



Tug Tales #17

June 2, 2014

**Important Photo Collection donated to DATPG INC  
By Orange City Former Mayor Harley Strickland**

*Dan Friend*

Over 50 priceless photos from both the American Manufactory Corporation and the Olson Corp have been donated to our organization for preservation on behalf of Ivey Nettles Strickland.

All of these photos are glossy b & w, and are different from the ones included in the AMC employee "standard set" of 29 photos. About five of them are of **ST 42** and are nice copies of the same group owned by the DeLand Naval Air Station Museum, but the rest appear to be unique!

The group of photos, along with two copies of the standard set, were saved over the years by Harley's mother Ivey Nettles Strickland, or Mrs. Harley A. Strickland Sr, as she was in the perfect position to collect them: she was a secretary in the main office from early on in 1942 through at least 1953 when the last batch of tugs were being built. And perhaps most importantly, the photos include some that verify that *the ten Olson-made US Army tugboats of 1953 were largely completed in DeLand.*

The Olson Corporation production of (10) US Army Design 3004 65' Tugboats began in late 1952 under a contract managed by the US Navy. The record notes reflect the Navy paid very little to the original contractors while adding changes that made the contracts hard to fulfill and unprofitable. Several companies went bankrupt; or handed the contract and unfinished boats over, and Olson did this when the Navy assigned Rawls Brothers of Jacksonville to finish the boats. Here's what Ed Carson, Beresford Historian, had to say about the matter: *"The boats were constructed to the design furnished by contract; however, the design was flawed. I.e. all of the piping was relegated to the starboard side in the original design; therefore, leading to an imbalance once the vessel was floated. The Government's position was that Olson Corp should have recognized this, and redesigned to equalize the balance. Olson Corp. responded that they did not have Marine Architects to redesign and that they had fulfilled their contractual obligations. This resulted in mediation wherein the Pentagon cancelled the contract and removed all hulls and material to another contractor for redesign and completion."* - September 2013 letter Beresford Historian Ed Carson

The big question has been: how far along were the ten boats before they were towed to Jacksonville?

The "new" photos verify that all ten hulls were 100% completed at Lake Beresford; all but the last boat, *ST 1987*, had the superstructure completed; *ST 1978* and probably *ST 1979* were 100% finished near March of 1953; and most of the other boats had substantial other work done prior to the trip to Rawls Brothers in Jacksonville. This photo shows five of the '53 tugs under construction and relatively complete, and they are





*identified on the photo's back as ST 1982-1986. They were largely finished here!*

Many of the other photos are from the WW2 days and add to our knowledge of details. Another mystery has surfaced, however, as several of the photos show a smaller type of boat, perhaps 45 feet long, that has the letters "UNRRA-CHINA-35" on the bow. A total of three are shown in one photo, and these probably are from the 1946 time frame. Further proof of

this is that one of the three Design 327 tugs finished up by Olson in 1946 is shown being towed by one of the "China" boats to Jax. Did Olson have another contract with the UN to produce these smaller harbor craft? It seems so! Note the "tugboat" style rubber bumpers on the hull which were very similar to the larger tugs.

During the scanning process of these unique photos I noticed many are numbered, and it appears that several hundred photos were taken over the years by pro photographers, and probably many hundreds of other "snapshots" were taken as well. At this point we only have about 100 total of all kinds meaning lots more are out there!



***Ivey Nettles Strickland  
Photo at right taken in  
1944***

All of the photos are now safely scanned and registered in our DATPG INC archive database, and the originals were placed in acid-free sleeves. Our sincere thanks go out to Mr. Harley Strickland for his generosity and support.

**AMERICAN MACHINERY CORP.**  
• MARINE DIVISION •

