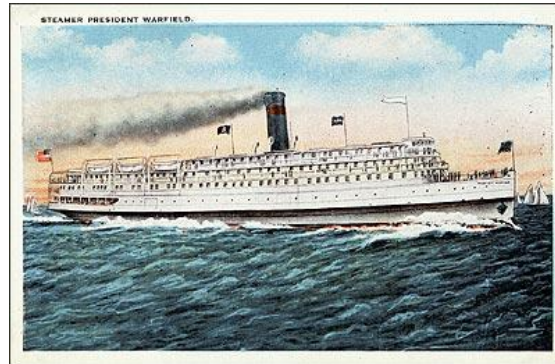


In Search of the *Exodus*

By Jerry Klinger



Daddy,

I was once told that the only things in life we could be sure of were "death and taxes". After reading this book I am convinced that there is another certainty we can add to the above two- and that is "there will always be an Israel."

*Dorothy, May 20, 1959*¹

"Show me the manner in which a nation cares for its dead and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender mercies of its people, their respect for the laws of the land and their loyalty to high ideals."

William Gladstone - British Prime Minister

The sounds of Ernest Gold's theme music, to the movie *Exodus* produced and directed by Otto Preminger, haunt me every time I hear them. It has been almost forty years. I am still filled with the hope, the promise of Jewish pride and dignity as the sounds fill the air. For the first time in 2,000 years, Jewish independence, bought dearly with Jewish blood, fiercely cries a 'never

¹ Inscription in a purchased second hand copy of *Exodus*, by Leon Uris, 1958

again' to victimhood but justice to all Jew, Moslem and Christian alike in the newly won State of Israel.² Of all the symbols and images that represent a nation, a people, the *Exodus* 47 is unique. It is special. It is fading into the past.

Perhaps it was the infusion of the dream that never permitted me to abandon Stephen Norman, the last descendent of Theodor Herzl, as had the Jewish people and the state of Israel. Perhaps it was the idealism of never ever will a Jew be left behind that drove the six year quest to return Stephen to Israel. Stephen was the only Zionist in Herzl's family. He was Herzl's only grandchild. He was the only member of Herzl's family to visit Palestine, love the land, to love the people. He died in Washington, D.C. (1946) and was abandoned, forgotten until it became a cause my being to bring him home. Stephen was reinterred on Mt. Herzl in a state funeral, with his family, December, 2007.³

Stephen Norman saw the meaning of Israel in the faces of the Jewish children he encountered in 1946 during his brief visit.

*I hitched a lift into Tel Aviv as soon as I was free. Driving along good, even roads, we soon reached the outskirts of the city and saw the first Hebrew street sign. Notices warned drivers to proceed slowly and beware of children. I looked around, and there they were, the children. They were playing, like children play in an English street. But here they romped in a Jewish street. I thought of their little brothers and sisters who had not been allowed to play in German streets, and it was good to see these free Jewish children. I had been told, you will be amazed at Jewish youth in Palestine: They are fair and sturdy and handsome. Therefore, I might have known what to expect, yet when I saw them, it was somehow new. **These children bore the mark of freedom.** It was quite unmistakable:*

Late 2010, a major memorial, educational and contemplation garden will completed on Mt. Herzl in Stephen's memory. It will be unique. It will be across from Yad Vashem. As many as 100,000 visitors a year will be able to learn about the meaning of Israel and Zionism sitting in the garden.

Few things are done in Israel without their being done face to face. Even with emails, faxes and telephones, the only way to be assured that projects will be completed to expectations is to meet. So it was last April, I met with the architects for the Norman memorial on Mt. Herzl. We met, we talked, we shared expectations and I knew I had done the best I could. Israelis will still do what they will.

² <http://www.imeem.com/kojikoji/music/tCcWF1Hs/ernest-gold-exodus/>

³ <http://www.jewish-american-society-for-historic-preservation.org/thelastherzl.html>

It was evening and I went for a walk in the German Colony of Jerusalem. It is a trendy area of restaurants and idiosyncratic little shops interspersed by shvarma stands and everyday life along Emek Refaim. Though I had been along the street dozens of times, a high gray walled cemetery at Emek Refaim and Rachel Emot was always closed, padlocked shut behind white painted steel doors. Not even a key hole was open to peer inside the Alliance Christian Missionary Cemetery. Tonight the gate was open. I did what I should not. I went in. What were they going to do to me? Yell. I would go into my tourist routine. I do not speak Hebrew and leave. That night changed my understanding of the world. Inside I found the nearly forgotten grave of the Rev. John Stanley Grauel. His dominant white tombstone read simply at the bottom – *Exodus-47*.

Who was this man? What had he to do with the *Exodus-47*? What had he to do with the Otto Preminger movie? Fascinated yet confused, I thought I knew a little bit of history, I returned to the outside world of internet connectivity back at the old Moriah Hotel and researched.

Rev. John Stanley Grauel had been a secret Haganah operative on the *Exodus 47*⁴. He had been placed there, deliberately by the Haganah, because they needed an Christian to do what no Jew could do. Rev. Grauel fulfilled his duty. He may have been one of the key reasons that Israel became a reality. He had been on the *Exodus*. He had been part of and not part of the story told by Leon Uris, Otto Preminger and Ernest Gold. Rev. Grauel testified before the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine about what really happened on the Exodus. He was believed by the U.N. Committee because he was not a Jew.

The true story of the *Exodus* is largely unknown, mostly forgotten today. It is not the story of Uris, Preminger and Gold. It is a story of drama, fierce courage, determination, tragedy and resolution in the face of cold hearted anti-Jewish brutality. The *Exodus* – the *Ship that Launched a Nation*, Ruth Gruber the famous newswoman, named her in dispatch and in her book by the same name. She was the ship that launched a nation, but what became of her? Where was the *Exodus*?

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The waters parted white, tumbling, sheared as the bow cut through the dark Mediterranean night. The old ship, dangerously overcrowded with human cargo, had left Sete as the President Warfield. In the night she was given her new name. It was not a name chosen by the crew or by the passengers but by the Command of the Haganah. In morning light, her name, her flag, her hoped for destination, became clear. The *Exodus-47*, carrying 4,554 people on a ship meant

for 600, pushed eastward, shadowed by six British Destroyers and the light cruiser Ajax; a battle fleet against the Jews.

The Ajax had earned fame in the recent war. She helped sink the German Battleship *the Graf Spree*. Now, she followed an unarmed, ageing, derelict of the Chesapeake Bay. The British High Command's orders to the British battle fleet – stop the Jews.

Built in 1928 for the Baltimore Steam Packet Company, the luxury Bay steamer was christened the *President Warfield*, after Solomon Davies Warfield, the President of the Company. S. Davies Warfield was the uncle of Bessie Wallis Warfield. In 1934, she allegedly became the mistress of Edward the Prince of Wales. Two years later, after Edward's accession as King, Edward proposed to her.

"The King's desire to marry a twice-divorced American with two living ex-husbands caused a constitutional crisis in the United Kingdom and the Dominions, which ultimately led to the King's abdication in December 1936 to marry "the woman I love". After the abdication, the former king was created the Duke of Windsor by his brother George VI. Edward married Wallis six months later, after which she was formally known as the Duchess of Windsor, without the style "*Her Royal Highness*".

Before, during and after World War II, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor were suspected by many in government and society of being Nazi sympathizers."

"The Baltimore Steam Packet Company, also known as the Old Bay Line, was an American steamship line, from 1840 to 1962, providing overnight steamboat service on the Chesapeake Bay, primarily between Baltimore, Maryland, and Norfolk, Virginia. Called a "packet" for the mail packets carried on government mail contracts, the term in the 19th century came to mean a steamer line operating on a regular, fixed daily schedule between two or more cities. By the time the venerable packet line ceased operation in 1962 after 122 years of existence, it was the last surviving overnight steamship passenger service in the United States.

In addition to regularly calling on Baltimore and Norfolk, the Baltimore Steam Packet Company also provided freight, passenger and vehicle transport to Washington, D.C., Old Point Comfort, and Richmond, Virginia, at various times during its history. The Old Bay Line, as it came to be known by the 1860s, was acclaimed for its genteel service and fine dining, serving Chesapeake Bay specialties. Walter Lord, famed author of *A Night to Remember* and whose grandfather had been the packet line's president from 1893 to 1899, mused that its reputation for excellent service was attributable to "... some magical blending of the best in the North and the South, made possible by the Company's unique role in 'bridging' the two sections ... the North contributed its tradition of mechanical proficiency, making the ships so reliable; while the South contributed its gracious ease"⁵

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baltimore_Steam_Packet_Company"

The Warfield was built by the Pusey and Jones shipyard of Wilmington, Delaware. She was one of the larger luxury bay steamers commissioned for the Baltimore Company. The Warfield was 320 feet long, 58 feet beam, 1,814 gross tonnage and of relatively shallow draft. She had a 4cyl triple expansion engine, generating 2600 horse power, at 105 R.P.M. that powered a single screw. She could maintain a very respectable 15 knot service speed. The Warfield was designed to transport 400 travelers in comfort and luxury. Her crew of 58 included a Captain, two mates, chief engineer, two assistant engineers, purser, assistant purser, mail clerk, two quartermasters, two watchmen, two lookouts, three oilers, nine firemen, three coal passers, ten seamen, three cooks, twelve waiters, steward, and attendant for the newsstand.

More than 10% of the Chesapeake Bay is shifting sand of three feet or less in depth. A good Bay steamer had to be able to float in very little water. The Haganah viewed her shallow draft as a major plus. They planned for the ship to run close to shore, along the Sinai and Palestinian Coast in waters that would be dangerously shallow for the larger, deeper hulled, British war ships. The *Exodus* could sail where no British warship could. The opportunity to use her shallow draft, to escape the British blockade never came.

“July 12, 1942, the ship was acquired by the War Shipping Administration (WSA) and converted to a transport craft for the British Ministry of War Transport. Manned by a British merchant crew led by Capt. J. R. Williams, the Warfield departed St. John’s, Newfoundland, Canada on September 21, 1942, along with other small passenger steamers bound for the United Kingdom. Attacked by a German submarine 800 nautical miles (1,500 km) west of Ireland on September 25, the ship evaded one torpedo. Her sister ship from the Baltimore Steam Packet Company, traveling in the same convoy, the Yorktown was torpedoed and sank the same day. The convoy scattered. The Warfield reached Britain where it served as a barracks and training ship on the River Torridge at Instow.



President Warfield enroute to Europe in 1947

Returned by Britain, it joined the U.S. Navy as *President Warfield* on May 21, 1944. In July the Warfield served as a station and accommodations ship at Omaha Beach during the Normandy

landing. Following duty in England and on the Seine River, the *Warfield* returned to Norfolk, Virginia, July 25, 1945. She was removed from active Navy service September 13. A month later, October 11, the *President Warfield* was struck from the U.S. Naval Vessel Register and returned to the War Shipping Administration on November 14.

From November 1945 until November 6, 1946 the *President Warfield* floated, tied up, decaying, abandoned as unwanted war surplus.

On November 9, 1946 the WSA sold *President Warfield* to the Potomac Shipwrecking Co. of Washington, D.C., who were acting as clandestine purchasing agents of the Haganah. Sold supposedly for scrap metal the ship passed through a series of dummy corporations to hide its true purpose. The *President Warfield* had been acquired by (the) Hamossad Le'aliyah Bet the underground Jewish organization in Palestine, intent on helping underground Jewish immigrants enter Palestine. She was towed to Baltimore, Maryland and refitted for the sea.

The ship left Baltimore February 25, 1947 and headed for the Mediterranean. With Palmach (Haganah's military wing) skipper Ike Aronowicz as captain, and supervised by Haganah commissioner Yossi Harel as the operation's commander and a largely inexperienced Jewish volunteer crew she sailed to her destiny, a open secret known to all including British intelligence. From the port of Sète, France, a fishing town near Montpellier, July 11, 1947, the *President Warfield* converted into a human sardine can, of improvised bunks left carrying 4515 Holocaust refugees. The British Royal Navy cruiser *Ajax* and a convoy of destroyers trailed the ship from very early in its voyage."

July 18, in international waters, some 20 nautical miles off the coast of Gaza, during the dark of the night, the British attacked the defenseless ship. British destroyers repeatedly rammed the ageing Chesapeake Bay Steam Packet. British boarding parties were thrown across on gangplanks. Machinegun fire filled the air. British Marines attacked with guns, stun grenades, bludgeons. The Jews fought back for four hours throwing canned food goods at the attackers, fighting with their fists, throwing attackers into the sea. Failing to gain control of the proudly renamed ship, the *Exodus-47*, the destroyers rammed her again and again. Below decks the terrified refugees heard the horrific clanging crashes of the British destroyers, from either side, smashing their old boat. The steel hull of the *Exodus* began to weaken and threatened to give way. Commander Yossi Harel agreed to surrender the ship. The fight was over. One crew member, 1st mate William Bernstein, a U.S. sailor from San Francisco, died. He was bludgeoned to death in the wheelhouse. Two young refugee passengers were murdered; one was shot in the head. A 15 year boy, the last survivor of the Yakubowitz family from the Holocaust, was shot in the stomach and killed. At least 150 refugees and crew members were injured, many severely. The fight was over. The *Exodus*, under its own power still, limped into Haifa. The British warships followed closely. As the refugee passengers saw their first glimpse of Palestine they lined the decks and sang the Hatikva, the Hope, the Jewish National Anthem. They expected to be interned in Cyprus.

“Due to the high profile of the *Exodus 1947* emigration ship, it was decided by the British government that the emigrants were to be deported back to France. Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin suggested this, and the request was relayed to General Sir Alan Cunningham, High Commissioner for Palestine, who agreed with the plan after consulting the Navy. Before then, intercepted would-be immigrants were placed in internment camps on Cyprus, which was at the time a British colony. This new policy was meant to be a signal to both the Jewish community and the European countries which assisted immigration that whatever they sent to Palestine would be sent back to them.

The British sailed the commandeered ship into Haifa port, where its refugee passengers were transferred to three more seaworthy deportation ships, *Runnymede Park*, *Ocean Vigour* and *Empire Rival*. The event was witnessed by members of UNSCOP. These ships left Haifa harbour on July 19 for Port-de-Bouc. Foreign Secretary Bevin insisted that the French get their ship back as well as its passengers.

When the ships arrived at Port-de-Bouc near Marseilles on August 2, the emigrants refused to disembark, and the French refused to cooperate with British attempts at forced disembarkation. Realizing that they were not bound for Cyprus, the emigrants conducted a 24-hour hunger strike, refusing to cooperate with the British authorities.

But the British government had no intention of backing down or relaxing its policy.

During this time, media coverage of the human ordeal intensified and the British became pressed to find a solution. The matter also came to the attention of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) members who had been deliberating in Geneva. After three weeks, during which the prisoners on the ships held steady in difficult conditions, rejecting offers of alternative destinations, the ships were sailed to Hamburg, Germany, which was then in the British occupation zone

Documents released from the British archives show that after much soul-searching, the British concluded that the only place they could send the Jews was to the British-controlled zone of post-war Germany, where the Jews could be placed in camps and screened for extremists; decision to land the Jews in Germany had been made because it was the only suitable territory under British control that could handle so many people at short notice. The British diplomats and military officers knew perfectly well that sending Jews back to Germany and putting them in camps so soon after the Holocaust would set off a fire-storm of protest.

The *Exodus 1947* passengers were successfully taken off the vessels in Germany although a number were injured in confrontations with British troops that involved the use of batons and fire hoses. The would-be immigrants were sent back to DP camps in Am Stau near Lübeck and Pöppendorf. Although most of the women and children disembarked voluntarily, the men had to be carried off by force.

The damaged former *President Warfield* remained moored to a breakwater at Haifa harbour as a derelict until it burned to the waterline August 26, 1952. Later towed to Shemen Beach, Haifa, it was raised in 1963 and scrapped by an Italian firm.”



The *Exodus*, formerly *President Warfield*, arriving at Haifa (British Admiralty photo)

The story of the *Exodus* would have ended there except for the fact I had found John Grauel. I had begun my search for Herzl's last family, Stephen Norman, with a simple question. What happened to him?. Where was he buried? Was his grave marked? It was an easy extension of the question. If the *Exodus* was sunk off of Shemen Beach, was there a marker on shore opposite where she lay, for curious cultural tourists to go and pay their respects?

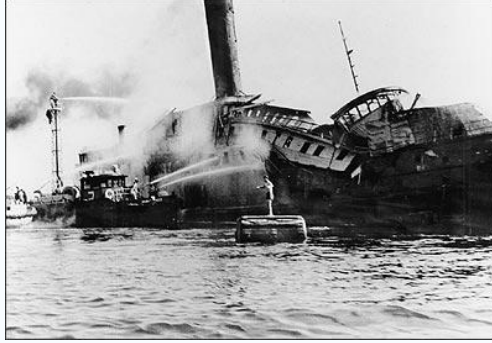
The *Exodus* lay tied up at the pier in Haifa Harbor where the British left all captured, refugee ships. She floated, battered and abandoned, nearly forgotten for five years.

From 1951 until his death in 1969, the mayor of Haifa was Abba Khoushi⁶. He was formerly the secretary of the Haifa labor council. He did much to develop and beautify the city.⁷ Always looking for ways to promote Haifa, Khoushi recognized that the abandoned *Exodus*, still tied up at the pier, was a potential goldmine of history, education and tourism. Khoushi proposed converting the *Exodus* into a floating museum the very first year he became mayor.

Some say it was a welder's torch; others imply it was sabotage, no one knows or will ever know for sure. Within a year of the proposal to convert the *Exodus* into a floating museum of the Aliyah Bet, *the Ship that Launched a Nation*, mysteriously burned to the waterline. Aug. 26, 1952, all that remained of her was a listing hulk.

⁶ http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0012_0_11099.html

⁷ http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0008_0_08171.html



Deeply disappointed, Khoushi had the wreckage cleared. The *Exodus* was towed north of the Haifa port area and sunk off of Shemen Beach.

Researching further as to where the *Exodus* lay and where was Shemen Beach the secondary sources began to diverge. Most referred to the burning of the *Exodus*. Most referred to her being towed off of Shemen Beach. A few noted that on August 23, 1964, there was an attempt by an Italian firm to raise the hull for scrap metal. A poignant photo exists of Ike Aronowitz, standing on the shore as the hull of the *Exodus* began to break water. His face is still youthful; he was only 24 when he was the Captain of the *Exodus*. His hair still sandy colored, full and tousled. His express observant, introspective and pragmatic.

The attempt to raise the *Exodus* failed. The hull slipped below the surface settling forever on the Mediterranean's bottom.

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Where is Shemen Beach? None of my Google searches, Mapquest searches, tourist books, did not identify where Shemen Beach is. I did what most people would do who are cultural tourists; I called the Haifa Tourist Board. They did not know where Shemen Beach is. I explained my interests in finding the *Exodus* and putting a marker on the shore near where she rests. My research into John Grauel's story confirmed that there were markers for the *Exodus* in France, Italy, Germany and Baltimore. There was nothing for the *Exodus*, specifically in all of Israel. There is a large memorial to the Aliyah Bet in Tel Aviv but nothing for the single most iconic story in the creation of Israel – the *Exodus* – in the entire country.

Working with the Palyam about Rev. Grauel, I asked if they knew the whereabouts of the *Exodus*.

“The only information I can add regarding the fate of the *Exodus* is that there was indeed an attempt to scrap her metal out of Shemen Beach. The famous Israeli sculpturer Yechiel Shemi of blessed memory took some Iron from it to create his sculpture dedicated to the Ha'apala (Aliya Bet) on the beach near

Gesher A'ziv ([http://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%A7%D7%95%D7%91%D7%A5:Achziv\\_Pesel-Yam21.jpg](http://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%A7%D7%95%D7%91%D7%A5:Achziv_Pesel-Yam21.jpg)). Note: all this is based on recollections of old people, I don't have hard evidence for you.)



An old Fodor's guide book referenced a museum about Edible Oil near Shemen Beach, 2 Tovim Street, Haifa. The guide book, instructed tourists which bus to take to the museum, its hours and that there was a small plaque in the museum pointing to where the *Exodus* lay out in the water. The Edible Oil Museum was located in the Shemen Oil Refinery area of the industrial zone north of the city. Repeated calls were not returned.

The Haifa Tourist board recommended that I contact the Clandestine Immigration Museum and the Maritime Museum. Dozens of times I have driven up and down the coast highway past the large green former Israeli Naval submarine that resembled an oversize swim bladder and the gray LST (a World War II Tank Landing Ship) that hung just above the highway. Someday, I promised myself, I will have to go and see the museum. I called and called and called. Being seven hours apart never helps. I always got the custodian who spoke poor English.

Fortune struck, or persistence, I reached the Director of the Clandestine Immigration Museum. Nir shared with me what he knew. He did not know the location of the *Exodus*. He listened patiently as I explained my idea, to mark the location of the *Exodus* for history and cultural tourism. I asked if he would inquire if I could count on the museum to join with me as an interested partner. He would inquire. "I am not looking for any money" I said. All Americans are rich in Israeli minds.

Sitting and waiting is never a good idea when action is needed. I contacted friends at the University in Haifa to ask around. I asked Bill to contact the Maritime Museum and the Maritime research center at the University if they knew where the *Exodus* was.

*"Hi Jerry,*

*Here's the response I just received from the guy in Maritime Studies. It*

*confirms what you've learned, namely that no one knows what has become of it. Are you thinking of commandeering a search?*

*Best,  
Bill"*

The reply.

*"Dear Bill*

*The Exodus got on fire and then was taken from the harbor and sunk somewhere in the vicinity, nobody knows exactly where  
Thats all I know."*<sup>8</sup>

Neither the Maritime Museum nor the Clandestine Museum, nor the Maritime Studies Department, nor the Haifa Tourist Board knew where the *Exodus* was.

Jews are a stiff necked people. Perhaps it is better to say we are stubborn. We do not give up an ideal or a goal easily. Searching for the *Exodus* was not going to end that easily.

Searching through secondary sources, from early ones to later ones, I kept looking for what had ultimately happened to the *Exodus*.<sup>9</sup> Most everyone agreed that she was sunk off of Shemen Beach and forgotten after an ill conceived effort to raise her for scrap metal in 1964. Everyone said the same thing except for an extraordinary book that was published in 1987, *The Jews Secret Fleet, the Untold story of North American volunteers who smashed the British blockade*. The book was written by Joseph M. Hochstein and Murray S. Greenfield.

Hochstein wrote of the fate of the *Exodus*. "After Israel became independent in 1948, the *Exodus* remained moored in Haifa harbor, too old and damaged for further use. In 1951, Haifa Mayor Abba Khoushi proposed that the battered little vessel be preserved as a museum of Aliyah Bet. Before this plan could be put into action, the *Exodus* caught fire August 26, 1952, and burned to the waterline. Her hulk was towed out of the way of the harbor traffic and abandoned at nearby Shemen Beach. Twelve years after the fire, an Italian firm cut the hull into two sections in a effort to salvage it for scrap; an attempt to raise the sections failed August 23, 1964. Shortly after that, the Hayama ship repair cooperative under contract to the Israel Port Authority, raised the hulk, and towed it to the Kishon River, and scrapped it."

Hochstein's story of the *Exodus's* end was different from that of all the others. The story needed to be verified. God does smile on us on occasion. Joe Hochstein had been editor of the

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<sup>88</sup> Personal email correspondence

<sup>9</sup> The Redeemers, Schwarz, *Exodus*, Leon Uris, *Exodus* 1947, Gruber, Commander of the Exodus, Yoram Kaniuk, The Pledge Leonard Slater, *Exodus*, 1947, encyclopedias, documentaries, online research are a few sources that were used.

Washington Jewish Week, my hometown newspaper. He had sold the paper years ago. Maybe the Jewish Week would know how to reach him. Contacting the paper resulted in “we have no idea how to find him. He made Aliyah a long time back”.

Persistence using the magnificent Al Gore invention, the internet, confirmed Joe lived in Tel Aviv. Thanks to a young, American Jew who had nothing better to do in his Harvard dorm room except play on his computer and invent ways to talk to his friends, Mark Zuckerberg created Facebook. I contacted Joe Hochstein. God must have been smiling.

My question for Joe was simple; everyone wrote that the *Exodus* was left abandoned on the bottom of Shemen Beach. You wrote that she was finally junked for scrap. Can you verify what you wrote?

I sent Joe a link to the story about Rev. John Stanley Grauel. Maybe Joe could tell me more about Rev. Grauel?

Most people would have passed the request by. Joe...Joe said it will take a few days. He said his notes and records on the book are in stored in boxes away from where he lived.

Contacts to various *Exodus* memorial sites did not bring responses or the usual; we do not know what happened to the *Exodus*. I contacted the Israel Ministry of Tourism. My interest had broadened. Bill Bernstein, the American sailor from San Francisco had been murdered on the *Exodus* by the attacking British. He was buried in Haifa – but where? I asked the Ministry where the *Exodus* was and where was Bill Bernstein? My inquiry expanded deeper and deeper into the crew of the *Exodus*.

Researching, I learned that the crew was made of up energetic volunteers, some as young as 18 years old who pretty much lied to their mothers about what they were doing. Few had any naval experience. The crew members were more likely to discuss opera and calculus than how to run the ship. An order, the story goes was given from the bridge. The response to the bridge from below was “mind your own business. You run your part of the ship and we will run ours”.

The control of the *Exodus* was broken into two parts. The operational command was under Ike Aronowitz, an experienced hardnosed seaman. The political command was under Yossi Harel. Mild friction existed between the American volunteers and the Palestinian crew members. Conflict is to be expected when, though both groups were Jewish, they came from different cultural perspectives. Conflicts between American and Palestinian never boiled over, conflict between Aronowitz and Harel did.

The night that the British attacked the *Exodus*, the Jews fought ferociously defending themselves, their ship. The British destroyers rammed and rammed again the ship. The hull,

though strongly built began to show signs of giving way. The heat of the battle was high, the adrenaline, the passion the tears and the desperation to reach Palestine was even greater. The British called for surrender. Surrender was refused, again the ship was rammed. It became apparent that the British were willing to sink the *Exodus* and kill 4554 people. They would blame the Jews for their belligerency.

Ike wanted to fight on. He and others took control of steering from below decks and wanted to push the *Exodus*, at full speed, for the shore, grounding her in the soil of Palestine. He wanted to free the refugees, to stream ashore and blend into the land, into the awaiting arms of prepared Haganah receivers. Yossi Harel feared that the old ship could not take the last desperate fight to reach Palestine. The British would murder 4,554 Holocaust survivors in the dark waters of the Mediterranean. He demanded the ship be surrendered. A tense period of conflict arose between Aronowitz and Harel. Aronowitz realized his dream of bringing the refugees home could not be done. He turned the operational command of the ship over to Harel. Harel turned the command to one of the American volunteers to surrender to the British. Aronowitz, Harel and the Palestinian Jewish crew vanished into the ships interior, to pre-prepared hiding places. The British searched for the Palestinians to arrest them. They were not found. Some "vanished" among the throngs of refugees below. Some in secret cabinets and areas built to hide them during the inevitable end of the voyage. The British took command. The *Exodus* steamed into Haifa harbor.

A radio broadcast ordered by Harel alerted the world as to what was happening. The Rev. John Grauel was the voice of the *Exodus* on the radio. As the ship pulled into the harbor, the press corps stood on the docks along with representatives of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine to witness the sad, defiant arrival of the *Exodus*.

The refugee passengers were marched off and immediately on to the awaiting British prison ships. They soon became the heroes of Israel and the symbols of the struggle for freedom against oppression and the bigoted apathy of the world.

Grauel was smuggled in to Jerusalem by Haganah agents led by Teddy Kollect. He testified about what happened. His eye witness report changed the vote of the Committee to support partition and the eventual creation of the State of Israel.

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The Israel Tourist Ministry did not know where the *Exodus* was. They did know where Bill Bernstein was buried in the Haifa. He lay in the Carmel Shore Cemetery Row 14 tomb 1. I knew on my next trip to Israel I would have to place a stone on his grave. I had to return to Israel. I had to find Shemen Beach and see what was possible at that location to memorialize the *Exodus*. The *Exodus* is too important a story to let simply slip beneath the waves.

A few days later, Joe got back to me with his source on the *Exodus*, Brent Dibner. Brent is a highly respected Naval architect and historian of the Israel Navy.

"The source for the final disposition of the Exodus is an article titled "Exodus 1947: its history and its voyage," by Brent Dibner. The article appeared in the Bulletin of the American Friends of the Haifa Maritime Museum, Vol. 3, No. 13, Fall 1984.

The following is from Page 7 of that issue of the bulletin:

"Shortly thereafter, the Israel Port Authority awarded a contract to the Hayama ship repair cooperative to scrap the hull. Hayama raised the hulk, floated it to the Kishon River, and scrapped it for its steel and equipment. As late as 1975, some of its machinery lay rusting in Haifa's municipal dump site. The Exodus was gone."

Joe suggested where I might find Brent.

I called Brent and told him of my project. We talked about the Ship That Launched a Nation and of the real, and even more important, cultural impact on Israel and the world's understanding of the reason for the Jewish State.

We talked about a project to remember the Exodus in Haifa.

Brent very generously shared his thoughts and ideas about the project in an email.

"Jerry:

Am sending you some marked up maps

Please know that the ENTIRE port area, from Rambam Hospital parking at Bat Galim all the way east and north up the coast to the Kiryot above the Kishon Port and oil terminals, the airport, etc. is off limits to the public. Thus there is no access to the coastline. You will see this on the maps I am sending.

Second, the Shemen Beach is no longer. The Port of Haifa's successive expansions have created new massive landfill of bulk headed container piers that extend east from the eastern breakwater towards the power station cooling basin at a power plant. All of this is off-limits.

The greatest exposure to tourists would be to add a plaque up on the Panaorama promenade below the Dan Carmel on the Carmel - above the Bahai gardens, with a plaque that orients the viewer and provides etchings of the images of the Exodus. The sensitivity would be to other ships in the 1930's and 1940's. Bat Galim and the beach area are not visited by tourists.....

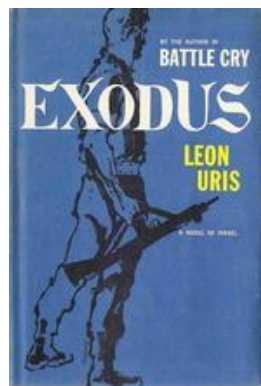
Regards,
Brent"

The map that I received was detailed. It clearly marked the history of the locations of the Exodus in Haifa area. The map included where Brent believed her remains lay.

Having been to Haifa many times I knew the area of the Louis Promenade. It was an excellent suggestion for a series of historic markers about the Aliyah Bet and the *Exodus* in Hebrew, English and Arabic. The markers are relatively inexpensive but effective. The possibility, that tens of thousands of Haifa visitor a year, both Israeli and foreign, *spatziering* along the Promenade reading the markers, learning, understanding why Israel came to be, is very, very enticing.

Two problems became apparent. Wanting to do the project, or funding the markers, was not one of them. Funding would come from the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation; being President has it merits. Dibner's conclusions needed to be confirmed. I needed a coalition of Israeli and American support for the project to be formed. Local support, with people on the ground, is absolutely essential to get anything done – Israel is, most certainly, no exception. Israelis have a deserved reputation for Independence and stubbornness that is, at times, incomprehensively frustrating to work with for many outside of Israel.

American Jews and Christians, Canadians, Brits, Aussies, Japanese, etc. , now all aging mostly in their 60's, their knowledge of the state of Israel and how it came into being came from a movie. Their children, most likely, have never seen the movie or the book it was based upon, *Exodus* by Leon Uris.



"Leon Uris¹⁰ was born in Baltimore, Maryland, the son of Jewish-American parents Wolf William and Anna (Blumberg) Uris. His father, a Polish-born immigrant, was a paperhanger, then a storekeeper. William spent a year in Palestine after World War I before entering the United States. He derived his surname from Yerushalmi, meaning "man of Jerusalem." (His brother

¹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leon_Uris

Aron, Leon Uris' uncle, took the name Yerushalmi) "He was basically a failure," Uris later said of his father. "He went from failure to failure."

Uris attended schools in Norfolk, Virginia and Baltimore, but never graduated from high school, after having failed English three times. At the age of seventeen, Uris joined the United States Marine Corps, serving in the South Pacific as a radioman at Guadalcanal, Tarawa, and New Zealand from 1942 through 1945. While recuperating from malaria in San Francisco, he met Betty Beck, a Marine sergeant; they married in 1945.

In 1950, *Esquire* magazine bought an article from him and this encouraged him to work on a novel. The resulting best-seller, *Battle Cry*, graphically showing the toughness and courage of U.S. Marines in the Pacific and *The Angry Hills*, a novel set in war-time Greece.

As a screenwriter and newspaper correspondent, he became intensely interested in Israel. In the early 1950s, he was hired by Edward Gottlieb,¹¹ an American public relations man seeking to improve Israel's image in the United States, to write a novel about Israel's origin that portrayed Israel in a favorable light.

In 1956, Uris covered the Arab-Israeli fighting as a war correspondent. Two years later, *Exodus* was published by Doubleday. *Exodus* became an international publishing phenomenon, the

¹¹“ Arthur Stevens related in the 1985 book "The Persuasion Explosion" that the idea for the book came about when Edward Gottlieb, an American Public Relations man seeking to improve Israel's image in the US, decided to commission a novel about Israel's origin that showed Israel in a good light and hired Uris to write it. According to Stevens, "Uris' novel solidified America's impressions of Israelis as heroes, of Arabs as villains; it did more to popularize Israel with the American public than any other single presentation through the media."¹

According to Jack Shaheen "In the 1950s, when Americans were largely apathetic about Israel, the eminent public relations consultant Edward Gottlieb was called on "to create a more sympathetic attitude" toward the newly established state. And so, he sent Leon Uris to Israel to write a novel, which became the bestseller *Exodus*... *Exodus* introduced filmgoers to the Arab-Israel conflict, and peopled it with heroic Israelis and sleazy, brutal Arabs, some of whom link up with ex-Nazis. The movie's only "good Arab" becomes a dead Arab.”

Dr. Jack Shaheen is the recipient of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee's Lifetime Achievement Award.

biggest bestseller in the United States since *Gone with the Wind*. Uris had sold the film rights in advance.

The story unfolds with the protagonist, Ari Ben Canaan, hatching a plot to transport Jewish refugees from a British detention camp in Cyprus to Palestine. The operation is carried out under the auspices of the Mossad Le'aliyah Bet. The book then goes on to trace the histories of the various main characters and the ties of their personal lives to the birth of the new Jewish state.¹²

Exodus was a worldwide best-seller, translated into a dozen languages. and was made into a, as well as a short-lived Broadway musical (12 previews, 19 performances) in 1971.

Uris' subsequent works included: *Mila 18*, a story of the Warsaw ghetto uprising; *Armageddon: A Novel of Berlin*, which reveals the detailed work by British and American intelligence services in planning for the occupation and pacification of post WWII Germany; *Trinity*, an epic novel about Ireland's struggle for independence; *QB VII*, a novel about the role of a Polish doctor in a German concentration camp; and *The Haj*, with insights into the history of the Middle East and the secret machinations of foreigners which have led to today's turmoil.

He also wrote the screenplays for *Battle Cry* and *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral*.

Leon Uris died of renal failure at his Long Island home on Shelter Island, aged 78.

Uris was married three times: to Betty Beck, with whom he had three children, from 1945 through their divorce in 1968; Margery Edwards in 1969, who died of an apparent suicide a year later, and Jill Peabody in 1970, with whom he had two children, and divorced in 1989.¹³

Uris died in 2003. He is buried in the U.S. Quantico Military Cemetery, Va.

His gravestone, carved with the Star of David and American Marine, makes a special reference to his being a "Jewish Writer."

¹² [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exodus_\(novel\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exodus_(novel))

¹³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leon_Uris



Otto Ludwig Preminger¹⁴, famed Austrian/ American -Jewish actor, producer and director purchased the movie rights from Uris. The Academy award winning movie, *Exodus*, starring starring American heartthrob, blond, blue eyed Paul Newman as Ari Ben Canaan the Haganah commander of the ship in the story, was released December 15, 1960. The movie script was written by Dalton Trumbull. Preminger broke another taboo – Trumbull had been blacklisted during the McCarthy Era communist witch hunts.

May 21, 1961, ten American Nazi “Storm Trooper” including their “Leader” George Lincoln Rockwell, were arrested outside a New Orleans theater screening the movie. The American Nazis picketed the theater, intimidating patrons with posters and signs that read “America for whites, Africa for blacks and Gas Chambers for Jews.”

The movie was a worldwide blockbuster. The medium of the silver screen appealed to popular culture and the rising awareness of the Holocaust. The movie positively affirmed the story of Israel. For the first time, the world was being brought to a personal understanding of Jews and their struggle for a homeland. The movie became the story of Israel for millions upon millions of viewers sympathetically understanding Israel. Many identified through the movie with righting a two millennia crime against humanity – the Holocaust.



¹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otto_Preminger

Leon Uris hated the movie. He hated the hauntingly beautiful theme music by Ernest Gold. Though he was hired by Preminger as a consultant, Preminger had to have the disruptive Uris ejected, permanently, from the filming. Uris said he would have preferred the popular actor, Jeff Chandler, to play the role of Ari Ben Canaan instead of Newman. Ironically, Paul Newman was Jewish, Jeff Chandler was not. Otto Preminger commented, years later, that after he had purchased the rights to *Exodus*, if he had know of Ruth Gruber's work on the true story of the *Exodus*, he would have purchased those movie rights instead.

The movie is dated and largely unviewed, even by Jews.

Early August, 2009, I traveled to Israel to see what could be done. Two project ideas had come from the *Exodus*. Both projects had the same root. Support for Israel is declining. My hope is to try and reverse it, at least a little. The world does not know nor remembers and seems to care less and less why modern Israel came into being. There is no memorial to either the *Exodus* in Israel or to Rev. John Stanley Grauel. As the *Exodus* symbolizes world and Diaspora understanding of Israel, a memorial for the Christian Reverend of the Exodus who did so much for the creation and support of the State, symbolizes Israel's recognition of Christian heroes of Israel.¹⁵

Seeking local support, as the representative of the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation (JASHP), I met with the Haifa Historical Society. The project for the Exodus was warmly received. Initial contacts with the Mayor by JASHP were not responded to but are being pursued by the Haifa Historical Society. Contacts with the Palyam and the Maritime Museum were modest.

The Clandestine Immigration Museum is supportive. It has two small exhibits in the LST *Af Al Pi Chen* that are specific to the Exodus. One is a mannequin of a refugee behind barbed wire and the other is a scaled replica of the *Exodus*, dark with age. The museum has a copy of the *Exodus's* bell and the original flag of the ship, both are not on display. Nir Meor, the director of the museum, kindly took the flag of the *Exodus* out from storage for me to see. The flag was signed by the handful of Palestinian/Israel crew members. American volunteer crew members of the *Exodus* were not included as signers.

¹⁵ A obscure street was named in Haifa for the *Exodus*, Yetziat Europa. In Jerusalem, a number of streets in the German Colony are named after Christian Zionists. The Wingate Institute is well known. Wingate himself is not. A few groves of trees were planted in the early 60's for Christian Zionists in various parts of Israel. Their locations are largely lost and forgotten. There is no focal point or memorial to Christians, some of whom gave their lives during the Israeli War of Independence, to any Christian in Israel.



A magnificent scale model of the *Exodus*, gleaming white and beautiful, is in the storage room of the Maryland Jewish Museum in Baltimore as is the original bell. An impressive interpretive marker to the *Exodus* sits prominently at Baltimore's Inner Harbor for thousands to see daily.

Brent Dibner's location of the *Exodus* had to be verified. Later, in Tel Aviv, I met with Ronen Zaretzky. Ronen is an editor at Haaretz. He and Yael Kipper produced "The Sand and the Sea," a documentary that Yossi Sarid, the former Israeli Minister of Education called, "the best documentary film that I have seen in recent year."

"This is a film about the reunification of two heroes. Two men from vastly different worlds who met at one fateful moment in the history of the state of Israel.

One-the twenty-four-year old captain of the *Exodus* ship, a native of the land soon to become Israel, already a hardened sailor, a rebel, rife with the drive to fight the British – is Ike Aharonovich.

Alongside him a thirty-year-old refugee – a gifted speaker and adamant Zionist whose entire family was murdered in the Holocaust; he boards the ship and with the force of his words alone maintains 4,500 refugees at the heart of sea – Mordechai Rozman.

For sixty years each rambled down the path of his own life, until old age kindled the need to talk about things past and to impart and share one's feelings. A close look into the lives of these two men reveals the gap between the dream once envisioned aboard the ship and the reality of life in Israel."¹⁶

In one of the final scenes of the very poignant documentary, Ike Aronowitz is in the bow of a small fishing boat riding out into the Haifa harbor. The fisherman who knew the location of the *Exodus* remains is at the helm. Ike directs the fisherman toward the Haifa port extension for the container ships. Ike points and stoically says, "it is there, it is there" as he points to the pier.

¹⁶ From the back of the DVD case, "The Sand and the Sea" a gifted by Ronen Zaretzky

The *Exodus* is buried, unceremoniously and without dignity or notation, under tons of rock, steel and concrete of the container ship moorings bringing in the 50" flat screen color T.V.s from Korea so prized in Israel today.

Dibner's location of the *Exodus* was confirmed. The *Exodus* was found.

Two years ago, in the Prime Minister's office, at a meeting of the Herzl Council discussing the return and reburial of Stephen Norman, the last descendent of Theodor Herzl, I said...

"If Herzl is important to Israel alone, Israel will be alone".

So it is with the *Exodus*.

If the *Exodus* is important to Israel alone, Israel will be alone.¹⁷

The *Exodus* project is not about Israel alone. It is about all of Jewry, together, as one people.



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Jerry Klinger is President of the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation

[www.Jashp.org](http://www.Jashp.org)

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<sup>17</sup> Before meeting with the Haifa Historical Society, I had a few hours. I wanted to pay my respects to Bill Bernstein, the American sailor murdered on the *Exodus* and buried in Haifa. I went to the Haifa Tourist Board and asked a young lady where Bill Bernstein was buried. She responded, "Who?" "Fair enough"... I said. "He was an American sailor murdered on the *Exodus* and is buried in Haifa." She asked me, "What is the *Exodus*?" Americans have an expression taken from the movie *Apollo 13*, "Houston, we have a problem."

