

VESSEL HISTORY TIMELINE

- 1934 Jun - Manitowoc Shipbuilding Company launches the Electra, among the last of the eighteen 165 foot US Coast Guard cutters built between 1931 and 1934.
- Oct - Commissioned on the 25th, the Electra is assigned to duty patrolling the Atlantic coastal waters
- 1935 Nov - Acquired by the U S Navy to replace the presidential yacht Sequoia, the Electra is dispatched to the Norfolk Naval Shipyard for conversion.
- 1936 Jan - Officially renamed the USS Potomac
- Mar - Commissioned as a Navy vessel on the 2nd, the Potomac's inaugural cruise begins on the 23rd with a fishing expedition to the Bahamas. The Potomac is soon referred to as "The Floating White House".
- 1941 Aug - Publicized as a vacation cruise, the Potomac secretly carries FDR to the heavy cruiser Augusta, which then takes him to the Atlantic Charter meeting with Prime Minister Winston Churchill.
- Nov - Because of wartime security concerns, orders are issued for the Potomac to be confined to protected waters. Still officially the presidential yacht, the Potomac is assigned to duty at the Navy's Underwater Sound Testing Station.
- 1945 Nov - Decommissioned and returned to the Coast Guard after FDR's death.
- 1946 Jun - The Potomac is permanently decommissioned from federal service.
- Jul - The Potomac is turned over to the Maryland Tidewater Fisheries Commission and is used for fisheries patrol and occasional use by the Governor.
- 1960 Apr - Aging and expensive to operate, the Potomac is sold to W.G.Toone of the Neptune Lines, Inc. for use as a ferry between San Juan, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.
- 1962 Mar - Hydro-Capitol Inc. a southern California recreational firm buys the Potomac, planning to sail her through the Panama Canal to Long Beach and then operating her as an attraction at the Seattle World's Fair after making repairs. A host of problems brings the enterprise to naught with a decrepit former presidential yacht stranded in southern California.
- 1963 Jul - Hydro-Capitol attempts to recoup expenses by trying to present a hastily and superficially "restored" Potomac as a public attraction at Redondo Beach using false advertising. Attempt fails after a few weeks and the ship is brought to Long Beach to be sold at public auction.
- 1964 Jan - Entertainer Elvis Presley buys the Potomac at the Hydro-Capitol auction for \$55,000 in order to keep her from being junked.
- Apr - Elvis Presley donates the ship to Saint Jude Hospital of Memphis, Tennessee with the expectation of moving it there and turning it into a floating restaurant. Realizing that the logistics and cost make this unrealistic, the ship goes up for sale.

- May - Marie Pagliasso of Fresno, California takes out a \$65,000 loan to buy the Potomac. She is an investment partner along with Fresno businessman Carton Taylor, who guarantees the loan, for a group called the Potomac Yacht Historical Society that intends to operate her as a floating disco.
- 1970 After years of financial and legal problems Carton Taylor becomes sole owner of the Potomac when the Pagliasso estate defaults on the loan payments after her death.
- Jul - Carton Taylor advertises for the sale of the Potomac. Aubrey Phillips, a bail bondsman from Long Beach, California arranges for a ten year lease with an option to buy. Possession and financial responsibility are transferred to Presidential Yacht Potomac, Inc. a nonprofit corporation headquartered in Stockton, California.
- 1979 Feb - Idle and deteriorating, the Potomac is towed to Stockton from Los Angeles.
- 1980 Aug - Potomac is towed 80 miles to Pier 26 in San Francisco, allegedly for repairs.
- Sep - The Potomac is seized by US Customs and the Drug Enforcement Agency, along with a drug laden vessel anchored alongside her. Investigators determine that the Potomac has been used as a “smugglers command post” by a Long Beach drug ring using a fraudulent charity, “The Crippled Children’s Society” as cover for its operations.
- Oct - The Potomac is towed to Clipper Cove at the Treasure Island Naval Base to be held as evidence.
- 1981 Mar - Its hull pierced by broken pilings, the Potomac sinks in 35 feet of water.
- Apr - The Navy Reserve raises the vessel, patches its hull at a cost of \$60,000 to the US Customs Service and tows the Potomac to Oakland to be readied for auction. The Port of Oakland, under Executive Director Walter Abernathy, is the only bidder and buys the Potomac for \$15,000.
- May - The Port of Oakland establishes the Association for the Preservation of the Yacht Potomac and gives it \$400,000 in seed money to restore the ship to its appearance during the Roosevelt era and operate it as a historical and educational resource.
- 1983 Mar - The Potomac Association is incorporated as an educational, public – benefit organization and James Roosevelt, FDR’s oldest son, is elected Chairman of the Board of Governors.
- 1985 Congress, on President Reagan’s recommendation, appropriates a \$2.5 million grant for the Potomac restoration project, to be equally matched with locally-raised funding and in-kind contributions of materials and services.
- 1985-1988 Thorough inspections by naval architects and engineers identify 300 major tasks of restoring, replacing and rebuilding to ready the ship for US Coast Guard certification.
- 1988 Jun - The Colberg Shipyard Company of Stockton, California receives the contract for the first, structural phase, restoration work.
- 1989 Dec - The Potomac returns to Oakland for the interior refitting restoration work. The teak deck is relaid and modern equipment necessary for certification is installed.

- 1990 Oct - The Potomac is designated as a National Historic Landmark.
- 1993 Apr - The restored Potomac takes its inaugural cruise on San Francisco Bay.
- 1993-1995 Opening to the public is delayed until major retrofitting of the Franklin D. Roosevelt pier, including wheelchair access, is completed. The Potomac Association develops plans for its educational programs, dockside tours, history cruises and privately chartered cruises.
- 1995 Apr - The Potomac is officially opened to the public for tours on the 50th anniversary of Franklin Roosevelt's death. (Apr 12th)