

Bushy Tales

Dedicated to all who attended London Central High School
at Bushy Park, London England from
1952 to 1962



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Visit the Bushy Park Website at <http://www.bushypark.org/>

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES



**1953 – Mariann (Walton)
McCornack (d. 2022)**



**1954 – Betsy (Neff) Cote
betsycote@Atlanticbb.net**

1955 – Nancie Anderson (d. 2016)



**1956 – Edie (Williams) Wingate
WingW@aol.com**



**1957 – William Douglas
rwmDouglas@gmail.com**



**1958 – Pat (Terpening) Owen
nemoamasa@sbcglobal.net**



**1959 – John "Mike" Hall
MGHall446@gmail.com**



**1960 – Ren Briggs
rpbjr@frontiernet.net**



**1961 – Betsy (Schley) Slepetz
bslepetz@comcast.net**



**1962 – Dona (Hale) Ritchie
Dona.Ritchie@att.net**

A little reminder to all –if/when you change your email address, please let Pat Terpening (58) Owen nemoamasa@sbcglobal.net or me know, if you want to continue to receive the newsletter. Too many times we only find out when you send us an email saying you haven't received the newsletter in few months. Thanks, guys.

Memories of Bushy Park

Robert Harrold (60) maintains a Bushy Park website at BushyPark.org Among the things you can see at this website is a “Guestbook”, in which many website visitors have left comments. There are many entries, dating back to April 2007. Here is a direct link: [Bushy Park Guest Book](#)

Letters to the Editor



From: Deonne Allegier (54) Stewart Giddens

Hi Pat;

I think when I wrote you, I was somewhat scrambled!! So, better late than never. I attended Bushy Park from Sep 1952 to Dec 1952 when my dad was transferred to Stuttgart, Germany. To the best of my knowledge Bushy Park was the first American HS in England, and it was boarding. I did find a reference to my name in that first annual. I sent a correction and a story about our boarding house to the email for the website.

I did the second half of my Junior year in Heidelberg HS, again, boarding. I then "opened" another new HS in Stuttgart. There we lived at home and took the bus to school. This was the '53-'54 school year. This was a class of 29 where I was Valedictorian and Marsha Shopak (sp) was Salutatorian. I never did stay in touch with any classmates from Bushy. Park. I was an Army Brat, and most of my classmates at Bushy were Air Force Brats. We never crossed paths again.

I hope all is well with you. This is certainly a different weather cycle - here in the Denver area, we have had snow on the ground almost the whole of January. No melting going on and now we are having several days of real Arctic cold.

Sincerely,
Deonne Giddens

[Editor's Note: Two additional memories emails from Deonne Giddens were published in the [November 2022 issue of “Bushy Tales”](#).]

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From: Gary Baldwin (54)

Hi Billie and Snookie,

I just finished reading an article published in our local New Jersey newspaper describing the current condition and fate of the SS United States. I'm not sure if you both sailed on this once great ship, but I know Billie came over to England aboard this vessel. I would like to send the article to you both and to the Bushy Tales editor because I feel others came to or return home from England on the ship. I cut the article out and can mail it to one of you if you know of a way to share it with others.

You may be able to find the article by searching the following: The article is entitled: "Fate of the fading S.S. United States uncertain" It was published in the Asbury Park Press, Sunday, February 12, 2023, page 4A, the website is app.com.

What a shame to see this vessel decaying through the years. I did travel down to Philadelphia to see the ship several years ago. No money was ever raised to restore the vessel so it will soon go to a scrap yard and be gone forever.

Hope this finds you both well and enjoying life.

Gary Baldwin

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Hi, All:

Gary, thank you very much for sending me this email and the information about the [SS United States](#). Our family road this vessel in May 1954 to England and back again in November 1955 on our return.

I went to the APP website and was able to get a 3-month subscription for \$1. I now have the article downloaded, so no need to send it along. I will gladly include it and your email in our next newsletter.

It was an awesome ship. It was designed with war in mind as a personnel carrier narrow enough to pass through the older Panama Canal. Its speed was amazing. My father was a Captain in the US Navy headed to London to be an Assistant Naval Attache. Whether or not this had anything to do with it, we traveled first class in both directions. I have seen articles over the years about its sad state, getting sadder every day. It is a shame that it will be scrapped, but probably makes economic sense now.

I served on the [USS Ingraham \(DD-694\)](#) for two years from 1962 to 1964. It was 20 years old when I was aboard her. In 1971 the ship was sold to Greece, where it served in the Navy until 1992, when it was decommissioned. In 2001 it was sunk by the Greek Navy as a target ship.

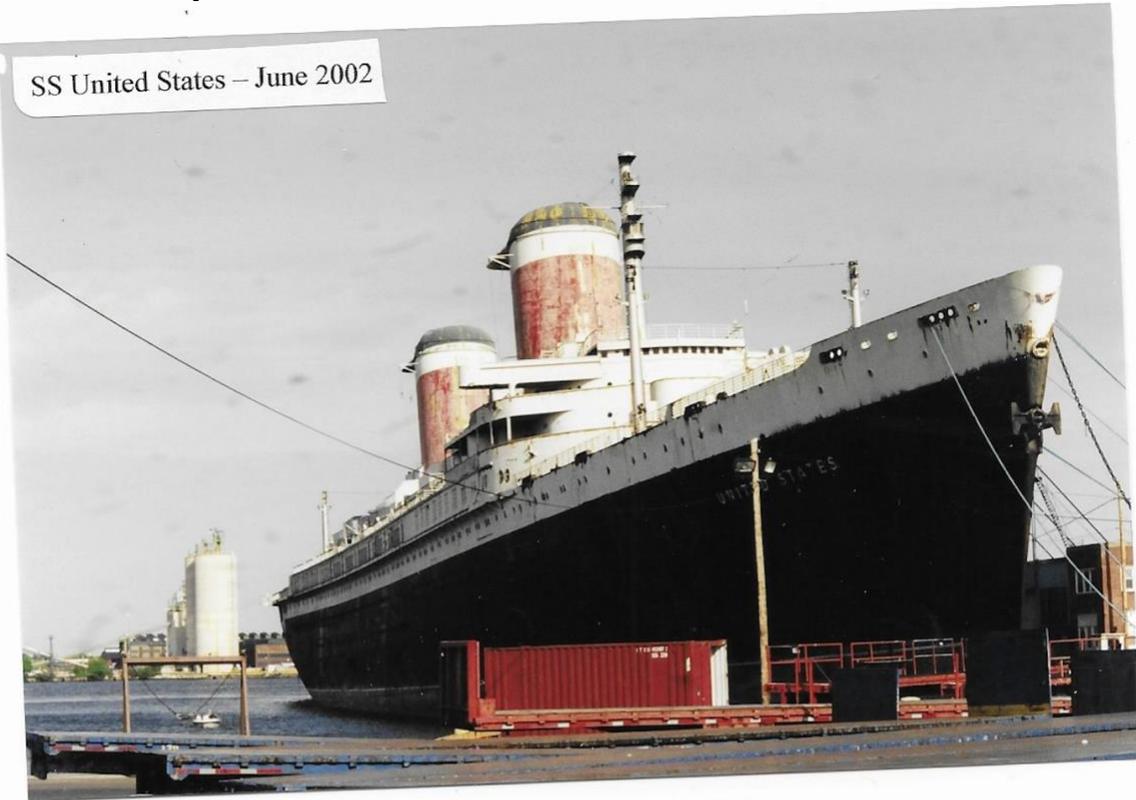
The third USS Ingraham was commissioned in 1989 and served in our fleet until January 2015. In 15 August 2021 it was used as a target in a large scale sinking exercise in the Pacific. It was sunk by two missiles fired by a USMC shore unit. Broke my heart to read about these two ships when they were being destroyed, but what are you going to do with them.

Thanks again for sharing this article with all of us.

Kind regards,
Bill Rumble (57)

Photos from Gary Baldwin:

SS United States – June 2002



SS United States – June 2002



Fate of the fading S.S. United States uncertain

Gretchen F. Coyle, New Jersey Maritime Museum guest columnist

Black has faded to dull charcoal, large hunks of rust peeling off the hull. Two bright red funnels are partially gray/white aluminum, years of inattention obvious. Gone are the lifeboats, once secured in case of a Titanic- like sinking; never needed in a ship that was the pride of generations of Americans.

Almost 990 feet long, the S.S. United States is tied up to a pier in South Philadelphia near the Walt Whitman Bridge to NJ, seen by daily commuters, I-95 travelers and boats on the Delaware River. The ship's propellers are on the fantail, rusty and gigantically out of place. The stern deck was heavily damaged during the transformation. Years of exposure to the elements and two tows across the Atlantic have left the glamorous ocean liner an almost unrecognizable hulk. Yet the name is clearly visible along both sides of the bow.

Gone, too, is most of the interior, stripped down to dull yellow metal shell. Light is visible only through portholes and doors. Once elegant moldings, décor and stairs have been removed; furniture sold or scrapped. Decks have rusted to brown; many unsafe many years after the S.S. United States first sailed from New York on July 3, 1952. The bridge and all mechanical instruments have been taken off.

Fast and tough

A Newsweek article in 1952 forecast the S.S. United States as the 'Fastest, Toughest, Most Beautiful' ship ever built.

William Francis Gibbs and his team of marine architects designed the ship so it could easily be converted from 2,500 passengers to a 15,000-person troop ship much like the Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary. The United States Lines built the S.S. United States in Newport News, Virginia, at Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company.

Dorothy Markwald designed the lavish interior with early 1950s modern décor. Glass, aluminum, and asbestos filled the fireproof lounges with a mid-century sophisticated look. It was uniquely and refreshingly American, according to seasoned travelers. There is nothing left of her magnificent work; all was sold or scrapped years ago.

Luxury liner and Cold War weapon

At a cost of \$79 million, the U.S. government picked up two-thirds of the cost, deeming it imperative during Cold War times. Military classified secrets and untold stories still surround the aura of the ship. Technologically ahead of its time, the ship could cross the Atlantic in three-and-a-half days at almost 40 miles per hour. She was the holder of Blue Riband for westbound and eastbound.

USA Today has called the S.S. United States a 'Symbol of U.S. supremacy – and odd as it seems – a Cold War weapon.'

It was a reliable ship with more power than necessary and did not ever break down like other ocean liners. She had a near-perfect record over the years.

Family memories

Like many of their friends, my parents traveled once a year by ship, hardly ever by plane. There was always a great sendoff with parties, flowers and champagne sent aboard. Dinners were black tie for the men, evening dresses for the ladies.

I still have my mother's travel books. On September 6, 1968, she wrote:

'Watched three liners arrive (NYC) – Oceanic, Franconia and Independence. Left for boarding United States at 9:30am, friends waiting to wave goodbye. Sailed at noon.'

‘Sept. 7th: Clear, cool and windy. \$10.00 bar check from friends, candy from others. Were in steamer chairs most of the day. Went to Captain’s party.’

‘Sept. 8th: Didn’t feel too well on account of big swells, so spent the morning in our room. Ocean choppy but we felt fine. Went to movies and on deck party in afternoon. Went to ballroom for the horse races but had no luck. Had cocktail at noon with Robert Mahoney from U.S. Embassy.’

‘Sept. 10th: Ship docked at Le Havre at 3am very quietly but was awake and never went back to sleep. Coffee in room at 6am and breakfast at 7am. Disembarked at 8am, boat train for Paris left at 8:45am.’

My parents appreciated the excellent service and time schedule on the S.S. United States that year, lambasting return problems on the Queen Elizabeth II, saying ‘It was a boring wait at a damp pier, Q. E. II tried to land twice at Cherbourg, couldn’t, took passengers to Southampton and flew them to Paris.’

Even tips were recorded during the 1968 trip:

‘\$5.00 – Dining room captain.

\$20.00 – Dining room steward.

\$3.00 – Wine steward plus 25 cents change from final serving.

\$20.00 – Cabin steward.

\$5.00 – Deck steward.

\$2.00 – Night steward for coffee in room.

\$4.25 – Bar steward who found and returned my glasses.’

1969

In 1969, the S.S. United States was dry docked in Newport News, supposedly for an overhaul before going on a world cruise. The ship never sailed again. Bit by bit most everything except the bare hull was sold or scrapped.

Ownership changed hands, the mission and outcome decided, re-decided. Money was always the factor. With plane travel so easy, the day of the luxury ocean liners was winding down by the mid 1960s.

Finally in 1996 the ship was towed to Philadelphia. Owner Norwegian Cruise Lines says the ship costs over \$1,000 per day to stay tied up to the dock. Even if the ship is someday made fit to cruise, nothing would ever be the same. Only a bleak hull remains. Yet in 2007 the S.S. United States was placed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places.

What’s next

Today the mighty bow faces inward towards a shopping center, while the ship is cordoned off with a high wire fence. No one is allowed on the dock or inside the creaking hull. Paint chips and broken glass can be seen all over the concrete pier. Eerily no one is around; no security visible; no one seems to take notice.

Many people may be immune to the mess, daunted by the task of restoration, or see the clear economic reality of trying to restore the luxury ocean liner. The best view is of the stern from the Delaware River, where admirers and curiosity seekers can see the damage.

Two groups are hoping to see the S.S. United States sail the oceans once again.

Each group pleads their case to a nostalgic public; but not a big money giving one.

Will the money ever be raised to restore America’s pride of the 1950s or will it be dismantled piece by piece on a Third World beach? Faded and forlorn, the future looks dimmer as time passes. Visitors to the New Jersey Maritime Museum often ask about the S.S. United States. Words like retired, landmark and abandoned are routinely used. Are any of these accurate? What do you think?

Looking up at the S.S. United States at Pier 82 shows a rusted, weary ship. Photo by Gretchen F. Coyle

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From: Jerry Lane Berry (55)

Hi: Bill,

Attached is a photo of a sort of mini- reunion in Aurora on the 8th of February; the old guy is Jerry Berry (55) and the young woman is Margee Cannon, the daughter of Coach Cannon (53-56?). She was born in England while I was in at Bushy Park.

We first met in September at a community theater fund raiser. Turns out she and my wife Linda have been members of the same book club for, I think, 20 years. This meeting was when the club met at our house; she arrived with the Central High jacket in the photo.

A convivial meeting and meal.

Cheers!

Jerry Berry (55)





From: Judith Samms (59) Stanford

I loved every minute at Bushy Park. Wonderful classmates, teachers, dorm supervisors and the English people and life. I was a dorm student, and the dorm personnel were kind and helpful. Best times of my life and wish I could do again. How lucky I was.

Judith Samms Stanford

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