas, would carry over two million Christmas greetings when she sailed on December 15, 1966.

In December 1966, 22 liners would sail with 12,400 passengers for Christmas and New Year cruises to the West Indies, and on January 4, 1967, no fewer than nine liners returned with 5,225 passengers.

One well-known liner was not among them, as the Cunarder *Mauretania* was pulled from service when she returned to Southampton on November 10, and would quickly go off to Inverkeithing in Scotland for dismantling. A year later, the *Caronia* would leave New York for the last time as a Cunarder. She would return briefly under a new owner as the *Caribia*, fail, and then go into layup, first in Gravesend Bay and then on the West Side, until she was sold to Taiwanese breakers in 1974. However, she would never make her destination, sinking off Guam. Lots of her furniture had already made it ashore, and the headmaster

Above Left: Severe damage to the *Michelangelo* from an Atlantic storm in April 1966. Photo by Theodore W. Scull.
Above Right: The *Caribia* (ex *Caronia*) laid up in August 1970. Photo by Theodore W. Scull.

Above Left: The outbound *Oceanic* seen from the Staten Island Ferry. Photo by Theodore W. Scull.
Above Right: The *Homeric* whistles her departure from New York in December 1970. Photo by Theodore W. Scull.

who hired me at Trinity School interviewed me while seated in a *Caronia* chair. He did not know that, and said "tell me more," so maybe that's why he offered me a job.

It was a bloodbath, as Cunard's *Carinthia* and *Sylvania* would soon follow. During this period, Cunard was in a disastrous financial state, and the six-week's British seamen's strike in the first half of 1966 helped neither the passenger nor the profitable freight trade. The passenger business had been losing money since 1961.

In 1966, the port handled 904,632 sea passengers, decreasing in 1967 to 836,043, a 7.6 percent drop. The drops would soon become much steeper, and in the first half of 1968, it was 30.8 percent. Profits did not decline as quickly, because there were fewer ships and generally higher load factors.

Saturday was my usual play day, and if I didn't go to the piers, I would ride the Staten Island Ferry. In 1965, the *Kennedy*-class ferries had arrived from Orange, Texas of all places, putting an end to Bethlehem Steel's yard on Staten Island as the source. The three boats, the *John F. Kennedy*, *American Legion*, and *Gov. Herbert H. Lehman*, were popular from the start. The *JFK* is still around 51 years later, spanning my entire time in New York apart from the middle of 1964 to her arrival. The ferry department takes considerable pride in seeing her continue, and she always looks good and carries the old Marine & Aviation funnel marking, not the dull DOT marking.

On Saturday back then, the boats operated 20-minute headways, so catching a liner was easier than it is now. The best situation would be to leave Whitehall Street as the liner passed the Battery, and then join it in the same channel to sail on parallel courses, or by timing the St. George Terminal departure to meet her in the Upper Bay, and if really lucky, maybe opposite the Statute of Liberty.

On a rainy Saturday or in the dead of winter, I would stay at home and listen for the *Homeric*'s whistle, sometimes on alternate Saturdays, signaling imminent departure and then the backing whistles. It was so regular I knew when to go to the window. Most of the time, I heard it, even though I lived way over on the Upper East Side.

I left Holland America late in the summer of 1966 for a master's degree program at the University of London. Just before sailing, a couple of memorable incidents occurred.

On Friday, September 2, 1966, I went down to see North German Lloyd's elderly *Berlin* (built in 1925 as the *Gripsholm*) sail for the last time. I went aboard and was stunned how old she seemed; apparently not a lot had changed under the German flag, including the caged elevator in the forward part of first class. Some cabins were the smallest I had ever seen, and pretty much all I heard was German being spoken. Ah, the days of ethnic departures.

At sailing time, I walked to the end of the pier at water level and photographed her backing out. She seemed so small and far away at the city end of the pier; but then, she was less than 18,000 tons.

Evening departures were even better, and perfect for a cheap, fun date. North German Lloyd's *Bremen* often sailed at midnight, that is at 12:01 am, until too many passengers missed the boat as the departure date written on the ticket was one day later than the embarkation date. The sailings then became 11:59 pm, ending the confusion. Regardless of losing two minutes aboard, the embarkation party scene was the same; an oom-pah band and plenty of cheap German beer, as NGL had a special license in port. My dates preferred the French Line sailings at 11:00 pm, because Champagne replaced beer and the lighted dance floor was multicolored glass. These festive evenings cost less than $10, and that included seamen's charity donation, drink, and the crosstown bus over to the piers and usually a taxi back.

On September 7, the Wednesday following the *Berlin's* final farewell, I heard on the radio that the *Hanseatic* (built as the *Empress of Japan* in 1930) was on fire at her pier, and I hopped on my bicycle to investigate. Smoke was coming from within, and it was such a sad sight, as I had sailed on her twice, in June 1961 and August 1963. Soon we would hear that she would have to be scrapped, and the beautiful wood-paneled interiors were a major factor. Passengers were immediately rebooked on other ships, including the *Queen Mary*, sailing the same day with *Hanseatic* passengers arriving two days earlier than scheduled at Southampton, and the *United States*, sailing a day later, with passengers reaching Southampton a day earlier than scheduled and Germany, two days.

On September 16, 1966, I sailed on the *Rotterdam* to Southampton. I mention this because it meant I was not in New York when the *Queen Mary* sailed for the last time the following year. Probably no other event so deeply dramatized that transatlantic sea travel was dying, and now in freefall. Summer sailings held up for a few more years, but the off-season was pretty much gone. Few wanted to endure a sea journey in winter, if you could fly in as many hours as it once took days.

Back home from England aboard the *Queen Elizabeth*, I firmly put down my roots in New York in July 1968 and have remained here ever since.

In 1968, the first major winter gap in transatlantic sailings began when the *France* sailed from Southampton on December 20, 1968, and the first sailing from Southampton took place when the *United States* departed the same port on March 21, 1969. Now, based on annual figures, the remaining liners had only a 15 percent share of transatlantic traffic, vs. 85 percent by air. The *Times* reflected the decline of transatlantic ship travel in a January 14, 1969 headline, "Chill Winds of Austerity Blow Along 'Luxury Liner Row,'" and it ran a photo that showed the emptiness of 12th Avenue in the West 40s.

Above Left: The *Berlin* on her final departure from New York in September 1966. Photo by Theodore W. Scull.
Above Right: The *Santa Rosa* at Pier 40 in January 1971. Photo by Theodore W. Scull.

Cruising, of course, was in its ascendency, and in 1968 New York saw 350,000 people sail. The well-known *New York Times* writer Richard F. Shepard mused on "…those who have taken to cruising, aimless voyaging, usually around the Caribbean, with no end in mind other than fun and deep-throated whistle stops at shopping centers strategically based on sun-drenched isles."

American Export spent $3.5 million to refurbish the *Independence* into a one-class ship, and when she first reappeared in April, the *Times*' Werner Bamberger wrote a piece entitled "PSYCHEDELIC SHIP RAISES EYEBROWS," referring to her as a "go-go ship … with her appearance highlighted by a 500-foot exterior mural resembling an enormous orange, yellow and raspberry sunburst with eyes that produced sharply mixed reactions in the steamship fraternity."

The *Constitution* would go into layup as the *Atlantic* recently had, and the *Independence* would soon follow. All were later sold to carry on for quite some years under new owners.

Moore-McCormack's *Argentina* and *Brasil* of 1958 sailed to the East Coast of South America, and then on cruises. They would be laid up in 1969. Subsequently, they traded under other owners, though not quite as successfully as the American Export ships as they were very expensive to operate given the number of passengers they could carry.

In November 1967, Grace Line announced that its 250-passenger *Santa Paula* and *Santa Rosa* and its four combi-ships, the *Santa Magdalena, Santa Maria, Santa Mariana*, and *Santa Mercedes*, would move from Pier 57 and 58 to the more modern Pier 40 now that Holland America was phasing out its cargo services. The ships would soon sail under Prudential-Grace, but on January 21, 1971, the *Santa Rosa* became the last US-flag passenger ship to operate from the East Coast when she arrived back in New York.

For Cunard, the largest-ever peacetime gap occurred between the last sailing of the *Queen Elizabeth* on November 5, 1968, and the maiden arrival of the *Queen Elizabeth 2* on May 7, 1969.

With the huge Cunarder now history, the French Line's *France* became the largest liner; she already held the title as the longest when she appeared back in February 1962. CGT's other liner, the *Flandre*, was sold to the Italian Costa Line, and from then on the *France* would be sailing alone, though for a while opposite the *QE2* in a brief recreation of weekly sailings. The French Line and Cunard passenger offices were side by side at 555 5th Avenue.

In 1969, the *Times*' food editor Craig Claiborne penned a piece entitled "THE FINEST RESTAURANT IN THE WORLD: S.S. FRANCE." He also wrote, "the decor of the dining room is not one of the glories of France. … It resembles a large amphitheater with modern art that looks remarkably early Grecian." Among the animals being carried on this voyage was "the bewhiskered ocelot belonging to Salvator Dali, and its name is Babou, an Indian word for gentleman. He dines at times with his master."

At the same time, the French government was complaining that the ship was costing too much in subsidies. And this from the *Times*: "Only a quarter of France's own shipboard travelers use French ships. The other 20,000 cruise on foreign craft." One of the points not listed was the French annoyance at subsidizing mostly American passengers.

The *Queen Elizabeth 2*'s arrival was certainly the biggest happy event of 1969, and while she arrived while I was at work, I did pay her a visit that Saturday, May 9. I was stunned by how modern she was, especially the Queens Room and the fact that there were no enclosed promenades with deck chairs. The class system confused me, because it was not all that obvious. But I was taken in by the ship that ensured transatlantic sailings would continue, and I could take advantage of them during the summer holidays.

I watched the liner sail from the Staten Island Ferry that same day, and late on Monday afternoon I went directly to the Cunard passenger office at 555 5th and made a booking for June 19, a few days after school closed.

The years 1967, 1968 and 1969 produced headlines for the *United States*. The ship's designer, William Francis Gibbs, died in September 1967 at

age 81. Then in an article published in the *Times* on August 16, 1968, George Horne wrote of the "SECRETS OF THE UNITED STATES REVEALED." "The brass curtain that high Navy officials secured 16 years ago … was quietly rolled back yesterday. Her propulsion plants developed 240,000 horsepower … while in the past, spokesmen for the line have faithfully clung to a 150,000-hp figure. Her real speed … is 42 knots, or better than 48 miles an hour in land speed." Horne went on, "The engine room … will now be available for standard passenger tours." And there was a lot more revealed in a longer follow-up article by Horne published two weeks later on September 1. "Experts called the superliner the most over-designed merchant ship ever to emerge from draftsman and builder." In addition, declassified photos showed the four propellers, twin 200-foot-long bilge keels, and one of the twin engine rooms. The interiors of the bilge keels were reportedly packed with balsa wood, erasing the Gibbs' boast that the only wood was in her pianos and butcher blocks.

All that excitement did not last long. 14 months later, in November 1969, the *United States* went into layup in Norfolk, and as we know, she is still idle 46 years later. If you want to simultaneously see a proud and sad sight, head to the Philadelphia waterfront.

Enter the 1970s, and the final chapter. The Greek Line ended transatlantic service in 1970 when the *Olympia*, a mainstay since 1953, switched to cruising. She was subsequently withdrawn and sold. The *Queen Anna Maria*, the former *Empress of Britain* (1956), also went into cruise service and was sold. Both had long lives under new owners.

In January 1971, the *Times* reported that Polish Ocean Lines' *Stefan Batory* arrived in New York on January 4, the first communist passenger ship to dock here in 18 years, and the ship was boycotted by the longshoremen at Pier 40. The visit of the Soviet *Baltika* in Setpember 1960 was not counted, as she was chartered by the government for UN business. The dockers boycotted that ship too. The *Stefan Batory* came to New York because the St. Lawrence route to Montreal was iced up, and the ship would revert to Montreal seasonally after this incident. The Soviet Baltic Shipping Company did run infrequent transatlantic crossings in the 1970s, but most of their business was cruising, while the liner services centered on the St. Lawrence route to Montreal.

Holland America, once a major transatlantic carrier, would make a last regular transatlantic sailing with the *Nieuw Amsterdam* in 1971. The *France* was due to be withdrawn in the mid-1970s, but when the French unions got wind of this, they mutinied off Le Havre in September 1974, and the incomparable French Line service ended then and there. Italian Line, propped up by its powerful union, would begin ending transatlantic passenger service in 1975 when its two largest liners sailed for the last time, and after only 10 short years in service. A year later, the curtain came down with the *Leonardo da Vinci*.

The *Queen Elizabeth 2*, apart from the occasional interloper, was left to sail the North Atlantic alone. All was not entirely well with the ship. She suffered from labor problems and troublesome steam turbines from the start. More than once I experienced complete shutdowns at sea for short periods. In summer 1976, the problem became acute and my westbound sailing was delayed by a week, and when the ship finally departed Southampton the crossing was scheduled for seven nights. It was an unhappy passenger list. Quite a few passengers back then had taken advantage of relocation fares when moving house and home, and often that involved the family car and pets. The delay brought on additional stress, as if moving between continents was not enough.

I gave up booking the ship for 11 years. At times, Cunard considered selling her for scrap and possibly building a new liner. Happily, a decision was made to re-engine the ship with the most powerful engines ever used to propel a passenger ship—nine MAN-B&W diesel generators powering two electric motors, one for each screw. The work took place in Germany during the off-season period in 1986–87.

I booked the first voyage following the refit, which also included letting go all the former crew, rehiring some and bringing on a majority of non-British crewmembers. The re-engining and re-crewing gave the ship a new lease on life, and I became a regular passenger again.

Above Left: The *Queen Elizabeth 2* departs New York on her maiden eastbound crossing in April 1969. Photo by Theodore W. Scull.
Above Right: The *Queen Mary 2* on her maiden arrival in New York in April 2004. Photo by Theodore W. Scull.

The ship made news from time to time, and not always what the public relations department hoped to write about. In August 1992, she ran aground off Cuttyhunk, near Martha's Vineyard, and the passengers disembarked at Newport, Rhode Island. The ship went to Boston for repairs.

The 90-foot rogue wave that slammed onto the ship in September 1995 probably produced more positive press than negative. Capt. Ron Warwick was on the bridge when he saw what he described as the white cliffs of Dover looming up in the dark. The passengers were mostly asleep, and the damage was limited to a depressed foredeck and the loss of the tripod mast at the bow. A lesser ship might not have weathered the storm so well. However, there was no question that the ship had suffered decades of pounding and stress, and the aluminum superstructure above the Boat Deck revealed lots of patching, especially around the windows. To reduce some of the strain, the schedule was slowed down by a day in 1996. When a large storm loomed across her regular route, she diverted southwest to a point just above the Azores before continuing west to Ambrose.

Nevertheless, the *QE2*'s last decade of transatlantic service was overwhelmingly a happy one. While she was aging, refits here and there kept her in good form, while becoming more traditional in decor compared to the Swinging London style she presented in the late 1960s.

After Carnival Corporation bought Cunard in 1998, it was not long before the firm announced the contract for a replacement that would be the longest, widest, and largest liner ever built. She would be named *Queen Mary 2*. When the new ship entered service in January 2004, the *QE2* was withdrawn from Atlantic service and based in Southampton for cruising until her retirement in 2008 after 39 years of service.

The *QE2* made one last round-trip crossing from Southampton to New York in October 2008, with her final departure from New York on October 16. She began her final passenger voyage in Southampton on November 11, and arrived at Dubai two weeks later. Finished with engines, there she remains, and promises of future use as a hotel have come to naught. It is an aching situation for her loyal passengers.

Cunard, who was first to begin regular service in 1840, would carry on as the last, at least for the foreseeable future, with a magnificent new liner, now 11 years old at the company's 175th anniversary and our branch's 50th in 2015.

50 YEARS OF CRUISING
IN THE PORT OF NEW YORK

BY DOUGLAS NEWMAN

When the World Ship Society–Port of New York Branch was founded 50 years ago, cruising was still almost wholly an auxiliary to the traditional ocean liner trade—albeit an increasingly important one, especially in the decreasingly viable off-season. But while the liner trade was already in what would prove to be terminal decline, largely dying out over the following decade, cruising was only beginning its ascent.

1965 was a seminal year in the development of cruising from New York. Home Lines' first-ever purpose-built ship, the *Oceanic*, had been designed to serve as a transatlantic liner during the peak summer season and as a cruise ship the rest of the year. But when she entered service in 1965, it was as a full-time cruise ship, operating year-round seven-night cruises from New York to Nassau. She joined the *Homeric* (ex *Mariposa*), which had closed out the line's transatlantic service in 1963, making Home Lines the first transatlantic line to shift to full-time cruising.

Not only was the *Oceanic* brand new and ultra-modern; at 38,000 gross tons she was far larger than any full-time cruise ship before her. She quickly became enormously popular, and for 20 years she was a fixture, operating seven-night cruises to Nassau, often with the addition of Bermuda, along with longer Caribbean cruises in the winter. Many still remember her as the quintessential New York cruise ship.

One of the most notable forerunners of the cruise trade came to an end in 1966. Furness Bermuda Line had operated from New York to Bermuda since 1919, though the service itself dated as far back as 1873. It had started as a liner service, but by the 1960s passengers could also take a true cruise, staying on board during their time in Bermuda. The *Queen of Bermuda*, dating to 1933, was easily one of the most popular and well known "cruise ships" of her day sailing from New York. Furness cited the expense of upgrading her and her younger but smaller consort, the *Ocean Monarch*, to meet new US safety regulations as its reason for withdrawing the pair.

Above: The *Rotterdam* departs New York in April 1980. Photo by Theodore W. Scull.

The Bermuda government, which had contracted with Furness to operate the route, selected Cunard's *Franconia* (ex *Ivernia*) and Greek Line's *Olympia* to replace the Furness pair for the five-year period from 1967 to 1971. Both had been built the decade before as transatlantic liners, but were no longer needed by their owners as such.

In 1968, a new full-time cruise ship arrived in New York. Chandris Lines was mainly in the business of operating line voyages on the emigrant trade between Europe and Australia, but among other things, it had dabbled in the American cruise trade. In 1967 it bought the Union-Castle liner *Kenya Castle* and extensively rebuilt her into the *Amerikanis*, specifically for the American market. She mainly operated on cruises from New York to Bermuda and the Caribbean, though she would migrate from New York to warmer waters in the winter. She soon became a successful and popular ship, and Chandris established a following in the American market.

The *Amerikanis* was successful enough that in 1970, Chandris purchased another ship for the American market, American President Lines' *President Roosevelt.* She too was sent to Greece for an extensive refit, emerging as a thoroughly modernized cruise ship. In 1971 she entered service on cruises from New York to the Bahamas, switching, in an increasingly common pattern, to Caribbean cruises from Florida in the winter. Unfortunately, and unusually for Chandris, she was a major commercial failure, owing in large part to her astronomical fuel consumption. She thus stayed in the fleet only a year, being sold in 1972 to Eastern Steamship Lines to run short cruises to the Bahamas from Miami, where her fuel consumption mattered less. *Amerikanis*, however, continued as a successful New York-based cruise ship in the summer.

In 1971, Holland America Line ended its transatlantic service and became Holland America Cruises. Holland America, which had already operated a substantial cruise program, became Home Lines' biggest competitor from New York. Its counterpart to the *Oceanic* was the *Rotterdam*, built in 1959 to serve equally well as a two-class transatlantic liner or a one-class cruise ship. Like the *Oceanic*, she spent most of her time on seven-night cruises to Nassau, often with the addition of Bermuda. The rest of the fleet was made up of the smaller *Statendam* of 1957 and two new additions in 1972, the former Moore-McCormack liners *Argentina* and *Brasil* of 1958, which became the *Veendam* and *Volendam* respectively.

An important, if short-lived, new entrant also came to the New York cruise trade in 1971 in the form of Flagship Cruises. Following the success of Knut Kloster's Miami-based Norwegian Caribbean Lines beginning in 1966, many Norwegian shipowners decided they wanted to be in the burgeoning American cruise trade. They soon formed companies like Royal Caribbean Cruise Line, also of Miami, and Royal Viking Line of San Francisco to build and operate new cruise ships for the American market. Flagship Cruises was the New York version of this phenomenon.

Flagship's plan was to operate on the time-honored New York–Bermuda route, and it secured a contract from the Bermuda government to this end. It built two fine new 20,000-ton cruise ships in Germany: the *Sea Venture*, named after the ship that carried Bermuda's first settlers, which entered service in 1971, and the *Island Venture*, which followed in 1972. The *Island Venture* did not remain for long, as at the end of 1972, after only a single season, she began a lucrative charter to West Coast-based Princess Cruises as the *Island Princess*. The *Sea Venture* continued alone for two more years until 1974, when British shipping giant P&O bought Princess to strengthen its position in the US cruise market. Princess had been very pleased with the *Island Princess*, and P&O promptly made Flagship an "offer it couldn't refuse" for both ships. The *Sea Venture* became the *Pacific Princess*, and Flagship's Bermuda operation ended. The line hoped to maintain the service in 1975 by chartering the *Volendam* and renaming her *Sea Venture II*, but the Bermuda government did not agree. Meanwhile, the *Island* and *Pacific Princess* became among the most successful cruise ships of their era, and gained international fame thanks to their role in television's *The Love Boat*.

One of the stranger episodes in New York cruising history came when P&O decided to position its flagship, the *Canberra*, in New York for a series of cruises in 1973, mainly to the Caribbean and somewhat ironically marketed by Cunard. Unfortu-

nately, the ship, designed for line voyages between Britain and Australia, was thoroughly unsuited for this trade. She did not have the amenities American passengers expected on a cruise ship—in particular, she had a very large number of cabins without private facilities—and was also too large to dock in many of the Caribbean ports and grounded twice during the season. The operation was such a disaster that P&O concluded she was completely unsuited for cruising and announced that she would be sold at the end of the 1973 season, probably for scrap. Fortunately, an upswing in future cruise bookings convinced the company that such a large cruise ship might be viable after all, and she was retained and given a refit for full-time cruising—but not for the American market.

The career of one of New York's most popular cruise ships, the *Homeric*, came to an abrupt end in 1973 when she suffered a galley fire off New Jersey. It was determined that the damage to the 41-year-old ship would be uneconomical to repair, and she went to the breakers. In need of a replacement, Home Lines bought the *Hanseatic* from German Atlantic Line, an affiliated company. This ship had been built in 1964 as the *Shalom*, the flagship of Zim Israel Lines, for New York–Haifa service and cruising, but was a commercial failure. She had been bought by German Atlantic in 1967 to replace an earlier *Hanseatic*, the former *Empress of Scotland*, which had burned at her New York pier in 1966. Her acquisition by Home Lines was thus the second time in six years she would replace a ship whose career was ended by fire.

The new addition to the Home Lines fleet was named *Doric*, and coincidentally, she was ideal for the Bermuda route that had just been vacated by the *Sea Venture*. Whereas larger vessels like the *Oceanic* could not berth in Hamilton, and thus had to anchor and use tenders during their Bermuda calls, the somewhat smaller *Doric* did not encounter this problem. The *Doric* won a contract from the Bermuda government for the 1975 season, beginning a long association between Home Lines and this route. Holland America Cruises also entered the Bermuda trade at this time. Like the *Doric*, its *Statendam* could berth in Hamilton, and thus made an ideal Bermuda cruise ship.

By the middle of the 1970s, the cruise market had dramatically changed. The center of American cruising had decisively shifted to Florida, and liners that doubled as part-time cruise ships became a thing of the past; after 1976, Cunard's *Queen Elizabeth 2* would be the only one operating out of New York.

In the spring of 1977, New York saw something it hadn't in some five years: a brand-new cruise ship. At her naming by Princess Grace of Monaco, Cunard's chairman proclaimed the *Cunard Princess* "the last cruise ship." She operated a season of Bermuda cruises, Cunard's first since it replaced the retired *Franconia* with the unpopular *Cunard Adventurer* for 1972 and 1973. However, these were apparently not successful enough for Cunard to return after 1977.

By the late 1970s, the New York cruise market had settled into dominance by Home Lines and Holland America. The *Oceanic* and *Rotterdam* operated year-round, though the latter would often be gone for part of the winter and spring on a world cruise. The *Doric* and, depending on the year, the *Statendam*, *Veendam*, and/or *Volendam* additionally operated on Bermuda cruises in the summer only. While other cruise lines offered cruises from New York, they were more occasional in nature.

The dawn of the 1980s brought swift changes to the New York cruise scene, however. 1980 would be the last full year for the *Rotterdam* as a New York-based ship. In the summer of 1981, she went to Alaska with the *Statendam*, while the 'V' twins kept up the New York–Bermuda service. Although she would continue to visit New York each year, she was now just that, a visitor, usually operating a single Christmas/New Year's cruise from New York to the Caribbean and then beginning her world cruise here. The winter of 1980–81 was also the *Oceanic*'s last as a year-round New York ship; Home Lines finally succumbed to the trends of the market and shifted her winter cruise program to Port Everglades beginning with the 1981–82 season. New York was now effectively a seasonal port.

Chandris Lines had been successful in the New York market beginning in 1968 with the *Amerikanis*, but did not replace her when she moved to the Mediterranean in 1977. In 1982, it re-entered the market via Fantasy Cruises, an American company that chartered the 50-year-old *Britanis* (ex *Monterey*), a sister to the departed *Homeric*. She offered short

Popular New York cruise ships of the 1980s: Home Lines' *Atlantic* in May 1984, ***Above Left***, and Chandris Fantasy Cruises' *Amerikanis* in July 1986, ***Above Right***. Photos by Theodore W. Scull.

cruises to Bermuda and Canada and one-night cruises to nowhere, giving New Yorkers an affordable cruise option reminiscent of that provided in the 1960s and 1970s by Greek Line. Chandris, which bought Fantasy Cruises outright in 1985, remained a strong presence in New York for the rest of the decade.

Both Home Lines and Holland America saw a need for fleet renewal in the early 1980s. Home Lines built a new ship, the *Atlantic*, which replaced the *Doric* in 1982. The *Atlantic* was something like an attempt to fit many of the *Oceanic*'s features in a hull that could berth in Hamilton; her design was transitional in an era when cruise ship design was rapidly changing.

Holland America built two new ships, the *Nieuw Amsterdam* of 1983 and *Noordam* of 1984. As a result, the *Statendam* left the fleet in 1982; the *Veendam* and *Volendam* followed in 1983. The new ships followed the *Rotterdam* to Alaska in the summer, and the 1983 Bermuda season would be the company's last full season of cruises from New York for more than 20 years. Reflecting its shift in geographical orientation, the line's headquarters moved to Seattle in 1983. This was highly ironic, given that the new ship that entered service that year was named for New York!

This left Home Lines as the main cruise line in New York. In the summer of 1984, Bahama Cruise Line's *Bermuda Star*, the former *Veendam*, competed with the *Atlantic* to Bermuda. 1985 was similar, but with the addition of Royal Caribbean's *Nordic Prince*, the first foray of a Miami cruise line in the New York market. That year also saw a new ship for Chandris, the *Galileo* (ex *Galileo Galilei*).

1985 was also the *Oceanic*'s last year with Home Lines. The following year, the company took delivery of a new *Homeric*. Like the *Atlantic*, she was designed to be able to berth in Hamilton, and thus became Home Lines' second ship on the summer New York–Bermuda run. She was of a totally new design, arguably a more successful blend of the traditional and the modern than the rather awkward *Atlantic*.

1986 saw five ships on the Bermuda run with the addition of a returned *Amerikanis*. In 1987, this increased to six with the addition of the *Galileo*. In 1988, there were seven; the *Queen of Bermuda* (ex *Brasil/Volendam*) replaced the *Bermuda Star* for the newly renamed Bermuda Star Line, while Royal Caribbean added a second ship, the *Song of Norway*. This remains the largest number of ships ever serving the route.

However, in 1988, Home Lines' owners decided to shut down the company at the end of that year's Bermuda season. Its ships were bought by none other than old rival Holland America Line, purely as a vehicle for acquiring the practically new *Homeric*. HAL had no interest in the *Atlantic*, for which it arranged an immediate bareboat charter, or in returning to the New York–Bermuda trade.

The Bermuda government hastily arranged for the *Cunard Princess* to take over the route in 1989, and in 1990, the *Royal Viking Star*. A more durable solution came from Chandris. The company had

recently ordered its first-ever newbuilding, and in light of the demise of Home Lines, it decided the time was right to introduce a new premium brand. Thus, in 1990, Celebrity Cruises began New York–Bermuda service using an extensively rebuilt *Galileo*, renamed *Meridian*, and the brand-new *Horizon*. The arrival of Celebrity Cruises also meant the end of Fantasy Cruises in New York. Celebrity maintained a two-ship Bermuda service through the 1990s. Competition came from Royal Caribbean and, starting in 1992, Norwegian Cruise Line, which replaced Commodore Cruise Line, the former Bermuda Star Line.

While these three lines dominated the Bermuda route in the 1990s, others offered cruises to other destinations, often using former liners. Regency Cruises offered seven-night cruises to Montreal on the *Regent Star* (ex *Statendam*) in 1990 and the *Regent Sun* (ex *Shalom*/*Doric*) from 1991 until 1995, when the line went bankrupt. Regal Cruises' *Regal Empress* (ex *Olympia*) was a fixture each summer beginning in 1993, offering short, inexpensive cruises to the Bahamas, Canada/New England, and nowhere—essentially the role she once filled for Greek Line, and that Chandris Fantasy later occupied. Dolphin Cruise Line offered similar cruises with the *IslandBreeze* (ex *Transvaal Castle*) in 1996 and 1997 and, as Premier Cruises, with the *OceanBreeze* (ex *Southern Cross*) in 1998 and the *SeaBreeze I* (ex *Federico C.*) in 1999.

In contrast to these classic ships, Carnival Cruise Lines made its first foray into the New York market in 1994 with its new *Fascination*—at 70,000 tons, then the largest cruise ship ever based here—running a series of four and five-night cruises to Canada. There was then a five-year hiatus until Carnival returned in 1999 with the new *Carnival Triumph*—New York's first cruise ship over 100,000 tons. Most North American cruise lines, even those that otherwise did not sail from New York, also offered fall Canada/New England cruises through the 1990s.

The year 2000 brought some major changes to New York cruising. Celebrity, owned by Royal Caribbean since 1997, was reduced to a single Bermuda ship, the *Zenith*. The Bermuda government was concerned that Royal Caribbean controlled too much of the market for cruises to its shores, and thus reduced the combined company to two ships. NCL also quit the New York–Bermuda route, as its only appropriately sized ship, the *Norwegian Crown*, was transferred to its Orient Lines division. A surprising new entrant from New York to Bermuda was Princess Cruises with the *Pacific Princess*, which had been built to serve this route nearly 30 years before as the *Sea Venture*. Premier based two ships in New York that summer, the *Rembrandt* (ex *Rotterdam*) and the chartered *The Big Red Boat III* (ex *Eugenio C.*). The company collapsed at the end of the summer season.

NCL returned in 2001 with Canada/New England and Bahamas cruises on the *Norwegian Sea* (ex *Seaward*), while the Bermuda government relented and allowed Celebrity to bring back its second ship. New York's last former liner, the *Regal Empress*, ended her reign in 2002, as Regal Cruises went bankrupt the next spring. In 2003, Radisson Seven Seas Cruises' *Seven Seas Navigator* replaced the *Pacific Princess* as New York's fourth Bermuda ship, as the latter was sold; this lasted through the 2005 season. NCL also decided to position a second ship, the brand-new *Norwegian Dawn*, in New York for a series of cruises to the Bahamas and Florida.

The *Norwegian Dawn*'s 2003 New York season was a success, and partly as a result, 2004 saw dramatically increased cruise offerings from New York. Carnival brought the *Carnival Miracle*, operating a season of Bahamas cruises nearly identical to NCL's; Royal Caribbean brought one of its largest ships, the *Voyager of the Seas*, for a summer of Caribbean and Canada/New England sailings; and NCL was able to replace the *Norwegian Sea*'s Canada/New England program with a Bermuda season on the *Norwegian Crown*, which had returned from Orient Lines. Celebrity, in turn, moved one of its two Bermuda ships, the *Horizon*, to Philadelphia. But most importantly, the *Norwegian Dawn*'s New York program would now be year-round, New York's first full winter cruise program since those of the *Oceanic* and *Rotterdam* in 1980–81. A New York cruising revival was underway.

For decades, all cruise ships berthed at the Passenger Ship Terminal (Piers 88–92) on the West Side of Manhattan. But in 2005, Celebrity and Royal Caribbean moved to Cape Liberty Cruise Port in Bayonne. Their ships became the first major passenger ships to sail from New Jersey since the 1960s. Offer-

ings in 2005 were otherwise similar to those in 2004, but with the loss of Royal Caribbean's *Nordic Empress* and the addition of a second year-round NCL ship, the *Norwegian Spirit*, beginning in the fall of 2005.

In 2006, Cunard and Princess moved to the area's third cruise terminal, the Brooklyn Cruise Terminal in Red Hook. That year also brought a major push into the New York market by Carnival Corporation. Holland America offered its first full season of cruises from New York in over 20 years with winter Caribbean cruises on the new *Noordam*, while Princess returned with a summer season of Caribbean cruises on the new *Crown Princess*. The latter, along with the *Explorer of the Seas*, became one of the first mega-ships to call in Bermuda, which had heretofore tightly restricted the size of cruise ships. 2007 saw the last-minute substitution of Celebrity's *Zenith* with the much smaller *Azamara Journey* (ex *R Six*), ending the 17-year presence of one or both of the sisters *Horizon* and *Zenith* on the Bermuda run. In the winter of 2007–08, NCL dropped to one ship in winter, but Royal Caribbean upgraded to year-round service.

Celebrity did not return to Bermuda or the New York market in 2008. Holland America's winter cruises lasted only two seasons, not returning for 2008–09. Holland America did begin New York–Bermuda cruises on the *Veendam* in summer 2010, its first since 1983; however, this lasted only three seasons, through summer 2012. Celebrity also resumed Bermuda cruises in 2010 with the *Celebrity Summit*, and NCL brought back two-ship year-round service in winter 2010–11. Princess did not return for a full summer season in 2012, but Disney Cruise Lines operated its first-ever season from New York that summer; Disney will return in 2016 after a three-year absence. Carnival added its own year-round cruises in 2012–13, joining NCL and Royal Caribbean; however, it consolidated to one ship from two in summer 2013, and reverted to summer-only service after the 2013–14 winter season. This leaves a single Carnival Cruise Lines ship each summer as Carnival Corporation's sole full-season cruise ship in New York, after experimenting with various arrangements across the Carnival, Princess, and Holland America brands in 2006–12.

NCL and Royal Caribbean have proved more dedicated to the New York market. In 2013, the brand-new *Norwegian Breakaway*, at 144,000 tons, became the largest cruise ship ever based in the port. In 2014, she was surpassed by Royal Caribbean's 168,000-ton *Quantum of the Seas*, which replaced the *Explorer of the Seas* for the company's winter 2014–15 program before heading to her long-term home in China. Relieved by the slightly smaller *Liberty of the Seas* for summer 2015, her sister *Anthem of the Seas* will become the company's new year-round New York (New Jersey) ship in November.

2016 will see five cruise ships based in the Port of New York: the *Anthem of the Seas*, *Norwegian Breakaway*, and *Norwegian Gem* year-round, and the *Carnival Sunshine* (ex *Carnival Destiny*) and *Disney Magic* in the summer. Of course, there are also many ships that call here without running a full season of cruises; in particular, most North American-based cruise lines continue to offer fall Canada/New England cruises from New York. Cunard's *Queen Mary 2* also offers occasional cruises between her transatlantic crossings, a role she took over from the *QE2* in 2004. While many of these ships may not excite enthusiasts as much as the liners of the past, they do ensure that New York remains a busy and important port for passenger ships.

The *Carnival Victory* (left) and *Queen Mary 2* (right) berthed at the Passenger Ship Terminal in July 2005. Photo by Douglas Newman.

PIER A A BRIEF HISTORY

BY STUART GEWIRTZMAN

New York City's Pier A, the venue for the World Ship Society–Port of New York Branch 50th Anniversary Celebration, has played a variety of important roles on New York's waterfront over its 129-year history. Completed in 1886 as the headquarters for the city's Department of Docks and the Police Department's Harbor Patrol, it is the oldest pier still standing in Manhattan. For many years it greeted distinguished visitors arriving in the city by sea, and it was also home to the first permanent World War I memorial in the United States. Later, it served as the headquarters of the Fire Department's Marine Division. It was nearly destroyed in the redevelopment of Battery Park City, but was saved by preservationists, only to fall vacant and derelict. Finally, it was revived as the restaurant and event venue of today.

Located at the southern tip of Manhattan just north of the Battery, a site chosen for its easy access to both the East River and North River waterfronts, construction on Pier A began in September of 1884 and was overseen by George Sears Greene, Jr. (1837–1922), chief engineer of the Department of Docks. Born in Lexington, Kentucky, Greene briefly attended Harvard before leaving to study engineering under his father, a distinguished Civil War general and one of the founders of the American Society of Civil Engineers. After serving as assistant engineer on the Croton Aqueduct and later working for several Cuban railroads and for mining companies on Lake Superior, he was appointed the department's chief engineer in 1875, a position he held for 22 years. Two of his brothers also had notable careers: Francis Vinton Greene was a soldier and engineer and served as New York City's police commissioner, and Samuel Dana Greene was acting commander of the ironclad USS *Monitor* during its famous Civil War engagement with the CSS *Virginia*.

Atop the pier structure of granite blocks resting on a cement foundation, the landside end of the building was constructed with brick and terra cotta walls and an iron truss supporting a tin roof painted

green to resemble copper, and was fireproofed to serve as a storehouse for maps and records. The shoreside end, built with a conventional wood-framed skeleton and clad with galvanized iron siding, was separated from the fireproofed portion by a 20-inch-thick brick firewall. The building was provided with central steam heating, gas lighting, and water from the Croton Aqueduct. The Police Department occupied the northern side of the first story of Pier A, near where its steamboat, *Patrol*, was customarily berthed, and also had a lookout stationed in the four-story wooden tower at the offshore end of the pier. The Department of Docks occupied the remainder of the building.

The need for more office space resulted in the construction of a two-story addition at the landside end of Pier A in 1900, and the further addition of a third story in 1904. In 1919, a ship's clock donated by industrialist Daniel G. Reid, one of the founders of the U.S. Steel Corporation, was installed in the tower as a memorial to U.S. servicemen who died during World War I. It was the first permanent World War I memorial in the United States.

Pier A continued to be used by the Department of Docks and its successor, the Department of Marine and Aviation, until 1960, when it became the headquarters of the Fire Department's Marine Division and home to Marine Company 1 and its fireboat *John D. McKean*. In 1964, a renovation removed much of the original exterior ornamentation in favor of plain aluminum siding.

The original plans for Battery Park City called for the aging pier to be demolished, but preservationists intervened. In 1975 they succeeded in having Pier A added to the National Register of Historic Places, and in 1977 it was designated a New York City Landmark. But while the preservationists' efforts meant the pier was now saved from demolition, restoring it proved more challenging. In 1987, the city announced plans to rebuild the pier with restaurants and a visitor center, retaining the fireboat berth and headquarters for Marine Company 1 but moving the Marine Division headquarters elsewhere, but these plans never materialized. The Fire Department finally left the pier entirely in 1992, and, now vacant, it sank further into disrepair.

Finally, in 2008, the city turned the pier and its restoration over to the Battery Park City Authority, the very entity that wanted to demolish it decades earlier. Restoration finally commenced in 2009, and in 2011 Pier A was leased for 25 years to a partnership lead by Peter Poulakakos, a Lower Manhattan restaurateur who is no stranger to the adaptive reuse of historic properties: he currently operates restaurants along historic Stone Street and in the landmarked 1853 India House building at One Hanover Square, and is involved in the development of a new hotel, restaurant and event space above the ferry slips in the landmarked 1909 Battery Maritime Building. In November 2014, with the restoration work completed, including the replacement of its green-painted tin roof with a new copper roof, Pier A assumed its latest role as Pier A Harbor House, a restaurant and event venue where patrons can observe the goings-on in the harbor much as the Harbor Patrol lookout did from his post in the pier's tower more than a century ago.

Left: "Department of Docks and Police Station, Pier A, North River, Manhattan," ca. 1935. Photo by Berenice Abbott, New York Public Library collection.

Opposite Page: Pier A Harbor House, September 2015. Photo by Stuart Gewirtzman.

PORT OF NEW YORK BRANCH

WORLD SHIP SOCIETY