



CHARTING A FORWARD COURSE

A DECADE OF BEATING THE ODDS

2020-2021



SS UNITED STATES
CONSERVANCY

SAVING AMERICA'S FLAGSHIP



OUR MISSION AND VISION

The SS United States Conservancy leads the global effort to save the pride of our nation, the SS *United States*. The last remaining American superliner from the “golden age” of transatlantic travel represents an enduring monument to the American spirit. What began as a fledgling preservation effort undertaken by a small group of ship enthusiasts has now grown into a global movement to save and restore this pinnacle of mid-century technological and artistic achievement.

In 2010, the SS *United States* was only days away from being destroyed by a scrapper’s blowtorch. The Conservancy succeeded in raising the funds to purchase the vessel. Upon securing title and saving the ship from certain destruction, the Conservancy began building an international community of passionate supporters determined to protect this enduring expression of American design and innovation. For more than a decade, the Conservancy has successfully executed a three-tiered approach to one of the most uniquely ambitious historic preservation projects in a generation:

- Fund the maintenance and protection of the SS *United States* in her current condition
- Explore and advance viable redevelopment investment partnerships to secure the ship’s future
- Fulfill a curatorial mission to celebrate and preserve the ship’s rich history and plan a future museum

The Conservancy’s current partnership with RXR Realty and its recent progress toward converting America’s Flagship into a successful, sustainable, world-class destination doesn’t mean our work is complete. It means that we must chart a forward course. We must now design and deliver a state-of-the-art museum to celebrate the SS *United States* and broader themes of mid-century art, culture, design, and innovation.



AMERICA'S FLAGSHIP

A Symbol Worth Saving and Celebrating

As much a patriotic symbol of our nation as the Empire State Building or Washington Monument, the SS *United States* is a powerful reminder of America's soaring ambition and ability to rise to any challenge. "America's Flagship" represented a soaring synthesis of post-war technology, architecture, and artistic innovation.

The fastest passenger ship ever conceived and the only remaining U.S.-built luxury liner, the SS *United States* represented the pinnacle of post-war technology, luxury, and design with a top-secret, Cold War mission. Built as part of a public-private partnership between the U.S. government and United States Lines, she could be converted into the fastest troop carrier in the world, capable of ferrying 15,000 troops, 10,000 miles without refueling.

The SS *United States* was the life-long passion of America's preeminent naval architect, William Francis Gibbs. Gibbs achieved breakthroughs in efficient hull design and integrity, propulsion, and fire prevention. He and his firm designed almost 70 percent of all the Navy's fleet, including the mass-produced Liberty Ships, which helped the Allies achieve victory in World War II.

AN ICON OF THE "AMERICAN CENTURY"

In 1999, the ship was added to the National Register of Historic Places even though she was less than 50 years of age because of her "compelling national significance," a status earned by less than one percent of the National Register's recognized historic properties.

Gibbs had long dreamed of the “perfect ship” to regain American supremacy of the seas and had sketched an initial prototype in 1914. His quest was finally fulfilled with the *SS United States*’ triumphal maiden voyage in 1952. With a hull nearly a thousand feet long and two inches thick, the vessel averaged an astonishing 40 miles an hour across the North Atlantic, capturing the famous Blue Riband using only two-thirds of her power and establishing a speed record that has never been broken.

In more than 800 incident-free voyages, the *SS United States* carried more than one million passengers during her service career, from celebrities and royalty to immigrants making the journey to their new home. The ship was a global ambassador of her namesake nation, and her red, white, and blue stacks were a source of pride and inspiration following the devastation of war. Though the Jet Age would silence her engines in 1969, the *SS United States* still inspires. She represents the nation’s common values, our strengths, and the epic scope and scale of our ambition.



SS United States in Bremerhaven in the 1960s, photographed by Karl Heuer. Photo courtesy of Karl Heuer, Jr.



THE CONSERVANCY

A Decade of Beating the Odds

Over the last decade, the SS United States Conservancy has led the growing effort to save this iconic symbol of our nation. Taking its place among other important historic preservation organizations, such as the efforts to save Grand Central Terminal and the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, the Conservancy has grown from a small grassroots organization to a global community of committed supporters.

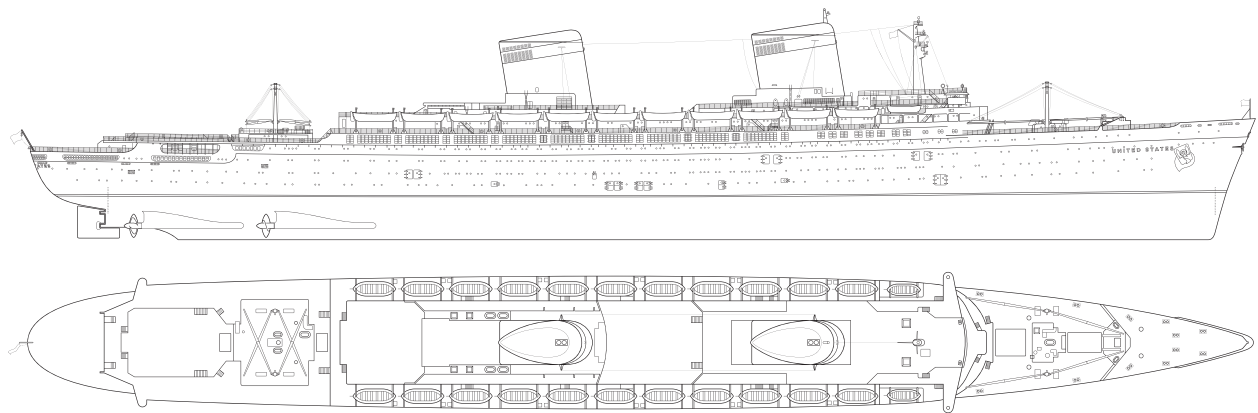
Incorporated as an independent nonprofit organization in Washington, DC in 2009, the Conservancy formed a prominent board of directors and advisory council, recruited a talented team of staff and consultants, and opened offices in Washington, New York, and Philadelphia. This progress attracted transformative gifts totaling \$5.8 million from prominent philanthropist and businessman H.F. “Gerry” Lenfest that enabled the Conservancy to purchase the SS *United States* outright in February 2011.

Since its inception, the Conservancy has prioritized stewardship of donor funds. We have raised more than \$12.7 million since the organization’s inception, and this support has prevented the SS *United States* from being lost to history. We have been beating the odds year after year as we care for an irreplaceable historic asset—100 feet longer than the *Titanic*—and the size of a 600,000-square-foot office tower lying on its side.

More than 80 percent of all funds raised have been directly deployed to secure and maintain the *SS United States* in her current location in Philadelphia. These costs associated with protecting, maintaining, insuring, and berthing the ship total up to \$60,000 per month. Donations have also supported the organization's curatorial and educational programs which have included planning and organizing exhibitions, acquiring an extensive collection of artifacts, and efforts to raise awareness about the plight of America's Flagship. Maximizing every dollar has helped ensure the safety of the ship for nearly a decade and has provided confidence for donors small and large that the organization takes its fiduciary responsibilities as seriously as its core mission.

OUR WORK AND OUR PASSION

In the words of the *SS United States'* designer, William Francis Gibbs, the ship's builders, designers, suppliers, officers, and crew "were trying for the greatest ship in the world and they knew they were doing it as trustees for the citizens of the United States... the result is a tribute to the American system." The Conservancy and its global community of supporters continue to summon this passion, pride and dedication as they work tirelessly to save the *SS United States*.



SS UNITED STATES CONSERVANCY BY THE NUMBERS

- Raised more than \$12.7 million to save and sustain the *SS United States*
- Spent \$0.80 from every dollar raised on core maintenance and security costs alone for the upkeep of the *SS United States*
- Reached more than 1.3 million people online in 2019 to educate and engage in saving the *SS United States*
- Built a base of supporters and donors from all 50 states and more than 40 countries
- Cultivated an active community of nearly 30,000 on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram
- Built one of the world's largest collections of art, artifacts, and archival documentation relating to American seaborne passenger travel



Conceptual rendering of the SS *United States* by author-illustrator David Macaulay

REDEVELOPMENT

Progress and Optimism

Our organization's primary responsibility has always been saving the SS *United States* from being lost to history. That has required expanding our supporter base and raising the funds to keep the ship safely afloat. Simultaneously, we have worked tirelessly to ensure that this national symbol is successfully redeveloped into an economically sustainable destination and museum. After reviewing other historic ship preservation projects, we concluded that a shipboard museum on its own would not be financially feasible. Rather, the ship's 600,000 square feet of usable space could support a dynamic mixed-used commercial development and waterfront showplace that would attract the large number of visitors necessary for long-term financial viability. With a length spanning three city blocks, the SS *United States* offers numerous opportunities for a unique and successful commercial program that restores the ship to her former glory in tandem with the Conservancy's heritage mission.

Since acquiring the SS *United States*, the Conservancy began exploring the vessel's redevelopment, creating detailed plans for the ship's potential conversion into a stationary, mixed-use attraction. We targeted America's leading port cities and solicited interest from dozens of potential developers and investors from around the world. We explored a number of potential cities and pier locations for the ship's permanent home including New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Seattle, and Miami. We entered into two formal option agreements with partners to initiate formal redevelopment assessments, including one with Crystal Cruises, which studied the possibility of modernizing the ship for seagoing service.

ENGAGEMENT WITH RXR REALTY

In December 2018, the Conservancy entered into an exclusive option agreement with RXR Realty, a prominent, New York-based real estate development firm, to explore the *SS United States*' redevelopment. RXR is well respected in the commercial and residential real estate community. As of February 2021, RXR managed 75 commercial real estate properties and investments with an aggregate gross asset value of approximately \$20.5 billion, comprising approximately 25.5 million square feet of commercial properties.

RXR is exploring various plans to repurpose the vessel as a permanently moored floating structure encompassing a collection of unique hospitality, food and beverage, and cultural spaces. Those offerings would include a world-class museum honoring the ship's history and exploring mid-century design, art, and innovation. RXR and the Conservancy anticipate the project will be landscape-altering for its home city, creating over 1,000 jobs, generating new direct and indirect economic activity, and activating the waterfront at its destination.

RXR has built its reputation on adapting and updating iconic assets for the 21st century. The firm's New York City portfolio includes the Helmsley Building, 75 Rockefeller Plaza, the Starrett-Lehigh Building, and the massive Pier 57 on Manhattan's west side, which will house Google's newest offices. In addition, RXR works closely with municipalities on large-scale, transformational projects, including their status as master developer for the City of New Rochelle, their partnership with JetBlue on a new terminal at JFK Airport, and their redevelopment of the Nassau Coliseum on Long Island.

For the *United States*, RXR has assembled a best-in-class architectural and engineering team, including Perkins Eastman Architects, HLW, and Gibbs & Cox, the ship's original design firm. Having already invested significant funds in their first due diligence period, RXR is proceeding with the next phase of design development. While slowed by the COVID-19 crisis, they have embarked on a nationwide Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) process to locate an optimal permanent location for the ship. Target cities for this process include Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Miami, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego.

The Conservancy is heartened by the passion and commitment of the leadership of RXR to the cause of saving the *SS United States*. We remain cautiously optimistic about the firm's progress to date and will continue to work closely with their team in the coming months as their complex process continues.

RXR's exciting work allows the Conservancy to concurrently begin planning for the incorporation of a shipboard museum and immersive experience that celebrates the legacy of the vessel and explores a range of design and innovation themes.





TELLING THE STORY OF AMERICA'S FLAGSHIP

From Forgotten Relic to Front Page News

Due to the Conservancy's sustained publicity efforts over the last decade, the SS *United States* has gone from a largely forgotten relic to achieving national and global recognition once again. The plight of America's Flagship has been featured on virtually every major news wire, national television news channel, and leading print newspaper outlet. In the U.S., coverage has spanned outlets nationwide, including the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, CNN, NPR, Fox News, NBC Nightly News, and CBS Sunday Morning. The ship's unique history and exciting future possibilities have captured the imagination of photographers, artists, and journalists from the world over. The story has also gone global, with coverage in major outlets worldwide, including Germany's *Der Spiegel* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Italy's *La Repubblica*, UK's *The Guardian*, *ITV* and *Daily Mail*, and France's *Le Matin*.

THE BIG SHIP IS A BIG STORY

In 2020, the Conservancy's continued redevelopment partnership with RXR Realty and our ongoing preservation efforts were featured in Bloomberg News, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Newsday*, WHYY's weekly television series "You Oughta Know," and more than 300 other news outlets and specialty publications. We anticipate additional interest from traditional media about the ship's redevelopment will pick up again following the relaxing of Coronavirus restrictions.

Traditional media goals for the remainder of 2020 and into next year will include continued outreach in conjunction with RXR to markets and media verticals. Additionally, the Conservancy will actively work to pitch a range of new media targets in the museum, arts, and design spaces to follow the story of our museum development and curatorial mission.

CULTIVATING OUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY REFRESHED DIGITAL STRATEGY

Our digital strategy is a critical component of telling the ship's story, building momentum, and creating a fertile ground for grassroots fundraising, particularly in the COVID-19 context. As the Conservancy prepares to shift focus toward designing, funding, and building a world-class museum, social media accounts will be utilized to expand the reach of our message to new audiences.

The Conservancy launched a new web platform in the Spring of 2020, which presents a sleeker face to the world with an improved user experience. This digital "gangway" will continue to be updated and offer our supporters and the general public "sneak peeks" of redevelopment progress as well as the evolving vision and curatorial goals and programming of the future museum and innovation center.

Last year, the Conservancy made more than 1.3 million impressions on Facebook alone through largely organic (unpaid) outreach. On Facebook, our goal for the remainder of 2020 is to double our presence to 50,000 followers through a combination of promoted posts, "like acquisition" ads, and engagement ads. This combination will yield not only greater impact but also capture additional data on supporters critical to our fundraising efforts. Expansion of our Instagram presence will also be undertaken on a parallel track.

The Conservancy's popular and informative electronic newsletters will continue reaching supporters twice per month. These updates will be retooled and refreshed to enhance ongoing Conservancy fundraising goals.

The image shows a composite of digital assets for the SS United States Conservancy. At the top is the website's navigation bar, featuring the organization's logo on the left and menu items: HOME, AMERICA'S FLAGSHIP, THE CONSERVANCY, HOW CAN I HELP?, SHOP, EVENTS, NEWS, BLOGS, and a prominent red DONATE button. Below the navigation is a large hero banner with a close-up of the ship's red funnel, overlaid with the text "HELP SAVE AMERICA'S FLAGSHIP THE SS UNITED STATES". To the right of the banner is a photograph of the SS United States ship at sea. Below the banner is a short paragraph of text: "The pride of a nation. The pinnacle of technological and artistic achievement. A monument to the American can-do spirit... The SS United States represents our common values, our strengths, and the epic scope and scale of our history. Her story is our story, and today, America's Flagship needs our help. Unite to save and restore this irreplaceable icon to the glory and dignity it deserves." A red DONATE button is positioned below the text. On the right side of the image is a screenshot of the organization's Facebook page. The page header includes the logo, the name "SS United States Conservancy", the handle "@SSUSC - Nonprofit Organization", and a blue Sign Up button. The page content shows an "About" section with the website URL, a description of the mission, and statistics such as "35,012 people like this" and "35,013 people follow this". There is also a "Photos" section with a thumbnail of a ship at sea. The bottom of the Facebook page shows a post from the "Hampton Roads Chapter" with a photo of the ship and the caption "Throwback Thursday".



Duke Ellington and Ethel Merman performing on the SS *United States*



Steinway Baby Grand Piano on display at Steinway Hall

PRESERVING A LEGACY

Artifacts and Artistry that Defined a Generation

The SS *United States* wasn't only an ambassador for America. She was a floating showplace of mid-century modern design. The ship's interiors epitomized the era's focus on new materials and manufacturing technologies, modernism, and post-war recovery. The vessel's engineering and naval architecture – from her unmatched high-pressure, high-temperature, steam propulsion system to her ultra-light aluminum superstructure to her unique, sculptural hull design—endure as an unparalleled expression of American craftsmanship and industrial accomplishment. The Conservancy's curatorial programs and growing collections showcase and explore these themes and will serve as a foundation for the future shipboard museum experience.

COLLECTIONS INVENTORIES

The Conservancy has undertaken comprehensive inventories of individual and institutional collections of SS *United States* objects and memorabilia—a truly challenging task given that all of the ship's furnishings, fittings, artwork, and records were scattered worldwide in the decades since her withdrawal from service in 1969. These key artifacts and other unique items in museums and private collections around the world will complement the holdings of the Conservancy's permanent collection. The Conservancy has also completed an exhaustive inventory of artifacts that remain on board the ship. That thorough catalog of thousands of items will guide the Conservancy in prioritizing the preservation of shipboard artifacts prior to the vessel's redevelopment.

EXCITING EXHIBITIONS

The Conservancy has hosted and supported high quality exhibitions that have raised awareness of the ship's historic importance and promote the cause of saving the vessel. In addition to loaning items to displays at the Smithsonian Institution, the Peabody Essex Museum, and other institutions, the Conservancy's exhibitions have included:

- **Norman Rockwell Museum, November 2019–April 2020**
Coinciding with the release of best-selling author David Macaulay's *SS United States*-inspired book, *Crossing on Time*, the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, MA, unveiled an exhibition prominently featuring the ship. The centerpiece of the display was an 11-foot-long model of the superliner, graciously donated to the Conservancy by the children of Douglas Bushnell.
- **Independence Seaport Museum, March–November 2014**
Just a mile from the current berth of the *SS United States*, this exhibit featured a wide array of artifacts from ship furnishings to passenger and crew stories and displays, to a recreation of a first-class dining room experience. It also included an interactive display of three-dimensional modeling of the ship developed in partnership with Drexel University's Digital Media Program.
- **Forbes Galleries, May–September 2012**
This exhibit featured highlights from the ship's famed Duck Suite, which was the preferred first-class cabin of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor on their numerous transatlantic voyages, along with a wide array of exquisitely curated unique artifacts and imagery from the vessel.



Model of the *SS United States* on display at the Norman Rockwell Museum

CONSERVANCY COLLECTION FIXTURES & ARTWORK

The Conservancy's full permanent collection comprises thousands of items, spanning ship models, prints and paintings, vintage ephemera, furniture and fixtures, and archival materials. These items have been painstakingly gathered, preserved, and inventoried by the Conservancy's curatorial team for future display. They include:

FURNITURE

Hundreds of pieces of mid-century modern furniture including chairs, tables, lamps, smoking stands, benches, deck chairs, and other items.

SERVEWARE

Extensive serveware collection featuring American-themed design schemes ranging from table decor to elaborate place settings.

PRINTS

Among the Conservancy's print collection are the complete "America's Cup" series of 14 prints by R.F. Paterson displayed aboard the ship as well as various prints of the *SS United States* by renowned maritime artists including Robert Semler, Thomas Skinner, James Flood, and Robert Lloyd.

CABIN CLASS SMOKING LOUNGE CURTAIN PANELS

The collection includes three of the Dorothy Liebes harlequin-patterned curtain panels from the ship's Cabin Class Smoking Lounge, which include weights to prevent the panels from swaying too much with the movement of the ship. (Donor: Carl Weber)

BLUE RIBBAND COMMEMORATIVE MEDALLIONS

On her maiden voyage in 1952, the *SS United States* broke the record for the fastest Atlantic crossing, and special commemorative medallions were presented to officers and crew after the historic voyage. (Donors: Katherine Neurohr and Mariners Museum of Newport News)

A GROWING CURATORIAL COLLECTION

The Conservancy has acquired an extensive collection of artwork and artifacts from the ship that demonstrate the extraordinary and innovative craftsmanship that made the *United States* a singular achievement. We are continuing to expand this collection of art, artifacts, and archival documentation featuring the vessel. We are also continually updating our inventory of shipboard artifacts targeted for retention and restoration and are evaluating needs for restorative work on those items prior to public display.

COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS

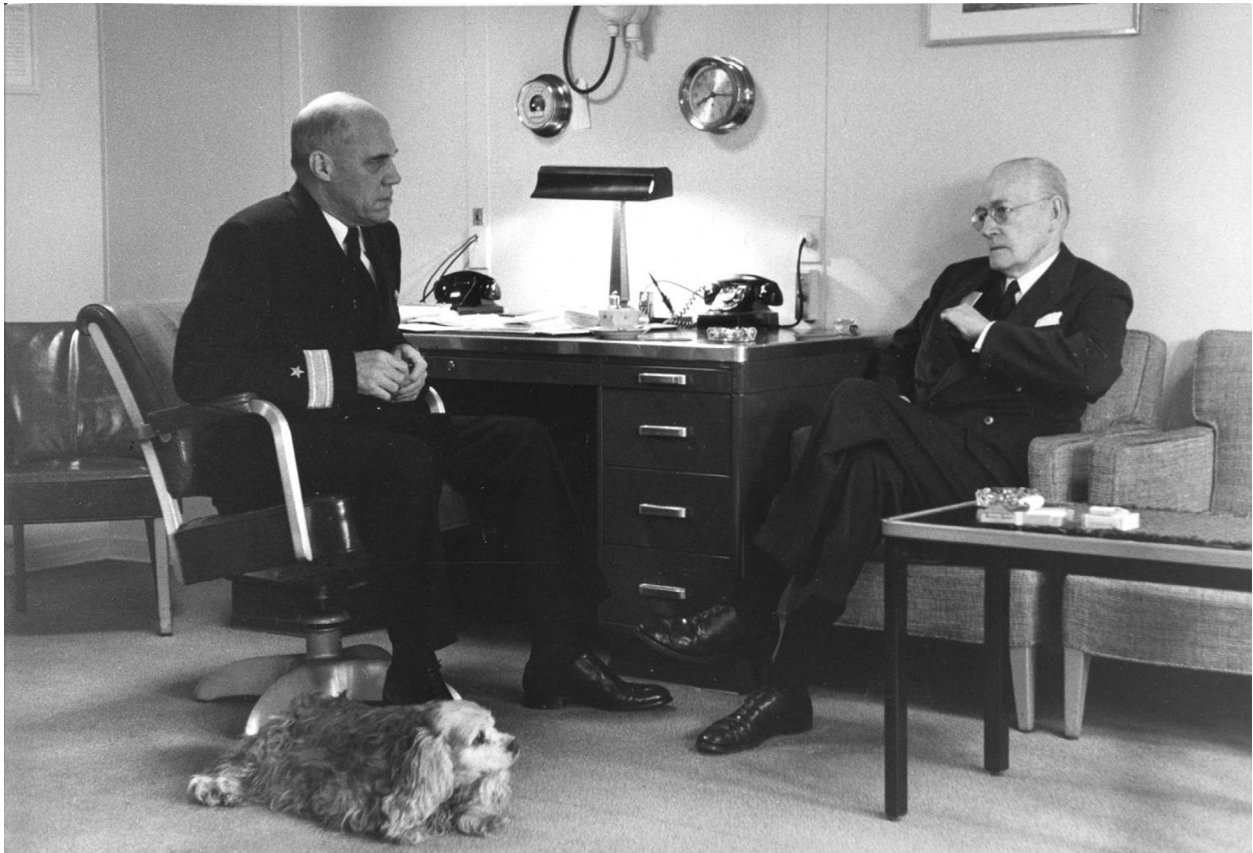
Among the hundreds of major items in the Conservancy's permanent collection are these highlights:

- **Steinway Baby Grand Piano**

This iconic fire-resistant Steinway Baby Grand Piano graced the *SS United States'* Grand Ballroom and was played by many renowned musicians, including Duke Ellington. The ship's mahogany pianos were among the few items made of wood aboard the ship, due to the ship designer's obsession with fire prevention. (*Donors: Mark Perry, Robert Forbes; acquired from Bob Scofield in honor of Michael Persico*)

- **Captain's Quarters Furniture**

The Conservancy has acquired the complete set of furniture from the ship's Captain's Quarters, including the Commodore's desk, shelving, bed, nightstands, lamps, top-secret safe, and a master key to the entire vessel. (*Donors: Steve Williams in honor of Melvin Williams*)



Commodore John W. Anderson with William Francis Gibbs (Chota Peg listening intently in foreground), in the Captain's Quarters. Photo courtesy of Charles Anderson.



Partial view of the "Snowflake Crystal Montage"

- **Gyrocompass**

In addition to the machinery components remaining in the engine rooms, the Conservancy has been acquiring components removed from the vessel's bridge and other spaces decades ago for future display. The gyrocompass was located on the bridge of the ship and helped keep the ship on course. (Donor: *The Dragas Family*)

- **"Snowflake Crystal Montage" by Charles Tissot**

A gorgeous panel depicting a crystal snowflake montage was created by renowned artist Charles Tissot for the ship's Private Dining Room. The panel is a beautiful example of the mid-century modern decorative art on display throughout the SS *United States*. (Donors: *Bob Forbes, Mark Perry, Carl Wesch, Mario Alvarez-Garcillan, Susan Gibbs, Charles Anderson, Frank Slate Brooks*)

- **Emergency Life Raft**

One of the emergency life rafts included on the SS *United States*. Not to be confused with the ship's aluminum lifeboats, these inflatable boats were stored on deck for emergency use. (To the best of our knowledge, they were never deployed.) (Donor: *Terrence Mahoney*)

- **Mark Perry Collection**

The Mark Perry Collection comprises a number of items significant to the SS *United States*' history. Included is personal ephemera belonging to Commodore Harry Manning, consisting of awards and the commodore's personal scrapbook. Additional items include a detailed U.S. government feasibility study for the ship's conversion to a troop transport and hospital vessel, "allowance lists" which are detailed inventories of every single item in every single room, and a coffee table from the Captain's Reception room on Sun Deck.



Photograph from the Albert W. Durant Photography Collection

- **Albert W. Durant Photography Collection**

The Conservancy acquired a special series of vintage photographs taken on the Big U's speed trials in early 1952 by Albert Durant. Durant was Virginia's first black city-licensed photographer, and his work features the ship's African American crew members. (Donors: Mariners' Museum, and Colonial Williamsburg Foundation)

- **William Francis Gibbs Collection**

The Conservancy has an extensive collection of items relating to the ship's designer, William Francis Gibbs. These include a bronze bust by Malvina Hoffman, letters and speeches, personal possessions, and one of the commemorative medallions William Francis Gibbs gave to crew members on the ship's record-breaking maiden voyage. (Donor: Susan Gibbs)

- **Models of the SS United States**

A vintage model of the SS United States measuring 11 feet long and was put on public display for the first time at the Norman Rockwell Museum as part of a special exhibition featuring art from renowned author-illustrator David Macaulay. (Donor: The children of Douglas F. Bushnell) An additional encased six-and-a-half-foot travel agency model of the SS *United States* was recently donated to the Conservancy by board member Thomas Watkins.

EPHEMERA AND ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTATION

The Conservancy's extensive collection of documentation related to the ship includes:

- Deck Plans and Blueprints
- Menus and Programs
- Photographs, Slides, and Negatives
- Reports and Official Records
- Newspaper and Magazine Articles
- Passenger Lists

ORAL HISTORIES AND TESTIMONIALS

The Conservancy has connected with hundreds of former officers and crew members, builders, designers, passengers, maritime historians, and ship enthusiasts to help preserve and protect the legacy of the Big U. These moving stories collected over the last decade preserve the first-hand accounts of the thrill of serving and sailing on board America's Flagship.

In the coming year, the Conservancy will expand its oral and video documentation. These will then be curated for incorporation into interactive exhibitions aboard the redeveloped ship and provide visitors a bridge to the events, culture, and people of the days of transatlantic travel.

MUSEUM PLANNING CHARRETTEs

The Conservancy initiated a comprehensive museum planning process which included a series of conceptual charrettes. With support from The Roz Group and Eisterhold & Associates, these resulted in evocative renderings and potential interpretive themes for a future shipboard museum with a focus on American design and discovery. Several day-long consultative sessions with experts explored a range of potential themes, including technological and industrial "high water marks," pop culture and social trends of the 1950s and 1960s, the "American Century" and post-war history, and the golden age of transatlantic liners.

HIGH QUALITY DOCUMENTARY FILMS

SS UNITED STATES: LADY IN WAITING (2008)

Combining never-before-seen archival footage and compelling interviews with the ship's crew and passengers, as well as preservationists and maritime historians, this documentary tells the story of the SS *United States* and the early efforts of Conservancy leaders to save the storied vessel. Produced by Mark Perry and directed by Robert Radler, the film features famed CBS broadcaster Walter Cronkite in one of his last interviews. The award-winning documentary was presented by WTTW National Productions, the acclaimed PBS affiliate in Chicago, and aired on American Public Television stations nationwide.

SS UNITED STATES: MADE IN AMERICA (2014)

The Conservancy partnered again with Robert Radler on a follow-up film to "SS *United States: Lady in Waiting*." The five-part series includes incredible footage of the ship, both in her heyday and in her current state, as well as interviews with former passengers and crew, maritime experts, and Conservancy leaders who worked to prevent the ship's destruction and advance restoration plans. The film can be viewed on the Conservancy's website.

FUTURE DOCUMENTARY FILM PROJECTS

As redevelopment of the SS *United States* advances, the Conservancy will ensure that this story is told on film. We anticipate partnering with RXR on a top-tier, full length documentary that will chronicle the ship's rebirth. We also plan to update the ending and components of "Lady in Waiting." Finally, we have begun working with Charles Shan Cerrone and Colorspace Studios on film documentation of passenger and crew stories for inclusion in the Conservancy's future museum.



Conceptual Rendering of Possible Museum Program. Image courtesy of Perkins Eastman and the SS United States Conservancy

THE SS UNITED STATES FLAGSHIP CENTER FOR DESIGN AND INNOVATION

A World-Class Museum for a World-Class Destination

As RXR and the Conservancy work to revive the ship into a thriving waterfront destination, the Conservancy is launching a planning process for a shipboard museum and “heritage trail” of historic locations throughout the vessel and befitting the vision and history of the *SS United States*. The Conservancy’s new innovation center and museum will become an exciting and inspiring centerpiece of the vessel’s redevelopment and will explore the story of the *SS United States*’ emergence as a singular American post-war achievement through immersive experiences, state-of-the-art displays, and special events.

The gallery spaces will serve as the home for the Conservancy’s stunning collection of artifacts showcasing the “Mad Men” era of mid-century modern art and design. Working together with RXR, the Conservancy will also create a “heritage trail” approach to exploring the superliner, allowing visitors to peek into the past while taking advantage of the ship’s new, modern offerings. Through a combination of self-guided and expert-presented tours of restored iconic spaces including the bridge, engine room, a first-class suite, and other spaces to be determined, visitors will experience America’s Flagship and the bygone era of transatlantic travel.

The Conservancy's exhibitions and events will also explore a range of compelling themes that will be fine-tuned during the next stage of the museum planning process, potentially including 20th century industrial innovation, the trans-Atlantic liner era, and American cultural identity and artistic expression of the post-war period. The goal is to ensure that the SS United States Conservancy's programming and displays are dynamic, engaging, and relevant as they explore broader themes of art, design, and innovation.



SS *United States*' designer William Francis Gibbs views his beloved vessel. Photo courtesy of Melvin Konner.

CREATING AN EXPERIENCE THAT INSPIRES

PHASE I: LAYING THE FOUNDATION MAY–DECEMBER 2020

- **RXR Liaison and Museum Planning**

Phase I will focus on identifying, recruiting and hiring consultants - including architects, exhibit designers, and project managers - to help conceptualize and cost out the future museum. In coordination with RXR, we will also begin to identify additional opportunities in various commercial spaces throughout the vessel for artifact display and historic interpretation.

- **Advisory Council Revitalization**

The Conservancy will revitalize its advisory council to expand its roster of distinguished curatorial experts, historians, and artists to guide our thinking on the new shipboard experience and “heritage trail.” World renowned specialists in post-war history, mid-century modern art and design, maritime history, and other relevant themes will advise the Conservancy on museum planning and development.

- **Business Plan Development**

The Conservancy will develop initial construction and operational budget parameters that will inform its broader fundraising strategy as well as help prioritize activities. Initial outreach to additional experts such as architects, exhibit designers, and preservation/restoration specialists will inform the business plan development.

- **Supporter Surveys and Engagement**

We will survey our global community of supporters to help generate ideas and direction for the the museum’s future displays and interactive components. It is crucial to ensure that our supporters feel invested in the process and enthusiastic about our fundraising efforts.

- **Collections Development**

We will continue cataloguing our extensive collections and identifying iconic objects for potential future acquisition, such as the original Blue Riband and the Hales Trophy. We will identify the marquee items in our collections to be prioritized for potential display and will work with RXR to identify opportunities for featuring selected items in various locations throughout the vessel.

- **Collections Outreach and Digitization**

The Conservancy will create digital displays featuring professional-quality photographs of highlights from our collections. These images will be showcased in an exciting online gallery that will serve as a primer for the future shipboard exhibition. This will also be used for online social-digital content that will be critical to growing our community of supporters and bolstering organizational fundraising.

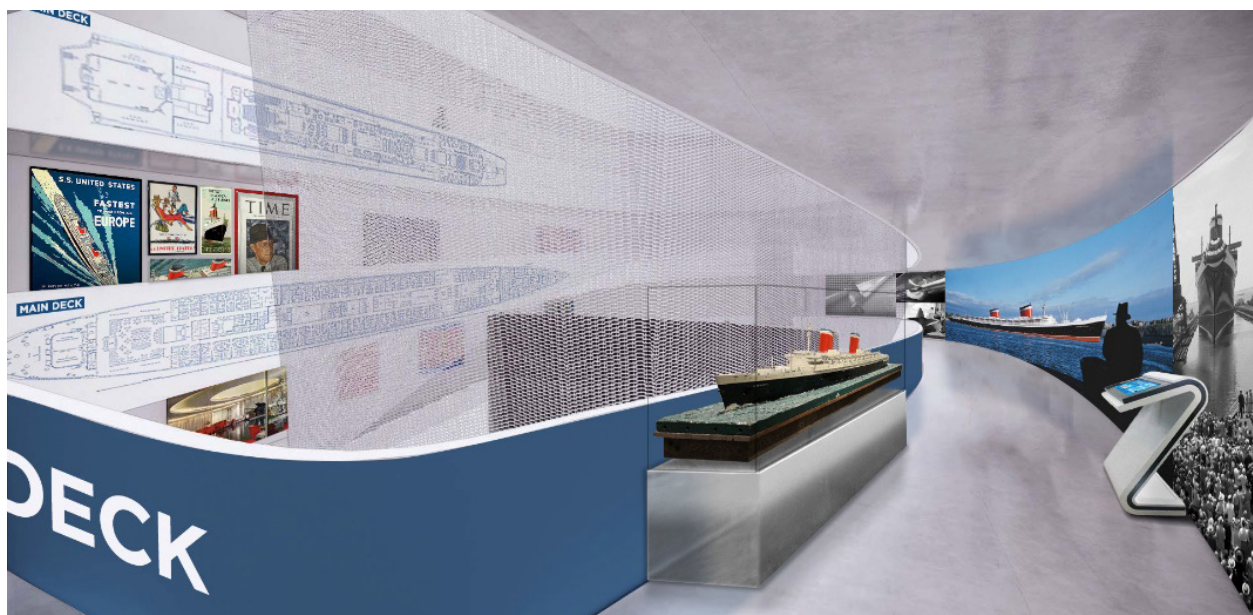


PHASE II: PLOTTING A NEW COURSE JANUARY 2021–MAY 2021

- **Continuation of Museum Design Development**
Dependent on the parallel progress of RXR Realty’s redevelopment efforts, the Conservancy will complete its business plan for the museum’s design, construction, and ongoing operations.
- **RXR Space Management Agreement Negotiation**
With support from Project Management consultants, the Conservancy will negotiate allocation of construction and operating costs with RXR as well as revenue arrangements. This will encompass issues such as defining “white box space,” merchandizing and intellectual property issues, branding, and joint-programming.
- **Capital Campaign Plan**
A comprehensive fundraising plan will be developed identifying a full range of potential targets, including public sources, foundations, corporations, and individual underwriters. Anchor donor meetings will commence during this time with the goal of securing pledges for a capital campaign.
- **Museum Partnerships**
We will explore the possibility of establishing partnerships with established institutions and peer museums. These could include collaborating on permanent or temporary exhibitions, educational programming, and co-branding.

PHASE III: EXECUTING THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN MAY 2021 AND ONWARD

During this phase, the Conservancy will endeavor to complete all necessary negotiations with RXR regarding the space allocation, construction agreements and ongoing support. Final construction documents will be produced for the museum as well as the final business plan. The execution of our augmented fundraising strategy, discussed below, will also be well underway.





REENERGIZED FUNDRAISING

Realizing Our Vision. Achieving Long-Term Sustainability.

Just as the SS *United States*' commercial redevelopment must achieve long-term sustainability, the Conservancy's continuing mission requires increasing revenue through a combination of corporate sponsorships, naming opportunities, philanthropic donations, leveraging merchandizing opportunities, and ticket sales. The future museum's broader framing will help ensure relevance and reach and contribute to thought leadership to post-COVID-19 discussions on issues of design and technological innovation.

Our efforts over the next year must augment our fundraising program to ensure we can meet the significant revenue demands associated with a new museum and innovation center. This will include production of refreshed donor materials, more frequent solicitations, prospecting with new audiences, digital fundraising, major gifts cultivation, and special events.

MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the new web platform, the Conservancy will create captivating new donor materials, both printed and digital, that build excitement for the work ahead. These materials will revise giving tiers, donor benefits, naming rights, and be augmented by new renderings of the ship and future museum, already in production.

MAJOR GIFTS

The Conservancy continues its ongoing outreach to identify major donors who may be inspired to make transformative gifts in support of the SS *United States*' historic revitalization and its world-class museum. Relevant foundations and corporate giving programs (potentially including RXR's shipboard tenants and commercial partners) will also be considered priority targets for support. Naming opportunities will be explored in consultation with RXR along with a wide array of benefits for high-level donors.

PLANNED GIVING

The Conservancy will institute a formal planned giving program with special outreach to our existing donor network and growing supporter community with information about how to make a bequest to advance the Conservancy's mission.

MERCHANDISE AND PARTNERSHIPS

The Conservancy will increase its merchandise sales and fundraising partnerships, including online auction offerings, branded apparel, and other products. This will also include exclusive experiences for supporters such as our second Legacy Cruise scheduled for August, 2021 in partnership with the Pollin Group. New product lines will be explored, including authorized reprints of archival images.

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Conservancy must expand its donor base. More frequent and effective solicitations can begin immediately in conjunction with the organization's refreshed digital strategy. Facebook and email will be primary outreach channels, with "high touch" strategies deployed for top-tier donors. Digital outreach will be accompanied by summer and year-end "snail mail" fundraising solicitations.

SPECIAL EVENTS

The Conservancy will continue to conduct low-overhead and underwritten fundraising events inviting the arts, design, and maritime communities to "Get in on A Deck." These will introduce the Conservancy's multi-faceted curatorial mission to a wider circle of potential supporters.

We plan to reschedule a special event and concert at Steinway Hall that will feature a performance on the SS *United States*' custom baby grand from the First Class Ballroom. This event was originally slated for March but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key supporters will be encouraged to host small, salon-style events at their homes or offices. These informal gatherings will feature briefings about the ship, special guests, and lively discussion. They will offer intimate opportunities for convening the Conservancy's most generous supporters as well as recruiting new donors.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND BOARD DEVELOPMENT

The Conservancy will further strengthen its board of directors and increase the board's "give or raise" commitments. As the organization continues its transition—from its initial focus on keeping the vessel safely afloat to developing and fundraising for a major museum and visitor center—the organization itself will continue to evolve to meet these challenges. Investments will be made in bolstering staff capacity, particularly in the fundraising arena.

FULL SPEED AHEAD

The hard work of the Conservancy, sustained over the course of a decade, has ensured the *SS United States* is once again a global symbol of her namesake nation and poised for revitalization. So many supporters from across the nation and around the world have rallied around America's Flagship, and this collective effort is a fitting tribute to the workers and visionaries who made history in bringing her to life. This is a pivotal time for the *SS United States*: We need your help to advance the twin goals of saving the "First Lady of the Seas" and creating an extraordinary museum and innovation center aboard the iconic vessel. With your help, the Conservancy's next decade will be an even greater success. Thank you for accompanying us on this historic journey.





SS UNITED STATES
CONSERVANCY

SAVING AMERICA'S FLAGSHIP

P.O. BOX 32115

WASHINGTON, DC 20007

888.488.7787

info@ssusc.org