



FINAL VOYAGE

IN THE END, THE ONLY NEW HOME THAT THE FAMED SS UNITED STATES COULD FIND WAS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA

BY DAVID NYE

The once-grand liner is carefully maneuvered down the Delaware River as the SS *United States* departs Philadelphia on its final journey. During its service life, the liner carried a virtual who's who of personalities from that era including the Duke and Duchess of Windsor (hauling these worthless Nazi-lovers was certainly nothing to be proud of), John Kennedy, Bill Clinton, Dwight Eisenhower, Harry Truman, John Wayne, Coco Chanel, Sean Connery, Walter Cronkite, Salvadore Dali, Duke Ellington, Cary Grant, Bob Hope, Marilyn Monroe, Prince Rainier and Grace Kelly, Elizabeth Taylor, and lots of others.

As *Sea Classics* heads to the printer on 4 March, the SS *United States* had just completed its voyage from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Mobile Alabama. At that location, the historic American ocean liner will be stripped and prepared for sinking off Florida to become part of the world's largest artificial reef. Our editorial position is that a better end could have been found by the *United States* Conservancy for this very important artifact of American technology. Sinking such a vessel and stating that it is a form of preservation is akin to saying that a Boeing 747 flown into the side of a mountain preserves the aircraft. Once sunk, that is it. From Day One, the attempts to save *United States* have been flawed.

For decades, SS *United States* had been docked at a pier in South

Philadelphia. Apparently, the owner of the pier decided to greatly up the rent. Surely, somewhere along our vast coastline there must be a pier owner or company that would be sympathetic to docking the huge liner and leaving it be until a better solution could be found. It appears that the hull of the great ship is still sound and eventually someone could come along with a better idea than sinking the grand vessel.

Warren Jones of the SS *United States* Conservancy stated, "The SS *United States* will never stop teaching us about American pride, purpose, and possibility." Unfortunately, that is a false and hollow statement. First, very few of the current generation even know what the *United States* is nor do they know anything of the incredible era of transatlantic ocean liners. Once sunk, the ship will become a corroding,