

Scott G. Rickards

The beginning [1967-1973]-

My family has been involved in the maritime industry since 1926. I'll start with my Grandfather. Capt. Chester Rickards [1926-1976] as a boy at age 15, would get up at 05:00A, catch the trolley from SW Philadelphia to Delaware Ave. [Pier, company unknown] He worked all day until the tug shut down, mostly for a good meal, wages were bad.. He received his captain's license in the early 40's and was employed by Meyle [ Independent Pier Company]. I have memories of Pop coming home at all hours of the day and night, when we would have family holidays together. The 1st thing he would do is get a shower. The beautiful smell of a tugboat was on his clothes. When my parents got divorced in 1967, Pop/Mom agreed to take either my brother or I on any given weekend to baby sit while my parents worked out their divorce. Pop had this great idea to take me out on "TRITON" which was Jupiter's sister. [Meyle named most of his tugs after planets and were docked at Pier 34]. The day would start at wakeup 05:00A, throw on clothes, fly down Delaware Ave.[ remember those cobblestones?. it was like a roller coaster ride]. We would arrive at Pier 34, Pop would grab my hand so I wouldn't trip over the cleats. He knew where everyone was located, even at night. When we rounded the corner, there they were, the fleet all lit up, running idle, smoke spewing out the stacks.. It wasn't a day to play. Pop had 2 standing orders.. The engine room was off limits, stay out of the lifeboat, it's not a playhouse. On any given day, Pop said you will help the cook clean potatoes, onions, carrots, do dishes [ I had to stand on a milk crate to reach the sink}] mop galley floor, clean the head, pilot house windows, sweep the quarters, polish the brass, pledge the woodwork. At 1st , I was thinking this stinks, I could be in bed sleeping, or watching Capt. Kangaroo, or Capt. Noah [ remember them?]. But after awhile, I would tell my brother can I go to Mom/Pop's again just to ride on my new BIG toy.. The crew really liked me, because I did most of their clean up details, and they keep watch on me while Pop was steering. Some great memories were also getting my plate of food, sitting on the forward bit, watching the sun rise behind the Walt Whitman Bridge, and every now and then glance up at the wheelhouse and see Pop looking down at me as if saying [ don't worry, I have control of this monster]. Pop also allowed me to take the helm of TRITON [ while hip tow to a barge] while again , standing on the same milk crate. Great memories. I see what some of today's youth are doing and I would have never traded my younger years for anything.

1975-1978 I worked as summertime painter for IOT [Interstate Oil Company] chipping/painting tugs, barges ALL summer, never got off. Again, great memories.

1978-1981 sailed deep sea

2001 - present- I happened to be stopped at Delaware Ave/ Washington Ave [ Pier 40], when something with a signal orange/black stack, big white M caught my eye. There was Jupiter. The last time I saw here was in 1973 [?]. Back in those days when the tugs were waiting for work, they would tie up together, sometimes 3 deep. It seems Jupiter was

always in that 3 deep pack. All the crews would board other tugs for conversation, get any latest news. It was like a block party without the grub or grog. I explained to the guard about the tug, he allowed me to board her. The flashbacks started going in my mind. I said to myself, I have to join [ If anything, to relive my childhood]. I am also proud to say, my son [ Chris] volunteered his weekends to help paint, guided tours of Jupiter. Chris also did his Eagle Scout project on her. My younger son [ Scott] has said he would also like to do HIS Eagle project on Jupiter. This makes me proud as a father that they would show interest in the tug that has worked the rivers of Philadelphia by their father [myself, volunteer], GF [my dad, deckhand, 1960's ], GGF [ Captain Rickards]. I know my Dad and Pop are smiling down from heaven. I still thank Pop [ in my mind] for giving me a taste of hard work at an early age and for an industry that I that I enjoyed later in my life.

Thank you for allowing me to tell this story.

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