

#SSUSFullAhead

SSUSC.org

SAVING THE
UNITED STATES:
HISTORY

FULL SPEED

AHEAD!

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

WHAT IS THE SS UNITED STATES?

The *SS United States* is an historic ocean liner, widely known “America’s Flagship.” She is the fastest passenger ship ever built and the largest ever made in the USA. The *United States* still holds the trans-Atlantic speed record and is one of the last remaining of the world’s great 20th Century ocean liners. Since the vessel’s launch over 60 years ago, she has served as an enduring iconic symbol of American innovation and engineering might. She is the only ship that bears the name of this great nation.

WHY IS THE SS UNITED STATES SO IMPORTANT?

Like the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, and the Washington Monument – there’s only one *SS United States*. The ship was an ambassador of America’s post-war industrial power and a technological marvel. The soaring symbol of grace and grandeur touched the lives of over one million passengers, thousands of crew members, and countless others who were thrilled by her mere presence in New York or Europe flying the Stars and Stripes. Today, this ship remains one of the world’s last surviving examples from this bygone era of travel in grand style. The vessel still holds the transatlantic speed record, achieved on her maiden voyage using only two-thirds of her power. She served as a Naval auxiliary and was packed with top-secret features. It is imperative that we save her for future generations.

HOW DOES THE SS UNITED STATES COMPARE TO THE TITANIC?

The *SS United States* is the most famous ship that *didn’t* sink! At nearly 1,000 feet long, the *SS United States* is more than a hundred feet longer than the ill-fated *Titanic*, has five more decks, and – while in service – weighed in at nearly 10,000 tons heavier. The *SS United States* is so large that if you stood her on end, she’d be nearly as tall as New York City’s Chrysler Building or the Comcast Center

in Philadelphia. As the fastest ocean liner ever constructed, the SS *United States* could move almost faster in reverse than the *Titanic* could travel forward.

WHO BUILT THE SS UNITED STATES AND WHY?

For much of the 19th and 20th centuries, passenger travel across the Atlantic Ocean was dominated by a range of European merchant shipping lines that competed for the title of biggest, fastest and most luxurious ocean liner. The *Queen Mary* and *Normandie* are two examples of famous liners that transported travelers between New York and the ports of Europe in comfort and style. After World War II, it was America's turn to demonstrate its ability to compete and win on the seas. This era brought with it new American prosperity and ingenuity as well as new security threats. The US Government worked in conjunction with United States Lines to develop a "super ship" to be part Cold War weapon and part luxury ocean liner. The top secret Pentagon project produced the fastest, safest and most advanced vessel ever constructed – the SS *United States*. The ship could be quickly converted into a troop carrier able to transport 15,000 military service members for 10,000 miles without refueling, and do it faster than any other ship before or since.

HOW FAST WAS THE SS UNITED STATES?

The SS *United States*' [propellers](#), materials, hull and sleek overall design were part of a top secret Pentagon program to create the world's fastest ship. The SS *United States* still holds the trans-Atlantic speed record or "Blue Riband." Her true performance figures were kept secret for many years, but we know now that on her sea trials she achieved an amazing 38 knots – about 44 miles per hour. Some maritime historians and former crew members maintain that she sped even faster, so her true top speed may never be known. By comparison, today's modern cruise ships travel at around 28 miles per hour. The SS *United States* smashed the transatlantic speed record on her maiden voyage in 1952 using only two-thirds of her power.

WHO DESIGNED THE SS UNITED STATES?

The SS *United States* was designed by self-taught naval architect and marine engineer William Francis Gibbs. Born in 1886, Gibbs realized a life-long dream of designing the fastest ship in the world with the SS *United States*' maiden voyage in 1952. His firm designed over 60-percent of all of the nation's heavy armored ships in World War II, some 5,000 vessels in total. Widely regarded as one of the nation's foremost naval architects, he was deeply attached to his prized creation. Gibbs called the SS *United States* every day when she was at sea and rarely missed being on hand for the vessel's docking at her pier in New York. Gibbs's granddaughter, Susan Gibbs, serves as the SS *United States* Conservancy's executive director.

DID ANY FAMOUS PASSENGERS TRAVEL ON THE SS UNITED STATES?

The SS *United States* was **the** ship on which to sail in the 1950s and 60s, and she carried a very impressive complement of notable passengers on nearly every voyage. These included Marlon Brando, Coco Chanel, Sean Connery, Gary Cooper, Walter Cronkite, Salvador Dali, Walt Disney, Duke

Ellington, Judy Garland, Cary Grant, Charlton Heston, Bob Hope, Marilyn Monroe, Prince Rainier and Grace Kelly, Elizabeth Taylor, John Wayne, and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. The ship also carried four US presidents – Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Clinton. In fact, the *SS United States* carried more Presidents and heads of state in her career than any other ship in history.

WHERE IS THE SS UNITED STATES LOCATED NOW? CAN I VISIT THE SHIP?

The *SS United States* is docked at Pier 82 on Philadelphia's Delaware River. Because the vessel is located at a working pier and is subject to Homeland Security regulations, access to the vessel's pier is restricted. Members of the media are sometimes permitted on board with the permission of and escorted by the Conservancy. Financial supporters of the ship [at certain levels](#) can also schedule tours with the Conservancy. However, an excellent view of the vessel for the general public can be seen from Columbus Boulevard or from the IKEA cafeteria in Columbus Commons across the street. To pinpoint directions to the vessel using GPS, the following address may be used: 2100 South Christopher Columbus Boulevard, Philadelphia PA 19148.

ARE THE SS UNITED STATES' INTERIORS STILL INTACT?

No. Unfortunately, the vessel's fittings were all dismantled in the 1980s and 1990s by previous owners for financial gain and to remove building materials popular in the 1950s that were later deemed hazardous. Many fittings and artwork remain in private collections. The Conservancy's mission includes a restoration of several of the ship's grand public rooms to their original configuration with both original and replica materials. The Conservancy is presently undertaking a special project to catalogue the location and ownership of the remaining fittings from the vessel including furniture, artwork, china and other items.

HOW DO I RESEARCH WHETHER ONE OF MY ANCESTORS TRAVELED ON THE SS UNITED STATES?

Over one million passengers traveled on the *SS United States*, and passenger lists from each voyage were maintained by United States Lines. These documents were scattered after the ship was withdrawn from service, but the Conservancy is currently compiling and digitizing these records for future use, including genealogical research.

ABOUT THE SS UNITED STATES CONSERVANCY

WHAT IS THE SS UNITED STATES CONSERVANCY?

As the owners of the *SS United States*, America's National Flagship, the Conservancy leads the global effort to save this one-of-a-kind piece of American history from being lost forever. The Conservancy, a national nonprofit organization, raises awareness and financial resources for the maintenance, restoration, and ultimate reuse of this iconic vessel. The Conservancy's staff, Board of Directors, and

advisors work in tandem with volunteers from across America and around the world to ensure that the fastest ocean liner ever to cross the Atlantic endures and inspires for generations to come.

HOW DOES THE CONSERVANCY SPEND THE FUNDS IT HAS RAISED?

Prior to entering into an option agreement with Crystal Cruises, the Conservancy spent 82 cents out of every dollar raised on direct costs related to the *SS United States'* upkeep, including dockage, insurance, security, and vessel maintenance costs. The Conservancy is now prioritizing its exciting curatorial and educational programs highlighting the historical significance of America's Flagship. The Conservancy deploys a very small team of part-time staff members and consultants, as well as a large network of volunteers and pro bono advisors. The Conservancy's management and board of directors receive no compensation for their work on behalf of the *SS United States*.

WHAT IS THE [SAVETHEUNITEDSTATES.ORG](https://www.savetheunitedstates.org) CAMPAIGN?

[SavetheUnitedStates.org](https://www.savetheunitedstates.org) is a groundbreaking crowd-funding campaign to save and restore America's Flagship. It is an innovative, online experience that combines the latest in digital technology, social networking and historic preservation in an innovative new web platform for everyone to enjoy. [SavetheUnitedStates.org](https://www.savetheunitedstates.org) offers visitors a virtual ship experience online where they can navigate throughout the great vessel to learn about her history, her personalities and her accomplishments. Everyone can help save the ship by personalizing their own sections for as little as \$1. Contributors can select sections of the ship they wish to help save and then build a profile with photos and stories around those portions – making every supporter a part of the large, online community dedicated to saving the ship. This groundbreaking interactive experience will become a permanent part of the future *SS United States* Center for Design and Discovery. To date, more than 80,000 pieces of the ship have been saved.

DOES THE CONSERVANCY OFFER EDUCATIONAL AND CURATORIAL PROGRAMS?

The *SS United States* Conservancy remains deeply committed to honoring the legacy of the *SS United States* through curatorial and educational programs, and we will continue to prioritize this important work. Since its founding, the Conservancy has developed and mounted major temporary exhibitions at the Forbes Galleries in New York City and the Independence Seaport Museum in Philadelphia. In 2016, the Conservancy partnered with the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge Massachusetts to develop an exhibition featuring the *SS United States* artwork of renowned author-illustrator David Macaulay. The Conservancy maintains a growing collection of *SS United States* documents, images, artifacts, and other historical materials. We have also conducted an exhaustive preservation inventory of fixtures and shipboard components remaining aboard the vessel. Plans are underway for a dynamic "digital exhibition" that will explore the *SS United States'* unique design and history.

WHAT IS THE SS UNITED STATES CENTER FOR DESIGN & DISCOVERY?

The Conservancy is well underway with the development of the new SS United States Center for Design and Discovery. The museum and learning center will explore the SS *United States*' emergence as an iconic American achievement and examine broader themes of 20th century post-war society, maritime history, science and technology, and mid-century modern art and design. The Conservancy continues to expand its permanent collection of SS *United States* artifacts, historical documents, artwork and ship fixtures. For more information, [click here](#).

IS MY CONTRIBUTION TAX DEDUCTIBLE?

Yes! As a national 501(c)(3), all contributions to save America's Flagship are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

HOW CAN MY COMPANY OR ORGANIZATION HELP SAVE THE UNITED STATES?

Becoming a Corporate Sponsor of the SS United States Conservancy provides your company or organization with a unique opportunity to help champion the global effort to Save the SS *United States*. Sponsor benefits include national media exposure, naming rights opportunities, permanent online recognition on SavetheUnitedStates.org, special tours, and appreciation events. The cause of America's Flagship reaches a wide range of audiences in a growing global community of supporters. Show them you care about saving our history and become a sponsor today. If you have any questions about our Corporate Sponsorship Program or would like to receive copies of our Corporate Sponsorship materials, please contact Eva Benningfield a info@ssusc.org or call (888) 488-7787. You can also download our Corporate Sponsorship brochure [here](#).

HOW DO MY CONTRIBUTIONS HELP?

Without continued financial support from its members and donors, the SS *United States* will be lost forever. When [becoming a member](#) or making a donation through SavetheUnitedStates.org or on our [Conservancy website](#), your support will help the Conservancy continue its efforts to ensure that the SS *United States* inspires and endures for generations to come. Your donations will enable us to expand its educational and outreach programs to inform the public, policymakers, and the media about the history and potential of America's flagship and will help us launch exhibitions and displays honoring the SS *United States*.

DOES THE CONSERVANCY RECEIVE ANY GOVERNMENT FUNDING?

No. The SS United States is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but she does not receive State or Federal financing. The Conservancy relies on the generosity of private citizens from across the nation and around the world who want to protect and preserve this unrivaled design and engineering achievement.

ABOUT THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SS UNITED STATES CONSERVANCY AND CRYSTAL CRUISES

WHAT AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED BETWEEN THE SS UNITED STATES CONSERVANCY AND CRYSTAL CRUISES?

The SS United States Conservancy and Crystal Cruises have negotiated an exclusive option agreement. During the option period, Crystal will explore the feasibility of returning the *SS United States* to seagoing service. The vessel would retain her iconic identity and recognizable profile, and would once again serve as an ambassador of American innovation, design, and pride. Crystal is currently incurring the costs associated with the maintenance, insurance, and docking of the *SS United States* at its existing berth in Philadelphia at least through September. If the option is exercised, additional details will be revealed at that time.

DOES THIS MEAN THAT THE SS UNITED STATES IS FINALLY SAVED?

The Conservancy has been working tirelessly since acquiring the *SS United States* in 2011 to preserve the ship's historical legacy and to find a partner committed to activating the ship's commercial potential. This option agreement is a major step forward toward realizing these goals. The deal ensures the vessel's carrying costs are covered through at least September 2016. During the option period, a comprehensive feasibility study will be conducted and plans for the vessel's revitalization will be developed in hopes of returning the *SS United States* to seagoing service as a luxury ocean liner and national icon.

WHAT ROLE WILL THE CONSERVANCY PLAY DURING THE OPTION PERIOD WITH CRYSTAL CRUISES?

The Conservancy will be working closely with Crystal, Gibbs & Cox (the ship's original designers), and a team of maritime historians and preservation advisors to identify and preserve historically significant artifacts remaining on board the ship in advance of the vessel's renovation. The Conservancy will also advise Crystal's design team about the ship's history and original interiors so that Crystal can craft new interior spaces that capture the essence of the ship's original grandeur. Furthermore, the Conservancy is working with Crystal on plans for a shipboard exhibition aboard the *SS United States* which would feature loans of original artifacts from the Conservancy's permanent collection.

WILL THE SS UNITED STATES' HISTORIC PROFILE AND APPEARANCE BE FULLY PRESERVED?

In order for the *SS United States* to meet 21st century maritime regulations and international standards for design, safety, and passenger accommodations, some exterior modifications to the vessel will be necessary. The extent of these alterations is not yet fully known and will be addressed by the comprehensive feasibility study now underway. The Conservancy will be working closely with Crystal during the planning and design process to ensure that the ship's iconic profile is preserved to the fullest extent possible.

WILL CRYSTAL CRUISES TAKE TITLE TO THE SHIP IF THE SALES OPTION IS EXERCISED? IF SO, WILL THERE BE A PAYMENT TO THE CONSERVANCY FOR THE SHIP?

Yes. If the option agreement is exercised, Crystal will assume ownership of the *SS United States*. Proceeds from the vessel's sale will support the Conservancy's ongoing curatorial and educational mission, including the establishment of a land-based museum and exhibitions accessible to the general public and the expansion of its permanent curatorial and archival collections.

ASSUMING THE SALES OPTION WITH CRYSTAL CRUISES IS EXERCISED, WHAT ROLE WILL THE CONSERVANCY PLAY IN THE FUTURE?

The Conservancy's mission of educating the public about the historic significance of the *SS United States* will continue. The Conservancy plans a permanent, land-based museum dedicated to the *SS United States* and broader themes of maritime history and technological innovation. The Conservancy will also work with Crystal to develop shipboard displays featuring original art and artifacts from the ship on loan from the Conservancy's permanent collection. The Conservancy will also continue to explore opportunities for traveling exhibits, and such as its collaboration with the Norman Rockwell Museum on a special show featuring illustrations of the *SS United States* by renowned author-illustrator, David Macaulay, along with highlights from its permanent collections.

WILL THE GENERAL PUBLIC HAVE ACCESS TO THE SHIP AFTER IT RETURNS TO SEAGOING SERVICE?

It is hoped that the *SS United States* will be accessible to small groups of visitors during certain port visits. However, because the project is still at an early stage, an onboard visitor/guest policy has not been determined.

WILL CRYSTAL RESTORE AND RECREATE SELECTED HISTORIC COMPONENTS OF THE VESSEL SUCH AS PART OF AN ENGINE ROOM, PUBLIC ROOMS, BRIDGE OR OTHER ICONIC SPACES?

In order to be in full regulatory compliance with over sixty years of new maritime rules and shipbuilding practices, the *SS United States* ship will have to be extensively re-built. The ship's interiors have already been stripped down to the bare bulkheads by previous owners, so they offer a blank canvas for an innovative redesign that will accommodate new passenger spaces.

The Conservancy will work with Crystal to ensure historic components of the ship are incorporated or recreated on board to the fullest extent possible. Along with outfitting the ship with luxurious amenities that are true to the ship's storied history, features original to the *SS United States* such as the Promenade, Navajo Lounge, and Grand Ballroom will be retained and updated. The Conservancy will work closely with Crystal to help recreate the *SS United States'* original grandeur and ambience throughout.

WILL THERE BE A MUSEUM OR HISTORICAL DISPLAYS ON BOARD THE RENOVATED SHIP?

Yes. The Conservancy will partner with Crystal to create special ship-board exhibitions showcasing the *SS United States'* legacy. These displays will feature a wide range of historic artifacts from the ship's original design and service career on loan from the Conservancy's permanent curatorial collection.

WILL THE CONSERVANCY CONTINUE TO EXPAND ITS CURATORIAL PROGRAMS AND COLLECTIONS?

Absolutely. The Conservancy's mission is only enhanced by this agreement. We are currently in the process of raising funds to acquire several unique and high-profile artifacts from the vessel's service career. The Conservancy will pursue its curatorial programming aboard the ship as well as through its land-based exhibitions. Through its expanded curatorial and educational programs, the Conservancy will be able to reach tens of thousands of visitors each year.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT ARTIFACTS OR COMPONENTS NOW ABOARD THE SHIP NOT UTILIZED IN THE VESSEL'S FUTURE RESTORATION?

The Conservancy has already catalogued all of the historically significant artifacts and components still aboard the vessel. Crystal has committed to assisting the Conservancy in the proper removal, care, and storage of these items. Some of these objects will be incorporated into the Conservancy's land-based exhibition and some will be returned to the ship as part of historic displays. In the short term, some of these artifacts will also be housed by the Conservancy until such time as they will be used for exhibits.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE SHIP'S HISTORIC ENGINEERING SPACES?

If the option with Crystal Cruises is exercised, the *SS United States'* record-breaking power plant will be removed from the ship to make way for more efficient and modern propulsion technology in hopes that she will maintain her title as the fastest cruise vessel in the world. Because the ship's existing power plant is no longer operational, the vessel will require new, high-tech systems. However, the Conservancy is committed to preserving components of the original power plant and incorporating them into an immersive, digitally-enhanced exploration of the ship's legendary engineering spaces.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE *SS UNITED STATES* IF CRYSTAL'S PLANS DO NOT ADVANCE?

We are optimistic that Crystal's exciting vision for the *SS United States* will move forward. However, should Crystal choose not to exercise the sale option, ownership of the vessel would remain with the Conservancy. We would continue our efforts to secure financing and commercial partnerships to support the ship's redevelopment. The Conservancy remains determined to ensure that the *SS United States* inspires and endures for generations to come.

WHERE WILL THE SHIP'S REFIT TAKE PLACE?

The timing and location of the *SS United States'* refit is being determined during the course of the feasibility study, and information will be released in the coming months as it becomes available.

HOW MANY JOBS WILL BE CREATED FROM THE SS UNITED STATES' RENOVATION?

As part of U.S. crew requirements applicable to operating a U.S. cruise ship, there is a potential for thousands of jobs to be created for American citizens and permanent residents. It is premature to determine the exact number of jobs that will be created, but more information will be released as plans for the vessel advance.

WILL THE SHIP'S HOME PORT AGAIN BE NEW YORK?

Crystal is exploring the possibility of home-porting the *SS United States* in New York City once again. Though it is not yet certain where her home port would be, it is envisioned that Manhattan would be a key destination and point of embarkation for future transatlantic voyages, and that the ship would also visit other key U.S. ports.

WILL THE SHIP INCORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND OTHER INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN HER REDESIGN?

As part of its technical feasibility study, Crystal will determine how to best ensure the *SS United States* is in full compliance with the latest Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) rules and environmental protections while setting high standards for passenger comfort and amenities.

HOW MUCH WILL THE SS UNITED STATES' REFIT COST?

In addition to Crystal's commitment to cover the monthly carrying costs for the vessel and all fees associated with the ship while she is berthed Philadelphia, additional resources will be invested during this time to undertake and complete a complex technical feasibility study. Once this due diligence is completed, better estimates of the additional investment required to restore the ship to a modern day luxury ocean liner will be possible. Initial cost estimates are in the \$800 million range.

WILL THE SS UNITED STATES BECOME THE FASTEST OCEAN LINER AFLOAT ONCE AGAIN?

Yes! The current vision is to fit the *SS United States* with new engines and sophisticated marine technology so she maintains her status as the fastest ship in the world reaching top speeds of more than 30 knots.

WHERE WILL THE SS UNITED STATES SAIL? WILL SHE MAKE TRANSATLANTIC CROSSINGS OR FOLLOW ANY OF THE OTHER ORIGINAL ITINERARIES?

It is anticipated that the ship will return to the sea as "America's Flagship" once again, bringing her storied history into present-day ports in cities like New York City and San Francisco, as well as transatlantic and global ports of call.

WHEN WILL THE SHIP'S RENOVATION BE COMPLETED AND WHEN WILL SHE RETURN TO SERVICE?

Crystal's thorough feasibility study is just beginning. At its conclusion, the *SS United States* would then undergo an extensive refit and modernization process. An update on the timeline to return the ship to service will be provided later in the year.

I WOULD LIKE TO BE A PASSENGER ON THE SHIP'S MAIDEN VOYAGE: HOW CAN I PURCHASE TICKETS?

Please stay tuned! Later in 2016 additional announcements on the progress of the feasibility study and timeline will be made. At this time, you can sign up for updates about the progress of the effort at CrystaltheNextChapter.com and on the SS United States Conservancy's website SSUSC.org.
