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On the 13th of September, 1907, the *Lusitania* arrives in New York City on her maiden voyage. In this image, we see her sailing past Battery Park. Online, courtesy Library of Congress. Click on the image for a full-page view.

When the *Lusitania* was built in 1907, owners of the Cunard Steamship Company hoped they had purchased a fast liner.

In competition for wealthy passengers who desired both speed and comfort as they crossed the Atlantic, Cunard's ships had not held the Blue Ribbon speed record for many years. *Lusitania* and her slightly longer sister ship, *Mauretania*, would change that.

A turbine steamship, *Lusitania* was 787 feet long. She was 87 feet 6 inches wide and drew a bit more than 60 feet. With twenty-five boilers generating steam to drive her 68,000 horsepower engines, the ship was fast. She could make 24½ to 25 knots.

Like the *Titanic*, launched four years after *Lusitania* was built, she was certified to carry emigrants. Her capacity was 3,000 souls on board, including crew.

When she was first built, *Lusitania* was equipped with limited lifeboats (as the *Titanic* was when she struck the iceberg on April 14, 1912). Regulations from the British Board of Trade had not kept pace with the new super liners.

After *Titanic* sank, however, more lifeboats were added to ships. When *Lusitania* sailed from New York City on the 1st of May, 1915, she had 48 lifeboats aboard.

On her second transatlantic crossing (from Queenstown, Ireland - now called Cobh), the crew set a new speed record. With trimmers shoveling the coal, stokers and firemen minding the huge boilers and engineers working around the clock to coax the best performance out of the ship, she arrived in New York harbor within 4 days, 19 hours and 52 minutes.

She was everything Cunard's owners hoped she would be.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-LUSITANIA-Lusitania-Sinking>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/THE-LUSITANIA-Lusitania-Sinking>

Questions 2 Ponder

What Role Did People Play in Running a Turbine Steamship?

Ships like the *Lusitania* were turbine steamships. A transatlantic crossing, in less than 5 days, required a huge amount of human effort.

During her sea trials, *Lusitania* reached a speed of 26.7 knots. Her fastest transatlantic crossing was in 1909 when she averaged 25.85 knots, making port in 4 days, 16 hours and 40 minutes.

About 5,000 tons of coal had to be loaded, shovel by shovel, to fill the *Lusitania's* coal bunkers which surrounded the ship's four boiler rooms. For a five-day crossing, that means the ship needed about 1,000 tons of coal for each day at sea.

With trimmers shoveling coal, stokers and firemen minding the huge boilers and engineers working around the clock to coax the best performance out of the ship, *Lusitania's* awesome speeds resulted from human beings working exceptionally hard as a team.

What do you think was the most-difficult job aboard a turbine steamship like *Lusitania*?

Can you liken 21st-century teamwork to the teamwork required of *Lusitania's* crew? Explain your answer.

Media Stream



Lusitania - Docked in Port

Image online, courtesy maritimequest.com website.

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THE LUSITANIA

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Lusitania - Record-setting Ship

This video clip is from the BBC's recreation of the ship, and the story of her 1915 sinking, entitled *Lusitania: Murder on the Atlantic*. Copyright, BBC, all rights reserved. Clip provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the production.

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