

24 September 2014

Gala Party in New York

Not all of the people in New York last weekend were necessarily there to join the estimated 300,000 marching because of climate change. McAllister Towing & Transportation, one of the oldest and largest family-owned marine towing and transportation companies in the United States, was celebrating both their 150th Anniversary with both a gala party and christening of their newest azimuthing tractor tug, the "*Buckley McAllister*" Friday night at the Chelsea Piers Lighthouse.

The day started out, at least for those tug boat enthusiasts, with rides on board the "*Buckley McAllister*" at 10:30 am and 1:00 pm departing from the historic South Street Seaport Museum.

Founded by Captain James McAllister in 1864 with a single sail lighter, the company has served the maritime community continuously, earning a reputation for unsurpassed excellence. Today, the company operates a balanced and extensive fleet of tugs, barges, and ferries in the major ports on the U.S. East Coast and in Puerto Rico. Buckley McAllister, son of Captain Brian A. McAllister, is the now the President and, and if I am counting generations correctly - a great-great-grandson of the founder, representing the fifth generation of McAllisters at the helm. Captain James McAllister started the first McAllister enterprise shortly after he arrived from Cushendall, County Antrim, Ireland. Together with his brothers and in-laws, McAllister formed the Greenpoint Lighterage Company. They augmented the lighterage business with towing, with the acquisition of their first steam tug, the "*R.W. Burke*", in the 1880s, while the Brooklyn Bridge was still being built.

One hundred fifty years later, after having survived World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, the 1979 Energy Crisis, the 1985 collapse of oil and the more recent 2008 economic recession, McAllister Towing is still going strong. The current fleet consists of over seventy-five tugs and covers the entire U.S. East Coast in twelve major ports.

The newest addition, for the moment, to the fleet – the 5,150BHP "*Buckley McAllister*" was designed by Jensen Maritime Consultants of Seattle and built this year by Senesco Marine in North Kingston, Rhode Island as their Hull 300. The 98.0' x 36.0' x 14.75' depth / 16.5' draft ASD tug is powered by twin 2,575HP CAT 3516C-HD Tier III diesels with Schottel SRP 1215 low speed azimuthing drives with straight line carbon fiber shafts. This gives her an ABS certified bollard pull of 66.6 short tons / 59.1 long tons ahead and a free running speed of abt. 13 knots. Towing gear consists of a forward JonRie 250 Series Escort winch with 600,000lbs brake holding force and 180,000lbs linepull plus a JonRie 512 Series tow winch aft driven by a John Deere 6068 AFM-75 diesel with a 30HP electric back up. The aft towing winch has a capacity for 2,100' of 2.75" wire.

Firefighting capability is provided by a single CAT C32 Tier III diesel with a 11,600gpm SFP pump and two FFS 1,200 LB remote controlled monitors with foam injection mounted forward of the pilothouse plus a 1,100gpm deluge system. The tug is classed by ABS with the notation ⚓ A1, Towing Vessel, Escort Vessel, Fire Fighting Vessel Class 1, ⚓ AMS, Unrestricted Service. In addition to the "*Buckley*", Senesco Marine is scheduled to delivery shortly her sister tug "*Eric McAllister*" (Hull 301) named after the fifth generation Chief Financial Officer, followed by the 6,000HP "*Tate McAllister*" (Hull 110) in October from Washburn & Doughty Associates in East Boothbay, Maine.

It was a good party - well enjoyed by all. The tug was successfully christened to the raucous sounds of the FDNY Emerald Society Pipes and Drums by the sixth generation - Buckley's daughter Janet, who had just celebrated her 15th birthday. Plenty of food and drink circulated through the night and the speeches and presentations were also well enjoyed as McAllister Towing starts what might become another 150 years plus a couple more generations at 17 Battery Place working in the towing industry.

[Link to "*Buckley McAllister*" photos + a couple more McA tugs which happened by.](#)