

YACHT WITH RICH HISTORY
relaunched in Portsmouth. A3

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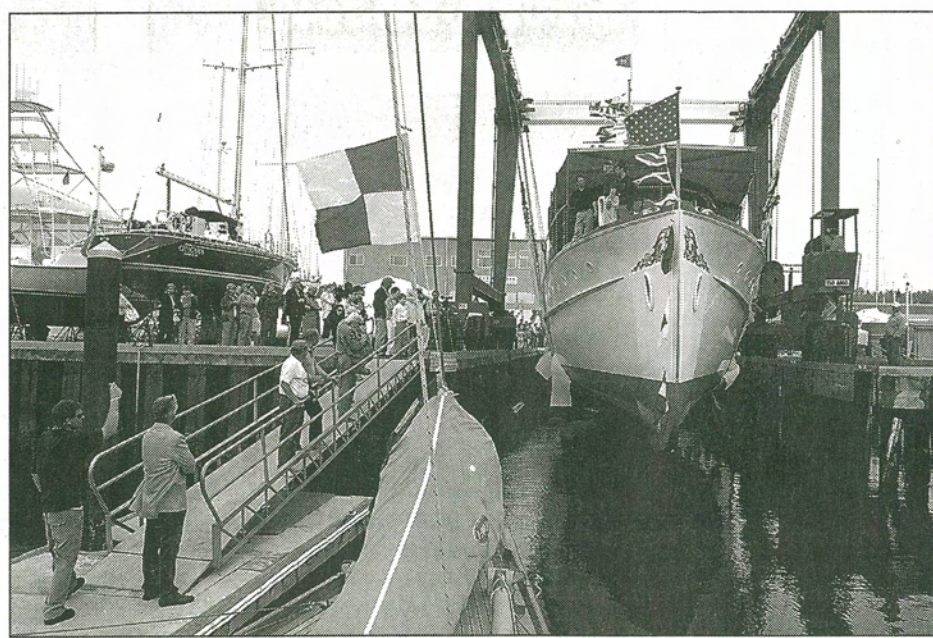
Monday
May 11, 2009



Jacqueline Marque ♦ Daily News staff

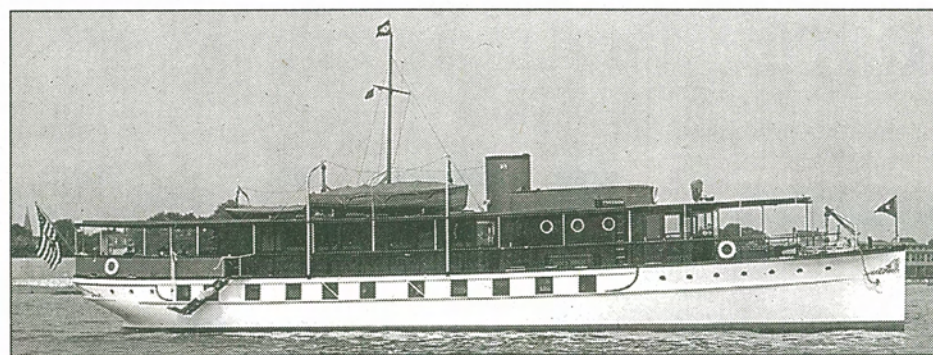
The transom of the newly restored 104-foot Freedom is seen before the yacht was relaunched on Saturday in Portsmouth. The project, which took McMillan Yachts more than four years to complete, cost about \$6.5 million. The boat originally was built by Mathis Yacht Building Co.

Making a big splash



Jacqueline Marque ♦ Daily News staff

Above, Freedom is launched Saturday in Portsmouth after a four-year restoration project. Below, Freedom is seen in its original form. The yacht was built in 1926 for Aubert J. Fay of Boston. Throughout most of the 1930s, Freedom was owned by J.P. Donahue, the daughter of F.W. Woolworth, who at the time was the wealthiest woman in the country.



Contributed photo

Luxury yacht restored to original luster

By James A. Johnson
Daily News staff

PORTSMOUTH — A renovated 104-foot luxury yacht, once owned by the richest woman in America, was launched Saturday by McMillan Yachts.

More than 100 people gathered along the docks at Melville for the relauching of Freedom, built in 1926 by Mathis Yacht Building Co. of Camden, N.J.

The sister ship of the presidential yacht Sequoia, Freedom was built during the 150th anniversary of the country's independence. During most of the 1930s, J.P. Donovan, the daughter of F.W. Woolworth, owned the yacht. Considered the richest woman in America at the time, she was often the American hostess to the Duke and Duchess of York.

"This is a happy day and it has been a long time coming," Earl McMillen, president of McMillan Yachts, said in describing the four-and-a-half years it took to renovate the yacht.

He found Freedom in Jacksonville, Fla., in 2001, when it was being threatened with the chainsaw.

"The fellow who owned it passed away, and the owners of the marina where she was were threatening to cut her up," McMillen told the guests at the launching ceremony.

He stepped in and formed a partnership with several individuals who were able to finance the renovation,

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EARL McMILLEN

president of McMillan Yachts

which cost about \$6.5 million.

The three granddaughters of the yacht's designer, John Trumpy, were among those thankful for McMillen's rescue efforts.

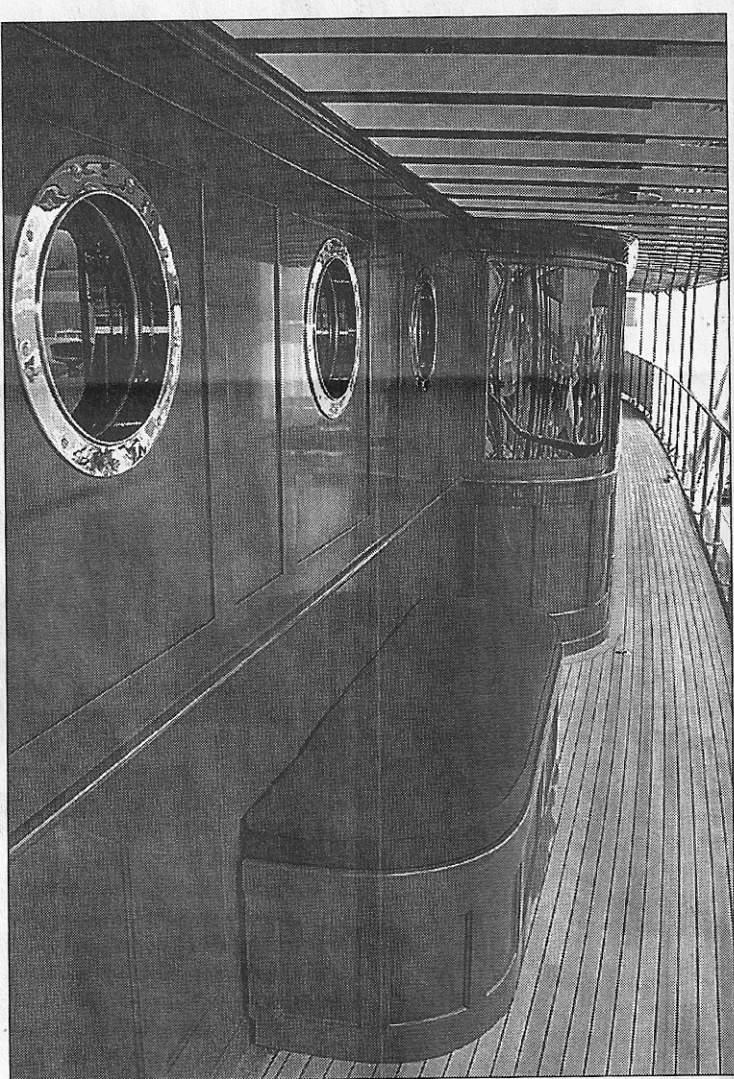
"It is always really meaningful to all of us to find somebody who cares so much about the integrity and the beauty and the construction of wooden boats," Jane Trumpy said, speaking on behalf of her family.

She said her brother Don expressed it best: "What Earl has done is absolutely miraculous."

"We are just so honored that there are people in the world like Earl McMillen who are willing to maintain and keep afloat these yachts that my grandfather designed," Sigrid Trumpy said after christening the yacht with a bottle of champagne.

Terry Nathan, president of the International Yacht Restoration School in Newport, praised McMillen not only for restoring the yacht, but

SPLASH A4



Jacqueline Marque ♦ Daily News staff

The cabin of Freedom was completely reframed and the deck and hull were replanked as part of a \$6.5 million restoration project.

Splash

Continued from A3

also for sustaining the craft that makes such vessels possible.

"The greatest accomplishment here today is not simply the launching of Freedom, but the art of restoration itself, and you and your team have done an extraordinary job to keep that alive," Nathan said.

After the christening, travel lifts carried the yacht — suspended in three large slings — to the water. It was lowered slowly and when the hull touched the water, a cannon salute was fired.

The yacht features five double staterooms that can accommodate 10 overnight guests. It also has room for a crew of eight, although the crew normally will be limited to four.

In an interview last week, McMillen described the process of renovation.

"When we bought the boat, it was in horrible shape," he said. "It was not seaworthy and we were not even able to float it to Newport."

A barge transported Freedom to Newport, where it was stored at Newport Shipyard for about two years. During that time, McMillen formed a syndicate of about 12 partners to begin the restoration. Freedom was his firm's main focus for the next four-and-a-half years.

"Basically it's a new boat," McMillen said. "Everything you see is new. We laid a new keel. We reframed the entire boat, bow to stern. When we replanked the

hull, we used two layers of planking. We rebuilt the deckhouse."

A big change was the addition of four fins on the hull that are part of a stabilization system. Boats like Freedom tend to roll a bit, McMillen said, and the fins will eliminate that.

Under the partnership, Freedom will operate as a private boat with a bit of charter influence. Each partner's access to the yacht will depend on the percentage of ownership. A typical 5 percent share would give the partner access for four days during the summer. A partner could board the yacht in Newport on Wednesday and go to Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket or Cape Cod till Sunday. Another partner might meet the boat there and take it back to Newport.

McMillen also is re-forming the company that built Freedom in 1926. He has taken out a trademark on Mathis Yacht Building Co., which later changed its name to John Trumpy & Sons. The company has been incorporated in Rhode Island.

At Saturday's ceremony, McMillen praised the shipwrights, especially Jeff Jacobson, the project manager, and Dan Roten and Todd Jarem, the two leads in the project.

"The old saying is that they don't make things like they used to," McMillen said. "Well we do, and actually we do it a little better."

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