



February 2018

VOLUME 8, NUMBER 1

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Maritime heritage comes to life in the Big Easy

This month, Steamship Historical Society board members, staff and friends attended the 11th Maritime Heritage Conference in New Orleans. Presented by the Maritime Heritage Alliance and Tall Ships America, it was co-sponsored by SSHSA and the National Maritime Historical Society and brought together dozens of like-minded organizations such as the Council of American Maritime Museums, Historic Naval Ships Association, and many more.

The conference began with comments from sponsoring organizations, including a welcome by Dr. Timothy Runyan, a moving speech from Tall Ships America's Bert Rogers, a presentation by Ron Oswald of NMHS, and SSHSA Executive Director Matthew Schulte, who stressed the shared history and purpose of maritime organizations, whether they be tall ships or engine-powered.

There were many meetings, sessions and presentations to attend throughout the conference, one of the highlights being a breakfast talk by Captain Clarke "Doc" Hawley, a 60-year veteran of river shipping and living legend, who gave a compelling overview of notable riverboats and captains on the Mississippi.

There were many SSHSA representatives on hand, and all were great ambassadors to the approximately 400 attendees. Many people received their first PowerShips issue at the conference, and were introduced to the society and our programs. Attendees also learned about us through a dynamic presentation by Education Coordinator Aimee Bachari focusing on our education program, "Steaming into the Future." Aimee part of a program that also included panel presentations from the Egan Maritime Institute and Diving with

The winter issue of *PowerShips* has landed!

Issue #304 of *PowerShips* features articles on the SS *Columbia*, Hoboken's Fifth Street Pier, A Hog Islander's Odyssey in World War II, Sailing (or Avoiding) The Exiles' Line to India, U-Boats Off New England 1942-1945, Ship Research Part 2 and more. Whether you're new to SSHSA or your membership has lapsed, it's not too late to come on board! Sign up or renew today by [clicking here](#) or calling our headquarters at (401) 463-3570. Don't miss out!

What you're missing on social media!

If you don't follow us on social media, you may be missing out on a lot of exciting things going on at SSHSA. Click the icons and links below to check us out on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Tumblr](#) to stay up to date on all things #shiphistory.

a Purpose, and board member Captain David Pickering moderated and encouraged an engaging discussion between presenters and conference-goers about how we can better reach younger audiences through maritime history and culture.

Other panel discussions and presentations at the conference included subjects such as disaster planning and recovery, social media development and institutional change. There were numerous discussions of historical subjects like navies and warfare, ocean liners and fisheries, as well as preservation of historic ships and maritime sites. There were independent students and writers, and organizations like South Street Seaport, Maine Maritime Academy, and NOAA presenting research and ideas. The conference was wonderfully capped by the keynote speaker, National Book Award winning writer Nathaniel Philbrick ("In the Heart of the Sea").

From the sessions to the speakers to the gala dinner, it was a wonderful meeting of minds across maritime fields and we were happy to be a part of it! Kudos to Dr. David Winkler, Tall Ships America staff and all of the maritime heritage folks involved in the planning, coordination and successful outcome!

(Photos: Above, Captain Clarke "Doc" Hawley gives a breakfast talk on notable Mississippi River ships and captains at the 11th Maritime Heritage Conference in New Orleans. Below, passengers ride aboard the historic *Natchez* steamboat.)

April talk to focus on preserving, salvaging historic sites

As advances in technology have enabled us to better locate the final resting places of long lost ships, questions about ownership and conservation remain hot topics in the maritime heritage world. Our friends at the Rhode Island Marine Archaeology Project will examine this dynamic by taking a closer look at two important nautical cases.

"Property vs. Preservation: The *Lusitania* and the *Endeavour*" will be held on Thursday, April 12, from 5:30 to 7:30 at the Rhode Island Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission offices at 150

Royal Mail honors its maritime roots

Great Britain's Royal Mail is paying tribute to history of mail transport across the oceans with a new set of collectible postage labels.

"Royal Mail Heritage: Mail by Sea," features six legendary ships that were part of the transatlantic mail delivery that has existed for centuries: the *Queen Mary*, the *Antelope*, the *St. Helena*, the *Great Western*, the *Britannia* and the *Olympic*.

Collectively, these ships have lifetimes of stories to tell. While the *Queen Mary* was well known for being one of the most luxurious ways to cross the sea – regularly transporting dignitaries, celebrities and royalty – it was also a big leap forward for postal delivery, cutting the travel time from England to New York to just four days.

Benefit Street in Providence. Guests will include F. Gregg Bemis Jr., who currently owns the salvage rights to the *Lusitania*; Michael J. Daly, a partner with Pierce Atwood in Providence who practices admiralty law; Dr. John Broadwater, retired director of the *Monitor* project; and U.S. Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), who was the Attorney General of Rhode Island and helped establish Rhode Island's ownership of the Newport transport fleet that included the *Endeavour*.

Moderated by RIMAP's Dr. D.K. (Kathy) Abbass, the talk will touch on principles governing commercial salvage operations and how those principles relate to historic shipwreck preservation efforts. The *Lusitania* and the *Endeavour* were chosen because they represent two shipwrecks using the same salvage laws for different purposes.

Mr. Bemis secured the salvage rights to the *Lusitania* more than 40 years ago. After the Irish offshore territorial boundaries expanded to include this ship, Ireland used preservation laws to limit his access to his property. This has resulted in a protracted legal wrangle and is a classic case of the private property versus preservation issues that affect both research and recovery.

In the case of the *Endeavour*, RIMAP's studies of the Newport transport fleet continue under archaeological permit, and his legal maneuvers set a precedent for how salvage laws may also protect historic shipwrecks.

For more information, visit www.rimap.org.

(Photo: A colorized picture of the *Lusitania* - via Youtube.)

Treasures from 'Ship of Gold' on display now

One of the greatest lost treasures in American history is on display through Saturday in Long Beach, California.

Part of the Long Beach Coin, Currency, Stamp & Sports Collectible Expo, the public can get their first look at historic gold and silver coins, gold ingots and unopened sacks of gold dust treasure recovered

The *Antelope* also has a colorful history and was captured twice by the French, in 1781 and 1782. In 1783, the packet's crew successfully fought off the French privateer *Atalanta*, and the crew was praised for the "successful protection of the mail" by postmaster general of the United Kingdom, Philip Stanhope, 5th Earl of Chesterfield.

More recently, the *St. Helena* was "designed and built to carry mail, cargo and passengers to and from the remote South Atlantic island after which she is named," according to Royal Mail. She is one of only two ocean-going vessels in the world to still carry the title of Royal Mail Ship.

Royal Mail Group Ltd. designed the labels, using illustrations by Andrew Davidson. Issued Feb. 14, Mail by Sea is the fourth set in the Royal Mail Heritage series with the theme of mail transportation. The previous three sets in the series were Transport (February 2016), Mail by Rail (February 2017), and Mail by Air (September 2017).

Royal Mail is offering a first-day cover franked with all six Mail by Sea labels. The labels also are packaged with a carrier card that includes additional information about the history of carrying mail by sea.

For more information, visit www.royalmail.com.

Warming oceans weaken ice, open up Arctic routes

As ice continues to weaken and retreat as a result of climate change, new routes are opening up for shipping companies in the Arctic. Once thought impossible, two ships

from the SS Central America, a ship sunk in a storm off the coast of South Carolina in 1857 as it was transporting a haul from the Gold Rush-era West Coast.

The gold's return to California has been an interesting story. Lost for more than 100 years, the ship was discovered by treasure hunter Tommy Thompson in 1988 after convincing 161 investors to pony up \$13 million for the expedition. Thompson and his investors were eventually given ownership of the gold found inside, and 532 gold bars and thousands of coins were sold for about \$50 million in 2000.

However, Thompson never paid his investors, and he went into seclusion until he was arrested in a Florida hotel room in 2015. He remains in jail until this day because he refuses to give the location of 500 missing gold coins.

The items on display were purchased by the California Gold Marketing Group in a court-approved transaction in November 2017. Since then, each piece of the treasure has been cleaned by hand, soaking it in a solution to brush off the rust and grime that accumulated under 7,000 feet of water.

After the display, the gold will all be put up for sale. Experts say some of the coins could go for \$1 million each because of the history behind it and the rarity.

The Long Beach Coin, Currency, Stamp & Sports Collectible Expo is open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday, and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. For more information, visit www.longbeachexpo.com.

(Photo: Some of the gold recovered from the SS Central America in 2014 - via CBS News.)

Tickets selling fast to *Normandie* Ocean Liner Dinner

Tickets are selling fast for this year's Ocean Liner Dinner. A tribute to the *Normandie* and the French Line, SSHSA is bringing a taste of the

have recently completed trips across the Arctic without the assistance of an icebreaker, one of them during the rigorous winter season.

The tanker *Christophe de Margerie* was the first to make it through, traveling from Norway to South Korea in just 19 days in August 2017. That's about 30 percent quicker than the regular route through the Suez Canal, according to its Russian owner, Sovcomflot.

Not to be outdone, the shipping company Teekay recently announced that one of its ships, the *Eduard Toll*, made its way from South Korea to the Sabetta terminal in northern Russia in December. From there, it sailed on to Montoir in France to deliver a load of liquefied natural gas.

Scientists say that this is another alarming example of a dangerous trend. Warming atmospheres and oceans are causing the southern edges of the ice to retreat. Since 1979, a winter sea ice cover more than twice the size of Texas has been lost, and the maximum extent of the Arctic sea ice has dropped 2.8 percent, according to the National Snow and Ice Data Center.

This trend will likely mean that more companies adjust their routes. One study suggested European routes to Asia will become 10 days faster via the Arctic than alternatives by the middle of the century, and 13 days faster by the end.

Contact Us

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first-class lifestyle to our annual fundraiser on April 7. [Click here to purchase tickets now](#), or call 401-463-3570 or email info@sshsa.org for more information.

Our Ocean Liner Dinner is gaining steam each year, with two fabulous evenings behind us already. Our inaugural RMS *Queen Mary* dining experience in 2016 was a splendid affair, and those who attended last year's fun and excitement are still talking about the seven-course *Titanic* meal developed straight from White Star Lines' 1912 menu.

Come relive the golden age of ocean liners and help support SSHSA's efforts to preserve maritime history. We're planning some really special touches this time around, so trust us when we say this is one event you do not want to miss. [Reserve your spot today!](#)

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 24

Steamship Disasters of Rhode Island

11:00 AM

Admission is free, but reservations are required

Ship History Center

Warwick, RI

www.sshsa.org

March 13

On Deck: Maritime Navigation

10:30 to 11:15AM

\$5 for members, \$8 for nonmembers

Maine Maritime Museum

Bath, ME

www.mainemaritimemuseum.org

March 21

Spring Lecture Series: Loving a Sailor, Past and Present

7:00 PM to 8:30PM

Free with museum admission, registration is required

National Museum of the Great Lakes

Toledo, OH

419-214-5000, Ext. 200; reservations@inlandseas.org

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April 5-9

Tall Ships Galveston

Various dates and times, see website for details

Adults: \$10 for festival only, \$20 with onboard ship tours; Children
age 7-12: \$5 for festival only, \$10 with onboard ship tours

Texas Seaport Museum

Galveston, TX

www.galvestonhistory.org

April 7

Ocean Liner Dinner featuring the *Normandie*

6:00PM

\$150 per person or \$250 per couple

Rhodes on the Pawtuxet

Cranston, RI

www.sshsa.org

April 14

2018 Lego Shipbuilding Contest

10:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Free with museum admission

Los Angeles Maritime Museum

Los Angeles, CA

www.lamaritimemuseum.org

April 17-18

Pirate Days

10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Free for members, \$5 per child (plus museum admission) for
nonmembers

Mystic Seaport

Mystic, CT

www.mysticseaport.org

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.

Bryan Lucier, Editor, *Ahoy!*

Find us on:

[Renew Your Membership Today](#)

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