



CRUISING WITH THE PRESIDENT

An Annotated Chronology of
Franklin D. Roosevelt's Cruises
During the Potomac Years

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Cruising With The President

When the Sequoia was replaced by the Potomac as the presidential yacht on March 2, 1936, President Roosevelt and those around him could rest more easily. A ship with a wooden hull had been replaced by one with a steel hull – thereby reducing the fire hazard; a ship with a gas engine had been replaced by one with a diesel engine – a much more efficient and safer propulsion system; and a ship in which he had to be carried from one deck to another had been replaced by one with an elevator – giving him a much desired freedom from dependence on others. Now, instead of being a guest aboard Vincent Astor’s ocean – going yacht, the Nourmahal, for the fishing vacations that he loved, President Roosevelt had a ship where he could truly rest, relax, enjoy the fishing and think through matters of presidential policy.

By 1936, a fishing holiday around the end of March had become an annual feature – and provided the natural setting for the Potomac’s first cruise. This annotated chronology describes the ways President Roosevelt used the Potomac, starting with this inaugural cruise and continuing through the years up to the end of 1941. That is, until our entry into World War II, when concern for the president’s safety – as well as the additional burden of leading the country in war – virtually precluded the Potomac from continuing to function as “The Floating White House”, as the Washington press corps had named her in very short order.

By following the Potomac along a time line – and knowing for each cruise who was on the ship, the nature of the activities, when and where it cruised and how long the cruise lasted – we can get a sense of what role President Roosevelt felt the Potomac could play in both his personal life and the life of the country. Most of the cruises have notes; they provide some background and fill out the story of that particular cruise.

The focus here is on both President Roosevelt and the Potomac. This means that the term “cruise” is used broadly to include any use of the Potomac, even though the President himself may not have been on board; and also, that cruises which the President took which did not involve the Potomac have been included.

From time to time there were occasions when relatively large numbers of people would be on the Potomac as day guests of President Roosevelt, and although the President was the host, he would not have spent much time with any one in particular. Such individuals have not been listed under the heading “Guests”.

The cruise information shown is based on: (1) The diary pages and the guest log pages in the Potomac Association's files; (2) The results of a search using the keyword "USS Potomac" from the "FDR Day by Day" file in the Library at Hyde Park and which was graciously provided to me by John Ferris of NARA. [There is an overlap of this material with that of the Potomac Association.]; and (3) The New York Times.

An alphabetical index of persons listed as guests, together with the cruise number, appears as an appendix.



THE CRUISES - 1936

Cruise Number: 36 – 1 Dates: 3/23 – 4/8 Type: Fishing Vacation
Itinerary: Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. - Bahamas - Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

Guests:

For the cruise: Frederick A. Delano, Chairman of the National Park and Planning Commission [FDR's uncle]; James [FDR's oldest son]; Captain Wilson Brown, USN [the President's naval aide]; Colonel Edwin "Pa" Watson [the President's military aide]; Captain Ross McIntire, USN [the President's physician]

In Nassau: Governor General Sir Bede Clifford and Lady Clifford; Sir George Johnson [President of the Bahamian Legislative Council]; Frank A. Henry [U.S. Consul] and Mrs. Henry

Notes:

- (1) This cruise, as was true of many others, did not start from Washington, D.C. He left Washington by train on Sunday the 22nd, arriving at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida (near Orlando) on Monday to receive an honorary Doctor of Literature degree - which gave him the opportunity for making a speech - before motoring to Titusville on the coast and then down to Fort Lauderdale where the cruise began that night .
- (2) The president and his party sailed from Fort Lauderdale on the destroyer Monaghan – not the Potomac. President Roosevelt's first experience of his new yacht occurred on 3/25, the third day of the cruise, when they boarded the Potomac at sea off Great Iguana in the Bahamas. The transfer was accompanied by all the naval formalities: He was piped over the side of the Monaghan and then piped again when he went aboard the Potomac. The change was officially signaled when the presidential flag was struck from the Monaghan and transferred to the Potomac. After

FDR left the Monaghan, it served as one of the escorting destroyers; the other was the Dale.

- (3) Because a president can never fully escape the duties and responsibilities of office, arrangements had been made for Navy seaplanes to deliver messages and mail from Miami. Absent any special urgency, deliveries were often made on the weekend because the president usually refrained from fishing on Sundays and the mail could be worked then.
- (4) Sunday was also a day on which he could entertain the commanders of the escorting vessels, as he did on 4/5.
- (5) Because the cruise was taking place in Bahamian waters, it was incumbent upon President Roosevelt to invite the Governor General, Sir Bede Clifford, for a lunch on the Potomac when it arrived in Nassau Harbor on 3/31. Lunch was served on card tables - to preserve the casual cruise atmosphere.
- (6) The press, which had merely been receiving briefings in Miami, was invited to come to Nassau to join FDR and his guests on the Potomac. Lunch for the press, however, was a stand - up buffet in the saloon.
- (7) FDR's uncle left the Potomac at Nassau, 4/31; the Dale left with James aboard on 4/5.
- (8) After the cruise ended on 4/8, President Roosevelt boarded a train for Warm Springs, Ga. before returning to Washington.

Cruise No: 36 – 2 Dates: 5/2 – 5/3 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River/ Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Raymond Moley [a presidential advisor]; Colonel and Mrs. Arthur Murray [of Argyle, Scotland - old personal friends of the President]; Captain and Mrs. Wilson Brown; "Missy" LeHand [the President's secretary]

Note:

The Potomac returned in a heavy rain and electric storm. It was important for the president to be back in Washington so that he could greet Lord and Lady Clifford who were to spend Sunday and Monday nights at the White House.

Cruise No: 36 – 3 Date: 5/10 Type: Day Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River

Guests:

Senator Burton Wheeler [Chairman of Senate Commerce Comm.] and Mrs. Wheeler; Sam Rayburn [Chm. of House Commerce

Comm.]; "Missy" LeHand; Grace Tully [assistant to "Missy" LeHand and subsequently her replacement as the President's secretary]; Captain Wilson Brown

Note:

The cruise lasted 7 hours during which time there was a review of the general legislative outlook.

Cruise No: 36 – 4 Dates: 5/15 – 5/17 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River/ Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Harry Hopkins [WPA administrator and FDR's closest advisor] and Mrs. Hopkins; Rex Tugwell [Resettlement Administrator] and Mrs. Tugwell; Captain Paul Bastedo, USN [the President's new naval aide]

Note:

This cruise illustrates the typical combination of work and relaxation. Working out plans for federal relief efforts went hand in hand with the time outs for fishing.

Cruise No: 36 – 5 Dates: 5/30 – 6/1 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River/ Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Dr. Stanley High [head of Good Neighbor League] and Mrs. High; Judge Samuel Rosenman [Assoc. Justice of NY Supreme Court and long term friend and advisor] and Mrs. Rosenman; "Missy" LeHand; Captain Paul Bastedo

Note:

A major reorganization was being worked out at this time to resolve the relative roles of the WPA (Works Progress Administration), headed by Hopkins and the PWA (Public Works Administration), headed by Secretary Ickes [Interior]. FDR used the cruise setting to get his guests thoughts on the matter.

Cruise No: 36 – 6 Dates: 7/4 – 7/6 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Richmond, Va. - Jamestown; Yorktown - Washington, D.C.

Guests:

Eleanor, Harold Ickes; R. Walton Moore [Ass't. Secretary of State]; Captain Bastedo; "Missy" LeHand

Note:

President Roosevelt left Washington at 10A.M. with a large entourage on the morning of 7/3, motoring through Virginia; the major stop that day was the dedication of the Shenandoah National

Park. They then went on to Charlottesville, arriving at 5P.M. On the next day they all went on to Monticello for FDR's Independence Day address; after lunch they drove to Richmond, where FDR (accompanied only by Eleanor, Captain Bastedo and "Missy" LeHand) boarded the Potomac for an overnight sail to Jamestown – arriving there at 10A.M. on Sunday. The entire entourage motored to Williamsburg for church services, then lunch at Carter's Grove before going on to Yorktown where the Potomac was waiting. Ickes and Moore, together with Captain Bastedo and "Missy" Le Hand, joined FDR on the Potomac for a cruise to the ocean and then up the Potomac River for a Monday morning return to Washington.

Cruise No: 36 – 7 Dates: 7/14 – 7/28 Type: Vacation Cruise
Itinerary: Rockland, Me. – Nova Scotia - Campobello, New Brunswick

Guests:

On the Sewanna: FDR, James, John and Franklin, Jr. [Three of FDR's four sons]

On the Potomac:, Captain Bastedo, Marvin McIntyre [a White House Aide for press], Ross McIntire and, from 7/22, Hall Roosevelt [Eleanor's brother and a sailing companion of FDR for many years]

A. B. Randall [Commodore of the United States Lines] who spent 2 days on the Sewanna and then boarded the Potomac on Friday, 7/17.

Notes:

- (1) On many of FDR's vacation cruises, the cruise was part of a larger itinerary. This one actually started on Friday, 7/10, when FDR went up to New York City for the dedication of the Triboro Bridge on Saturday. On Monday, 7/13, after a stay at Hyde Park, he left for Rockland, Me., where the cruise itself would begin. Also as was common for these vacation cruises, the yacht aboard which FDR would be staying would be accompanied by a small flotilla. The yacht Sewanna had been chartered by James for the cruise; the Potomac's main role this time was to be that of an accompanying vessel. The flotilla consisted of the yacht Sewanna, the motor schooner Liberty [for the press], the Potomac, the destroyer Hopkins and the Pontchartrain [a Coast Guard vessel].
- (2) In describing the Sewana, a schooner 56 feet long and 14 feet in the beam, the press mentioned that it would provide FDR with "...greater comfort, space and privacy..." than the Amberjack which he had used for his 1933 New England cruise. That may have been, but it is interesting to note that FDR left the Sewana

for the much larger and more comfortable Potomac on several occasions to eat, take a nap, etc.

- (3) FDR left Rockland on the Potomac on 7/14; the Potomac then sailed across Penobscot Bay to Pulpit Harbor on North Haven Island, Me. where they boarded the Sewanna. FDR was joined by his sons at Pulpit Harbor who had been cruising up the Maine coast in the Sewana.
- (4) The crew of the Sewanna consisted of FDR's 3 sons and 2 professional sailors [Captain A.E. Colbeth, who had been a member of the crew of the Amberjack for the 1933 cruise, and a paid seaman].
- (5) The Sewanna cruise itinerary: Pulpit Harbor; Seal Harbor [leaves 10:15 A.M., 7/16]; east across the Bay Of Fundy; south east to Cape Sable, Nova Scotia [arrives 4:15 P.M., 7/17]; around southern tip of Nova Scotia to Shelburne [arrives late on 7/18].
- (6) The remainder of the vacation cruise continued in the waters around southern Nova Scotia. On 7/22 FDR was visited by C. J. McDermott [classmate of FDR at Columbia Law School; he had a summer home near the Tusket River, N.S. (the Sewanna had anchored in the river about 3 miles inward from the Bay of Fundy)]. On the next day FDR, Hall Roosevelt, Franklin, Jr. and John were guests on McDermott's boat for a day of trolling for tuna; they returned to the Potomac for dinner after which they listened to Alf Landon's speech accepting the Republican Party's nomination for president.
- (7) The return leg of the cruise brought the party to Welsh Pool Harbor on Campobello [the island just across the Maine border in New Brunswick where the Roosevelts had a summer home] on 7/27. On 7/28 the President hosted a picnic for friends and family on a small nearby island – all of the guests except those who had been on the Sewanna were taken to the picnic grounds by the Potomac. FDR returned to the family home after the excursion.
- (8) On 7/30 the Potomac took President Roosevelt to Saint Andrews, N.B. where he entrained for Quebec.

Cruise No: 36 – 8

Dates: 9/12 – 9/13

Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River/ Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Homer Cummings [Attorney General] and Mrs. Cummings; Harold Ickes; Grace Tully

Cruise No: 36 – 9

Date: 9/21

Type: ?

Itinerary: ?

Guests:

Commander Yamaguchi [Imperial Japanese Navy]; Commander Woodside, USN

Note:

I was unable to find any reference to a cruise on 9/21 in the materials available to me. However the signatures of Commanders Yamaguchi and Woodside appear in the Potomac's guest book followed by the date Sept. 21, 1936. It may be that Commander Yamaguchi was a Japanese Naval Attaché and Commander Woodside was showing him the Potomac as a courtesy.

[Note: On 18 November 1936, President Roosevelt boarded the USS Indianapolis at Charleston, South Carolina for his "Good Neighbor" cruise to South America. This official state visit took him to Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires and Montevideo. He returned to Charleston on 15 December 1936. The Indianapolis was a familiar ship to FDR. He had used her to travel from Campobello to Annapolis in July of 1933 and had conducted a Fleet Review from her deck on 29 May 1934.]



THE CRUISES - 1937

Cruise Number: 37 – 1 Date: 3/31 Type: Day Cruise

Itinerary: Alexandria to Mount Vernon

Guests:

Lord Tweedsmuir [Governor general of Canada] and Lady Tweedsmuir, together with an entourage of about 16 other people

Notes:

- (1) FDR and Eleanor did not accompany Lord and Lady Tweedsmuir on the Potomac; they motored down from Washington. After visit and ceremonies, a motorcade took everybody back to Washington.
- (2) This was one of only a very few occasions when the Potomac was functioning as the presidential yacht without President Roosevelt being on board.

Cruise No: 37 – 2 Dates: 5/1 – 5/11 Type: Fishing cruise

Itinerary: Texas ports on Gulf of Mexico

Guests:

Elliott [FDR's second son]; Captain Ross McIntire; Colonel Watson; Captain Bastedo

Notes:

- (1) FDR left Washington by train on 4/27 for New Orleans; arriving there on 4/29 he boarded the USS Moffett planning to rendezvous with the Potomac on 4/30. However, after leaving at 8:20 AM mechanical problems developed and the night of 4/30 was spent on the Mississippi while the Army made repairs to the Moffett. The rendezvous was finally effected in the late afternoon on 5/1 near Aransas Pass, Texas.

- (2) FDR spent the afternoon with his stamp collection on 4/30 while delayed on the Moffett. During the time the transfer from the Moffett to the Potomac was being completed, the president spent his time in a small boat fishing.
- (3) About 6:40 P.M. on 5/1, a mail pouch was delivered to the Potomac containing, among other things, some 38 official letters and documents requiring his signature. One of these was the Joint Resolution on Neutrality – a signature being needed prior to midnight when the previous law expired.
- (4) From time to time during the course of this cruise, various guests visited or dined with the president aboard the Potomac. These included Elliott's wife Ruth, James V. Allred [the Governor of Texas], Jesse Jones [head of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and later, Federal Loan Administrator] and numerous friends of Elliott. On the last night of the cruise, Lt. Commander Waters of the USS Decatur [one of the escorting ships] and Lt. Clark of the Potomac were dinner guests of FDR.
- (5) The cruise ended at Galveston on 5/11. In addition to the time spent near Aransas Pass, the Potomac had gone to Port Isabel and the mouth of the Brazos River. FDR did not return to Washington until 5/14. After leaving Galveston, he visited Elliott's ranch where he was joined by James. FDR and James, later joined by Jim Farley [Postmaster General – at that time a cabinet office usually reserved for the head of the president's political party], returned to Washington via St. Louis.
- (6) Congress at this time was beginning its consideration of FDR's attempt to change the Supreme Court [the so-called "Court Packing" controversy].

Cruise No: 37 – 3 Dates: 5/22 – 5/23 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Mrs. James Roosevelt, Jr. [i.e. Betsy Cummings Roosevelt – see note 2] and Sara Delano Roosevelt [James and Betsy's daughter, named for FDR's mother]; Henry Morgenthau, Jr. [Secretary of the Treasury]; Captain Bastedo

Notes:

- (1) The party motored down to Quantico, Va. on the afternoon of 5/22, where they boarded the Potomac.
- (2) FDR's mother was sometimes referred to as "Mrs. James Roosevelt, Sr." and his son James' wife as "Mrs. James Roosevelt, Jr.". Although such designations were not quite

correct, it did help in keeping the various James Roosevelts and their wives distinct. For our purposes there are five James Roosevelts to keep separate: (i) FDR's father, who died in 1900; (ii) FDR's half-brother, James Roosevelt Roosevelt, "Rosy", the child of his father's first marriage, b.1854 – d.1927; (iii) FDR's half-nephew, "Rosy"'s son, known as "Taddy", b 1879 – d.; (iv) FDR's eldest son b. 1907 – d. 1991 ; (v) FDR's grandson – i.e. James' son.

Cruise No: 37 – 4 Dates: 6/5 – 6/6 Type: Weekend Cruise
Itinerary: Potomac River/ Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Harry Hopkins and Mrs. Hopkins; Robert H. Jackson [at this time he was Assistant Attorney General in charge of the anti-trust division; subsequently he became Solicitor General (1938), Attorney General (1940) and then Associate Justice of the Supreme Court (1941)] and Mrs. Jackson; "Missy" Le Hand; Captain Bastedo

Note:

The New York Times also listed James, his wife and daughter Sarah as guests; the Potomac's guest log shows some additional people on 6/5. Since the 6 people listed above would have taken up the available guest accommodations on the Potomac in just the right way [2 doubles, 2 singles], it would seem that the others were day guests for some part of the cruise

Cruise No: 37 – 5 Dates: 6/11 – 6/13 Type: Weekend Cruise
Itinerary: Annapolis, MD - Chesapeake Bay - Washington

Guests:

Homer Cummings [Attorney General]; Henry Wallace [Secretary of Agriculture] and Mrs. Wallace; "Missy" Le Hand; Captain Bastedo

Note:

The Potomac's guest log shows quite a few additional people on Sunday, the 13th, presumably day guests.

Cruise No: 37 – 6 Date: 6/23 Type: Day Cruise
Itinerary: Mount Vernon

Guests:

Prime Minister Paul Van Zeeland [Belgium] and Mrs. Van Zeeland; James Roosevelt; "Missy" Le Hand; Colonel Watson; Captain Bastedo

Notes:

- (1) President Roosevelt had a very keen sense of history and delighted in having heads of state and important foreign dignitaries cruise down the Potomac River to Mount Vernon. As the Potomac passed George Washington's tomb a "ceremony prescribed by Navy Regulations for over a hundred years" was described by Jack Lynch: The crew, not on watch, would man the rail, and as we came abreast of the tomb, the boatswain's mate would pipe "Attention", then "Hand Salute", then "Carry On", while the Colors were lowered, then raised – total elapsed time, about a minute! FDR especially liked this ritual and would usually call it to the attention of his guests ahead of time.
- (2) Problems of economics and finance were the subjects of discussion on the Potomac.

Cruise No: 37 – 7 Dates: 6/24 – 6/28 Type: Weekend Event

Itinerary: Annapolis - Jefferson Island – Annapolis

Notes:

- (1) On the evening of 6/24 President Roosevelt left the White House for the Naval Academy dock at Annapolis, where the Potomac was waiting to take him, Captain Bastedo and some staff for an overnight trip to the Jefferson Islands Club [located on Jefferson Island (one of the three small islands that make up Poplar Island) in Chesapeake Bay along Maryland's eastern shore and about 15 miles from Annapolis].
- (2) The Jefferson Islands Club had been established in 1931 as a resort and vacation spot for Democrats. Over the course of the next three days, i.e. Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 6/25 – 6/27, FDR acted as host to his cabinet and virtually the entire roster of the Democratic members of Congress. Each morning, four 75 foot navy patrol boats took that day's guests over to the Club and brought them back in the evening after their outing. FDR himself stayed at the Club in the special addition which had been built for him.
- (3) The Congressional battle over FDR's proposal for the reorganization of the Supreme Court had split the party and this event offered an opportunity for reconciliation.

- (4) FDR returned to Annapolis Sunday evening. His daughter Anna and her husband John Boettiger had come into Washington earlier that day and then motored to Annapolis to join FDR on the Potomac. FDR's son Elliott and his second wife, Ruth Chandler Googins, also joined the group that evening. [The family was beginning to gather for the wedding of FDR, Jr. to Ethel duPont on the coming Wednesday]. FDR returned to Washington Monday morning.

Cruise No: 37 – 8 Dates: 7/10 – 7/11 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Annapolis – Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Sam Rayburn [A Congressman from Texas, who at this time was Majority Leader and who subsequently became Speaker of the House of Representatives.]; James M. Landis [Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission] and Mrs. Landis; "Missy" LeHand; Grace Tully; Captain Bastedo

Notes:

- (1) Sam Rayburn was perhaps the person most directly responsible for securing passage of New Deal legislation. The Senate was considering the Court Bill and one of the topics discussed with Rayburn was whether or not there might be some tactical advantage to have the House go into recess while the Senate debated.
- (2) FDR took 3 Government Reports with him on the cruise [one on technological trends and their social impact; one on slum conditions; and one on the problem of unemployment and destitution]. He also took a Province of Ontario Report on power development and diversion of the Niagra River.

Cruise No: 37 – 9 Dates: 7/23 – 7/25 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River/ Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Phillip F. LaFollette [Governor of Wisconsin]; Senator Robert M. LaFollette Jr. [Wisconsin] and Mrs. LaFollette; Senator Alben Barkley [Kentucky; Majority Leader]; "Missy" LeHand; Captain Bastedo

Notes:

- (1) President Roosevelt left the White House late in the evening (9:45 PM) for this cruise. He had earlier conferred with legislative leaders on the Court Bill and its sure failure if allowed to go to a vote. FDR's public position after this legislative defeat was that

the threat of reorganization of the Court had itself brought about a change in the Court's decisions.

- (2) Passage of time also brought about change. FDR would have the opportunity that summer of naming a Justice of the Supreme Court to replace Justice Van Devanter.
- (3) The LaFollettes were brothers. Their father, Robert M. LaFollette, was the founder of the Progressive Party and was its presidential candidate in 1924.
- (4) James Roosevelt and Harry Hopkins joined the cruise on Saturday, 7/24.
- (5) The announcement that Alvin Barkely would be the new Senate Majority Leader was made on Sunday, as was the announcement that Captain Bastedo was to be succeeded by Captain W. B. Woodson as Naval Aide.

Cruise No: 37 – 10 Dates: 7/30 – 8/1 Type: Weekend Cruise
Itinerary: Potomac River/ Chesapeake Bay – Quantico, Va.

Guests:

Harold Ickes; Senator Green [Rhode Island]; Josephine Roche [Assistant Secretary of the Treasury]; Captain Bastedo; "Missy" Le Hand

Notes:

- (1) President Roosevelt was undecided until late in the afternoon of 7/30 whether or not he would go on this cruise because of a crisis in the Chinese situation. The Chinese had been routed at the Marco Polo bridge near Beijing by Japanese troops. This precipitated the (undeclared) war between the two countries [The Second Sino – Japanese War]. He did not leave the White House until 9:40 PM, after deciding that he could go since he would not be more than two or three hours away.
- (2) Governor Murphy of Michigan [a lawyer and former judge who was a very strong exponent of FDR's labor policies] arrived in Washington on the morning of 7/31 and was then flown out to the Potomac to join the president. There was much speculation that he was being considered for the vacancy on the Supreme Court. [Subsequently, Senator Hugo Black of Alabama was nominated and became FDR's first Supreme Court appointee.]
- (3) Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Mrs. Hull joined the group on the Potomac 8/1 before the cruise ended at Quantico.

Cruise No: 37 – 11 Dates: 8/13 – 8/15 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Annapolis - Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Senator Minton [Indiana – He would become Majority Whip in 1939];
Mrs. Eleanor Townsend [a friend of “Missy“]; Ross McIntire; Captain
Bastedo; Colonel Watson; “Missy” LeHand

Cruise No: 37 – 12 Dates: 9/2 – 9/7 Type: Fishing Cruise

Itinerary: Poughkeepsie - Long Island Sound (Montauk) & Block Island -
Poughkeepsie

Guests:

James; Harry Hopkins; Ross McIntire; Captain Bastedo

Notes:

- (1) The crisis in China remained one of FDR’s major concerns. Americans were advised to leave China on 9/5.
- (2) The president left Poughkeepsie in the late afternoon on Thursday, 9/2, after winding up legislative affairs [Principally the Wagner-Steagal Act, which provided Federal money to local agencies for public housing].
- (3) The Potomac headed down the Hudson River, passing the Battery at 11:00 PM; then up the East River toward Long Island Sound. The Potomac arrived at Fort Pond Bay [at the Eastern tip of Long Island off Montauk] early on Friday for the start of the fishing. Guarding the Potomac was the destroyer Selfridge and a number of Coast Guard picket boats. Basil O’Connor [FDR’s former law partner] joined the group on Saturday. The morning’s fishing was off Montauk Point, after which the Potomac and the Selfridge went to Block Island, CT. In the afternoon FDR, Ross McIntire and Basil O’Connor boarded a navy launch from the Selfridge for their fishing. After being stormbound Sunday at Block Island, they left Monday morning for the return trip. They passed the Race [entrance to Long Island Sound] about 1:00 PM, stopped and did some fishing before reaching Larchmont, NY at 11:00 PM. Passing through New York harbor and starting up the Hudson before dawn, they anchored at Poughkeepsie in the early afternoon, 9/7.

Cruise No: 37 – 13 Date: 9/8 Type: Day Cruise

Itinerary: Hudson River

Guests:

James; Lincoln MacVeagh [Minister to Greece] and Mrs. MacVeagh; Captain Bastedo; about 20 others (mostly relatives)

Note:

This was a short cruise from about noon to 5:30 PM on the Hudson River up and back from Poughkeepsie.

Cruise No: 37 – 14 Date: 9/12 Type: Day Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River

Guests:

Eleanor; Norman Davis [Ambassador at Large] and Mrs. Davis; about 20 others (many were Eleanor's friends)

Cruise No: 37 – 15 Dates: 9/18 – 9/19 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River/Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Lloyd C. Stark [Governor of Missouri] and Mrs. Stark; Harry Hopkins; Grace Tully; "Missy" LeHand; Captain Bastedo; Captain Woodson [FDR's next Naval Aide]

Note:

One purpose of this cruise was to see the Regatta on 9/18.

Cruise No: 37 – 16 Date: 9/22 Type: Day Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River

Guests:

Henry Morgenthau, Jr. plus about 20 of Secretary Morgenthau's guests

Note:

The use of the Potomac for this cruise presents a very interesting insight into FDR. Secretary Morgenthau wanted to have some guests take a cruise to Mount Vernon, but when he found there was no appropriate government vessel available on the day he had chosen, he telephoned the White House to see if the Potomac might be used. A White House staff member, knowing that the president would not be using it said it would be alright. Apparently the first

President Roosevelt heard about it was when Secretary Morgenthau wrote a letter to FDR 2 days later indicating what a great success the cruise had been. FDR's reaction to this news was clear – orders were issued that the Potomac was not available for anyone other than himself, unless he personally gave his permission.

Cruise No: 37 – 17 Dates: 11/29 – 12/5 Type: Fishing Cruise
Itinerary: Miami -Waters off Florida - Miami

Guests:

James; Robert Jackson; Harry Hopkins; Harold Ickes; Ross McIntire; Captain Woodson, Colonel Watson

Notes:

- (1) As usual, this trip had started several days earlier when FDR boarded his special train in Washington. It started a few days later than had been planned originally because of an abscessed tooth. Although treated, FDR would have trouble with a sore gum later in the trip and the cruise was cut short. Marvin McIntyre, "Missy" LeHand and James' wife had come down to Miami with the president but did not go on the cruise.
- (2) One of those meeting FDR at the train and accompanying him on the ride through Miami to the Potomac was James M. Cox [Democratic candidate for president in the 1920 election when FDR was his running mate]. The route through Miami brought FDR very close to the spot where he had barely escaped an assassin's bullet in 1933. President-Elect at the time, he had just finished a vacation on the Nourmahal and was on his way to make a speech. The bullet killed the mayor of Chicago [Cermak] who was in the seat next to him.
- (3) Robert Jackson was on the cruise to discuss possible new anti-trust legislation. As Jackson was embarking, Attorney General Cummings was preparing a speech to be given later that day, 11/29, in New York City attacking monopolies and trusts. This was to be a theme in FDR's 1938 State of the Union
- (4) Harry Hopkins, as the chief government official concerned with unemployment, was on the cruise to discuss relief spending. His position, in contrast to that of Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau, was that there should neither be a cut back on spending nor any attempt to have a balanced budget, given the recession then existing.

- (5) The United States Housing Authority [Created by the Wagner – Steagal Act] was under the supervision of Harold Ickes and he was on the cruise to discuss housing, both private and through the USHA.
- (6) Temporary “White House” offices were set up by Marvin McIntyre at Coral Gables [just outside Miami]. Messages from the Potomac, or the accompanying destroyer Selfridge, were sent to the destroyer Roper docked at Miami; special telephone links connected the Roper with the offices at Coral Gables.
- (7) The Potomac left Miami about 10:00 AM and headed for Dry Tortugas [about 65 miles west of Key West], reaching it in the early morning 11/30. It remained in that area until 12/4 when it started its return to Miami.



THE CRUISES - 1938

Cruise Number: 38 – 1 Date: 4/10 Type: Day Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River

Guests:

Samuel Rosenman; Harry Hopkins; “Missy” Le Hand; several friends

Note:

The group left for the Potomac from church for lunch and a short cruise.

Cruise Number: 38 – 2 Dates: 4/23 – 4/24 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River/ Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Harold Ickes, Stewart F. McDonald [Federal Housing Administrator]; William C. Bullitt [Ambassador to France]; Mrs. James Roosevelt; “Missy” LeHand; Captain Woodson

Note:

President Roosevelt spent a large part of the cruise working on a special message to Congress about tax-exempt bonds and taxation of the salaries of public employees. [A policy of reciprocal tax immunity was in effect then. While there was general agreement in the Congress that this tax immunity should be removed, there was considerable disagreement as to when it should be done and whether it could be done without a Constitutional amendment.]

Cruise Number: 38 – 3 Dates: 4/30 – 5/8 Type: Fishing Cruise
(NON – POTOMAC)

Itinerary: Charleston, S.C. - Caribbean -Charleston

Guests:

Rudolph Forster [Chief of White House staff]; Ross McIntire; Marvin McIntyre; Colonel Watson: Captain Woodson

Notes:

- (1) President Roosevelt chose to use the newly commissioned light cruiser Philadelphia [with escorting destroyer Fanning] for this 9 day cruise. It was described as the “shakedown run” for this new type of cruiser.
- (2) The cruise was the usual combination of work and pleasure. FDR returned to Washington immediately after landing at Charleston to review the status of his various programs. The Wages and Hours bill, which had just been brought to the floor of the House, was of major concern.

Cruise Number: 38 – 4 Dates: 5/14 – 5/15 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River/ Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Senator Robert LaFollette and Mrs. LaFollette; Senator Greene and Mrs. Greene; Mrs. James Roosevelt; “Missy” LeHand; Captain Woodson

Note:

Senator LaFollete, although not a Democrat, was a major supporter of New Deal legislation. Rumors of an “estrangement” between FDR and Senator LaFollette were circulating at this time and it was the general feeling that this cruise was an attempt by FDR to smooth out the relationship.

Cruise No: 38 – 5 Dates: 5/21 – 5/22 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Annapolis – Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Eleanor; Mrs. James Roosevelt; John Roosevelt and Anne Clark [his fiancée]; Elizabeth Henderson [a friend of Eleanor]; “Poppy” Hambley [Mrs. Littleton Hambley, a Washington friend]; “Missy” LeHand; Captain Woodson and Mrs. Woodson.

Notes:

- (1) After meeting with Senator Sherman Minton and Secretary Wallace in the morning, FDR and his guests motored to Annapolis

to board the Potomac in order to watch the crew races between Navy, Harvard and Columbia.

- (2) Given the limited number guest cabins on the Potomac, it is probable that not all the guests stayed on board for the cruise.

Cruise No: 38 – 6 Dates: 6/4 – 6/5 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Annapolis – Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Judge Samuel Rosenman and Mrs. Rosenman; Elizabeth Henderson; Margaret Hambley and Catherine Hambly [daughters of Mr. and Mrs. L. Hambley]; “Missy” LeHand; Captain Woodson

Cruise No: 38 – 7 Dates: 6/17 – 6/20 Type: Weekend Event

Itinerary: (1) [Mass.portion] Salem - Nahant - Salem

(2) Salem – Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Notes:

- (1) This was the weekend of John’s marriage to Anne Clark at Nahant, Massachusetts where her family had a seaside home. FDR left Washington by train at 9:00 PM on Thursday evening, 6/16 (just after Congress adjourned) for Salem where he was met by John and Anne on Friday morning. There they boarded the Potomac for the short cruise to Nahant. FDR and the party travelling with him remained on the Potomac for lunch since a landing would have been difficult because of a low tide.
- (2) Travelling with FDR were Frederick Delano, Harry Hopkins, Frank C. Walker, [a longtime friend of FDR and former head of the national emergency council], “Missy” LeHand, Marvin McIntyre, Ross McIntire, Colonel Watson and Captain Woodson; Anna and her husband, John Boettiger, joined the train at New York City, as did Major Harry Hooker [a Roosevelt family friend].
- (3) Franklin, Jr. and his wife Ethel – they had flown up from New York - had breakfast on Friday morning at James and Betsy’s home in Framingham, together with Eleanor, Elliott and Elliott’s wife Ruth. The later three had left Washington Thursday on an 8:00 PM train for Boston. Eleanor remained in Boston to meet her mother-in-law Sara, her (half)sister-in-law Mrs. James R. Roosevelt and her grandchildren Eleanor and Curtis Dall [Anna’s children from her first marriage to Curtis Dall] before going on to Nahant.
- (4) FDR remained on the Potomac Friday afternoon as a motor launch shuttled back and forth landing passengers and bringing people out to greet the President. That evening FDR and Eleanor

hosted a dinner party on the Potomac for the wedding party, some relatives and some close friends.

- (5) President Roosevelt left the Potomac on Saturday at 11:00 AM for the wedding ceremony. After the ceremony and reception, FDR returned to Salem where he boarded the Potomac for a leisurely cruise through the Cape Cod Canal, Long Island Sound and up the Hudson River to Hyde Park (i.e. Poughkeepsie).
- (6) Although President Roosevelt had planned to arrive home on the evening of 6/19, a heavy sea fog delayed his arrival until Monday morning. He remained at Hyde Park for several days working on end of session legislation - rejecting 7 bills and approving 36. Included in the approvals were the Wages and Hours Bill (the Fair Labor Standards Act) and measures providing for recovery and pump-priming funds.

Cruise No: 38 – 8 Date: 6/27 Type: Day Cruise

Itinerary: Poughkeepsie

Note:

FDR used the Potomac as a viewing platform to watch the final races of the Intercollegiate regatta. He had taken the train up from Wilmington, Delaware after spending the night of 6/26 with the DuPonts. He had arrived in Wilmington from Washington in the late afternoon to receive Swedish royalty who were in Wilmington to commemorate the first landing of Swedish colonists in Delaware.

Cruise No: 38 – 9 Dates: 7/16 –8/9 Type: Vacation Cruise
(NON – POTOMAC)

Itinerary: San Diego, Ca. – Galapagos –Panama Canal- Pensacola, Fla.

Notes:

- (1) The vacation cruise on the USS Huston – a voyage of 5888 miles – was preceded by a cross-country political swing by train.
- (2) The trip was for “speech-making, politics, fishing and loafing”.
- (3) FDR had suffered a defeat in the Congress over his plans to reorganize the government. Hoping to get a more amenable Congress in the coming elections, he campaigned across the country laying emphasis on those states where there were bitterly contested primaries. From Marietta, Ohio, from Covington, Kentucky, from Oklahoma City and from San Francisco there were nationally broadcast speeches; elsewhere there were remarks from the train’s rear platform, broadcast locally.

- (4) Having left Washinton in the late evening of 7/7, President Roosevelt arrived in San Francisco on 7/14 where he conducted the Fleet Review from the Houston. He then drove down to San Diego – visiting Yosemite on the way – to once again board the Houston and begin his cruise on 7/16.
- (5) While fishing, loafing and playing the tourist at the Galapagos were main activities on the cruise, it should be noted that the Galapagos are in a strategic position vis-à-vis the Canal Zone and that FDR did a careful inspection of the Canal. [His strategic concerns as Commander-in Chief were made manifest the following year – see my “ FDR and Fleet Problem XX ”]
- (6) At the end of the cruise, just off the Pensacola Bar, FDR transferred from the Houston to the McDougal to go to the Naval Air Station at Pensacola – which he had reopened in 1914 as Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

Cruise No: 38 – 10 Dates: 8/13 – 8/14 Type: Weekend Cruise
Itinerary: Quantico, Va./Chesapeake Bay

Guests:
Harry Hopkins; Commisioner George Allen [D.C. District Commisioner] and Mrs. Allen; “Missy” LeHand; Grace Tully

Note:
FDR had discussions with the Senators from Ohio and New Jersey about political matters before motoring to Quantico.

Cruise No: 38 – 11 Dates: 9/4 – 9/5 Type: Overnight Trip
Itinerary: Morgantown, Md. – Crisfield, Md.

Guests:
James A. Farley; Senator F. Ryan Duffy [Wisconsin]; David J. Lewis [Maryland Congressman]; Governor Nice [Maryland]; Dr. H.C. Byrd [President, University of Maryland]; Marvin McIntyre; Ross McIntire; Commander D. J. Callahan [FDR’s new Naval Aide]

Notes:
(1) The President and his party drove to Morgantown [in southern Maryland, about 50 miles from Washington] for the public purpose of announcing a new bridge across the Potomac River between Maryland and Virginia. They then boarded the Potomac for an overnight trip to Crisfield, arriving there at 8:00 AM. About an hour later they debarked and motored to Denton for an address by FDR; the return to Washington was by car.

- (2) The background for the trip was FDR's attempted "purge" of the Democratic Party. On 9/2, FDR had declared that he would have no objection "to the election of a good liberal running on the Republican ticket" and that he would support Republican candidates against Democrats whose views did not coincide with his own – a position which was rebuffed by Democrats in the House on 9/3.
- (3) Senator Tydings of Maryland was on FDR's purge list. The tactic here was to publicly support a bid by Representative Lewis for the party's senatorial nomination in the forthcoming primary. Hence the trip with Representative Lewis to show that he, Lewis, could get Federal projects for Maryland. [The attempt failed - Senator Tydings was renominated and reelected.]

Cruise No: 38 – 12 Dates: 9/9 – 9/10 Type: Overnight Trip
Itinerary: Washington – Hyde Park
Note:

President Roosevelt returned to Hyde Park preparatory to his leaving for Rochester, Minnesota by train to visit his son who had been admitted to the Mayo Clinic.

Cruise No: 38 – 13 Date: 9/25 Type: Day Cruise
Itinerary: Potomac River
Guests:

"Missy" LeHand; Marvin McIntyre; Frank C. Walker [a friend, political advisor and ally dating back to FDR's gubernatorial days]

Note:
The party boarded the Potomac in the afternoon to watch the motor boat races in the President's Cup regatta.

Cruise No: 38 – 14 Date: 10/27 Type: Day Cruise
Itinerary: Potomac River
Guests:

Cardinal Mundelein [Archbishop of Chicago]; Colonel Watson; Captain Callaghan

Note:
The president's party boarded the Potomac for a short cruise after witnessing Navy Day exercises at the Washington Navy Yard.



THE CRUISES – 1939

[NOTE: From February 18th, when President Roosevelt boarded the USS Houston at Key West, until March 3^d when he disembarked at Charleston, he was participating in the Navy's fleet exercise for 1939: Fleet Problem XX – an event which did not involve the Potomac. For a discussion and description of this event, see my "FDR and Fleet Problem XX "]

Cruise Number: 39 – 1 Date: 3/18 Type: Day Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River – Mount Vernon

Guests:

Frederic A. Delano; various friends and their families from both New York and Washington

Note:

The cruise began when they boarded the Potomac at one PM - followed by lunch, the short trip downstream to Mount Vernon and a return to Washington late in the day.

Cruise Numbers: 39 – 2 & 3 Date: 4/28 ; 4/30 Type: Day Trip

Itinerary: New York City – Hyde Park (Poughkeepsie)

Guests:

- (1) On 4/28: Crown Prince Olav and Crown Princess Martha of Norway, together with their attending party
- (2) On 4/30: Prince Frederick and Crown Princess Ingrid of Denmark, together with their attending party

Notes:

- (1) President Roosevelt had left Washington for Hyde Park on Tuesday, 4/25, for an extended weekend at home. His schedule

called for him to receive the Norwegian royal party Friday evening and to spend Saturday with them; to take a train down to New York City on Sunday to officially open the New York World's Fair and then rush back by train to Hyde Park to receive the Danish royal party in their turn.

- (2) These cruises, from the dock at West 57th Street in New York City up the Hudson River, served as the means to get the respective royal parties to Hyde Park – and, again, represent one of the very few times the Potomac was used without FDR being present.
- (3) Although neither of them knew it at the time, FDR and Crown Princess Martha were to become close friends after the German conquest of Norway and her decision to spend the war years in America.

Cruise Number: 39 – 4 Dates: 5/7 – 5/8 Type: Overnight Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River

Guests:

Eleanor; Harry Hopkins [now Secretary of Commerce]; Associate Justice William O'Douglas and Mrs. Douglas; "Missy" LeHand; Grace Tully

Cruise Number: 39 – 5 Dates: 5/12 – 5/14 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River / Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Robert H. Jackson and Mrs. Jackson; General Watson; Captain Callaghan; "Missy" LeHand

Cruise Number: 39 – 6 Dates: 5/20 – 5/21 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Annapolis/ Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Frank Murphy [Attorney General]; Senator James F. Byrnes [South Carolina] and Mrs. Byrnes; Ross McIntyre and Mrs. McIntyre; Captain Callaghan

Note:

There was a good deal of speculation as to the reason for inviting Senator Byrnes on the cruise. While Senator Byrnes originally was a strong supporter of FDR's programs, at this point he was advocating economic restraint – a position which was not finding much favor in the White House. This was an opportunity for the

President to gauge the opposition to “pump priming” as a basic recovery policy.

Cruise Number: 39 – 7 Date: 6/9 Type: Day Cruise

Itinerary: Washington – Mount Vernon

Guests:

Eleanor; King George VI and Queen Elizabeth [of Great Britain];
Lady Katherine Seymour

Note:

FDR arrived at the Potomac just moments before the King and Queen. After a 21 gun salute for the president and being piped aboard, he joined Eleanor, Cabinet members and their wives in greeting the royal party after another firing of 21 guns in a royal salute. “ Then with the royal standard and Old Glory flying fore and aft from the Presidential yacht, they sailed down the Potomac to the tomb of Washington at Mount Vernon.” Lunch (for 52) was on board. At Mount Vernon, the King – the first British monarch to visit the United States – laid a wreath at the gravesite. After spending some time visiting the home, the party motored back to Washington.

Cruise Number: 39 – 8 Dates: 6/16- 6/18 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Annapolis/ Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Senator Schwellenbach [Washington] and Mrs. Schwellenbach;
Senator Barkley; Ambassador Bullitt; Captain Callaghan; “Missy”
LeHand”

Note:

The party had motored from Washington to inspect the new naval museum at the Academy before boarding.

Cruise Number: 39 – 9 Dates: 7/8 – 7/9 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Annapolis/ Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Jesse H. Jones [now Federal Loan Administrator] and Mrs. Jones;
Steven P. Early [White House Secretary] and Mrs. Early; Captain
Callaghan; “Missy” Le Hand

Cruise Number: 39 – 10 Dates: 7/16 - 7/17 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River/ Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Mrs. Barbara Altemus; “Missy” LeHand”

Notes:

- (1) FDR left Washington by car on Sunday at 3:50 PM to visit with Commerce Secretary Harry Hopkins at his home on the Patuxent River before going on to the Potomac for the cruise.
- (2) There were severe labor problems in the country at this time. A major question for the President was whether to try to push the use of “pump priming” again, or to use more conservative approaches, given the recalcitrant Congress he faced.

Cruise Number: 39 – 11 Dates: 7/28 - 7/30 Type: Fishing Cruise
Itinerary: Quantico, Virginia - Atlantic Ocean off Virginia Capes

Guests:

Harry Hopkins [now Secretary of Commerce]; Steven Early; General Watson; Ross McIntire; Frank C Walker

Notes:

- (1) Although finding himself in the middle of one of the biggest run of marlin ever, FDR did not take a single fish on Saturday, the first fishing day of this vacation. He and the others, fishing from the stern of the Potomac, made up for this the next day.
- (2) FDR had left Washington while the Senate was in the midst of debating the Administration’s Works Financing Bill – a proposal in the “pump priming” tradition. On Monday, 7/31, a bill “...containing little more than one-half the amount originally recommended by the President...was passed today by the Senate...at the end of the 6th day of consideration.” It was seriously threatened in the House. FDR’s comment was “...the most rebellious Congress in the history of the New Deal.”
- (3) This cruise is a good example of FDR’s need to get away from the White House to be free to think through matters. Congress had passed the Hatch bill – an act to “prevent pernicious political activities” of Federal employees. He now had until Thursday midnight to decide whether to veto, sign or let it become law without his signature. In the event, he decided to sign it and the Hatch Act became law on August 2nd.

Cruise No: 39 – 12

Dates: 8/12 –8/24

Type: Vacation Cruise
(NON – POTOMAC)

Itinerary: New York City – Campobello, N.B. – Halifax, N.S. – Newfoundland – Halifax – Sandy Hook, New Jersey

Notes:

- (1) When President Roosevelt began this long vacation cruise in the waters of the North Atlantic, it was clear that a crisis was developing in Europe. Now, just a few months after the invasion and conquest of Czechoslovakia, Germany was demanding the return of the free city of Danzig and the so-called Polish Corridor. He had conferred with Secretary of State Hull by phone before leaving Hyde Park for the drive down to New York City and had concluded that this was not yet the time to call for a special session to revise existing neutrality legislation. [Congress was now in recess and FDR had failed to get Senate approval of revisions to the Neutrality Act in the regular session.]
- (2) This was President Roosevelt's first cruise using the USS Tuscaloosa. As usual, his fishing gear and his stamp collection were already on board as the crew of the Tuscaloosa and of the Lang [an escorting destroyer] rendered the appropriate honors.
- (3) The stop at Campobello allowed FDR to visit with Franklin, Jr. who was at the family's summer camp. Campobello always had a unique place in FDR's thoughts. It was in the waters around Campobello that he first learned the sailor's art as a young man and it was at Campobello that he contracted infantile paralysis.
- (4) Although the cruise had been scheduled to end with a more ceremonious landing at Annapolis, it had been cut short so that President Roosevelt could be in Washington as the European crisis deepened. The Soviet Union and Germany had signed a pact on 8/23 and the threat of war was growing. Indeed, one week later Germany invaded Poland and World War II had begun.

Cruise Number: 39 – 13

Date: 9/17

Type: Day Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River

Guests:

Eleanor; Mrs. James Roosevelt; Diana Hopkins [Harry Hopkins' daughter]; Mistress Holden; "Missy" LeHand

Notes:

- (1) This was FDR's first cruise since the war in Europe had begun. It was a very short one – just a few hours to observe a little part of the President's Cup regatta.
- (2) Diana Hopkins was just five years old when her mother died in 1937. Eleanor was very fond of Harry Hopkins and was concerned about his and Diana's well-being. Eleanor virtually adopted Diana, who came to live at the White House until Harry's subsequent marriage in 1942. The "Mistress Holden" presumably was Diana's young friend.
- (3) The invasion of Poland by Germany and the Soviet Union together with the resulting declaration of war by France and Great Britain had materially changed attitudes in the Congress. The special session called by President Roosevelt a week before had lifted the embargo on arms sales and allowed the so-called "Cash and Carry" program to begin.

Cruise Number: 39 – 14 Dates: 9/30 – 10/1 Type: Weekend Cruise
Itinerary: Quantico, Virginia – Potomac River/ Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Justice Harlan Stone and Mrs. Stone; Justice Felix Frankfurter and Mrs. Frankfurter; "Missy" LeHand

Note:

President Coolidge appointed Harlan Stone to be Attorney General in 1924; he was then named to be a Justice of the Supreme Court in 1925. Felix Frankfurter, a Harvard Law School professor, was an early admirer and supporter of FDR and a member of FDR's "Brain Trust". He was appointed to the Supreme Court in 1939.



THE CRUISES – 1940

Cruise No: 40 - 1

Dates: 2/15 – 3/2

Type: Inspection Cruise
(NON – POTOMAC)

Itinerary: Pensacola, Florida – Canal Zone – West Coast of Central America - Canal Zone - Pensacola

Notes:

- (1) President Roosevelt began this cruise with a great air of mystery. The day before he started out, he simply said that he was going to board the Tuscaloosa at some southern port for a vacation cruise and would not discuss further details; however, he did indicate that three members of the press would be accommodated on the escort ships following, viz. the destroyers Lang and Jouett. It was not until 17 February, when the convoy was well out to sea that the destination and purpose of the cruise was revealed.
- (2) The cruise gave FDR an opportunity to inspect both the Atlantic and Pacific defenses of the Panama Canal. Increasingly, FDR's major concern would be the necessity of building up the nation's defenses, securing additional funds for the Army and Navy and preparing for the consequences of any further German aggression.

Cruise Number: 40 - 2

Date: 5/12

Type: Day Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River

Guests:

Eleanor; Norman Davis [now Chairman of the American Red Cross]; Robert Jackson and Mrs. Jackson; "Missy" LeHand"

Note:

The Spring of 1940 saw renewed German activity. Denmark and Norway had been invaded in April and, on 5/10, just two days before, Germany had begun its Western offensive when it invaded Belgium and the Netherlands.

Cruise Number: 40 - 3 Dates: 5/18 – 5/19 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River

Guests:

Jesse H. Jones; Colonel Harrington; Robert Hickley; “Missy” LeHand

Note:

President Roosevelt took this cruise to relax from the strain of having worked night and day throughout the week as the European situation had deteriorated. The Netherlands had capitulated on 5/15 and the Germans were moving West through Belgium. He had sent a message to Congress asking for a substantial increase in defense appropriations, had appealed to Italy to keep out of the war, had been working on further messages to Congress and the country as well as having had to review a constant stream of reports.

Cruise Number: 40 – 4 Dates: 5/26 – 5/27 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River

Guests:

Harry Hopkins; General Watson; Captain Callaghan

Notes:

- (1) By 5/20 the British and French divisions in Belgium had been encircled by the Germans. A subsequent attempt at a breakout a few days later had failed. The German war plan – “Operation Case Yellow” – whose first part, the “cut of the sickle”, called for conquering the Low Countries and turning the Maginot Line [France’s supposedly impregnable defensive line along the border with Germany] before invading France itself, was succeeding.
- (2) Winston Churchill, who had just become Prime Minister on 5/10 [and given his “Blood, Sweat and Tears” speech on 5/13], ordered Operation “Dynamo”, a hasty but effective evacuation and rescue of the forces trapped at Dunkirk. Between 5/26 and 6/4, in an astonishing improvisation, naval craft and personnel - reinforced by hundreds of “little ships” and their civilian crews who had volunteered to take part – brought almost 350,000 British and allied troops safely across the Channel.
- (3) The day before the cruise, Saturday, 5/25, President Roosevelt had announced that a Defense Board, a special emergency body of government officials and private citizens from all segments was being formed to coordinate preparedness efforts.

- (4) Before leaving the White House for the cruise late Sunday evening, FDR had spoken to the nation, in his fifteenth “fireside chat”, about the state of the country’s defenses; and in that connection, about actions taken and actions forthcoming, about the role of government and industry and about the responsibilities of America and its citizens.

Cruise Number: 40 – 5 Dates: 6/1 – 6/2 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River/Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

James F. Byrnes and Mrs. Byrnes [James Byrnes would be named to the Supreme Court in 1941]; Harry Hopkins; “Missy” LeHand

Notes:

- (1) The situation of the Allies continued to deteriorate. Belgium had capitulated on 5/28 and the British were about to withdraw from Narvik, their last position in Norway. [The capitulation of Norway would take place on 6/10.] The Germans were poised to begin the second phase of their War Plan, the defeat of France.
- (2) FDR sent a special message to Congress asking for one million dollars in supplementary appropriations for preparedness and enlargement of the defense forces. This was in addition to the amounts previously requested.
- (3) Unusual security precautions for FDR were beginning to be introduced, even in the short trip from the White House to the Washington Navy Yard: motorcycle police riding alongside, not just ahead of his car; riding in a closed car, even though it was a warm summer’s day.

Cruise Number: 40 – 6 Date: 6/8 Type: Day Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River

Guests:

Harry Hopkins; Justice William O. Douglas and Mrs. Douglas; Alexander Kirk [Chargé d’Affaires in Berlin]; Betsy Cummings Roosevelt; “Missy” Le Hand

Notes:

- (1) The “Battle of France”, coded “Operation Red” in the German war plan, had begun on 6/5. By 6/8, the Germans were forcing the French to withdraw all along the so – called “Weygand Line” and were twenty miles from Rouen and about fifty-eight from Paris.

- (2) Alexander Kirk could not only give President Roosevelt first hand reports on the situation in Germany, but also valuable information on Italy since he had served under a succession of Ambassadors there and knew Mussolini well.
- (3) The House Ways and Means Committee voted to support the requested supplementary appropriations. It also planned for legislation to impose an excess profits tax, as had been requested by FDR in his 5/26 speech.
- (4) Italy declared war on 6/10.

Cruise Number: 40 – 7 Dates: 6/15 – 6/16 Type: Weekend Cruise
Itinerary: Potomac River/ Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Harry Hopkins; Averill Harriman and Mrs. Harriman; Captain René de Chambrun [Assistant French Military Attaché]; “Missy” Le Hand

Notes:

- (1) Captain de Chambrun, having just returned after taking part in the fighting in Belgium, could provide first hand information to President Roosevelt.
- (2) Averill Harriman, a scion of the Harriman family (railroads), was a businessman, financier and friend of Harry Hopkins. He had entered government service in 1934 and was to have a very distinguished career.
- (3) The French resistance to the German army was collapsing. Paris fell on the 6/14; the Atlantic coast was reached via the Loire River on the 6/16; the Swiss border on 6/17. On 22 June 1940 France would sign the document of capitulation in the very same railroad car in the forest of Compiègne where Germany had signed the Armistice in 1918. Newsreels would capture the unrestrained glee of Hitler as he danced a victory jig on exiting the railroad car.
- (4) Waiting on the pier to confer with President Roosevelt as the Potomac docked about 4 PM were Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles.

Cruise Number: 40 – 8 Date: 6/29 Type: Day Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River

Guests:

Francis Biddle [Solicitor General] and Mrs. Biddle; Jesse H Jones and Mrs. Jones; “Missy” LeHand

Notes:

- (1) President Roosevelt embarked on the cruise in the afternoon after a busy morning conferring first with the president of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks to get assurances that there would be cooperation in the national defense effort and secondly with members of the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies to discuss ways to further the committees purposes.
- (2) The Republican party, in the early morning hours of 6/28, had nominated Wendell Wilkie, a New York lawyer and president of a utility holding company, to be the party's presidential candidate. Wilkie had led the private utility companies fight against the Tennessee Valley Authority He was a newcomer opposed by veteran party leaders and had won an upset victory on the third ballot by skillfully eliminating Thomas Dewey [District Attorney of New York County] and Senator Robert Taft of Ohio.

Cruise Number: 40 – 9 Dates: 7/13 – 7/14 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River/Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

E.E. Bartlett and Mrs. Bartlett [friends of "Missy"]; Samuel I. Rosenman; Admiral Ross McIntyre; "Missy" LeHand

Notes:

- (1) The country was speculating about the third term intentions of FDR. Justice Rosenman was one of FDR's most important political advisors, particularly in connection with the 1932 presidential nomination. As the New York Times noted: "...Mr. Rosenman was constantly at Governor Roosevelt's elbow in Albany. He was the man on the Albany end of the wire whenever there was telephonic consultations between Roosevelt boosters in that city and in Chicago."
- (2) The Democratic Convention was to open on 7/15. James Farley, who had managed both the 1932 and 1936 campaigns, was opposed to a third term for FDR and would contest his renomination at the convention. FDR himself said nothing of his plans as he returned from the cruise; he also did nothing to check a movement to draft him for a third term.
- (3) FDR was renominated early on the morning of 7/18 on the 1st ballot.

Cruise Number: 40 – 10 Dates: 7/19 – 7/21 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River

Guests:

Steven Early and Mrs. Early; General Watson and Mrs. Watson;
“Missy” Le Hand

Notes:

- (1) After having stayed up till 3 AM listening to the broadcasts from the convention - FDR's choice of Henry Wallace as the Vice Presidential nominee had not gone down well with many Democrats at the convention - FDR slept until quite late this day. He also cancelled his usual Friday meeting with the press and did not leave the White House to board the Potomac until 6 PM.
- (2) Originally scheduled to return from the cruise on 7/20, FDR decided to extend it for one more day because Washington was sweltering in the summer heat. He returned early enough on 7/21 to confer with Ambassador Bullitt, getting a first hand report on the defeat of France and subsequent events before leaving for Hyde Park.

Cruise Number: 40 – 11 Dates: 7/27 – 7/30 Type: Inspection Cruise

Itinerary: Vicinity of Norfolk, Virginia [Naval Base; Navy Yard, Portsmouth; Newport News; Old Point Comfort]

Guests:

Senator Sheppard [Texas; Chairman of the Senate Military Affairs Committee]; Senator David Walsh [Massachusetts; Chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee]; Representative Carl Vinson [Georgia; Chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee]; Frank Knox [Secretary of the Navy]; Harry Hopkins; General Watson; Captain Callaghan

Notes:

- (1) This was the first of the “Defense Inspection Tours”. From this time until the election in November, President Roosevelt used the Potomac to make a series of these inspection cruises up and down the East Coast.
- (2) Jack Lynch described their nature: “We’d tie up, he’d be met by a car and entourage and be driven around a shipyard, munitions plant, or whatever, and make a few speeches to the assembled workers and officials. That it had a political effect was undeniable, at the same time we were involved in the greatest productive effort in the country’s history and his presence in his role of Commander- in Chief was certainly inspirational to the work force.”

Cruise Number: 40 – 12 Dates: 8/10 – 8/12 Type: Inspection Cruise
Itinerary: Portsmouth, New Hampshire; Boston, Massachusetts; Newport, Rhode Island; New London, Connecticut

Guests:

Frank Knox; Harry Hopkins; General Watson; Admiral McIntyre; Captain Callaghan

Notes:

- (1) President Roosevelt had come up to Portsmouth by train on 8/10. He boarded the Potomac in the evening, after having made a tour of the Navy Yard where he saw submarines in every phase of construction. Interestingly, the Potomac was docked just aft of the Squalus – a submarine which had sunk near Portsmouth on 5/12 the previous year with a loss almost half her personnel, had been raised, and was now being refitted and recommissioned. FDR had watched the salvage operation from the Tuscaloosa in August on his way to Campobello [see Cruise 39 – 12].
- (2) In Boston the President spent the day visiting the Navy Yard and the army arsenal at Watertown. From Boston the Potomac sailed through the Cape Cod Canal to Newport [known at that time as a stereotypical old time Navy town] where FDR visited the Navy Yard, the Naval Training Station, the Naval War College; and, from the Potomac on the way to New London, what was to become the site of the Quonset Point Naval Air Station. President Roosevelt left for the return train trip to Washington late in the evening of 8/12, after visiting the submarine base.
- (3) Britain was now sustaining massive air attacks. After the fall of France, Hitler had decided on these strikes as a way of either convincing Britain to sue for peace or, failing that, to destroy her ability to repel a German invasion. This period of time – officially from 7/10 until 10/31 – became known as the “Battle of Britain”.
- (4) A bill providing for a peacetime draft was before Congress. Debate on it would continue for several more weeks.

Cruise Number: 40 – 13 Dates: 8/24 – 8/25 Type: Weekend Cruise
Itinerary: Annapolis – Lower Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Governor Burnet R. Maybank [South Carolina] and Mrs. Maybank; Harry Hopkins; James V. Forrestal [Under Secretary of the Navy]; “Missy” LeHand

Notes:

- (1) To coordinate Canadian – American defense efforts [and to thereby also provide a channel for cooperating with Great Britain], a Joint Board on Defense had been created; the American Section, with New York Mayor LaGuardia as Chairman, had its first meeting on 8/24.
- (2) By now, the “Cash and Carry” program had put severe stress on Britain’s financial reserves and she was in debt to the United States. For the rest of the year FDR would be struggling with finding ways to assure a flow of military supplies to Britain. One idea was for the U.S. to lease British bases in the Western Hemisphere – Britain would not consider outright sale and transfer of authority. Payments on the leases by the U.S. could then be applied by Britain for military supplies. Another idea surfacing at this time was for the U.S. to sell Britain some old destroyers at a price far below what Britain would otherwise have to spend to enlarge her destroyer fleet. These two ideas soon came together and coalesced in the bases for destroyers deal.
- (3) Because of poor health, Harry Hopkins resigned as Secretary of Commerce on 8/24. He would remain a close confidant of FDR and often be used as a special envoy. His chosen replacement was Jesse H. Jones. In 1939, when FDR appointed Jones to head the Federal Loan Agency, Jones resigned as head of the RFC, but as Federal Loan Administrator had supervision over all government lending agencies including the RFC. Now he was unwilling to give up his position in order to become Secretary of Commerce. To accommodate the wishes of both President Roosevelt and Jesse Jones, special legislation was introduced permitting Jones to hold both positions simultaneously. He became Secretary of Commerce on 9/19.
- (4) The position of Postmaster General became vacant a little later in the week [because of Jim Farley’s opposition to FDR’s third term bid]. He was replaced by Frank C. Walker.

Cruise Number: 40 – 14 Dates: 9/14 – 9/15 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River/ Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Harry Hopkins; Basil O’Connor and Mrs. O’Connor; “Missy” LeHand

Cruise Number: 40 – 15 Dates: 9/28 – 9/30 Type:Weekend Cruise
Itinerary: Potomac River/ Chesapeake Bay/Aberdeen, Maryland

Guests:

Archibald MacLeish [Librarian of Congress] and Mrs. MacLeish;
Robert Patterson [Assistant Secretary of War] and Mrs. Patterson;
“Missy” LeHand”

Notes:

- (1) FDR had boarded the Potomac in the evening after learning that agreement had been reached on the excess profits tax proposal.
- (2) He left the Potomac in the Monday morning at Aberdeen -about 35 miles northeast of Baltimore on Chesapeake Bay. He returned to Washington by car, touring the Aberdeen Army ordinance proving ground, an airplane factory near Baltimore and Camp Meade on his way back.
- (3) The political campaign was fully underway.

Cruise Number: 40 – 16 Dates: 11/13 – 11/17 Type:Weekend Cruise
Itinerary: Potomac River/ Chesapeake Bay (Yorktown, Virginia)

Guests:

Harry Hopkins; Robert Jackson; Frank Walker and Mrs. Walker;
General Watson, Ross McIntire; “Missy” LeHand”

Notes:

- (1)The President left on Wednesday in the early evening after having expressed his thanks to those who had voted for him. FDR had won about 55% of the vote - not nearly the sweep of 1936 - after campaign rhetoric in which he had been characterized as a “war monger” and Wilkie as an “appeaser”. In fact, they were not all that far apart in their foreign policy views and analysts of the election have concluded that foreign policy issues were not the deciding factor.
- (2) The first draft calls under the Selective Service Act were now occurring [it had been signed into law by FDR on 9/16].

Cruise No: 40 - 17 Dates: 12/3 – 12/16 Type:Inspection Cruise
(NON – POTOMAC)

Itinerary: Miami – Kingston, Jamaica – Santa Lucia, Antigua – the Bahamas – Charleston, South Carolina

Notes:

- (1) This was President Roosevelt's third and last cruise on the USS Tuscaloosa - although she would be used again in connection with his Atlantic Conference trip in 1941[see cruise numbers 39-12, 40-1 and 41-7]. The cruise enabled FDR to inspect some of the bases we had obtained in exchange for the 50 old destroyers.
- (2) On the morning of 12/13 President Roosevelt spent about three hours with Edward, Duke of Windsor. He had succeeded to the British throne as Edward VIII in January, 1936; after reigning 11 months he abdicated to marry Wallis Simpson, the "woman I love" - an American, a commoner and a divorcee. Given the title Duke of Windsor, he was barred from England. He was now Governor General of the Bahamas. The Duke and Duchess had sailed to Miami on the Duke's yacht, the Southern Cross, several days before. While the Duke left Miami by plane to visit with FDR on the Tuscaloosa, the Duchess remained behind in Miami to have dental surgery.



THE CRUISES – 1941

Cruise No: 41 - 1 Date: 1/24 Type: Special

Itinerary: Annapolis - Potomac River – Washington

Guests:

Lord and Lady Halifax

Notes:

- (1) “President Roosevelt broke all diplomatic precedents today when he drove out to Annapolis, rode out on the yacht Potomac to the great new British Battleship, King George V, and personally welcomed the new British Ambassador, Viscount Halifax.”
- (2) This was the first instance in which a president had left the White House (and Washington) to meet an Ambassador. The unusual gesture served to emphasize the closeness and special relationship between the United States and Britain.

Cruise No: 41 - 2 Dates: 3/22 – 3/29 Type: Vacation Cruise

Itinerary: Port Everglades [Fort Lauderdale], Florida – Waters off Florida – Port Everglades

Guests:

Harry Hopkins [now Director of the Lend-Lease Program]; Harold Ickes; Robert Jackson; General Watson; Stephen Early; Admiral Ross McIntyre

Notes:

- (1) Because of the war situation, no positions or itineraries were disclosed for the cruise other than to say the Potomac was never more than a few hours away from a U S port, should it become necessary for the President to return quickly. Three press association correspondents were aboard one of the two destroyers accompanying the Potomac.

- (2) The first ships and war materials had begun moving toward Britain under the Lend – Lease program a little more than a week before. This program became the principle avenue by which the United States became the “Arsenal of Democracy” – a phrase which FDR used in his speech of 29 December 1940. The program was formally proposed in his speech of 1/6 – the “Four Freedoms” speech; it was passed by Congress and signed by FDR on 3/11.
- (3) On 3/29, after returning to Port Everglades, FDR made his Jackson Day address to the country by radio from the Potomac’s “wardroom”, i.e. the saloon.

Cruise No: 41 - 3 Dates: 4/26 – 4/27 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Potomac River/ Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Frank C Walker and Mrs. Walker; Admiral Ross McIntyre; Harry Hopkins; “Missy” LeHand

Notes:

- (1) This cruise replaced a planned vacation at Warm Springs, Georgia “...due to the pressure of public business...”
- (2) Germany had invaded Greece early in April and was now nearing Athens; Axis forces were at Tobruck in Cyrenaica [Northeastern Lybia]; German bombers were over England but the British were now raiding the French coastline and bombing cities in Germany.
- (3) Congress was beginning to debate the question of whether American naval forces should replace the British in the convoying of war material.

Cruise No: 41 - 4 Dates: 6/7 – 6/9 Type: Weekend Cruise

Itinerary: Annapolis -Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Crown Princess Martha and Princess Ragnhild [Martha’s 10 year old daughter]; Harry Hopkins, Robert and Diana Hopkins; Captain John Beardall [the President's new naval aide]

[Note: On 22 June, Germany launched “Operation Babarossa” – the invasion of the Soviet Union]

Cruise No: 41 - 5 Dates: 7/12 – 7/13 Type: Weekend Cruise
Itinerary: Annapolis -Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Senator Barkley and Mrs. Barkley; Stephen Early and Mrs. Early; Grace Tully [now FDR's private secretary after "Missy" LeHand's stroke]

Notes:

- (1) On 7/7, President Roosevelt sent a message to Congress informing them that, pursuant to an agreement with the Prime Minister of Iceland, the United States had sent forces to Iceland to supplement (and eventually to replace) the British , "... in order to insure the adequate defense of that country..." Further, as Commander-in-Chief he had ordered that "...all necessary steps be taken to insure the safety of communications in the approaches between Iceland and the United States and all other strategic outposts." There was significant opposition to this move in the Congress amid charges that it was illegal and unconstitutional.
- (2) During the week, FDR had asked for about \$5 billion in supplemental appropriations for the War Department; he was now working on submitting requests for additional billions for the Lend-Lease program, for the Navy and for the construction of merchant ships – all of which was to be added to the approximately \$33 billion already appropriated.

Cruise No: 41 - 6 Date: 7/20 Type: Day Cruise
Itinerary: Potomac River/Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Princess Martha and family; Claude Wickard [Secretary of Agriculture] and Mrs. Wickard

Cruise No: 41 - 7 Dates: 8/3 – 8/16 Type: Summit Meeting

Note: FDR had left the White House in the late morning of 8/3 for New London, Connecticut for what, ostensibly, was to be the start of a week's vacation on the Potomac in New England waters. In reality, it was the start of the Atlantic Conference – the first meeting of FDR and Winston Churchill as heads of their respective governments. This cruise and meeting is treated in detail in my " A Synchrony Of The Atlantic Conference, August 1941".

Cruise No: 41 - 8 Dates: 9/13 – 9/14 Type: Weekend Cruise
Itinerary: Annapolis - Chesapeake Bay

Guests:

Harry Hopkins and Diana Hopkins; William S. Knudsen [Director of the OPM – Office of Price Management]; Leon Henderson [Chairman of the OPA – Office of Price Administration]; Floyd B. Odlum [special advisor to Leon Henderson and head of a new Defense Contract Distribution Services office]

Note:

The OPM had been created in January; the OPA in April. These three men were “top defense chiefs”; they and others like them in the government were responsible for integrating the conflicting needs of government, labor and business under FDR’s defense program and turning the US into the “Arsenal of Democracy”.

Cruise No: 41 - 9 Date: 10/11 Type: Evening Cruise
Itinerary: Potomac River

Note:

The Guest of Honor was Eleanor, for this was a birthday cruise and dinner. Others on board included James and his wife; and those close to Eleanor: Joseph Lash, Malvina Thomson [Eleanor’s personal secretary], Mayris Chaney [a dancer and long term friend], Helen Gahagan (Douglas) [wife of the actor Melvin Douglas – he and his wife were active, militant New Deal supporters].

Cruise No: 41 - 10 Date: 10/26 Type: Day Cruise
Itinerary: Potomac River

Guests:

Lord and Lady Halifax; Clement Attlee [Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the British Labor Party]; James; Captain John R. Beardall

Note:

A serious labor crisis was developing at the time of this cruise. John L. Lewis, head of the United Mine Workers, was threatening a strike. FDR wanted the mines operating in the interests of national defense. Lewis, and many other labor leaders, felt that too much of the burden of the defense program was falling on the backs of workers while business was reaping profits. A particular point at issue here was the question of the union shop.



POSTSCRIPT: 1942 - 1945

President Roosevelt stopped using the Potomac once the United States entered the war, except for two occasions:

- (1) On 6 August, 1942 the Potomac was used to cruise to Mount Vernon with Eleanor, Queen Wilhemina of the Netherlands and 20 other invited guests; the return to Washington was by car.
- (2) Late in the evening of 11 November, 1943, President Roosevelt – together with General George Marshall [Army Chief of Staff], Admiral Ernest King [Chief of Naval Operations] and their staffs - boarded the Potomac at Quantico, Virginia for the first leg of what was to be a journey of 17, 442 land sea and air miles – the summit conferences at Cairo and Teheran. The Potomac met the USS Iowa in Chesapeake Bay early the next day to effect the transfer of the President and his party. At FDR's request, no honors were rendered as he came on board the Iowa and, due to war-time restrictions, his flag was not broken. While the Iowa carried the President overseas, the Potomac was directed to remain out of sight and incommunicado and to give the impression that the President was on board. The President returned on the Iowa, transferring to the Potomac on 11/16. Although no honors were rendered on FDR's transfer, the Potomac once again broke his flag at the main as FDR came on board. The Potomac reached Quantico very late in the evening and President Roosevelt decided to remain on board until the next day when the Potomac sailed upriver to the Washington Navy Yard.

After the death of President Roosevelt on 12 April, 1945 and before it was decided that she would no longer serve as the presidential yacht, the Potomac made its last presidential cruise on Sunday, May 6th, when it carried President Truman and his family for a day cruise on the Potomac River. She was relieved by the Williamsburg on 5 November, 1945.

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