

The Greatest Transatlantic Shipping Lines

Norddeutscher Lloyd

Germany's Norddeutscher Lloyd launched the golden age of liners in 1897 with the Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse, the first of the four pipers. In the years leading up to 1914, their fleet of express liners grew to four, each a refinement of the one preceding it. Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse was sunk while serving as an auxiliary cruiser in World War I. Kronprinz Wilhelm also served as a wartime raider, completing an amazing cruise of 8 months at sea without touching port, by running to the still-neutral US for interment. The Other NDL "Greyhounds", Kaiser Wilhelm II and Kronprinzessen Cecilie, were also interned early in the conflict, the Cecilie after a dramatic mid-ocean turn about and run into safety at Bar Harbor, Maine. All three liners were seized by the US and used as troopships after America's 1917 declaration of war on Germany.

Wartime losses and seizures left NDL in serious need of tonnage after the Armistice. One of the few liners not taken by the Allies in reparations was the incomplete Hindenburg, laid down shortly before the outbreak of the war. She entered service in 1922, taking the name of her sister ship Columbus, which was handed over to Britain and become White Star's Homeric. During the 1920s and 30s Columbus was popular as both a liner and cruise ship. In 1939, she also fell victim to war. After an attempt to reach interment in the US Columbus was scuttled to avoid capture by the Royal Navy.



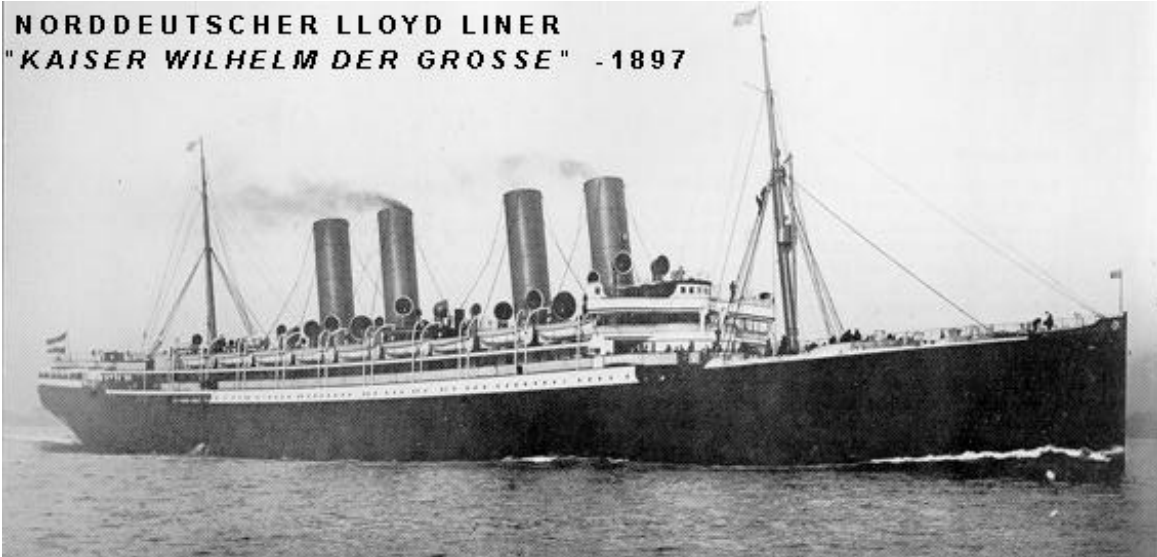
In the late 1920s, NDL set off the final round of international liner one-upmanship with the launch of the twin giants Bremen and Europa. On her maiden voyage the Bremen captured the Atlantic "Blue Riband" for the fastest crossing, breaking the record held by Cunard's Mauretania for over 2 decades. Not long after, she lost the title to her sister, Europa. During the peactime years of the Nazi regime, economic and governmental pressures led to NDL's merger with the Hamburg - Amerika Line. After the war they again seperated, but finally remerged in 1970 to form HAPAG - Lloyd.

Europa was at home when the Second World War started at the end of the summer of 1939, but the final days of peace found Bremen at New York. Knowing that British Naval forces would be watching for her, she made a passengerless fugitive run for Germany. Bremen alluded her pursuers, but it was her last voyage. During the war she was destroyed by fire. The Europa survived the war to be seized by the Americans in 1945 and later given to France to "replace" the Normandie. Rebuilt as the Liberte, she sailed for another decade before going to the scrapyard.

Appendix: Norddeutscher Lloyd pictures

Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse - 1897----- Interior ||| Kronprinz Wilhelm - 1901----- Interior
 Kaiser Wilhelm II - 1902----- Interior ||| Kronprinzessen Cecilie - 1907
 Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse and Kronprinz Wilhelm
 Kaiser Wilhelm II and Kronprinzessen Cecilie
 Columbus - 1922 ||| Main Lounge
 Bremen - 1929----- In Panama Canal - 1939----- Bremen at NYC - before final departure - August, 1939
 Europa - 1929----- Dining Salon----- Ball Room

**NORDDEUTSCHER LLOYD LINER
"KAISER WILHELM DER GROSSE" - 1897**



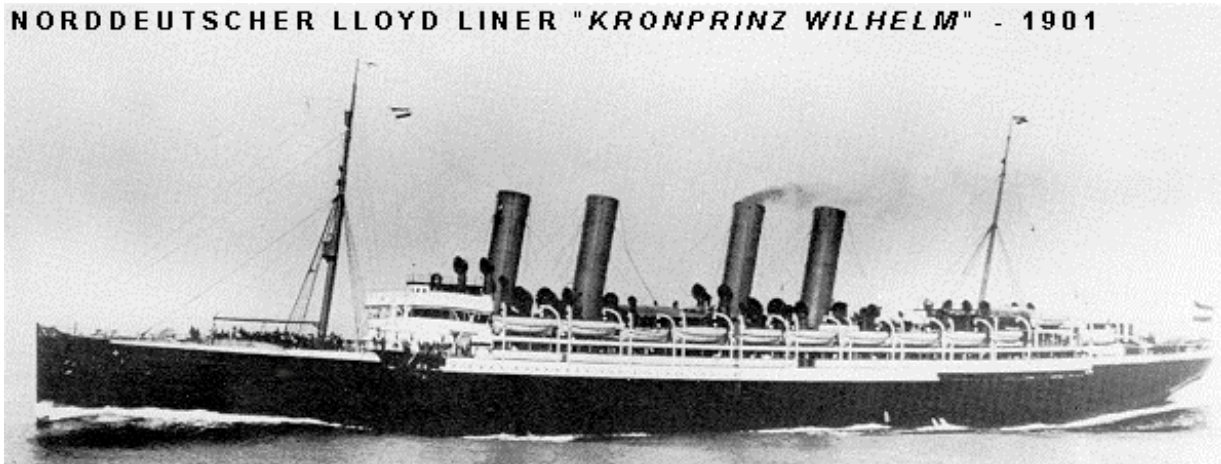
1897

LADIES' DRAWING ROOM

FIRST CLASS SMOKING ROOM

NORDDEUTSCHER LLOYD LINER "KAISER WILHELM DER GROSSE"

NORDDEUTSCHER LLOYD LINER "KRONPRINZ WILHELM" - 1901



FIRST CLASS DINING ROOM

FIRST CLASS MUSIC ROOM

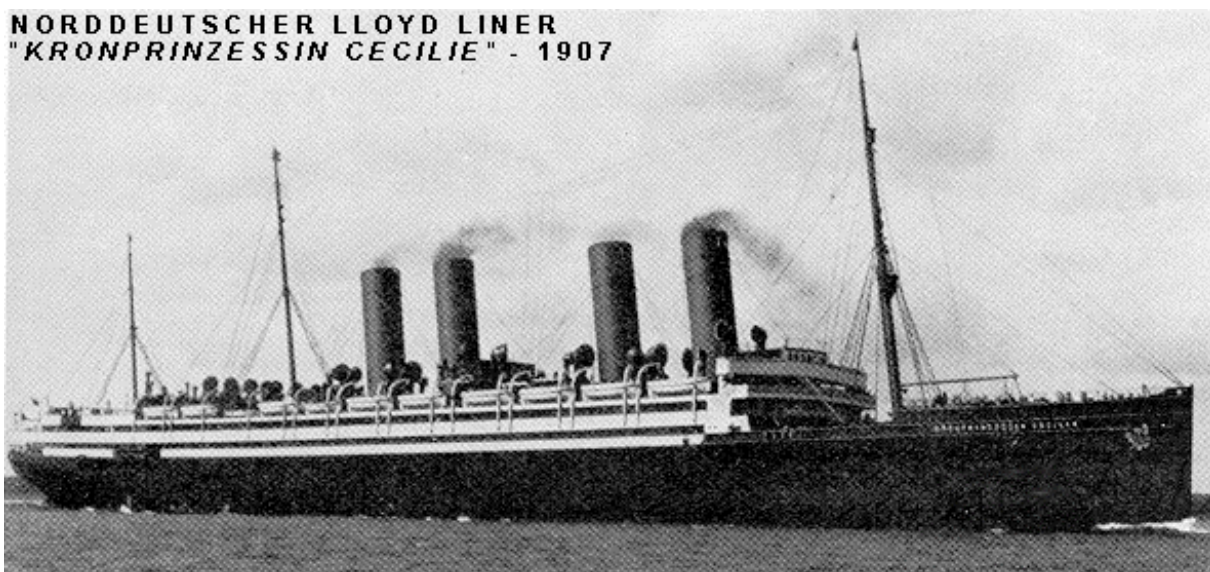
NORDDEUTSCHER LLOYD LINER "KRONPRINZ WILHELM" - 1901



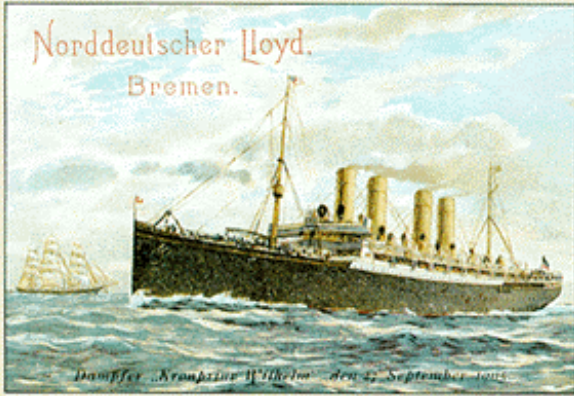
LADIES DRAWING ROOM
NORDDEUTSCHER LLOYD LINER



WINTER GARDEN
"KAISER WILHELM II" - 1902



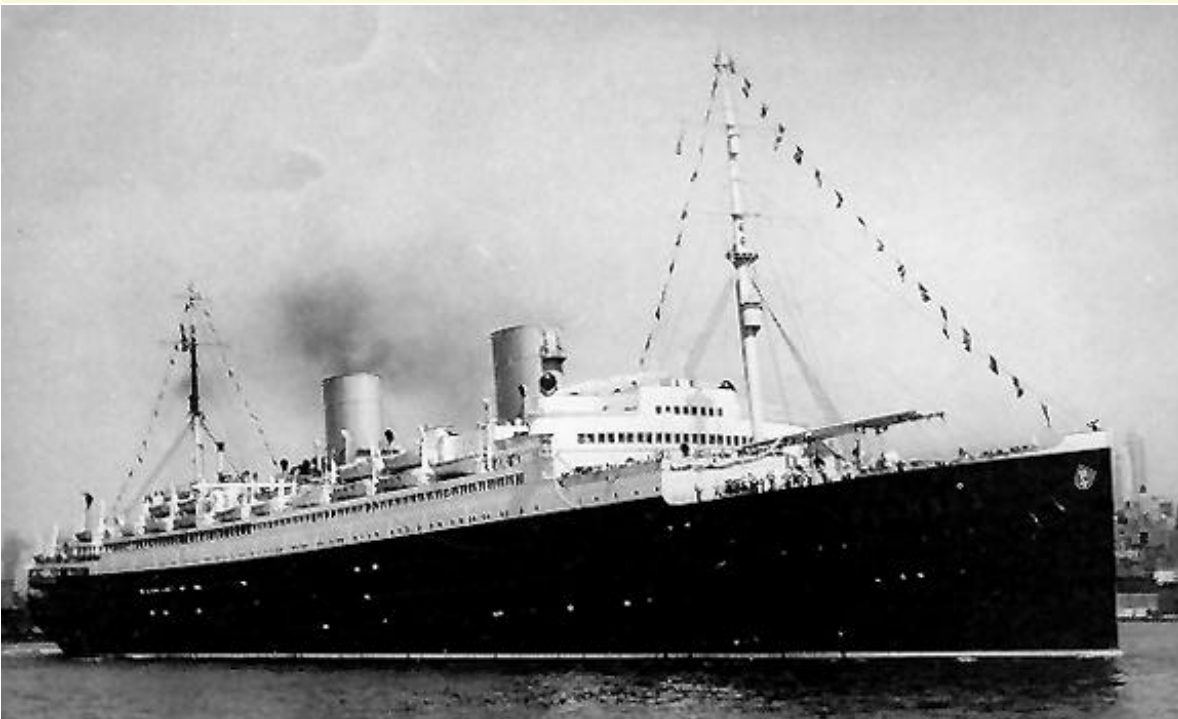
NORDDEUTSCHER LLOYD LINER
"KRONPRINZESSIN CECILIE" - 1907

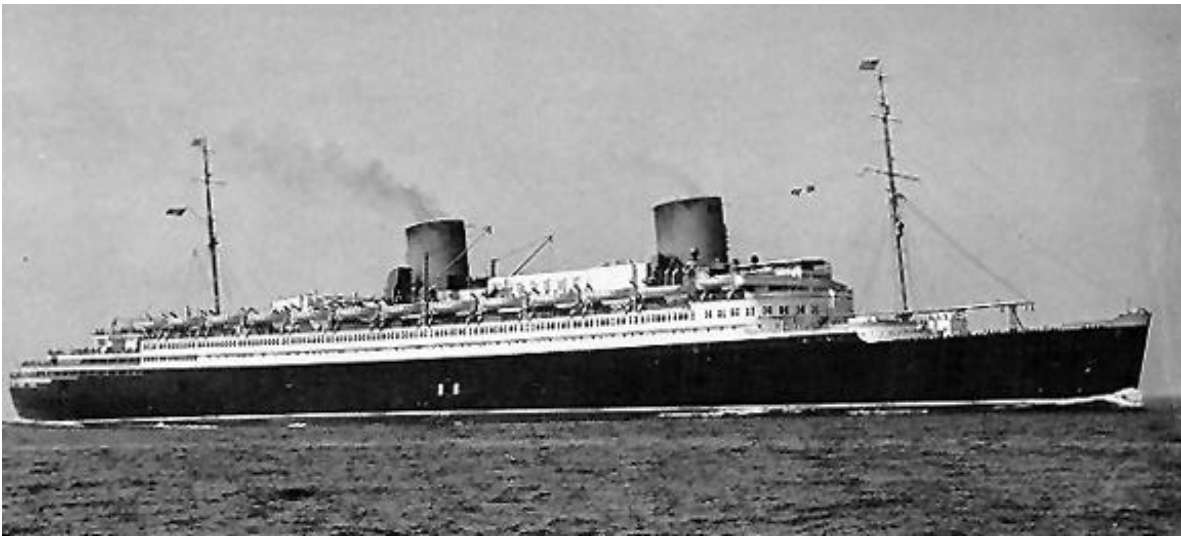


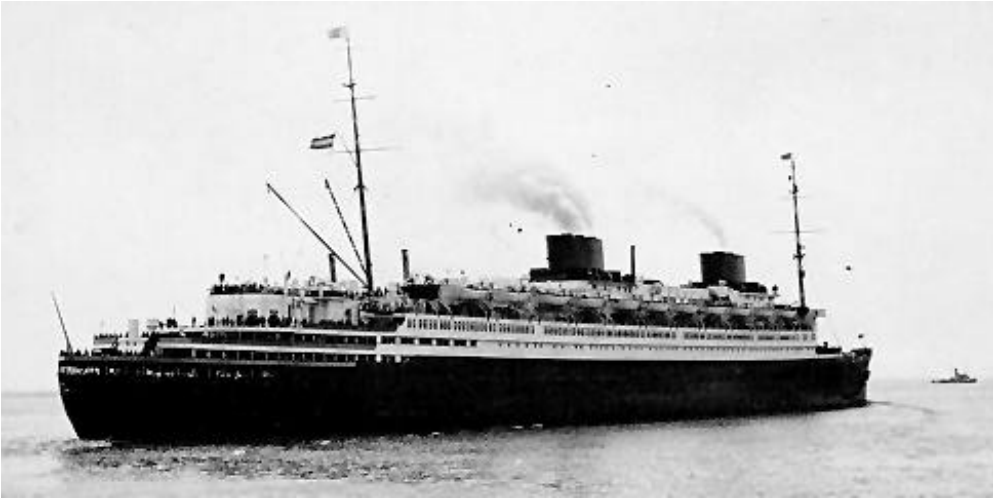
"KAISER WILHELM II"



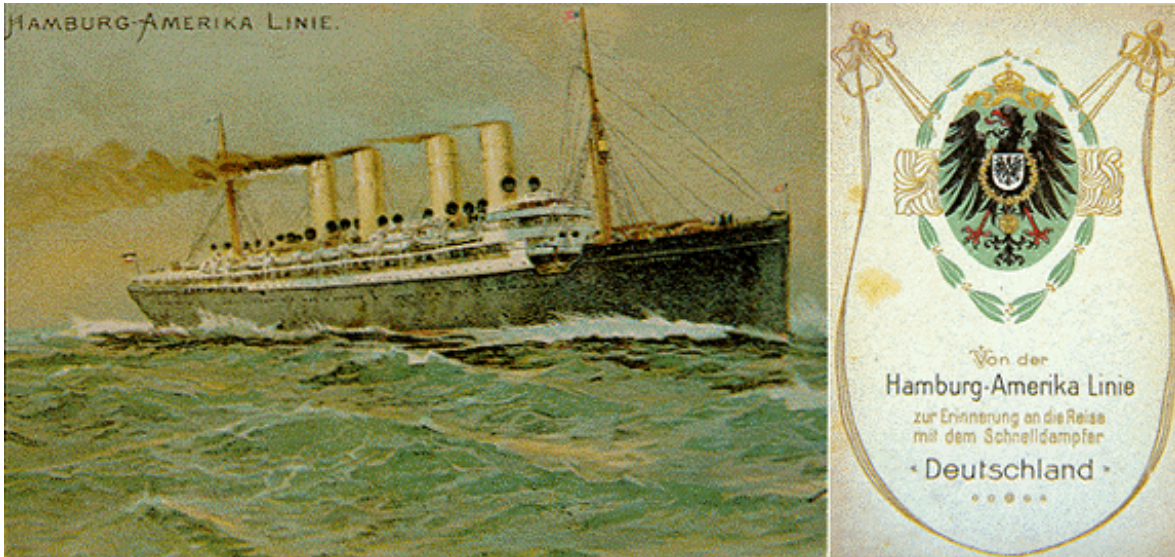
"KRONPRINZESSIN CECILIE"







Hamburg - Amerika Line



In response to the NDL's revolutionary Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse of 1897, the Hamburg - Amerika Line decided to enter into the speedy "express liner" market. Their Deutschland appeared in 1900, and soon wrestled the Blue Riband away from her other Teutonic rival. She was not a great money-maker, however, and by the end of the decade she had lost a boiler room and been converted to the luxury cruise ship Victoria Louise.

HAPAG's leader, Alfred Balin, believed that safety, size, comfort and luxury would always win out over speed. Thus he conceived the three largest liners yet build, to be named Imperator, Vaterland and Bismarck. The first two were briefly in service before the First World War, Vaterland being caught at Hoboken, NJ and interned in 1914. She was seized and renamed Leviathan by the United States after the declaration of war on Germany in 1917, and served for the duration and beyond as a troopship. After the war, she was retained by the Americans, while her sisters, Imperator, and the unfinished Bismarck were seized by Britain and sold to Cunard and White Star, respectively, and renamed Berengaria and Majestic.

During the 1920s, Hapag turned mainly to smaller liners. During the peactime years of the Nazi regime, economic and govermental pressures led to NDL's merger with the Hamburg - Amerika Line. After the war they again seperated, but finally remerged in 1970 to form HAPAG - Lloyd.

Appendix: Hamburg-Amerika Line pictures

Deutschland - 1900 ||| Deutschland Stern view ||| Interior
 Imperator - 1913 --- ||| Illustration ||| Swimming Pool



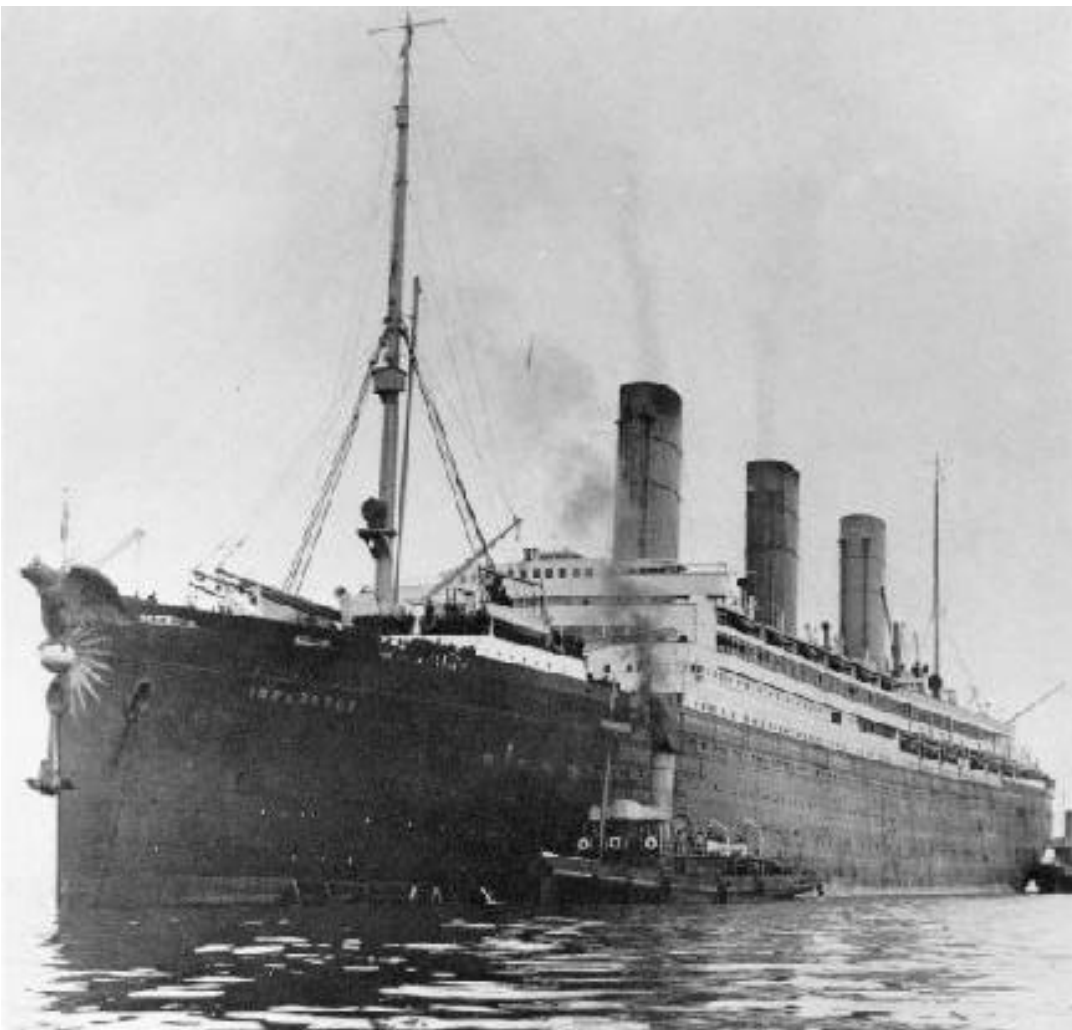


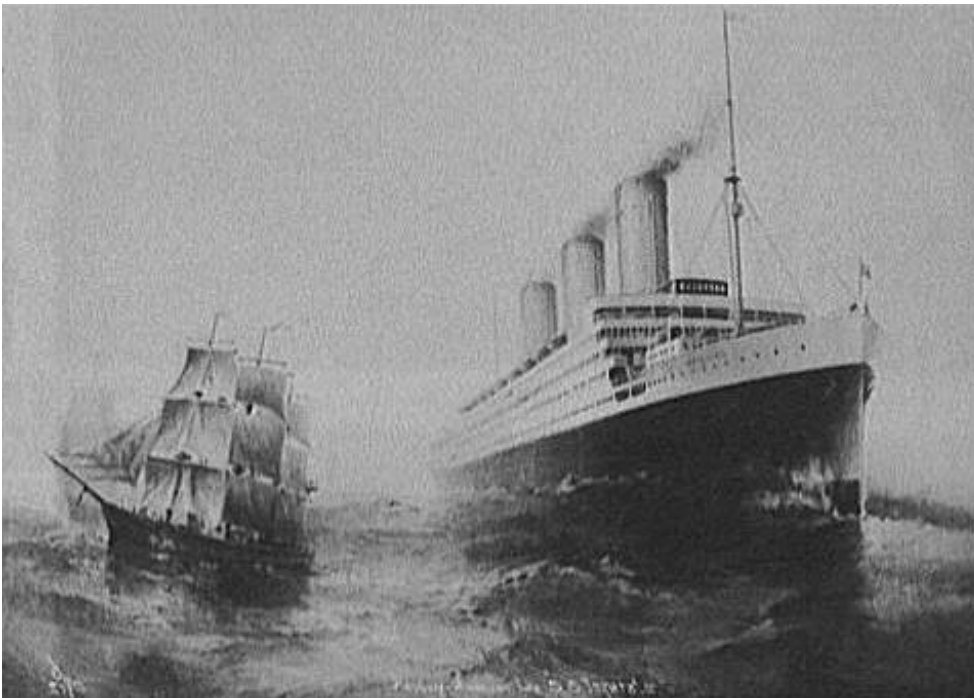
SMOKING ROOM



MAIN STAIRCASE

HAMBURG-AMERIKA LINER "DEUTSCHLAND" - 1900





Right: Cunard Line poster

Cunard Line

By far the most famous of all the Trans-Atlantic lines, Cunard was the pioneer of safe steam crossings. The advent of Norddeutscher Lloyd's revolutionary "Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse" in 1897 provoked a wait and see attitude from Cunard. When the response finally came a decade later it was nothing short of spectacular. The twin superliners Lusitania and Mauretania, two of the most famous passenger vessels of all time, made their debut in 1907. The Cunard pair were far faster than any other ships of the time, and many which came later. Mauretania would hold the Atlantic "Blue Riband" for over two decades, finally surrendering the record to the NDL's new Bremen in 1929. Seven years after their debut, the Cunard twins were joined by a somewhat larger and slower half-sister, the Aquitania.

Cunard also operated many smaller liners, including the Carpathia which rescued the survivors of Titanic in April, 1912. She was torpedoed and sunk by a U-Boat in 1918.

One of the most famous events of the First World War at sea is the torpedoing of the Lusitania off the coast of Ireland by a German U-Boat in 1915. Mauretania and Aquitania survived the conflict, and were joined in 1921 by the ex-HAPAG liner Imperator, seized from the Germans and renamed Berengaria.

The appearance of NDL's Bremen and Europa at the close of the 1920s set off the final round of international competition for speed, size and luxury at sea. Cunard entered the new decade with a plan to construct two immense new liners, the first of which was laid down in 1930. The spread of the Great Depression hit all the lines hard and work on the new liner was suspended in 1931. In 1934 the British Government agreed to provide loans to finish both new vessels, with the provision that Cunard merge with its chief British rival, the White Star Line. The merger and the sagging economy led to the scrapping of many older vessels from both fleets, including Cunard's Mauretania and Berengaria. In 1936, however, the first of the pair of new superships, the Queen Mary, entered service. For several years, she sparred with her French rival, the mighty Normandie, for possession of the fastest crossing "Blue Riband", which changed hands several times before the Queen Mary finally retook it for good.

Three years after the debut of the Queen Mary, and before the second supership was ready for service, a new smaller liner, the second Mauretania joined the fleet. She was a handsome vessel, but never achieved the fame of her namesake or her larger Cunard running mates.

The second and largest ever of the superliners, the Queen Elizabeth, was still incomplete when war broke out in September of 1939. The Queen Mary was safe at New York, and as soon as she could, the unfinished Queen Elizabeth made a top secret dash as her maiden voyage to join her older half-sister there. She was briefly moored beside the French Line's Normandie, but soon both Cunarders were serving as troopships, amassing an incredible record of wartime service.

The war granted a reprieve to the aged Aquitania, which had been slated for scrapping when the Queen Elizabeth was finished. She gave journeyman service during the war, then afterwards bringing immigrants to the New World. Her long career ended in 1950.

The Queen Elizabeth finally made her maiden voyage as a liner in 1946, and the decade and a half which followed saw the two Queens become the most popular and profitable liners in history. The rise of air travel after 1960 changed all this. By 1965, the second Mauretania had gone to the shipbreakers, and the Queens were both losing substantial amounts.

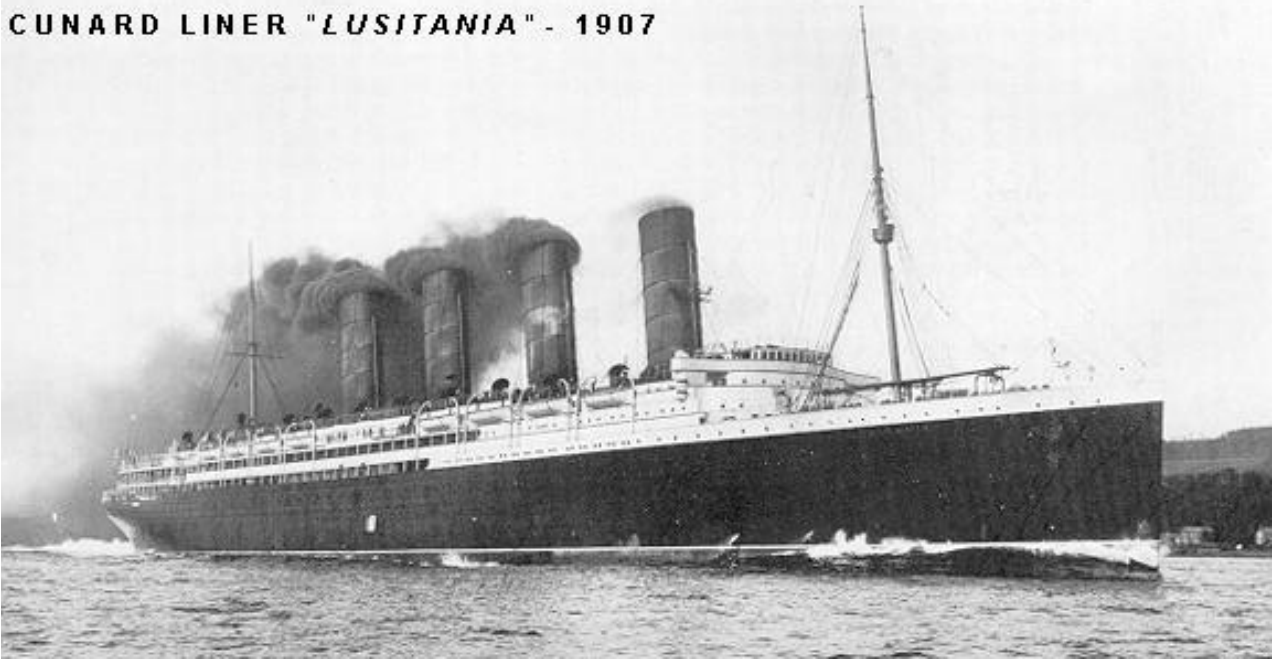
In 1967, the Queen Mary made her last voyage, to become a floating hotel at Long Beach, California. She remains there to this day, one of three classic superliners still afloat. The following year, the Queen Elizabeth was also retired, despite a recent major refit which was supposed to keep her sailing for at least another 10 years. She was first purchased by a group of Florida developers who soon went bankrupt. Sold to Orient Overseas Lines, she was renamed Seawise University and went to Hong Kong for conversion to a school ship. During the work she caught fire, capsized and sank in the harbor, a total loss.

In 1969, Cunard's new-generation liner Queen Elizabeth 2 made her debut. Since that time she has made fairly regular Atlantic crossings, along with much cruising.

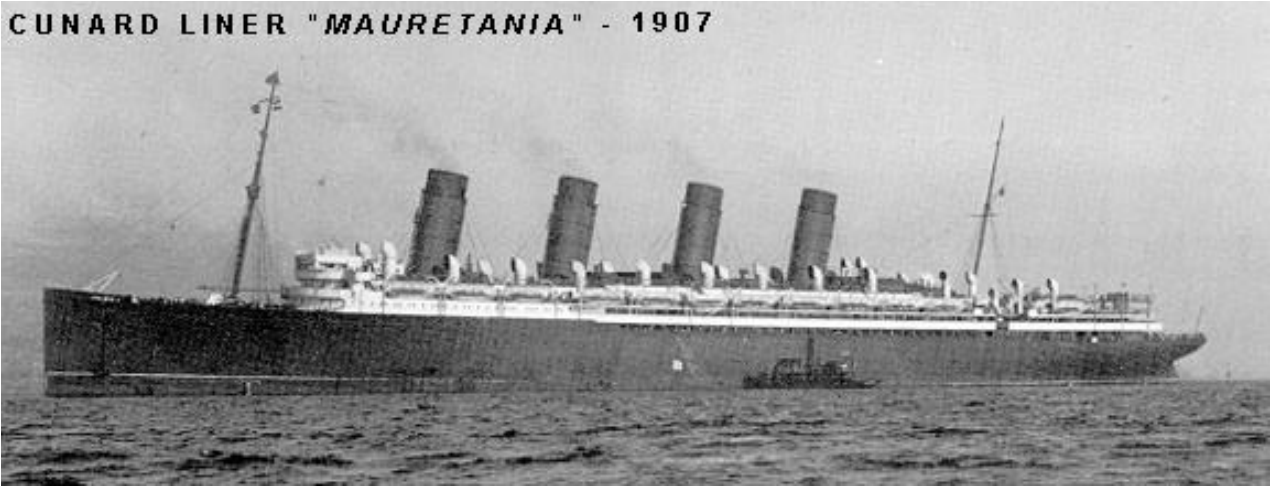
Appendix: Cunard Line pictures

- Lusitania - 1907 ||| At Dock in NY
- Mauretania - 1907 ||| Main Lounge ||| Dining Salon
- Aquitania - 1914
- Berengaria - 1921
- Queen Mary - 1936 ||| Dining Salon ||| Shopping Arcade
- Mauretania (II) -1939
- Queen Elizabeth - 1940 ||| As a Troopship ||| At New York ||| Main Lounge ||| Library

CUNARD LINER "LUSITANIA" - 1907

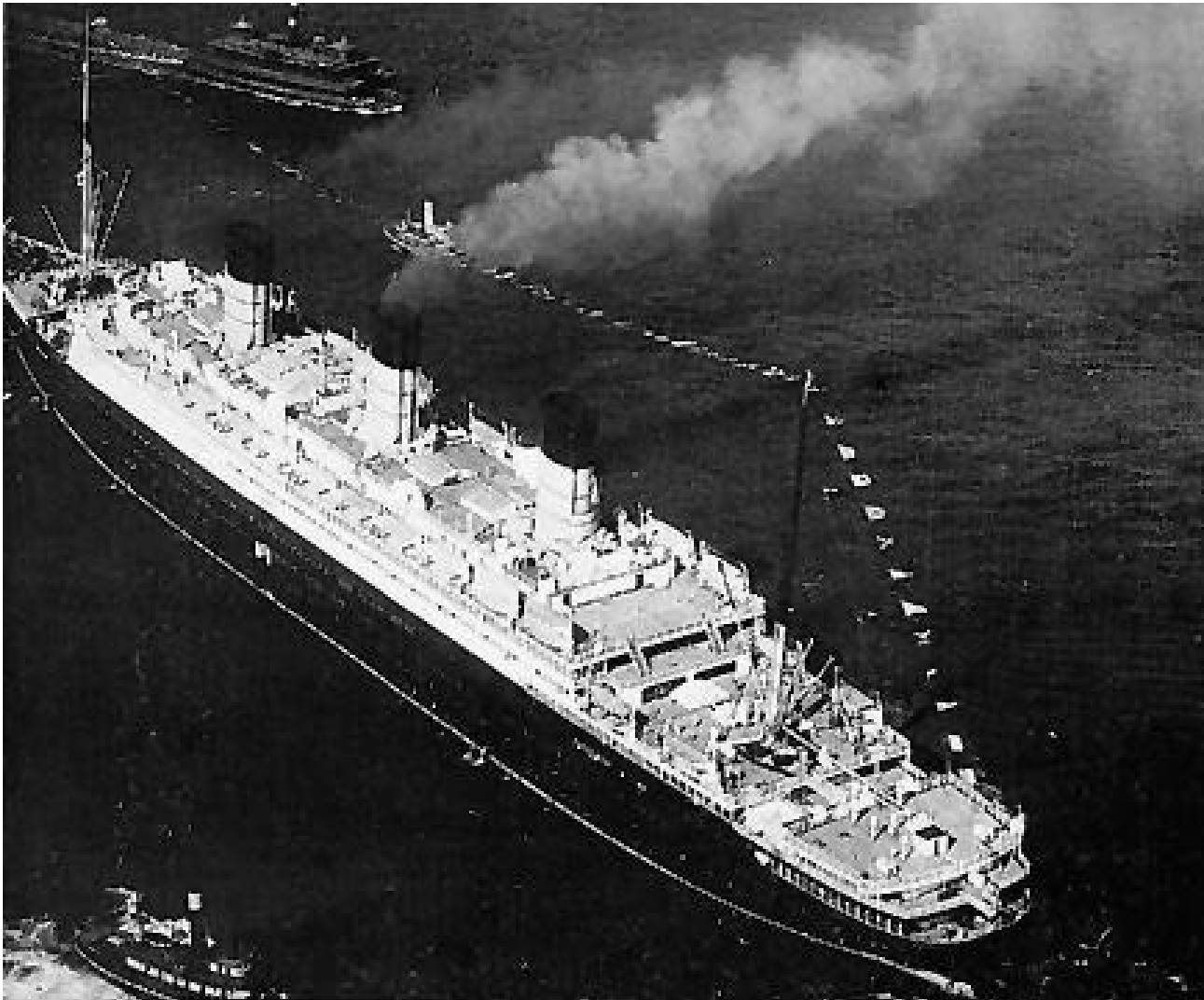


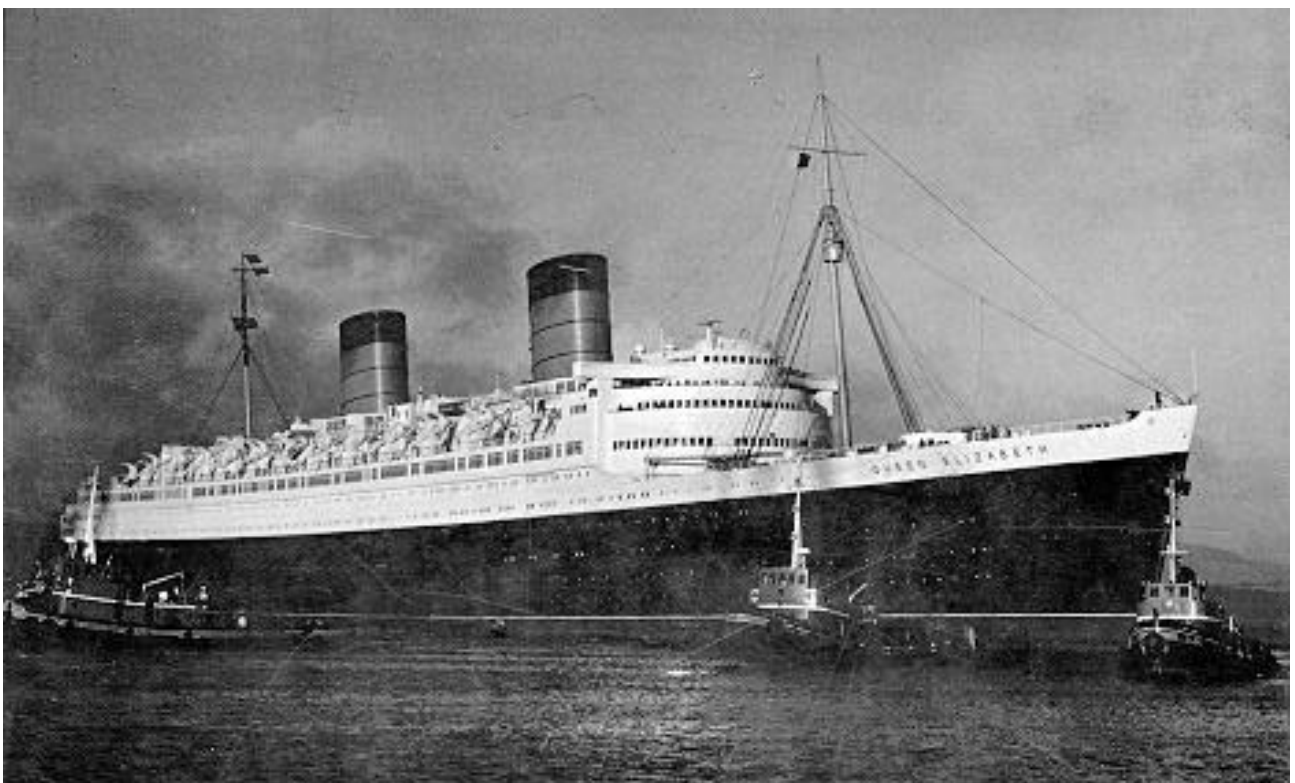
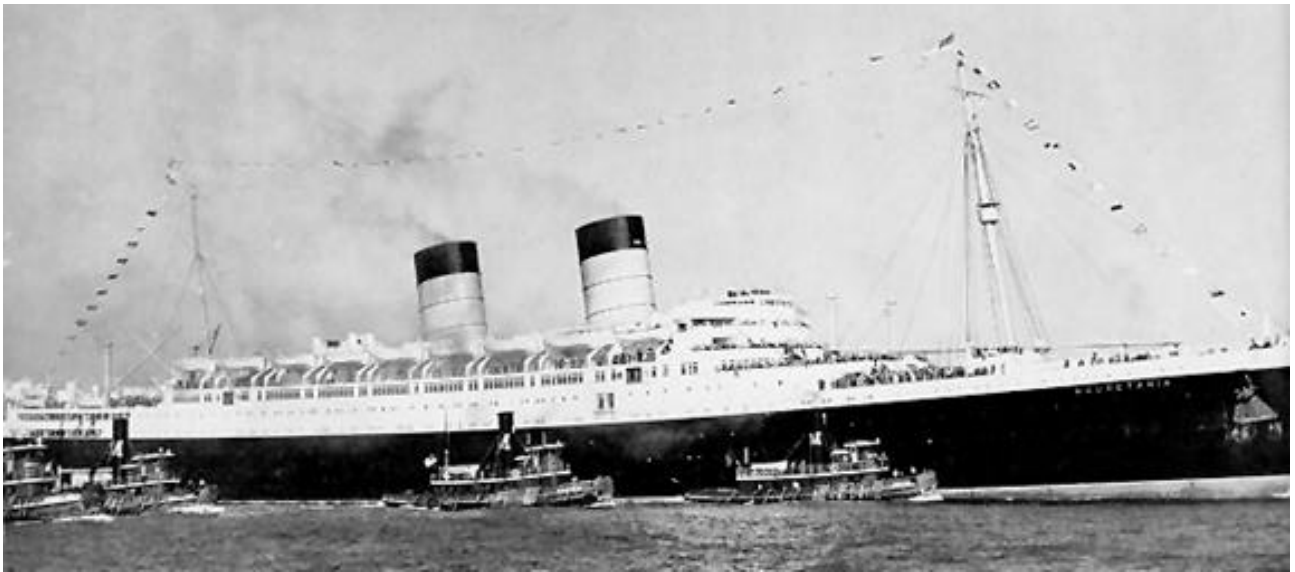
CUNARD LINER "MAURETANIA" - 1907

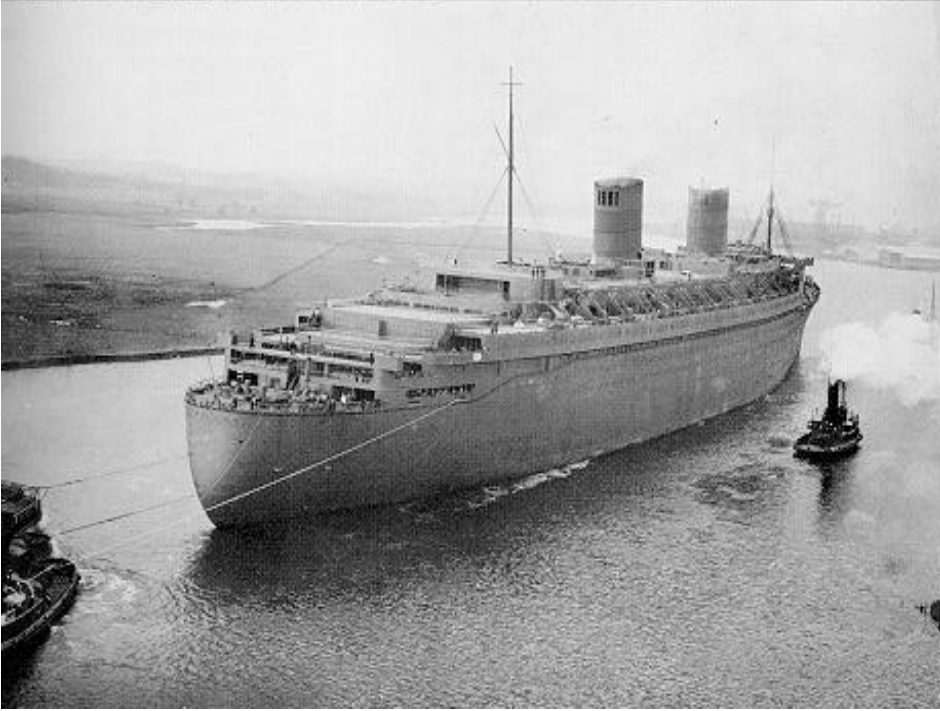


CUNARD LINER "AQUITANIA" - 1914.









White Star Line

The White Star Line waged a sixty year struggle against Cunard for the title of Britain's leading Trans-Atlantic service. It never gained dominance, but at times approached equality with the older line. White Star was a late entry into the superliner field. After the success of the Cunarders Lusitania and Mauretania, J. Bruce Ismay, the son of White Star's founder, and the majority stockholder, American financier J. P. Morgan, decided to stake the line's future on the largest trio of ships yet conceived by man. It was one of the most fateful nautical decisions of the century.



The huge trio was commissioned from the Belfast yards of Harland and Wolff. The first, dubbed Olympic, made her maiden voyage to New York, amid much fanfare, in 1911. Veteran Captain E. J. Smith was at the helm. The Olympic was not quite fast enough to take the "Blue Riband" from Cunard's Mauretania, but was far larger and more luxurious. She also seemed extremely safe. The Olympic-class ships were built with a system of 16 watertight compartments. In 1909, the line's much less advanced Republic had survived for many hours after a serious collision at sea. The new liners seemed so safe as to be virtually unsinkable.

The second ship of the class was the Titanic. The details of her loss to an iceberg during her maiden voyage in April of 1912 are too well known to go into here. About 1500 people, rich and poor, passengers and crew, were lost. Captain Smith, on his final trip before retirement, went down with his ship. J. Bruce Ismay was among the saved.

After the loss of Titanic, the Olympic was retrofitted with a full double bottom and more lifeboats. Further changes were incorporated into the plans for the final ship of the trio, the Britannic. World War One erupted before the new liner could enter service. Britannic was taken over by the Admiralty, and became a Hospital Ship. In 1916, she was sunk off Greece, on a mine planted by a German U-Boat. Poor damage control contributed to her loss, just a few miles off shore. Fortunately, only her crew and medical staff was aboard, and most escaped. The hospital was empty.

White Star was staggered by the tragic loss of two of her first three superliners. After the war, it obtained two unfinished German liners which had been seized by the Allies. The larger of the ships was the last of Hamburg-Amerika's pre-war super trio, the Bismarck. She entered White Star service as the Majestic. The somewhat smaller vessel had been named Columbus by ND. The name was transferred to her sister, the more aggressively named Hindenburg, which the German line was allowed to retain. The seized vessel became White Star's Homeric. Both German-built ships entered service in 1922.

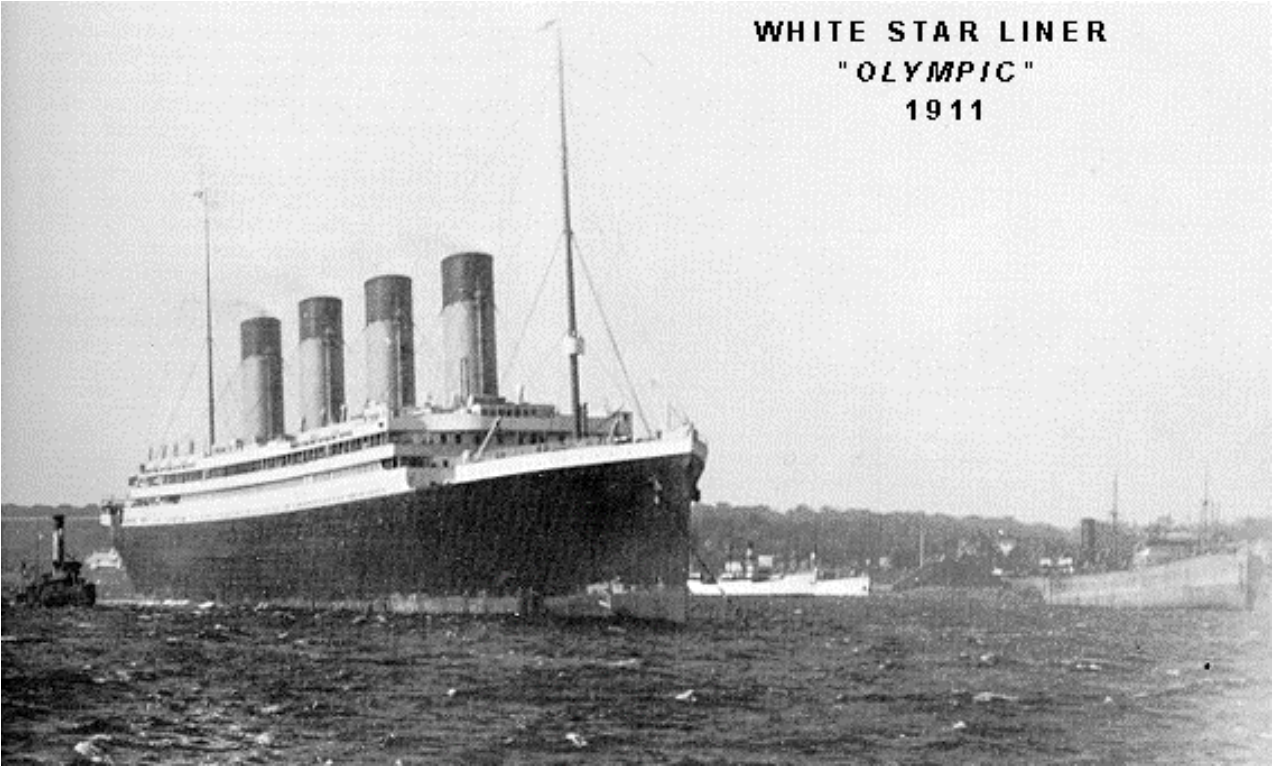
During the prosperous late 1920s, White Star ordered a pair of handsome modern motorships to run as companions to their big three. The first, a second Britannic entered service in 1930, followed two years later by the Georgic. The line was projecting two enlarged versions of this pair for the later 1930s, but the depression and merger in 1934 forming Cunard-White Star Lines put an end to such plans, and the struggle with the rival line.

After the merger, Olympic, Majestic, and Homeric all went to the shipbreakers. The Britannic and Georgic served in World War II, then returned to line service. Britannic sailed until 1960, her sister had been retired in 1954. The White Star name remained hyphenated with Cunard until the late 1940s, and Cunard flag lockers carry the White Star burgee to the present day.

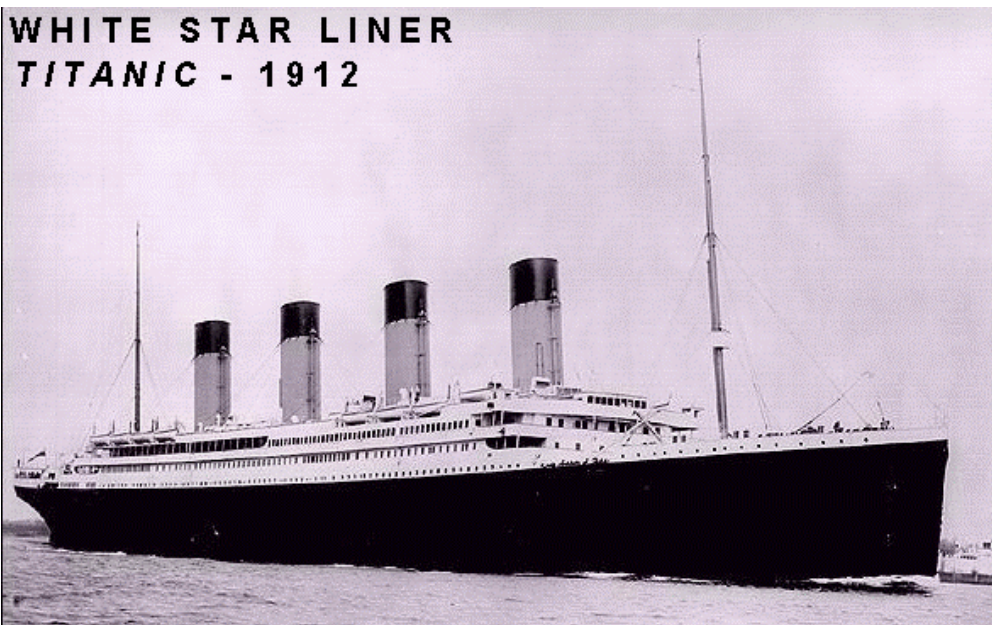
Appendix: White Star Line pictures

Olympic - 1911----- Stern View ||| Bow View in War Paint
 Titanic - 1912
 Britannic - 1915, as RN Hospital Ship
 Majestic - 1922 ||| Britannic (II) - 1930 ||| Republic -1909
 Various Line Publications ||| Olympic Class Postcards

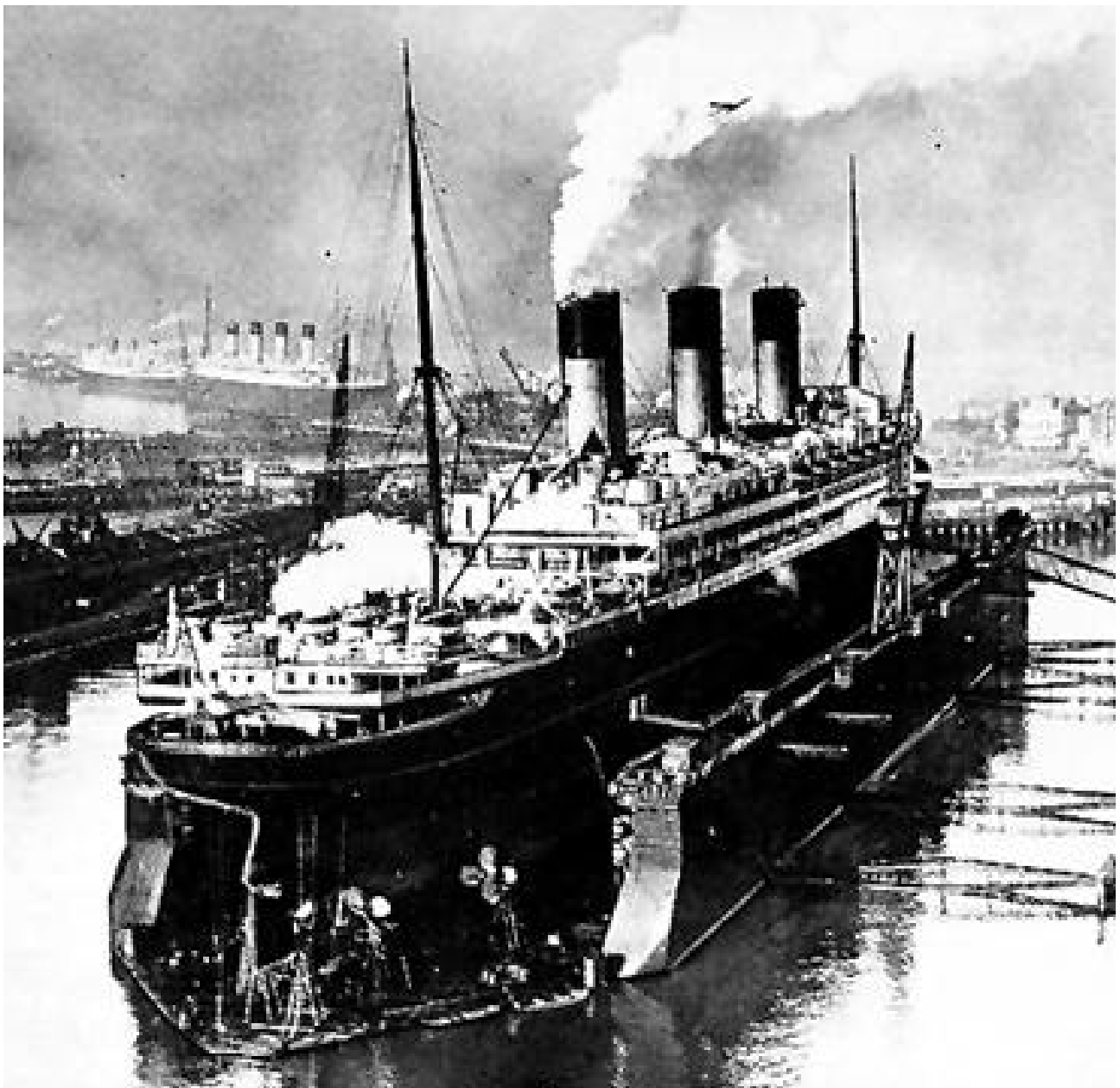
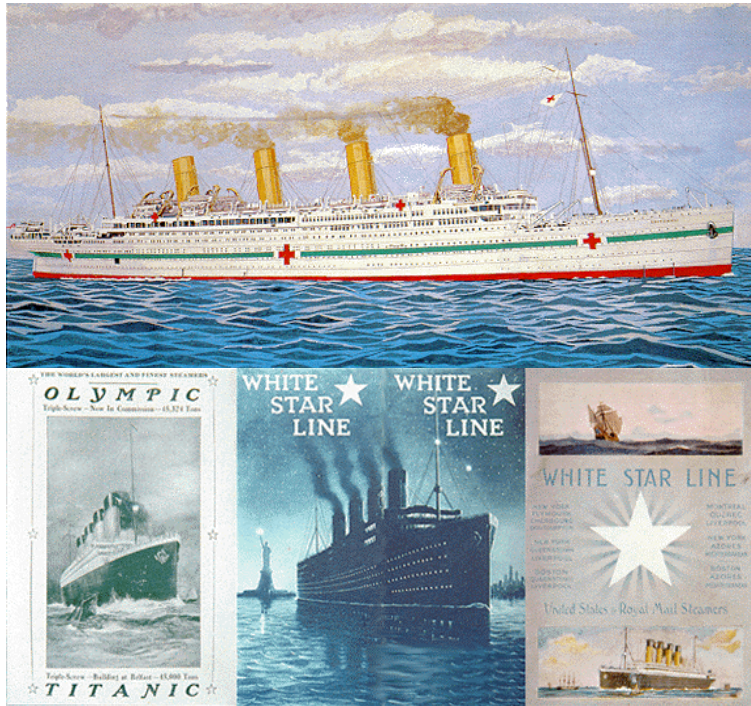
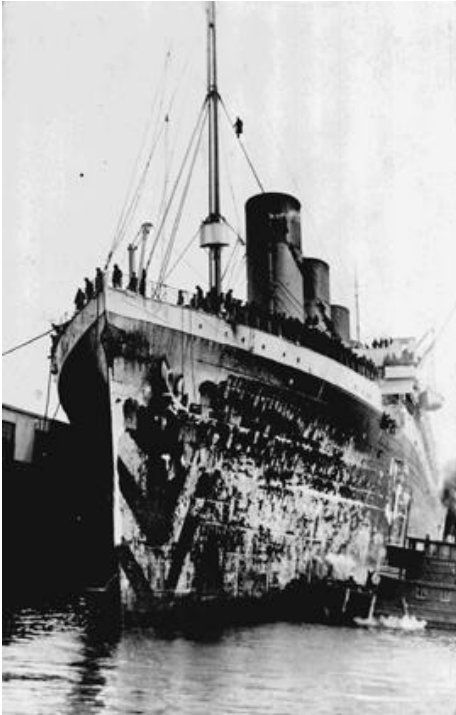
**WHITE STAR LINER
"OLYMPIC"
1911**

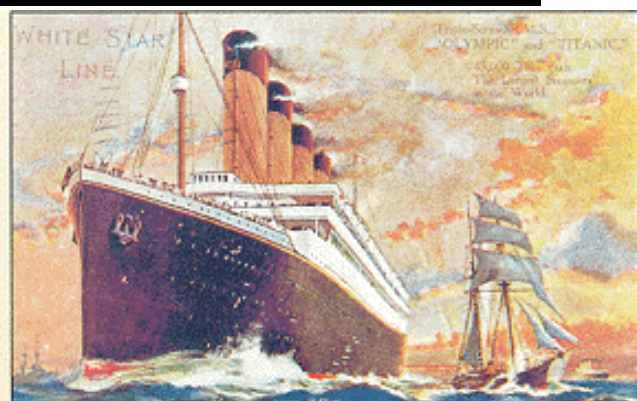
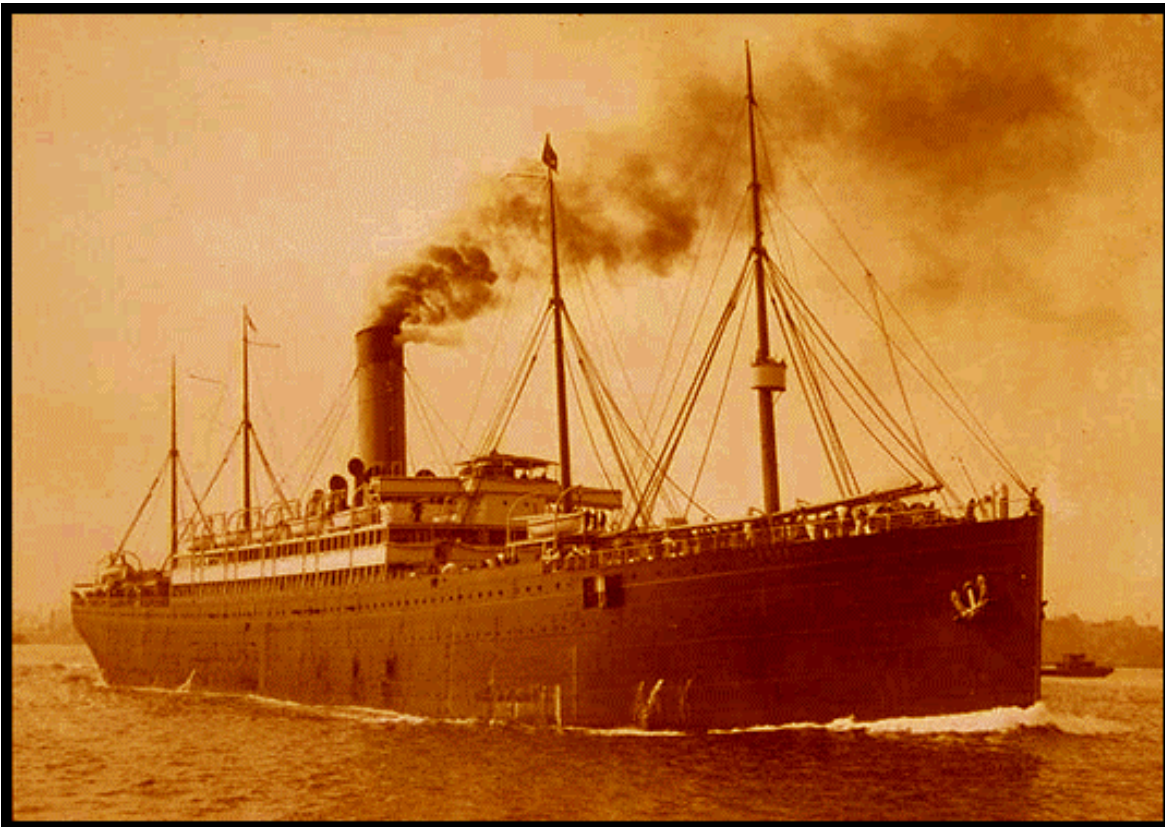
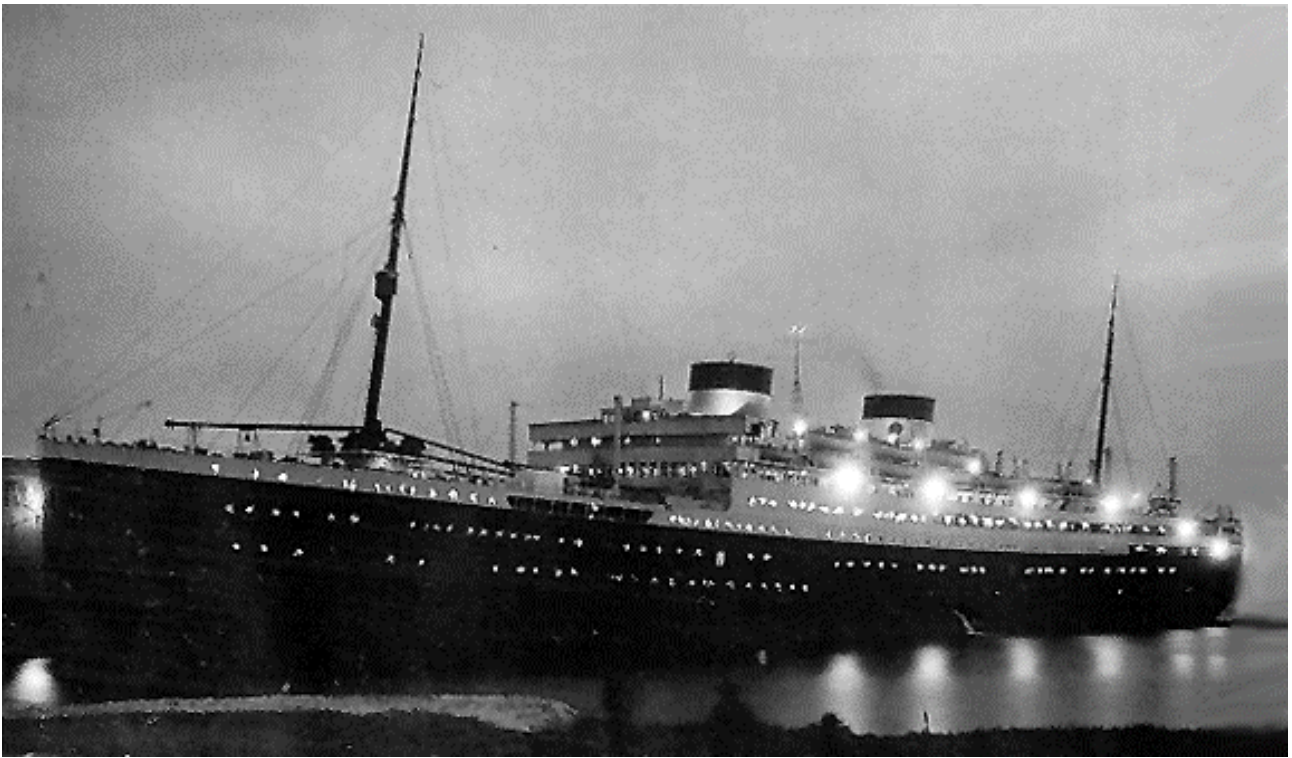


**WHITE STAR LINER
TITANIC - 1912**



The Greatest Transatlantic Shipping Lines





French Line (CGT)

France's Compagnie Generale Transatlantique (CGT) or French Line enjoyed a reputation for the most luxurious liners afloat. Their first foray into superliners was the France of 1912. After the First World War, she was joined by a new running mate, the Paris. France was withdrawn, due to the depression, in 1932 and scrapped two years later. Paris burned and sank in port at Le Havre in 1939. Both ships were very ornate, reflecting the traditional French mode of interior decoration. The next two large vessels for the French Line would break free of the past, and change luxury liners forever.

In 1927, the Ile de France joined the CGT fleet. Conventional on the outside, she had on the interior adopted the mode of decoration now known as "Art Deco". No less ornate than her predecessors, Ile de France set the tone for the coming group of superliners, luxury of an ultra-modern style. She soon became a favorite of discriminating passengers. The grand staircase, which rose three decks, was likely the most impressive ever afloat. After serving in World War II, Ile de France was totally rebuilt, losing one of her three funnels. She sailed for another decade, being sold to Japanese shipbreakers at the end of 1958. Before her destruction, Ile de France served as a floating set for "The Last Voyage", a Hollywood feature about the sinking of a luxury liner.



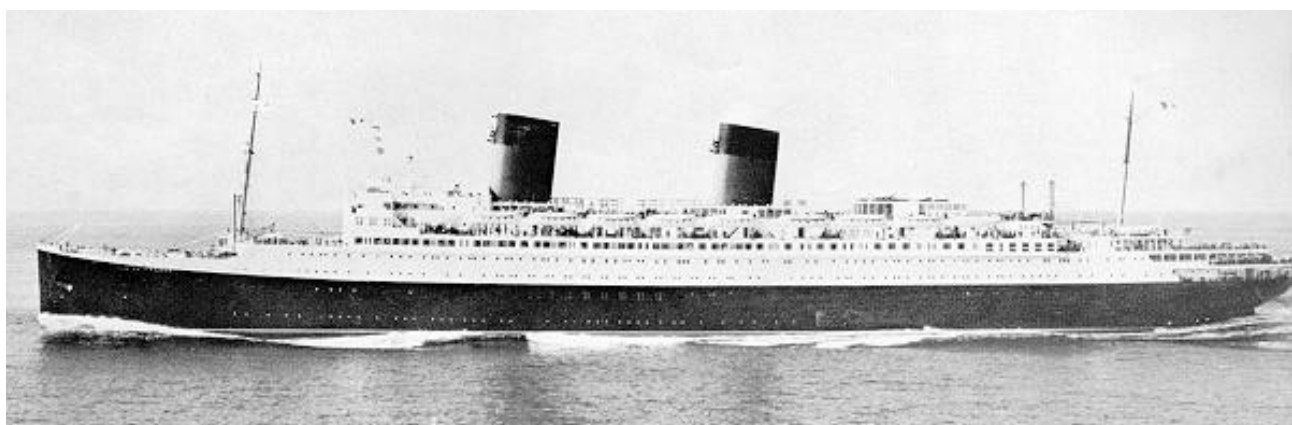
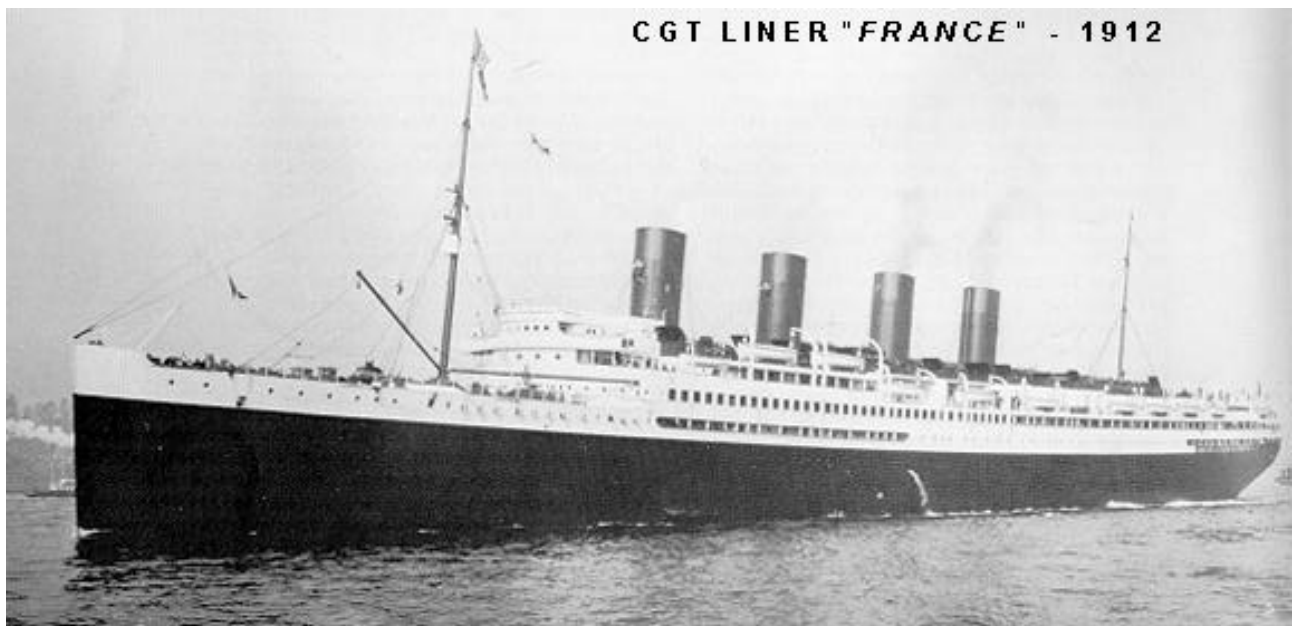
Ile de France had been a preliminary shot in the battle for supremacy on the Atlantic which began in earnest with the arrival of NDL's Bremen and Europa at the end of the 1920s. The French Line, with support and money from the government, began planning a liner to put all others to shame. This amazing vessel, the Normandie, entered service in 1935. The Deco mode of the Ile de France also informed the interiors of the Normandie, but her exterior also reflected the most up to date ideas in nautical design. She appeared strikingly futuristic, decades ahead of her British and German rivals. She was the last word in luxury at sea. The First Class Dining Salon was the largest room afloat, larger than the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. On her maiden voyage to New York, Normandie easily captured the "Blue Riband" from the Italian liner Rex, which had taken the record from the Europa in 1933. She later traded the honor several times with the Queen Mary before finally losing it to the Cunarder for good. During the late 1930s, Normandie sailed regularly on the Atlantic run and made an occasional cruise. The outbreak of World War II found her at New York, and for safety, there she stayed. Soon she was joined by many other liners, including the Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth. The British ships soon departed for war duties, but due to France's 1940 surrender to the Germans, Normandie remained in port. She was finally seized by the United States and, after Pearl Harbor, renamed USS Lafayette and turned over to the Navy for troopship duties. Much of her luxurious interior had been removed and stored before a welder's torch set off a fire in February, 1942. Due to a series of errors the blaze could not be controlled. Fireboats poured tons of water into the blazing hull and, hours later, Normandie rolled over at her pier, never to sail again. Despite a costly salvage operation, she was never repaired and scrapped after the war.

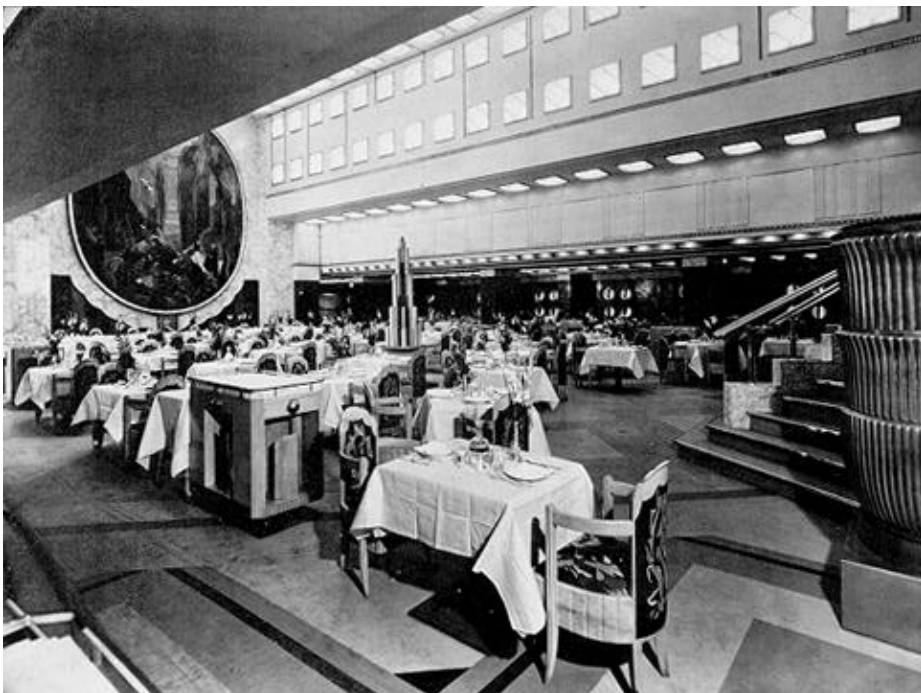
The German Europa survived the war and was allocated to France as compensation for the loss of Normandie. While being reconditioned, a storm at Le Havre broke her moorings and dashed her against the sunken hulk of the Paris. She sank, but luckily on even keel. Raised and rebuilt, she re-entered service as the Liberte and sailed for another decade.

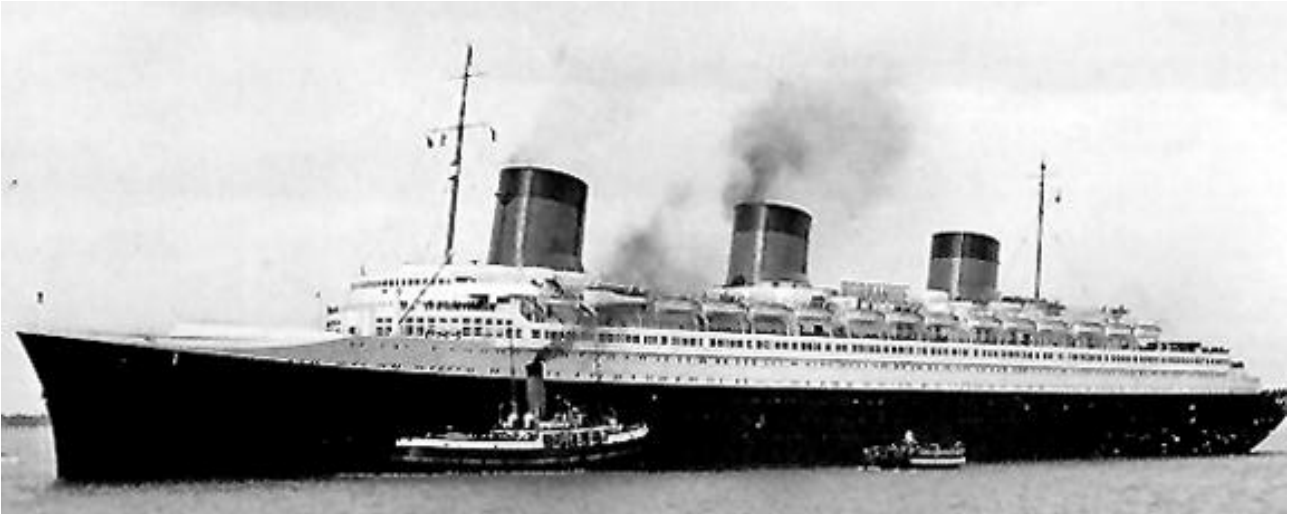
The last vessel for the French Line was the new France of 1962, the very end of the era of liners. She served for a dozen years before being laid up. Eventually sold to Norwegian Cruise Lines and renamed Norway she now serves as a cruise ship, one of three classic superliners still existing and the only still sailing.

Appendix: French Line Pictures

France - 1912 ||| Paris - 1921
Ile de France - After post-war rebuild ||| Pre-war ||| Grand Staircase ||| Dining Salon ||| Dining Salon
Normandie - 1935 ----- ||| From the Air ||| Dining Salon ||| Decorative Detail







CGT LINER "NORMANDIE" - 1935
(after 1936 refit)



United States Lines

The United States Line grew out of the United States Shipping Board, a First World War Federal Agency. The board managed vessels seized from Germany, including Hamburg - Amerika's Vaterland, now renamed Leviathan. After the war it was decided to use the liner to gain the US a share of the traditionally European-dominated Atlantic passenger trade. Hamburg - Amerika, understandably upset over the seizure of their liners, demanded \$1,000,000 for a copy of the plans for the ex-Vaterland. Rather than pay, the team of American naval architects designing her conversion, under the direction of William Francis Gibbs, made measured drawings of the entire vessel. In 1923, she became the first large American luxury liner on the North Atlantic run since the days of the ill-fated Collins Line in the mid-Nineteenth century.

Leviathan was not a great success. The lack of an established tradition on the run, a similar running mate and American Prohibition laws keeping her dry combined to alienate many Americans and most Europeans. By the depression years, she had been reduced to bargain basement cruises. The rules about alcohol aboard American flag vessels was changed in the waning years of "the great thirst" and the Leviathan suffered the indignity of being used for weekend "Booze Cruises to Nowhere". After the repeal, even this option was lost and she sat rusting at her pier for over three years, sailing to breakers in Scotland in 1938.

The next American ship to approach superliner size was the America of 1940. She served in World War II, then was returned to United States Lines which continued to operate her until 1964. Sold for cruising, she went through several owners and names until recently running aground and breaking up while under tow.

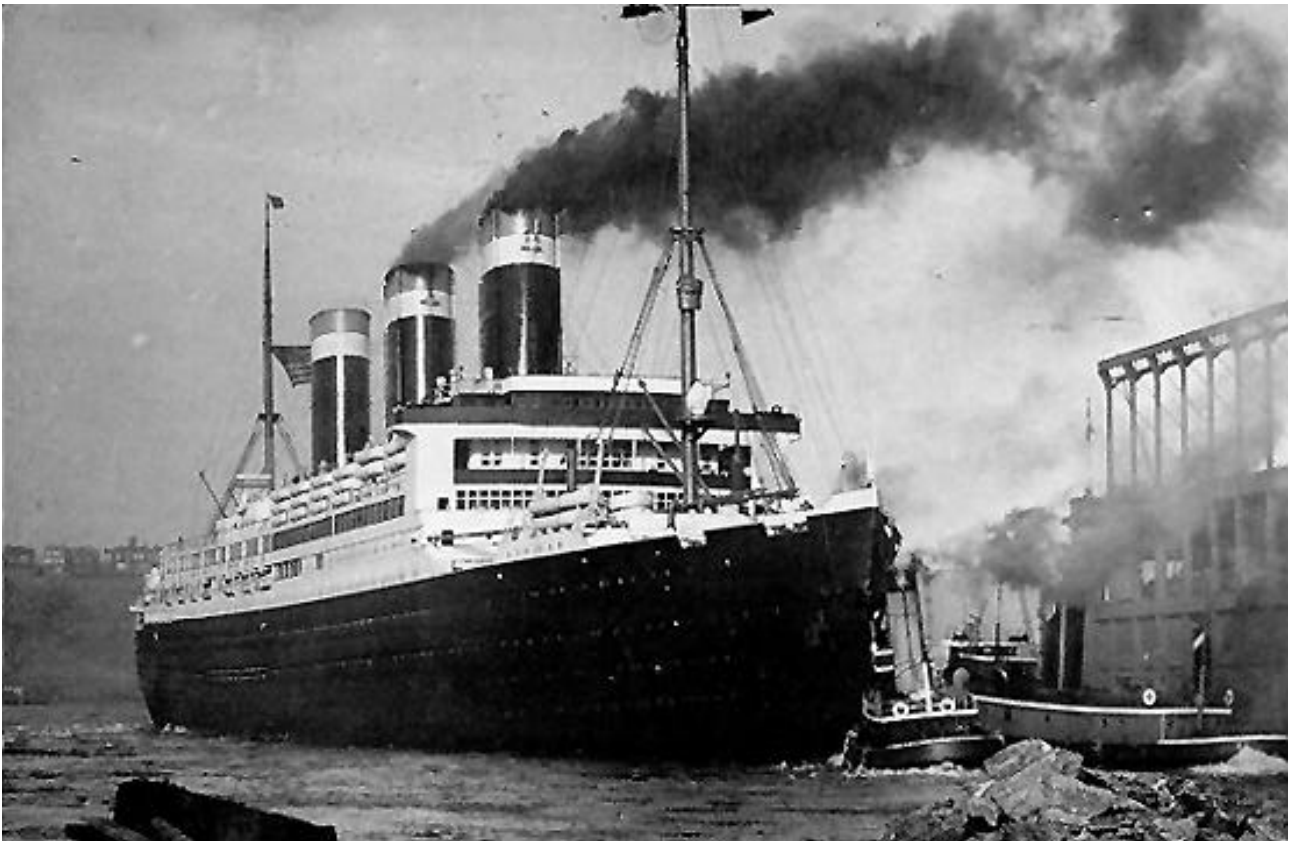
Impressed by the wartime record of liners like the Cunard Queens, the American government decided to finance another superliner in the late 1940s. Again, the United States Line was to manage the vessel, and again the designer in charge was William Gibbs. Saying that he was designing a ship, not a hunting lodge, Gibbs and his team produced a plan for the fastest and safest liner in history. Traditional wood finishing was audaciously eliminated from the new design for fire resistance. Aluminum was used for most of the superstructure, detailing and furniture to save weight. Her propulsion plant was a national secret. During sea trials, the United States was said to have exceeded 40 knots.

Entering service in 1952, the last of the superliners promptly won the "Blue Riband" for fastest crossing from Cunard's Queen Mary. She holds it to this day. United States was very popular during the final Trans-Atlantic boom years of the 1950s, despite her rather austere interiors. The 1960s were a different story, each year she lost passengers to air travel. Finally, in 1969 she was withdrawn and laid-up. After rusting at anchor for most of two decades, United States was sold and towed to the Eastern Mediterranean several years ago. She went to Russia, where here public spaces were gutted for asbestos removal. Then she was again laid up, this time in Turkey. Recently, she was towed back to the US and is currently in Philadelphia. This is good news, as it likely means a reprieve from the shipbreakers for one of the world's three surviving superliners. Her future, however, remains very uncertain.

Appendix: United States Lines pictures

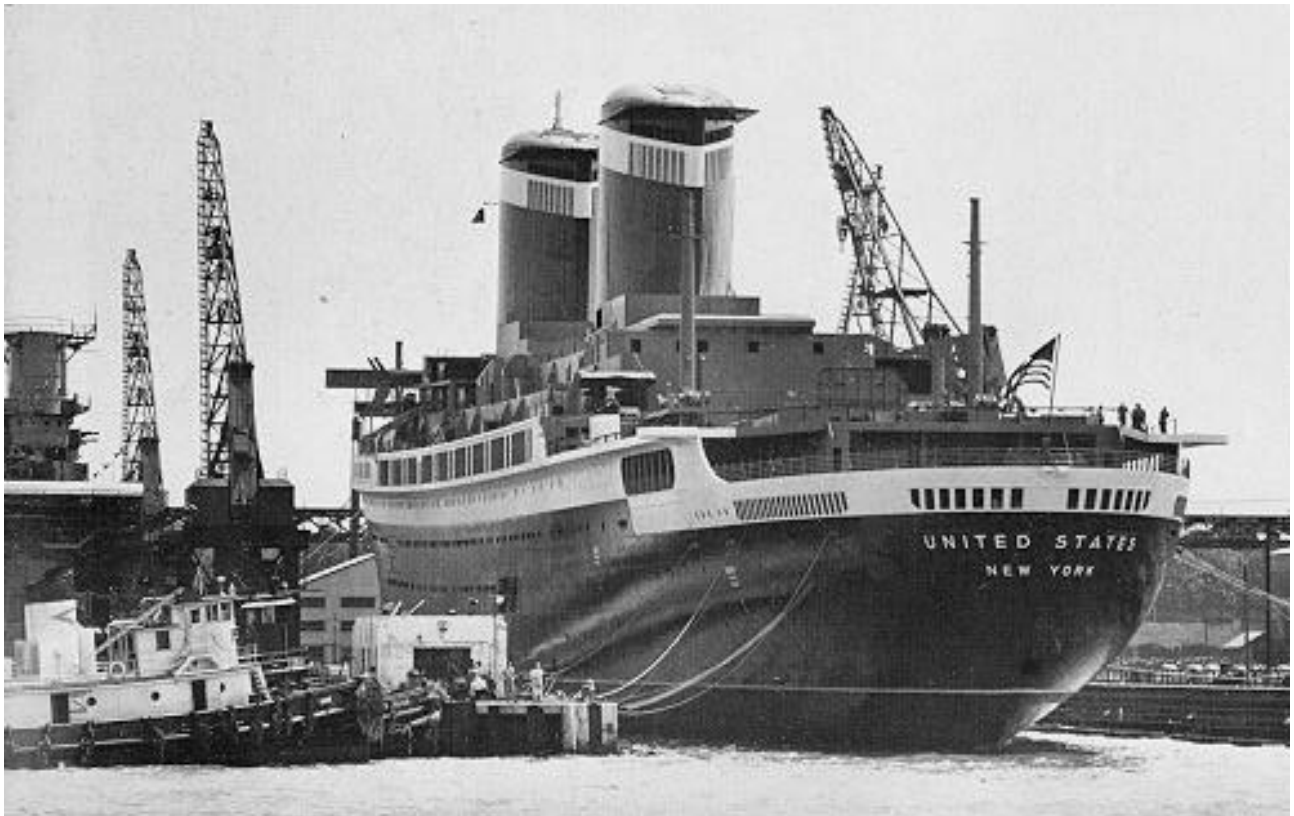
Leviathan - 1923*
 United States - 1952 --- ||| Aerial View ||| Stern View ||| Navajo Lounge





S.S. "UNITED STATES" 1952



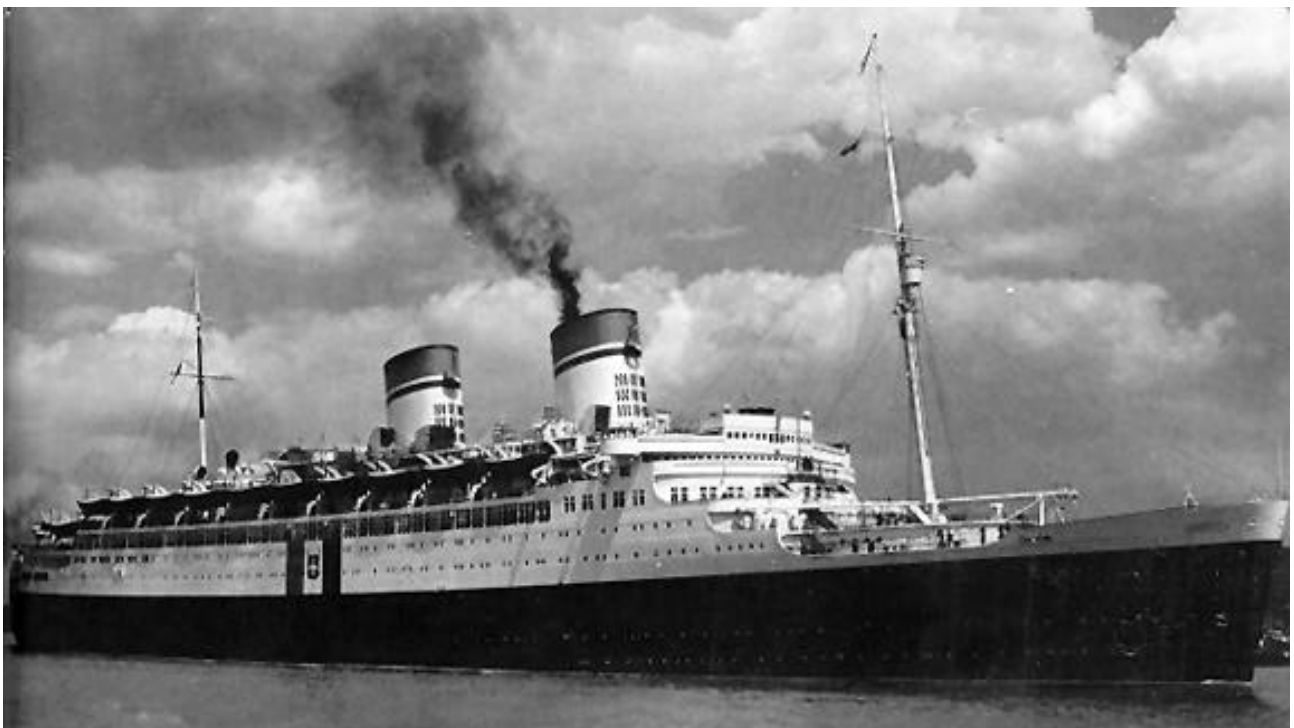


Italian Line

The Italian Line was formed by the government forced merger of the nation's three principle national carriers in 1932. Major units of the new line included the Roma of 1926 and the brand new Rex and Conte Di Savoia. In 1933, the Rex won the "Blue Riband" from NDL's Europa. The Italian liners, sailing the warmer Southern route, originated the great "Lido" decks and outdoor pools which remain a feature of cruise ships to this day. After the outbreak of World War II, the Italian Line continued service to New York until she joined the war as Germany's ally in the summer of 1940.

Roma, Rex and Conte Di Savoia were all destroyed in the war. Post-war Italian ship design concentrated on smaller, super luxurious liners like the ill-fated Andrea Doria of 1953.

Rex - 1932 ----- ||| Conte Di Savoia - 1932



Holland - America Line

During the liner boom of the late 1930's the Holland- America Line made a splash with their Nieuw Amsterdam. Not as large as other ships of state, the Dutch liner was strikingly modern in decor, more so than even the French Line's Normandie. Her luxury and the superior service provided by her crew soon won many loyal passengers. After war service, a refurbished Nieuw Amsterdam continued to sail on the Atlantic route and as a cruise ship until finally retired and scrapped in the 1970s.

Nieuw Amsterdam- 1938 --- Original Paint Scheme ||| Later Paint Schemes ||| Grand Hall ||| First Class Suite

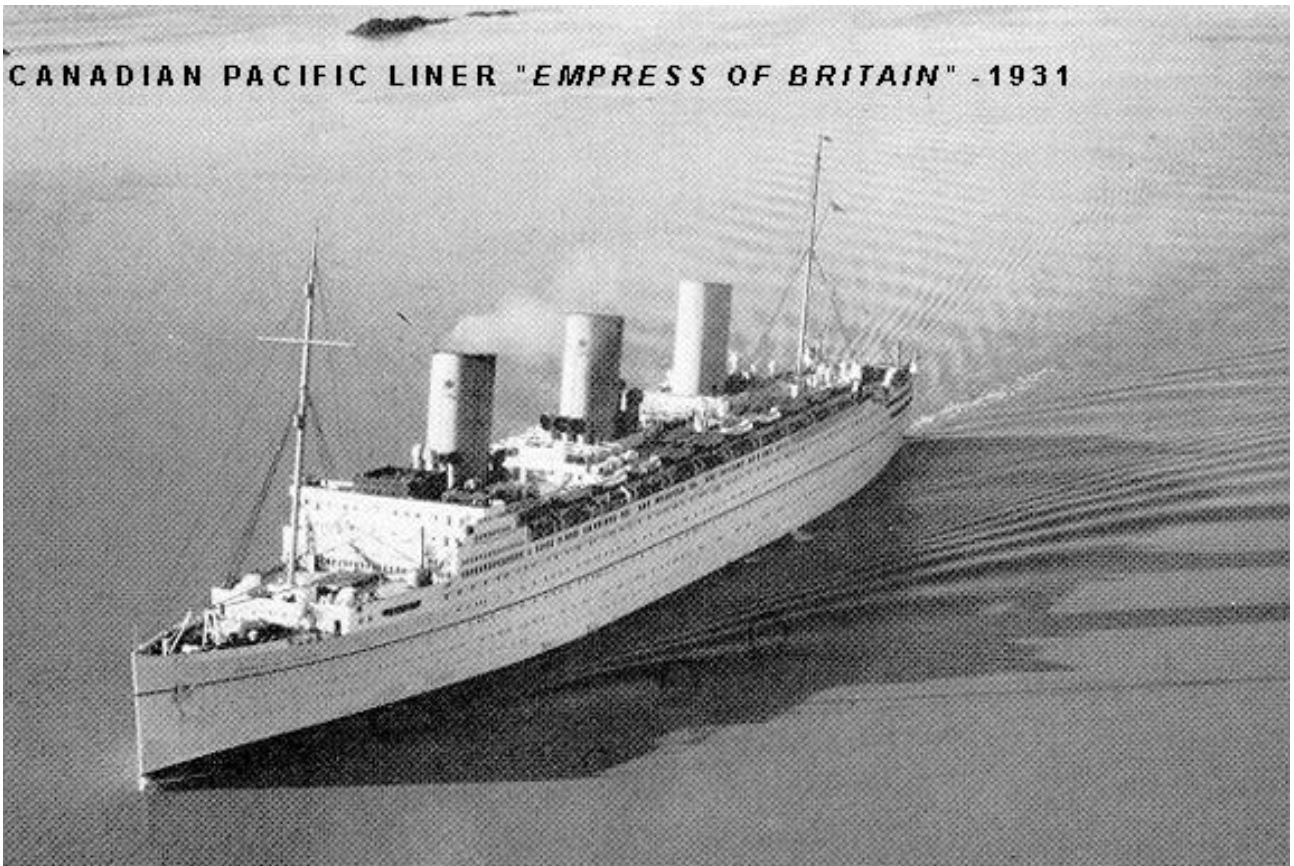
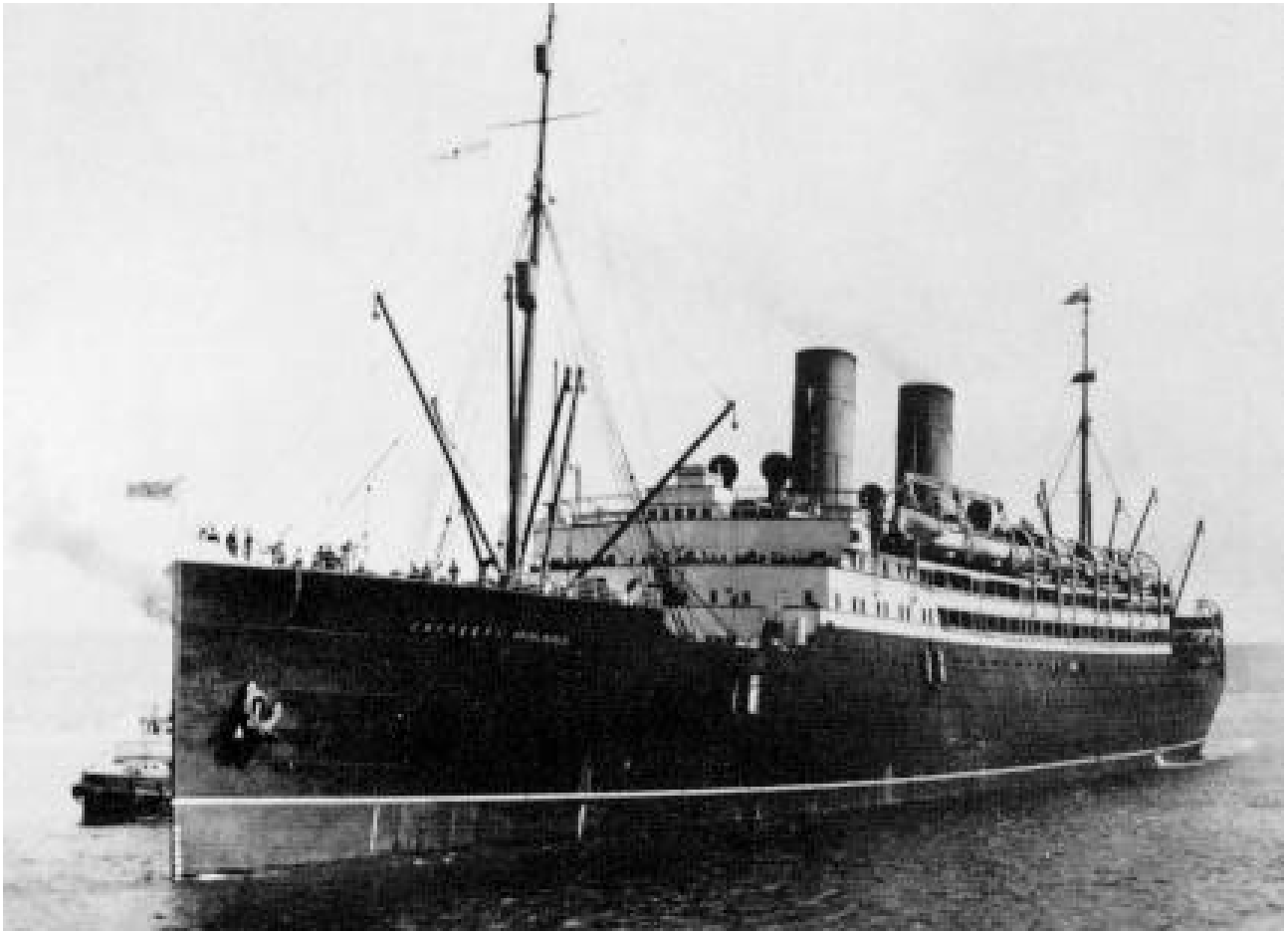


Canadian -Pacific Line

The Canadian Pacific Line ran a two ocean fleet during most of the golden era. The loss of their Empress of Ireland in the St. Lawrence River in 1914 ranks as one of history's worst marine disasters. The only of the line's ships to approach superliner status was the Empress of Britain, built in an unsuccessful attempt to draw a portion of the US Midwestern market to Montreal rather than New York for departure to Europe. She also was designed with an eye to cruising. Entering service in 1931, the depths of the Great Depression, Empress of Britain was the most debt ridden

ship of the decade. Taken over for war service, she was bombed by the German Luftwaffe and sank off Ireland in 1940.

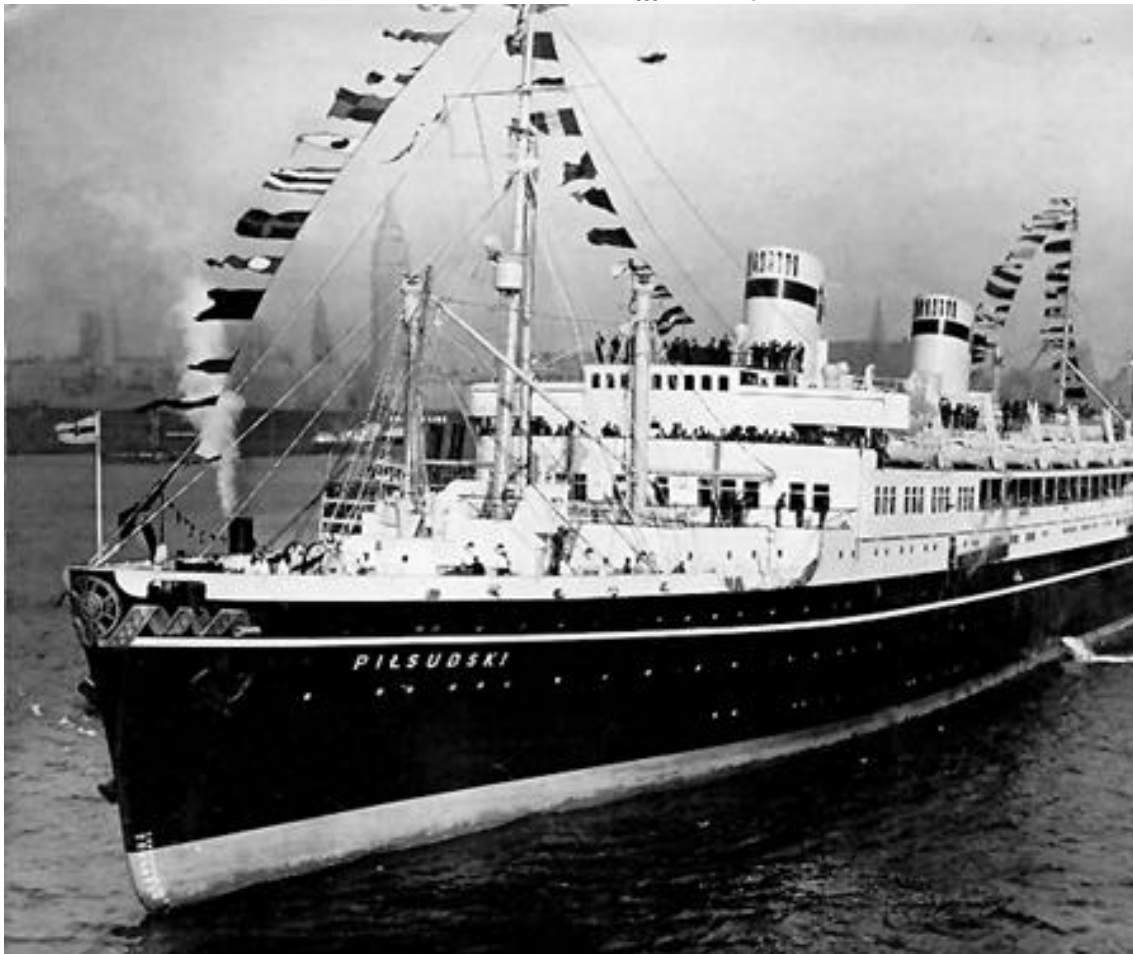
Empress of Ireland - 1906 ||| Empress of Britain - 1931



Gdynia - America Line

Even Poland felt compelled to have her own Trans-Atlantic service. Short on cash, she managed to arrange to pay for two liners largely through barter. Many European nations provided materials and equipment which went into the Italian built motorships. The first of the pair, the Pilsudski appeared in 1935. The following year her sister Batory entered service. The little Polish liners were a handsome pair and boasted tasteful, modern interiors. Pilsudski was commissioned as a Polish Navy Auxiliary Cruiser and sunk by the Germans early in World War II. Batory served as an Allies troopship and after the war returned to the Atlantic crossing. Cold War tensions ended her trips to New York in 1951. After sailing to India for several years, she resumed Trans-Atlantic service in 1957, now calling in Canada. Withdrawn in the late 1960s, Batory was used briefly as a floating hotel at Gdansk before being broken up in 1971.

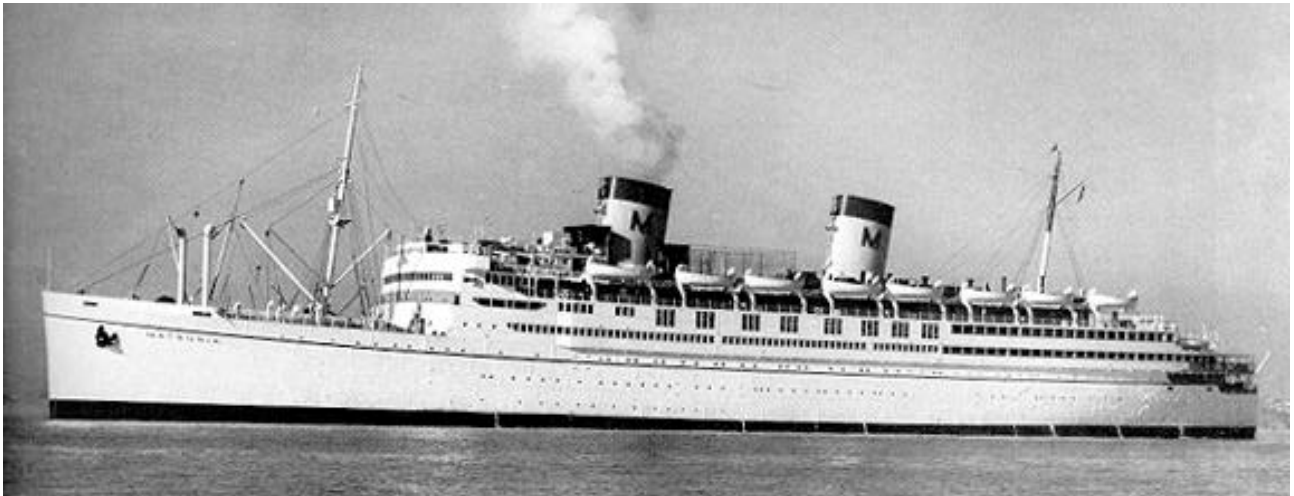
Pilsudski - 1935 --- ||| Library



Matson Line

The Matson Line ran passenger and cargo vessels mainly from the American Mainland to Hawaii. Typical of their tonnage is the Malolo, later Matsonia, of 1933.

Malolo - 1933



NYK Line

Japan, an island empire like Great Britain, was just a dependent on shipping to remain in contact with the rest of the world. Most Pacific-based liners were small, transporting relatively few passengers over great distances.

Completed in 1940, the Nitta Maru was the first of three new liners proposed by NYK for the long Japan - Europe route. By the time the liner was finished, war had begun in Europe, so the Nitta Maru was put on the Trans - Pacific route, setting a record for the Yokohama - San Francisco passage in the Spring of 1941. She also had the distinction of being the first liner with air conditioning in all passenger cabins.

As war clouds gathered, Nitta Maru was taken over by the Imperial Navy as a troopship. In 1942, a flight deck replaced much of her superstructure and she became the Aircraft carrier Chuyo. In 1943 she was torpedoed and sunk by the submarine USS Archerfish. Her two sisters, also converted to carriers, met the same fate before the war's end.

Nitta Maru - 1940

