History of the Sequoia

What Ever Happened to the Presidential Yacht?

The "floating White House" once provided a venue for American officials, prom parties, and leisurely afternoons offshore. Now it's rotting away in a boatyard and has become home to raccoons.

Designed by John Trumpy and built by the famed John H. Mathis & Company Shipbuilders in Camden, New Jersey, *Sequoia* was completed at a cost of approximately $200,000 and launched October 27, 1925.[5] Originally named the *Sequoia II,* she was the second of four successively larger yachts built between 1924 and 1931 for Mr. and Mrs. Richard McCall Cadwalader of Philadelphia.[5] The Cadwalader's third and fourth yachts were named *Savarona* and *Savarona II*, respectively.[6]

At 104 feet in length, *Sequoia II's* hull was originally constructed of long-leaf yellow pine on white oak frames and her deckhouse of mahogany and teak. She is capable of comfortably sleeping eight guests in her three double and two single staterooms, has ample crew quarters and can seat 22 for formal dinners.

A Congressional Resolution written to assist the Trust in bringing *Sequoia* back into government service, passed in December 1985. *Sequoia* underwent a $2 million restoration in 1986 before participating in the flotilla of vessels celebrating the centennial of the Statue of Liberty on July 4, 1986. Vice President George H.W. Bush used *Sequoia* in May 1987 to host a day of meetings with Yang Shangkun who subsequently served as President of the People's Republic of China from 1988 to 1993.[50][51] *Sequoia* was designated as a National Historic Landmark in March 1988. Political considerations dictated that if the Sequoia were to be returned to the government for use by the President, the cost should not be born by the U.S. government. The Trust was surprised by the Navy's requirement that the Trust not only pay for the yacht and its operations but also the security which would be required by the President. Unable to pay a $2 million repair bill, title to the yacht was transferred to the Virginia shipyard and Sequoia spent 6 years in storage.[52]

Upon taking office, the Clinton White House worked closely with the Trust during 1993 and 1994 to have Kuwait purchase *Sequoia* from the Virginia yard where she was being stored and transfer title to the Trust as gift to the American people and a gesture of gratitude to the US for leading a coalition of 34 counties in liberating Kuwait after Saddam Hussein's 1990 Iraqi invasion.[53]