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Ship Disaster Documents Found in SSHSA's Archives

As SSHSA staff and volunteers go through previously unprocessed boxes of archival items, interesting discoveries are being made. One of these discoveries was in a folder innocuously labeled, "Ship Disasters." But in fact, the folder documented one disaster: the sinking of the Ward Line's SS *Merida* in May 1911 after colliding with the United Fruit Company's SS *Admiral Farragut*. The folder is stuffed with mostly notarized affidavits testifying the items lost by passengers. These documents give a unique view into early 20th century fashion and economics, as well as a brief window into who these people were.

The SS *Merida* was built in 1906 for the Ward line by Cramp & Sons in Philadelphia. She was a twin screw ship with triple expansion engines. She was en route to New York City from Havana, Cuba, when on May 12, 1911 she collided with the SS *Admiral Farragut* in dense fog. All of her passengers and crew were rescued, with only one passenger injured, according to contemporary news articles. That passenger was the wife of "A. Peon" or Augusto Peon, who together

with his family and two maids were sailing to Paris to "await the end of Mexican troubles," most likely referring to the revolution that erupted that year.

The records of the sinking in our collection include the notarized listing of the Peon family, including his injured wife, Jacinta Bolio de Peon. They were clearly a wealthy family. Some of Augusto's lost possessions included a pair of French shoes, a cashmere suit, silk socks, and a case of literature and medical texts. His full list of

headquarters.

Like SSHSA on Facebook to read about current and historical maritime events and updates on SSHSA's new headquarters.

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Favorite SSHSA on Flickr to view images of conferences, events, and meetings, and scans of images from SSHSA's photo archives.

The Winter 2015 *PowerShips* is on its way

The most recent issue

expenses was \$1,064.60. His wife Jacinta's list included corsets, a Kimona (Japanese inspired blouse), several ostrich feathers, and necklaces of black pearls, emeralds and diamonds. Her jewelry alone valued \$41,500.

Other passengers did not have nearly as expensive or extensive lists. Most ran up to a few hundred American dollars. Items reflect common early 20th century fashion: petticoats, aprons, watch chains, suits, and handkerchiefs. Others reflect the length and purpose of one's travel: cameras, souvenirs, parasols and walking canes. Or, as from a British couple's list: a Webley automatic pistol, a Lancaster rifle, binoculars, and saddles.

To view more documents from the disaster and images of the *Merida*, please [click here](#).

Carnival Vista to Feature IMAX Theater, Water Slide, and SkyRide

When Carnival Cruise Line's newest ship, the 3,954-passenger *Carnival Vista*, launches May 1, 2016 in the Mediterranean, it will take onboard entertainment to a new level. An IMAX theater, 450-foot-plus-long water tube slide, and the suspended open-air SkyRide are just some of the attractions the ship will have. The *Vista* will also include an onboard brewery, aft pool, the New England-inspired Seafood Shack, and a dedicated families-only zone with lounge and cabins.

Carnival Vista will sail a variety of Mediterranean itineraries in its first season, calling on ports throughout Italy, France, Spain, Croatia and Turkey. After a season of eighteen sailings in Europe, the ship will embark on a 13-night transatlantic crossing October 21, 2016, arriving in New York City on November 3, 2016. It will then operate a series of sailings from New York. The ship's final homeport will be announced at a later date.

of *PowerShips* is on its way to your mailbox. Some members may receive a notice on their issue letting them know that they need to renew for 2015. If you are one of those members, you may mail in the postcard included with your outsert, call SSHSA at (401) 463-3570, or renew easily and securely online by [clicking here](#).

If you are not a member of SSHSA, you are missing out! [Click here](#) to review SSHSA's membership benefits. We look forward to welcoming you aboard!

SSHSA Headquarters Update

We are still extremely busy unpacking various boxes that were brought out of storage. Clippings, scrapbooks, letters, journals, and photographs have been located among the vast amounts of boxes. We are finally starting to see floor space in our conference and education room, and will have it ready by our opening on May 22, 2015. Visit our [blog](#) to see some of the archives we've uncovered.

Magnolia Marine Transport Christens 20th Towboat

Magnolia Marine Transport, the owners of seventy-six barges and twenty-one towboats, christened the M.V. *Emily Davis* on December 2nd, 2014, in Vicksburg, Mississippi. The *Emily Davis* is the 20th towboat in the fleet, but due to being "put straight to work out of the shipyard," she wasn't able to be blessed right away. "We had a small blessing, but nothing formal," Magnolia Marine Transport's President, Stan Humphreys, stated. "The crew told us they thought it might be haunted because it hadn't been blessed. They

To learn more about the *Carnival Vista*, please click [here](#).

(Above image: Carnival *Vista*- Cruise Critic.)

American Cruise Lines' Newest Riverboat's Maiden Voyage Scheduled for April 11th

American Cruise Lines' newest riverboat, *American Eagle*, will depart on her maiden voyage from New Orleans, Louisiana, on April 11th, 2015. A special celebration has been planned for the riverboat's maiden voyage, which includes musical performances, a meet and greet with American Cruise Line executives, a private reception, and exclusive piano concert.

American Eagle will carry one hundred and fifty guests in spacious staterooms, and will offer all the amenities today's travelers expect, while maintaining the elegance of classic late 1800s riverboats. Of the eighty-four staterooms, seventy-four feature large private balconies, all of which have sliding glass doors for optimal views and enjoyment.

American Cruise Lines will operate *American Eagle* primarily on the Lower Mississippi River between New Orleans and Memphis. The cruise line looks forward to welcoming guests aboard for the new riverboat's maiden voyage.

(Above image: American Cruise Lines' *American Eagle*- Travel News.)

SS United States Conservancy Effort Receives Anonymous \$250,000 Donation

The SS *United States* Conservancy has announced that they have received a donation of \$250,000 from an anonymous donor. The donor was inspired by the generosity and passion exhibited by cruise industry executive, Jim Pollin. In 2014, Jim donated an initial \$120,000, followed by a generous challenge grant. Supporters from around the world answered this call to action by donating \$120,000,

were kidding, of course, but we wanted to do it right."

The *Emily Davis* measures one hundred and ten feet long by thirty-two feet wide by ten feet, three inches deep, with a working draft of eight and one half feet. Clearance is forty-five feet.

PowerShips Feature-Lives of Liners

Due to a printing error, page 13 of the Winter 2015 issue of *PowerShips* cuts off the last sentence in Bill Miller's article, *Hoboken's Pier B*. To view the corrected page electronically, please [click here](#).

Maritime Training Complex to be built at San Jacinto College

San Jacinto College recently broke ground on the future San Jacinto College Maritime Technology and Training Center, and is expecting to complete the 45,000-square-foot project in 2016.

Texas leads the United States in export tonnage, and there are more than one million jobs related to marine cargo activity at the Port of Houston and private terminals, according to a recent report by the Port of Houston. San Jacinto College's Maritime program has awarded about 3,200 U.S. Coast Guard-required certifications since 2010, and has developed the state's first associate degree maritime transportation program. Due to the rapid growth of the program, the college purchased 13 acres of land along the Port of Houston to build the Maritime Training Center.

prompting Jim to match this amount. Jim was recently honored with the Conservancy's National Flagship Champion Award.

Funds from the new gift will be used for advancing the Conservancy's various curatorial programs, including planning for the SS *United States* Museum of Design and Discovery. Preliminary designs for the museum include restoring key areas of the ship to create innovative and immersive experiences for visitors.

The Museum and the Conservancy's curatorial and archival programs will be developed in consultation with an advisory council and other specialists, including maritime historians and experts previously associated with the Smithsonian Institution, Philadelphia's Franklin Institute, and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Jim Pollin stated, "Last year, I asked the world to help save our flagship. I asked people to join me in ensuring this majestic piece of American history had a future. This new gift is an amazing display of confidence in the Conservancy's vision and an acknowledgement of the ship's historic importance for all of us."

(Above image: SS *United States*, Braun Brothers Collection)

New Novel *Dogs in the Sun* features RMS *Queen Mary*

Author and SSHSA member Janice Convery brings to life the last voyage of RMS *Queen Mary* in her new novel, *Dogs in the Sun*, a tropical odyssey about a boat, a baby and a body that propels a diverse cast of characters to the shores of their new selves.

Students can earn certificates and associate degrees, as well as receive worker maritime training. Course offerings will also include U.S. Coast Guard required deck and engineering coursework to prepare mariners to work on commercial vessels in jobs ranging from a deckhand on a towboat to the captain of an oil tanker.

"This facility is going to make a big impact and help mariners stay competitive in a global industry," stated consultant Rear Adm. William W. Pickavance Jr., a former merchant mariner who spent thirty-two years on active duty as a commissioned officer with the U.S. Navy.

When it's completed, the San Jacinto College Maritime Technology and Training Center will have fifteen classrooms and engineering simulators to train maritime engineers to handle hydraulic, electric, pump control, motor control, heating and air conditioning and refrigeration jobs. There also will be a multipurpose space for industry conferences and corporate partner meetings.

Mariner's Museum Library features a new luxury cruise ship exhibit

The Mariner's Museum Library, located in Newport News, Virginia, has created a new exhibit titled "The Golden Age of Luxury Liners." The new exhibit, under the direction of student intern Alexandra McKay, features luxury cruise ships from 1920 to 1950, and includes items that would be found on these cruise ships, such as dinner menus, postcards, flyers, silverware, and glassware. All the items in the exhibit come from several different vessels and focus on different aspects of luxury cruising.

In many ways, *Dogs in the Sun* is an ode to the grand old luxury liner, her impeccable service record during peacetime and war, her sleek, vast beauty, her record-breaking superlatives, and her one-of-a-kind spirit that, despite all odds, still lives on.

"I first visited the ship on October 31, 1990, and I was hooked," recalls Convery. "It wasn't until I started writing the book, many years later, that I realized the importance of that day. It was the 23rd anniversary of RMS *Queen Mary*'s last-ever departure from Southampton, which kicked off a 39-day voyage down the coast of South America, around Cape Horn, up

Mexico and on into California's Long Beach where, at 12:07PM on Saturday, December 9, 1967, Captain John Treasure Jones uttered the words that ended the liner's sea-going career and ushered in her sedentary life: 'finished with engines.'"

In addition to researching her subject widely and volunteering on board the ship in 2002, Convery includes anecdotes she's gleaned from personal encounters with former crew, most notably a cheeky, blue-eyed chap named Devine who worked in the engineering department on both *Queens* in the 1960s. This former elevator greaser claims he once rode his Norton motorbike up the aft gangway, through the working alleyway, and back down the forward gangway, much to the wry displeasure of Captain Marr.

Devine also corroborated that the *Queen Mary* was indeed a happy ship. Perhaps that's why so many of us are still drawn to her. Convery is convinced one can still pick up the echoes of dedicated officers and crew, still imagine a certain easy, inspiring ambience that must have permeated the vessel when she was at the top of her game. Even today, she's alive, really, with the energy of past glories and triumphs, and aren't we happy she's still around to visit in Long Beach and, most recently, in the pivotal role she plays in *Dogs in the Sun*.

To learn more about *Dogs in the Sun*, please [click here](#).

What's Happening in Ship History?

This is a brief listing, so make sure to check locally for what's going on in your area.

February 24th

Winter 2015 Speaker Series: Shipwrecked!
Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum
St. Michaels, MD
http://www.cbmm.org/v_calendar.htm

February 24th, March 1st, March 14th

The exhibit is open to the public
Monday through Friday from 1:00PM
to 5:00PM through the Spring.

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USS *Cobia* Nook & Cranny Tours
Wisconsin Maritime Museum
Manitowoc, WI
<http://www.wisconsinmaritime.org/special-events/>
To make reservations, call the Museum at (920) 684-0218.

February 27th

Celebrate the Return of *Eva B.*
Exhibit Reception and Project Open House
San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park
San Francisco, CA
<http://www.maritime.org/events.htm>
Call (415) 561-6662 to RSVP.

February 28th

Shipboard Fare: Foods from the Seafaring Experience
Mystic Seaport
Mystic, CT
<http://www.mysticseaport.org/event/shipboard-fare-foods-from-the-seafaring-experience/>
Please call (860)-572-5331 to register.

March 7th

Genealogy Workshop
Oregon Historical Society
Portland, OR
<http://www.ohs.org/visit-ohs/events.cfm#march>

March 7th-8th

Battle of Hampton Roads Weekend
Mariner's Museum
Newport News, VA
<http://www.marinersmuseum.org/event/battle-of-hampton-roads-weekend/>

March 21st

5th Annual Annapolis Oyster Roast & Sock Burning
Annapolis Maritime Museum
Annapolis, MD
<http://www.amaritime.org/events/calendar/event/45-5th-annual-annapolis-oyster-roast-sock-burning>

April 13th-14th

Council of American Maritime Museums- Annual Meeting
Los Angeles Maritime Museum
San Pedro, CA
<http://www.councilofamericanmaritimemuseums.org/annual-meeting/>

April 19th

Ready, Set, Launch *San Salvador*
San Diego Maritime Museum
San Diego, CA
<http://www.sdmaritime.org/san-salvador-build/>



May 22nd

National Maritime Day Festivities and SSHSA Ship History Center
Opening

Steamship Historical Society of America

Warwick, RI

<http://www.sshsa.org>

More information coming soon!

May 23rd

SSHSA Annual Meeting

Steamship Historical Society of America

Warwick, RI

<http://www.sshsa.org>

More information coming soon!

Ahoy! is the quarterly electronic newsletter for those interested in maritime history. It is produced in February, May, August, and November and distributed by Steamship Historical Society of America to friends, members and any other individuals interested in maritime heritage.

Alissa Cafferky, Editor, *Ahoy!*

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