

JANUARY, 2018 VOLUME XXXV, # 1

## Sailing in Two Directions: Passenger Shipping in the Age of TITANIC By William Roka

Friday, January 26, 2018 – 6:00 PM

At the Community Church Assembly Room, 40 East 35<sup>th</sup> Street, Manhattan

By the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, travel was big business. Millions of passengers were on the move, corporations spanned the globe, and ship lines competed to build the world's largest moving objects, North Atlantic superliners. William Roka, the South Street Seaport Museum's historian and public programs manager, and curator of the Seaport's most recent exhibition *Millions: Migrants and Millionaires Aboard the Great Liners, 1900-1914*, takes us on a tour of this extraordinary period in travel history.

The largest number of passengers were westbound travelers, the immigrants in third class, who sought economic opportunity and a new life in the United States. Immigrants formed the largest source of revenue for shipping companies. In order to efficiently move millions across multiple borders and to ensure their entry into the United States in the face of increasingly stricter immigration laws, shipping companies created a sophisticated transit system that reached deep into Europe and across the US.

While travel conditions for immigrants improved each passing year, construction of superliners such as *Lusitania*, *Mauretania*, *Aquitania*, *Olympic*, *Titanic*, *Imperator*, and *Vaterland* was not entirely for their benefit. Beyond national pride in building the biggest and best, shipping companies were motivated by a more common interest: profit. After immigrants in third class, it was first-class passengers who provided the greatest source of revenue. For only a hundred thousand annual passengers, shipping companies would create floating palaces that rivaled the best hotels in comfort and amenities.

First class and third class, millionaires and immigrants, lives that were worlds apart on land, for a brief time almost touched aboard the North Atlantic liners.



AQUITANIA departing New York in 1914, from a period illustration by Oden Rosenzweig.

(William Roka Collection)

**NEXT EVENTS:** Membership meetings: February 23, March 22, April 27, May 18, June 22 (programs TBA).

**ADDRESS:** PO Box 384, New York, NY 10185-0384

**E-MAIL:** [wsspony@gmail.com](mailto:wsspony@gmail.com)

**WEBSITE:** [www.worldshipny.com](http://www.worldshipny.com)

## MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



AMERICAN QUEEN (left) and QUEEN OF THE MISSISSIPPI (right) at Paducah KY, July 2017.

(Marge Dowman)

### ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

**Please send reports of your holiday and winter voyages for publication in the next issue of The Porthole!**

### MUSEUMS, LECTURES AND HARBOR CRUISES

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

**SOUTH STREET SEAPORT MUSEUM** [www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org](http://www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org) or 212-748-8600.

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

**VANCOUVER WSS & VANCOUVER MARITIME MUSEUM** [www.worldshipsocietyvan.ca](http://www.worldshipsocietyvan.ca) for information or if you visit, contact Glenn Smith: 604-684-1240, email [glenn.smith@worldshipsocietyvan.ca](mailto:glenn.smith@worldshipsocietyvan.ca) Per their website, monthly meetings have been eliminated for the foreseeable future.

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

**MERSEYSIDE WSS:** Meetings are held at The Seafarer's Centre, Cambridge Road, Crosby L22 1RQ. Contact the Mersey Log editor for more information at [johnthomas23@gmail.com](mailto:johnthomas23@gmail.com) or 01244 34702.

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

**PROJECT LIBERTY SHIP** [www.ssjohnwbrown.org](http://www.ssjohnwbrown.org) or 410-558-0646. Visit or sail on the World War II vintage Liberty Ship, based in Baltimore, MD. Contact for dates and more information.

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

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

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

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

**THE NATIONAL LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM** [www.lighthousemuseum.org](http://www.lighthousemuseum.org) or 718-390-0040 – **PLEASE NOTE NEW PHONE NUMBER!** Contact for schedule of cruises and other events.

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

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

## **SHIP'S LOG - NOVEMBER**

At the start of the November meeting, we acknowledged the presence of Kathy Morgan, sister of our recently deceased former treasurer, Alan Borthwick. (His memorial service would be several days later, at Riverside Church.)

The evening's main event was another very interesting program from long-time member Ted Scull, accompanied as usual by his always-excellent photography. He was introduced by his friend and our membership secretary Stu Gewirtzman, who described Ted's love of travel – 120 countries' worth. The Ted talk this evening covered six of his many voyages, on ships that represented the last of their kind. In general, Ted described something of the vessel's history, atmosphere, a little about the other passengers, and a glimpse of the areas visited. He started the evening's travels aboard the passenger/cargo ship AMERICANA, which carried over 80 passengers to a number of interesting ports between Brooklyn and Buenos Aires. The idea behind the ship was that with room for at least 50 passengers, it would qualify as a passenger ship, and therefore get priority in docking. Unfortunately, the ship proved unsuccessful – too small for the service, and never carried more than 45 passengers. She was sold for tramping and was ultimately scrapped.

From there we time-travelled back to the days of colonialism and the fleets that were built to connect the various countries and their colonies. This evening we were sailing with British India Lines, whose 200+ vessels sailed over a mind-boggling tangle of routes. Ted sailed aboard three BI vessels, his favorite being the KARANJA, which he showed us. He was the only American and the only tourist, with the remaining passengers looking for work in other countries. Ted was so taken with the KARANJA that 30 years later he bought a model. She was not the last of the line, however; that was the DWARKA.

In a similar vein, there were the Royal Mail ships from England, with Union Castle Line servicing the remote Atlantic island of St. Helena. When that route was discontinued, a shipping entrepreneur bought a small freighter and offered to resume the service, for a subsidy. When his ship proved too small, he had another one built – a cargo/passenger vessel, the ST. HELENA, that would carry 128 passengers plus anything needed on the island, except fuel. Ted showed us how to meet people and make friends on the deck tennis court (where there were no containers in the way). Ted and Suellyn, along with other passengers, spent a week or so on the island, which visit provided some anecdotes as well as some scenic photography. Among the attractions, there were sites related to Napoleon's exile, and a then 165-year-old turtle, which may have been the world's oldest reptile. The ST. HELENA was supposed to stop running with the construction of a new airport, which turned out to have wind shear problems due to its location. When the problems are solved, the ST. HELENA will be sold.

Then Ted took us aboard a former ocean liner, the GRIPSHOLM, which had been sold to Regency Cruises and became the cruise ship REGENT SEA. We were photographically taken on a tour of the vessel, and to some interesting Mayan ruins ashore. Regency was one of the last to try to run a fleet of used ships. They turned out to be hard to maintain, and Regency eventually went broke.

And then we boarded (so to speak) an ocean liner that didn't become a cruise ship – the STEFAN BATORY – an example of an affordable and well-run national flagship. This was also one of the last ships to have kennels (cue photo of frolicking dogs). We saw economy cabins, were told of a group of girls accommodated on mattresses on the floor at a special rate, and heard a description of the captain's cocktail party, which involved some strange maneuvers by the officers.

This took us to the French Line, Ted's favorite, on which he had his first taste of trans-Atlantic travel, and the FRANCE, which was built to do only trans-Atlantic crossings. Among the deck scenes was one that showed that both French and American dogs were provided with familiar accommodations for their needs.

Ted closed with several spectacular sunset scenes, photographed from the QM2.

Marge Dovman

## **SHIP'S LOG – DECEMBER**

Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow -- who cares! Certainly not the 33 brave, hardy PONY branchers and friends who made it through the season's first snowstorm. Yes, there were some who unfortunately couldn't make it for our annual holiday party, as well as to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the QUEEN MARY's arrival in Long Beach. We made a repeat visit to Arte Café on West 73<sup>rd</sup> Street, and once again we were more than happy with our choice.

We had time for socializing, indulging in our favorite beverages, watching projections of maritime slides taken by various members, or perusing the copy of an invitation to a celebration in Long Beach of the QUEEN MARY's arrival anniversary held the previous day.

And then came the food – all attractive and all delicious! For the first course we could choose among caprese (buffala mozzarella, tomatoes and basil), fried calamari or an artistically arranged pear salad. The second course gave a choice of chicken parmigiana, grilled salmon, ravioli or chicken valdostana. Along with the usual meal-end beverages, we had apple pie with vanilla ice cream, followed by a pineapple layer cake. Why? Two birthdays, therefore two cakes! The celebrants were Marc Shenfield and Richard Wagner. Ages were not specified. But happy birthday, guys!

Between the final two courses we were treated to a film, "QUEEN MARY – A Legend of the Atlantic." This was a biopic of the vessel from her construction through the various incidents in her life, a tour of her three-class accommodations, and more. We didn't know how much more, because the show was interrupted in midstream due to lack of time, so we will all have to wait until next year to see how it ends. However, we still have our memories of Pat Dacey's excellent QUEEN MARY program at the previous meeting.

Just a note to add to the spirit of the season: while members paid \$35 each for this event, each enjoyed a subsidy of \$19 from the club as thanks for their membership.

And our thanks to all who participated in making this such a fun afternoon.

Retroactive best wishes for the holiday of your choice, and current good wishes for a happy, healthy and somewhat warmer New Year.

Marge Dovman



PONY Branch members enjoying the holiday party at Arte Café in New York City on December 9.

(Mario De Stefano)

### **SHIP NEWS**

**FERRY SUCCESSFUL:** New York City's new ferry services are an unqualified success, based on end-of-year data released by the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCDEC) and Hornblower, operator of NYC Ferry. Ridership totals for 2017 exceeded projections by 34%, with a total of almost 2.9 million riders. As a result, capacity will be added to six new boats in 2018. They will accommodate 349 passengers, and will be fitted with larger engines.

**LINDBLAD TAKES A BOW:** Construction has started on Lindblad Expeditions' new vessel. Designed for polar operation, she will feature the patented X-Bow, which is designed to enhance stability and optimize fuel efficiency. Zero-speed stabilizers will also aid passenger comfort at any speed, or while the ship is stationary. The steel-cutting ceremony took place in early January at Ulstein Verft in Ulsteinvik, Norway. The 126-passenger vessel is due to begin service for Lindblad and their expedition partner, National Geographic, in January 2020.



Lindblad Expeditions' unnamed vessel will feature the patented X-Bow, and will debut in 2020.

(Lindblad Expeditions)

**PUTTIN' ON THE RITZ-CARLTON:** The keel of the unnamed first vessel for The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection was laid at the Hijos De J. Barreras Shipyard in Vigo, Spain on January 11, 2018. The vessel will accommodate 298 passengers, all in suites with private balconies. Bookings open in May 2018, with the maiden voyage scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, 2019. Seven to ten-day worldwide itineraries are being planned, and the “yachts” will also be available for charter.



The renowned Tilburg Design of Sweden is designing the Ritz-Carlton Yacht interiors.

(Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection)

**NEW YORK CITY - A GROWING CRUISE PORT:** Two major cruise lines are committing new vessels to cruise service from the Port of New York. Norwegian Cruise Line, a New York mainstay for decades, will bring one of their newest and largest ships to New York for the 2019-2020 winter season. The 167,800-ton NORWEGIAN BLISS will arrive in New York from Los Angeles following a trans Panama Canal cruise on November 24, 2019. She will embark on a series of cruises to the Caribbean, the Bahamas and Florida, operating out of the port through April 2020. Fast-growing MSC Cruises is building multiple new ships, and have tentatively selected the 171,598-ton MERAVIGLIA to commence service from New York for the summer season in 2020. Itineraries and exact dates of the cruises have yet to be announced. In related news, MSC SEASIDE completed her maiden voyage from Trieste to Miami in December. The 153,516-ton ship is of an entirely new design developed by MSC, geared for warm-weather cruising. Her aft section is said to resemble a Miami Beach high-rise condominium. SEASIDE is now on a year-round deployment to the Caribbean from Miami, while sister SEAVIEW will be based in the Mediterranean beginning June 10, 2018.



SEASIDE, seen here during her maiden voyage from Trieste to Miami, is part of the rapidly growing fleet of Italian operator MSC. (MSC Cruises)

**FANTASTIC BARCELONA BUMP:** The roll-on, roll-off ferry FANTASTIC, owned by the Italian company Grandi Navi Veloci, apparently lost engine power while docking on January 12, and collided with the berthed cruise ship VIKING STAR in the Port of Barcelona, Spain. FANTASTIC dropped her anchor in an effort to avert the collision. Nevertheless, she drifted and impacted the Viking Cruises' 930-passenger ship near her stern on the port side at approximately 2:00 PM local time, in clear weather. Port officials boarded both vessels for damage assessment, which was minimal, and no injuries were reported. FANTASTIC continued to her next stop, Genoa, Italy at around 5:30 PM, while VIKING STAR proceeded to Marseilles, France at 6:00 PM.



VIKING STAR, pictured against a Manhattan backdrop in October 2016, was involved in a minor collision with the ferry FANTASTIC in Barcelona, Spain on January 12. (Bob Allen)

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