



THE ORIGINAL CHELSEA PIERS - NEW YORK'S MARITIME GRAND CENTRAL TERMINAL PRESENTED BY WILLIAM ROKA

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 6:30 PM (ET) ZOOM MEMBER MEETING



The original Chelsea Piers with the Lusitania alongside, 1910, (Photo: Public Domain)

Today the lonely iron arch of Pier 54 is an often-ignored reminder of what was New York's Grand Central Terminal of the Hudson River waterfront, the original Chelsea Piers complex that extended from Little 12th Street to 23rd Street. It saw millions of immigrants and some of the wealthiest people in the world brought to New York City by ocean liners to this docking on the Hudson.

But how did it work? Thousands of passengers and pieces of luggage, supplies, mail, and cargo had to be loaded and unloaded. How did the ships prepare to depart or dock, and what did the passengers experience as they departed for or returned from their voyages overseas? An illustrated presentation will explore this extraordinary period of New York's waterfront, now nearly forgotten and unknown.



William Roka is the Director of Programs at Village Preservation. He is also an independent historian and writer. His research, presented at conferences in the United Kingdom, Argentina, Australia, and across the United States, has focused on the history of travel and ocean liners in the early 20th century. William is also a WSS-PONY Branch Board member.

YARMOUTH CASTLE BURNING PRESENTED BY ERIC KATAKJIAN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 10AM (ET) ENCORE PRESENTATION

THE FRENCH LINE'S VILLE D'ALGER OF 1935
A Mediterranean NORMANDIE and Algeria's Mobile Colony
PRESENTED BY JOHN PERRY, Ph.D.
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 6:30PM (ET) ZOOM PRESENTATION

MEMBER PHOTOS



QM2 at night in Quebec, Canada, October 2025. (Photo: Chris Skokos)



SILVER SHADOW, August 21, 2025, St. Anthony, Newfoundland. (Photo: Preston Baker)



VIKING SEA, February 24, 2025, St. Thomas, V.I. (Photo: Preston Baker)

2026 NEW MEMBERSHIPS & MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Membership includes all digital issues of *The Porthole* newsletters, member meetings, encore presentations and invitations to member-only events.

THE 2026 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE BY JANUARY 31, 2026.

\$45 – Single \$65 – Single Patron \$70 – Family \$90 – Family Patron

Patron Memberships provide priority access to special events with capacity limitations.

Family Memberships include one additional person.



Patron Membership Promotion: Receive a free WSS-PONY Branch Embroidered Canvas Baseball Cap

NOTE: Only 7 caps remaining. Don't miss out.

- One free cap for each 2026 Patron member.
- Offer limited to one cap per person.
- One color and size with an adjustable back strap.

Notice the cap's lightship logo, which is the first logo of our parent organization, World Ship Society, UK, founded in 1947.

Join or renew online today at our website:

[Membership Application or Renewal – World Ship Society](#)

PONY BRANCH 2025 HOLIDAY PARTY AT TONY'S DI NAPOLI BY STUART GEWIRTZMAN



On a cold Sunday, December 28, 2025, a festive group of PONY Branch members and guests gathered to celebrate the holiday season at the Tony's Di Napoli's Italian Restaurant on Manhattan's Upper East Side. Those attending savored a four-course family-style lunch featuring salad, two pastas, chicken parmesan, and a selection of delicious desserts including cheesecake, cannoli and tiramisu. The three-hour event afforded ample opportunity to enjoy the camaraderie of friends, old and new, to catch up, to reflect on recent cruises and the many PONY Branch events enjoyed over the past year and to share plans for the new year.





(Photos: Stuart Gewirtzman)



COLLECTIBLE CORNER (Part I of II)

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES MAIDEN VOYAGE MEDALLIONS

BY ALAN ZAMCHICK

The 22 Compagnie Generale Transatlantique/Sudatlantique “French Line” Maiden Voyage medallions were covered in some detail in the July and October issues of *The Porthole*. But there was another French flag passenger line that operated long before the CGT/CGS with as notable a history that virtually matched the same number of passenger ships (30 vs. 29) of more than 10,000 tons as the combination of CGT & CGS. The Messageries Nationales was founded in 1798 for land transport, adding maritime transport as Messageries Impériales under Napoleon III in 1853. By 1871 it was known as the Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes or Messageries Maritimes for short (or simply MM). Its ships originally served Middle Eastern routes that quickly expanded to cover French colonial holdings in southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean as well as Australia via both the Suez and Panama Canals as France shifted from empire to republic. We already learned that CGT’s first Maiden Voyage medallions were awarded in 1906 to the LA PROVENCE. Messageries Maritimes first issued Maiden Voyage medallions in 1931. All of its post-WWII passenger ships, over 10,000 tons were celebrated with medallions. All were issued by the Paris Mint and all were struck in bronze. What follows is a review of those ships that had Maiden Voyage medallions, issued with notations during that period for those that did not. They are listed in “launch date” order.

GEORGES PHILIPPAR (1931): One of history’s lesser-known Maiden Voyage disaster ships. The GEORGES PHILIPPAR was built by Ateliers & Chantiers de la Loire, St. Nazaire, France. Tonnage: 16,990. Dimensions: 542’ x 68’ (565’ overall length). As with all listed ships she had twin-screws. 17 ½ knots. Motorship. Two masts and two *square* funnels. (These funnels were referred to as “Flowerpot design.”) She was the only ship with multiple funnels in this study. All others were single stack vessels with two masts. Launched

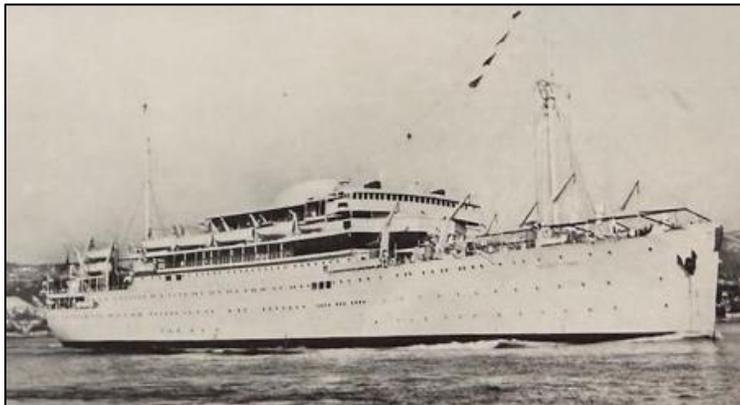


November 6, 1930. She was designed to carry 196 1st class, 110 2nd class, 89 3rd class and 650 steerage passengers. She sailed on her Maiden Voyage from Marseille for the Far East February 26, 1932. She (or “He” as the French refer to their ships in the masculine!) caught fire off Cape Guardafui, Italian Somaliland near the Red Sea on the return leg of her Maiden Voyage and was abandoned on May 16,

1932, with the loss of 41-54 lives (depending on differing accounts). The GEORGES PHILIPPAR sank 145 nautical miles northeast of Cape Guardafui on May 19th. George Philippar became Chairman & CEO of MM in 1925. 68mm (diameter); 151g (weight in grams). Engraver: Auguste Maillard (1864-1944). Sister Ships: ARAMIS and FELIX ROUSSEL. Neither had Maiden Voyage medallions issued.

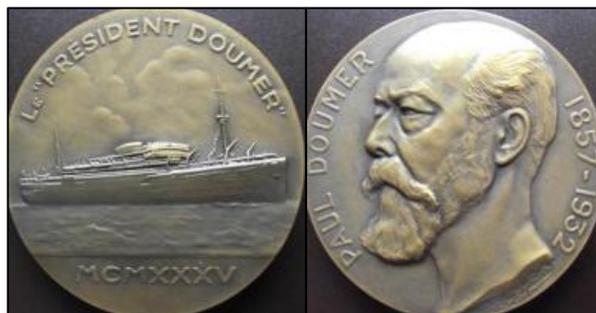


PRESIDENT DOUMER (1935): Built by Soc. Provençale de Construction Navigation, La Ciotat, France.



Tonnage: 11,898. Dimensions: 468' x 64' (492' overall length). 18 knots. Motorship. Launched, January 22, 1933. Service: France-Far East via Suez. Passengers: 138 1st class, 95 2nd class, 75 3rd class and 595 steerage. Maiden Voyage June 6, 1935. She was torpedoed and sunk by the Germans in

convoy northeast of Madeira, October 30, 1942, while under Bibby Line management and operating as a troopship. President Paul Doumer served France from June 1931 until his assassination in May 1932. 67.2mm; 155.12g. The engraver, Auguste Maillard, had his name imprinted on the reverse.



LA MARSEILLAISE (1949): LA MARSEILLAISE was laid down June 8, 1944, at Constructions Navales,

La Ciotat shipyard under the name MARÉCHAL PÉTAIN. The incomplete ship was sunk by the Germans as they retreated from Southern France. By 1946, she had been renamed LA MARSEILLAISE, was raised and towed initially to Toulon and later La Ciotat. Rebuilt, her initial voyage was June 30, 1949, a short Mediterranean cruise. Tonnage 17,408. Dimensions 593' x 75.5'. Motorship. Service: Marseille-to various Far Eastern ports including Japan. Passengers: 279 1st Class, 76 2nd Class, 318 3rd Class. In 1957 she was sold to the Arosa Line, Inc. and renamed the AROSA SKY. Only a year later, by October 1958 she was sold again to G. Costa du Andrea, Genoa – Costa Line and was renamed BIANCA C. On October 22, 1961,



during a Caribbean cruise and while anchored off St. George, Grenada she caught fire after an engine room explosion resulting in a lone fatality. On October 24th, a British cruiser attempted to tow her, but the hulk sprang a leak and she sank in deep water. Apologies for the quality of the medallion image. I've never seen the medallion offered for sale anywhere and its' specific dimensions are not available. The engravers name is, however, and it is the only MM medallion engraved by



Maurice Delannoy (1885-1972) who also engraved the 1930 Maiden Voyage medallion for the French Line's LAFAYETTE. His obverse version of Messageries Maritimes logo appears on a Maiden Voyage medallion featuring for the first time a rather fearful looking unicorn capped by a crown. The inscription on the reverse which features a maiden riding the bow of a ship is "La Marseillaise carries France's renown throughout the world." (*Medallion photo credit: www.cgb.fr*)

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES (1951): Not specifically issued for a ship but rather celebrating Messageries



Maritimes centennial year 1951. On the obverse its pioneer ship SÉSOSTRIS appears below the prow of a modern newbuild (quite possibly the VIET-NAM). The reverse features for the first time a tamer version of MM's unicorn logo in the same left profile on an anchor as in Delannoy's version. 59mm; 115.5g. Engraver Andrew Lavrillier's (1885-1958) "signature" appears on both sides.

LA BOURDONNAIS (1953): Built by Arsenal de Lorient, Lorient, France. Launched July 5, 1951. Tonnage: 10,944. Dimensions: 459' x 64' (492' overall length). Service speed 17 knots, 18.5 max.

Motorship. Service: Marseille, France-Mauritius, although she often called at Madagascar and Reunion. Maiden Voyage March 31, 1953. Passengers: 78 first, 112 tourist, 48 third. In its earliest years, she and her sisters (FERDINAND DeLESSEPS, PIERRE LOTI, and JEAN LABORDE) also had space (162) aboard for a class called "rationnaires" comprised of political refugees and displaced persons. She went



to Efhtymiadis Lines as its KNOSSOS in 1968. She suffered a fire at Limassol, Cyprus in 1973 and was scrapped in Spain in 1976. Obverse features the image of Bertrand-François Mahe De La Bourdonnais (1699-1755), a French naval officer and the colonial administrator that served the French East India Company. A representative galleon from the era flanks him to the left and the Breton language phrase "Dre An Mor Biskouas Troubardias" is included in a coat-of-arms to his right, linking La Bourdonnais' travels



to the poetic Breton expression "Across the Biscay Sea Troubadours." Engraver Roger Bertrand Baron's (1907-1994) initials appear on both sides of the medallion. 58mm; 106g. All four ships of this class shared the Lascroux-type funnel, after designer Emile Lascroux. His funnel design also graced the ANDREA DORIA, CRISTOFORO COLOMBO and INFANTE DOM HENRIQUE.

FERDINAND DeLESSEPS (1952): Built by Forges & Chantiers de la Gironde, Bordeaux, France.



Tonnage: 10,882. Dimensions: 459' x 64' (492' overall length). Service speed 17 knots, 18.5 max. Motorship. Service: Similar to LA BOURDONNAIS to French Indian Ocean colonies. Maiden Voyage: October 3, 1952. Passengers: 78 first, 112 tourist, 48 third. Sold to the Greeks she became the DELPHI in 1969. She provided several years of good service for Perlus Cruises as LA PERLA (1977) and LA PALMA (1980). She went to

Alang, India in 2003 and was broken up as SAGAR. The image of Ferdinand De Lesseps, designer and builder of the Suez Canal, appears on the obverse astride the route of the canal. 59mm; 118.5g. Engraver Raymond Betannier's (1890-1986) name appears along the left rim there too, as well as his initials on the reverse. Sister ships: JEAN LABORDE, LA BOURDONNAIS and PIERRE LOTI.



VIET-NAM (1952): Built by Messageries Maritimes "home yard," La Ciotat, France. Launched October



14, 1951. Tonnage: 13,162. Dimensions: 507' x 72' (532' overall length.) 21 knots service speed, 24.5 max. Parsons geared turbines. Her Maiden Voyage: Marseilles-Yokohama via Suez Canal, March 30, 1953. Passengers: 117 first, 110 tourist, 312 third. She was renamed the PACIFIQUE by 1967. Sold to Cia de Nav Abeto SA, Panama and became in rapid order the PRINCESS ABETO in '70, the MALAYSIA BARU for Fir Line service in '71 and the MALAYSIA KITA

in '72. On May 12, 1974, pending repairs at Singapore, she suffered a fire and sank after being towed to shallow water. She was raised and towed from that port and broken up in Kaohsiung, Taiwan in 1976.



The obverse of her medallion is illustrated with an incense altar between two coiled Malaysian-style dragons. The reverse features the logo, company name, ship name and issue date as MCMMLII. 58mm, 110.63g. Engraved by Raymond Tschudin (1916-1988) Sister Ships: CAMBODGE and LAOS. These ships were known as "les blanc," by the crew, being the first postwar MM ships painted white. (Photo credit: Collection of Luis Miguel Correia.)

(Medallions Photos: Alan Zamchick Collection except where noted. Ship Images: Historique de la Flotte Des Messageries Maritimes 1851-1975 except where noted.)

SHIPS IN PORT CROSSING ON THE NORTH GERMAN LLOYD BY BILL MILLER



A late morning departure from New York for the BERLIN.

Due to Allied restrictions following World War II, the West Germans, as they became in a divided nation, were not permitted to have any passenger liners for ten years, until 1955. It was punishment. But actually, in an arrangement with the Swedish American Line, the 18,600-ton GRIPSHOLM, a ship dating from 1925, was used for Bremerhaven-New York sailings under the operation of the shortlived Bremen-America Line beginning in February 1954. The 590-ft long liner retained its Swedish operation and name, but its twin funnels were repainted the yellow-mustard color of the North German Lloyd. A year later, however, by January 1955, it was bought outright and NGL, as it was commonly called, was back in the trans-Atlantic liner business. Renamed BERLIN, the ship was ceremoniously rechristened by West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. Business flourished, even in winter, and so there was soon need for a second, larger liner – and a ship with a higher capacity. On occasion and winter, the BERLIN reopened Lloyd's Caribbean cruise business. Even without pools and lido decks and lacking air-conditioning, these cruises proved to be very popular, booked solid and heavily supported by the German American travel market. Visits to pre-Castro Cuba were included.

The Germans shopped around and soon found that the big, 30,000-ton, French PASTEUR was for sale. Purchased in September 1957, it was soon off to the Lloyd shipyard and then partly gutted, then thoroughly rebuilt and modernized for Atlantic service as the BREMEN. Restyled for 1,122 passengers (216 in first class and 906 in tourist), the now 32,336-ton ship was sensibly used for nine or so months on the Atlantic – between Bremerhaven, Southampton, Cherbourg and New York – and the remainder for winter cruises from New York to the sunny Caribbean. When the 697-ft long BREMEN arrived in New York

for the first time, in July 1959, she was greeted by the outbound BERLIN. Proudly, the North German Lloyd now had a two-ship Atlantic service.



Inbound along the Hudson: The BREMEN makes a 1:00pm arrival.

Initially, the BREMEN was grouped as a Class AA Ship by Fielding's Travel Guide to Europe. "Everything onboard from the keel to the radar mast is run precisely as clockwork – including the passengers themselves. In first class, if dinner is one sitting, it is on the button at 7:30 pm – but if you linger in the bar until 7:31pm, an elevator operator will pin you with a firm eye and all but dare you to order another cocktail. In all other respects, the BREMEN is outstanding, especially as value for tourist class trippers." In 1960, first class fares began at \$350, tourist class from \$240. A two-week winter cruise from New York – to San Juan, Martinique, Antigua, Barbados and St Thomas – was priced from \$325.



Gala day: The outbound BERLIN passes the BREMEN on its maiden arrival at New York In July 1959.

Later but briefly, during 1966, there were actually three Lloyd liners in service. Earlier that year, the Company added the EUROPA, the former KUNGSHOLM of 1953. But after 41 years of service, the BERLIN was sold to Italian shipbreakers that September. Soon, North German Lloyd itself was offering more and more cruises, and less crossings. The BREMEN was even cruising in summer, once normally peak time for Atlantic service.

North German Lloyd's Atlantic service, begun in 1848, ended in late 1971. Passenger loads had dropped in the late '60s by more than 50%. Besides, the aging BREMEN was having mechanical problems and needed costly repairs. Further, all but tarnishing North German Lloyd's impeccable, timely image, there were now delays and even a few canceled sailings.



EUROPA had been the KUNGSHOLM of 1953.



Odd meeting: The half-sunk COLUMBUS C (ex-KUNGSHOLM of 1953, ex-EUROPA) meets the SEA PRINCESS (ex-KUNGSHOLM of 1966) at Cadiz in August 1984.

The BREMEN was soon sold off, becoming the REGINA MAGNA for Chandris Cruises; the EUROPA was reassigned as a fulltime cruise ship for the growing German travel market. These days, as Hapag-Lloyd, the Company operates luxury cruise liners as well as expedition ships.

(Photos: Bill Miller Collection)

An Opportunity to Learn More: The article "The Immortal ANDREA DORIA" by Bill Miller in the December issue of *THE PORTHOLE* generated some interest in the events that led to her collision with STOCKHOLM. For those wanting to learn more about the controversy surrounding the collision, [SS Andrea Doria - Wikipedia](#) provides additional information and resources regarding the tragedy.

SHIP NEWS

COMPILED BY PAT DACEY

The following is a glimpse of trends and developments in the cruise industry for 2026 that was compiled from open-source articles about the industry, cruise lines announcements and travel articles focusing on the cruise industry. *Cruise Industry News* is the primary source with other sources used as supporting data.

In 2026, 14 new ocean-going cruise ships will enter service accounting for an additional 30,000 new berths at a cost of over 10 billion dollars. In keeping with the trend to build bigger ships, some of these newbuilds will continue to grow, such as the launch of DISNEY ADVENTURE at a projected 208,000 tons and 6,000 berths. Royal Caribbean International will also continue to expand its fleet with the introduction of LEGEND OF THE SEAS at 258,000 tons and 5,610 passengers.

MSC, Norwegian Cruise Line and TUI Cruises will all also launch newbuilds exceeding 150,000 tons in keeping with plans based on the success of larger ships. Meanwhile, Viking, Explora and Regent will all launch newbuilds in 2026 that are medium sized and are all below 100,000 tons maintaining fleet continuity and aligning with current positive passenger satisfaction ratings.



EXPLORA III (Image: Explora)

Now with the overwhelming success of the “modern day” private island by the cruise industry, and the reality of port restrictions of larger vessels and their higher capacities, cruise lines are moving forward at an unprecedented rate to create additional and larger private properties for their exclusive use.

With the success of CocoCay in the Bahamas, Royal Caribbean has taken a leap from a private island to a 17-acre beach club on the western side of the Bahamas' Paradise Island. The new Royal Beach Club, Paradise Island, is a \$165 million venture in collaboration with the Bahamian government, located directly across from the cruise terminal in Nassau. The new facility will be serviced by a fleet of Royal Caribbean ferries. The beach club concept is an additional step by the cruise industry beyond the private island concept to compete with the local tourism economy. In this instance, the beach club capacity will be limited to 40% of onboard passengers. Additionally, Royal Caribbean is investing in Nassau and is making a long-term commitment to support the local economy through a public-private partnership, both inside and outside of the Royal Beach Club. Royal Caribbean is also projecting to move forward with more than eight new Royal Caribbean-owned exclusive destinations in Europe, the Caribbean, the South Pacific and South America.



The 43' tall Crown and Anchor Logo looms large over the construction of the new Royal Beach Club on Nassau's Paradise Island. (Image: Cruise Industry News)

Carnival Corporation is also making significant investments and enhancements to Half Moon Cay and Mahogany Bay which will be renamed Isla Tropicale. In July, Carnival will be debuting Celebration Key, located on Grand Bahama Island.

In a welcome trend, the cruise industry is incorporating new technology and the ability to use alternative fuels in newbuilds, with 65% of ships introduced in 2026 using alternative fuels such as LNG. In addition, many ports are moving towards adding support for shore side power, allowing ships to shut down their engines after docking and operate off the shore side connection.

With cruise industry bookings as well as profits pacing higher in 2025 and an optimistic outlook for 2026 an increase in accommodations for solo travelers is a welcomed for the 59% of travelers who intend to travel solo in 2026. According to Virtuoso Network, solo cruising is one of the growing cruise trends and will continue to see an upswing. Norwegian Cruise Line now has over 1,000 staterooms dedicated to solo travelers fleetwide while Holland America Line initiated its solo staterooms starting with its Pinnacle-class ships in 2016.

A final trend for 2026 is that more cruise lines are offering itineraries to showcase ports of call by increasing the time spent in port with many offering overnight stays. Cruise lines offering these port immersive itineraries include Regent, Princess, Azamara, Oceania, Atlas Ocean and Windstar in addition to others. With ships spending more time in port, many destinations are now introducing new cruise-focused taxes, fees and guest caps. These efforts are an attempt to manage the number of passengers visiting as well as address environmental concerns by regulating ship calls. In 2026, proposed or new taxes for cruise visits are already planned for Greece, Norway, Hawaii, Iceland and France.

All in all 2026 is shaping up to be an exciting year for the cruise industry with expanding itineraries, new ships as well as our personal favorites to travel on.

Happy Cruising in 2026!



Members may submit the following for consideration for publication in The Porthole: member photos with descriptions and dates taken, ship news, and maritime articles that may be of interest to your fellow members. Please direct submissions to wsspony@gmail.com. Please note published materials are subject to editing and, if printed, are not necessarily the opinion of the WSS-PONY Branch.

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