

RESOURCE EVALUATION

DATE: May 10, 2011

STAFF: McEneny

PROPERTY: Mary A. Whalen

MCD: Brooklyn

ADDRESS: Pier 9B Red Hook (Current)

COUNTY: Kings

PROJECT REF: -

USN: 04701.017109

- I. Property is individually listed on SR/NR:
name of listing:
- Property is a contributing component of a SR/NR district:
name of district:
- II. Property meets eligibility criteria.
- Property contributes to a district which appears to meet eligibility criteria.
- Pre SRB: Post SRB: SRB date

Criteria for Inclusion in the National Register:

- A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or represents the work of a master; or possess high artistic values; or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;
- D. Have yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Criterion C:

The Mary A. Whalen is significant in the area of historic marine technology as an intact and representative example of a motorized coastal and harbor tanker/lighter from the 1930s. Few vessels of her period and class remain. The Whalen retains a high level of integrity to her date of construction in 1938. Her hull is constructed of welded steel plating with lapped strakes, a transitional method of construction between lapped and riveted hull plates and edge-welded plating which have become widely accepted in modern construction. She retains her original power plant and operated as a bell boat until her retirement from active service in 1994. Under Criterion C, the Whalen would appear to be of statewide

significance. There are several older tankers and lighters still operating in NY including the former SOCONY Poughkeepsie from the 1930s.

Criterion A:

Association with Ira S. Bushey. Bushey was an early and significant force in the distribution of petroleum fuels. Based in Brooklyn, the Bushey companies built and maintained fuel storage terminals, tugs, barges and lighters and a shipyard to build and maintain this fleet. Bushey developed distinctive designs for its fleet and although this boat was built in another yard, its design may have been generated by Bushey. Local significance. An accident involving Whalen in 1968 resulted in litigation that was taken to the US Supreme Court in 1975. Due to the ruling within the last 50 years, further analysis is required to determine if the impact of the Court's decision is of exceptional importance to the broad pattern of American History. A period of significance has been set at 1938, the year of the tanker's construction, until 1958, when she was converted from transporting gasoline to oil products.

For further information about the Whalen, please see the exceptionally prepared application for National Register eligibility prepared by Portside New York.

If you have any questions concerning this determination of eligibility, please contact Daniel McEneny at 518.237.8643, ext. 3257 or daniel.mceneny@oprhp.state.ny.us

APPLICATION FOR NATIONAL REGISTER ELIBIGILITY
MARY A. WHALEN formerly S.T. KIDDOO

Prepared by Portside, New York

History Abstract

The *Mary A. Whalen* is a steel, lap welded, coastal oil tanker built in 1938 active until 1994. She is a particularly handsome example of her class of vessel. Her first twenty years she operated under the name *S.T. Kiddoo* and carried gasoline. In 1958, she was rechristened *Mary A. Whalen* and was converted to carry heavier fuel oil products. She was always based out of the port of New York, either out of Red Hook, Brooklyn while working for the Ira S. Bushey companies, or out of Staten Island when working for Eklof. She regularly went as far away as Maine during her gasoline-carrier years. She went out of service in 1994 when a bearing burnt up, and her crankshaft was damaged. She is one of the last local examples of several types (Bushey boat, coastal oil tanker, bell boat). She was involved in a 1975 Supreme Court case of major national significance *U.S. vs. Reliable Fuel*. A growing body of oral and document history is being assembled about her.

Our webpage about her current activities www.portsidenewyork.org/mary_whalen.htm

Our webpage about her history www.portsidenewyork.org/mary_whalen%20history.htm

Listed at <http://empirestatemaritime.org/vessel.php?id=58> and

[www.empirestatemaritime.org/PDFs/NY Parade of Ships ESMA.pdf](http://www.empirestatemaritime.org/PDFs/NY_Parade_of_Ships_ESMA.pdf)

VESSEL PARTICULARS

Name: MARY A. WHALEN

Owners: Tanker Princess Corporation, P.O. Box 195 Red Hook Station, Brooklyn, NY 11231. Current sole shareholder, Carolina Salguero, has plans to transition ownership to non-profit organization PortSide New York of which she is the founder and director.

Registered Dimensions: LENGTH - 166.0' BEAM - 31.6 DEPTH - 13' (though LOA between verticals is 172')

Tonnage: 613 GRT/499 NRT Draft - 1'-09" forward, 7'-06" aft

Official Number: 237782 (presently not documented)

Built: 1938 by Mathis Shipbuilding, Camden, NJ

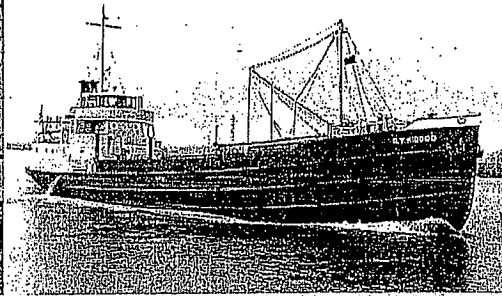
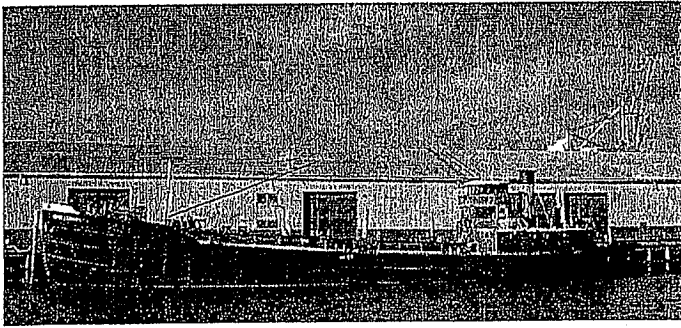
Construction: Welded steel

Propulsion: 6 cylinder Fairbanks Morse, single screw (cannibalized though replacement parts are being sought and many have been acquired)

ABS Classed: No

USCG Inspected: No

Use: home of non-profit PortSide New York



Distinctive

characteristics of a type, period, method of construction

A 2006 survey by Charles Deroko is attached (Mary Whalen Deroko survey 1-06 F.pdf). This describes the construction on detail. Note that this survey is no longer up to date as the ship was hauled out during six weeks in January-February 2007. During that time, the hull was blasted, repainted and zincs were attached. Thin and wasted spots in the steel were repaired to ABS standards. The sea chests were blanked off to protect against potential valve failure in the un-restored engine room (they can be removed at a later date); and two spud wells were installed one forward on the starboard lower work deck, one on the after end of the port lower work deck.

In preparation for this application, Deroko also supplied the following report:

STRUCTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

By Charles Deroko

www.charlescderoko.com

Naval architect, restoration consultant, licensed captain

When *MARY A. WHALEN* was completed in 1938, building welded ships was still a somewhat unpredictable method of construction. Electric welding appeared in 1918 and during the 1920's, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers developed a code for fabricating welded pressure vessels, such as boilers. Welded ships were built in Germany in the late 1920s and welding was slowly being accepted as an alternative to riveting, the established way to assemble a ship. The use of welding accelerated with the outbreak of WW2. Henry J. Kaiser used production and welding techniques that enabled his shipbuilding facility to launch a cargo vessel every 45 days.

Shipbuilders in the 1930s were unsure of the mechanical characteristics of welded joints and continued to lap the hull plates as they had done with riveted ships. However, hull plates that were lapped and welded did not take full advantage of the weight savings and efficiency that welding had to offer. Plates that were butt welded, that is, welded edge to edge, not only saved weight by eliminating the plate laps, but also presented a smoother plating surface to the water thereby reducing hull resistance.

MARY A. WHALEN represents the time when the shipbuilding industry was beginning to gain confidence in all-welded construction. Various hull inspections have revealed that *MARY A. WHALEN* has no riveted connections. This makes her historically significant as an early example of all-welded, lapped-plate construction and a good representative of this transitional period in shipbuilding. Further study of *MARY A. WHALEN*'s structure would likely reveal various design features relevant to the study of all-welded shipbuilding techniques.

MARY A. WHALEN is also one of the last surviving examples of a harbor and coastwise engines-aft type tanker. A related vessel, the *CHEM TRADER*, was built in 1931 as the *ELLEN BUSHEY* and is reportedly still in service in Guyana. The continued service of the *CHEM TRADER*, along with the good material condition of *MARY A. WHALEN*, attests to the durability of this type of vessel.

Additionally, the *Mary A. Whalen* is a bell boat, of which few remain in New York State. Some bell boats, like the tug Chancellor, have been converted and no longer operate as bell boats. On bell boats, the captain only controlled the rudder (left right movements). The throttle and engine direction were controlled by the engineer who responded to the Captain's signals via the sound of a bell (or gong) and jingle (a smaller bell).

The *Mary A. Whalen* is also a "Bushey Boat" a vestige of Ira S. Bushey & Sons, a notable shipyard and fuel terminal in Red Hook, Brooklyn which closed in 1977. Few "Bushey boats" are still afloat in the region. A history of Ira S. Bushey & Sons is attached with this application.

The *Mary A. Whalen* retains a high degree of original and historic detail. Below we feature some of the major items:

- Webb Perfection cast iron, diesel pot-burner stove in galley (patented 1918)
- Wood paneled refrigerator and freezer (date unknown)
- 1938 Fairbanks Morse engine (cannibalized but many replacement parts acquired)
- Sounding machine on boat deck
- Fidley with original gauges, telegraph, wood engineer's desk
- Wood helm in wheelhouse on brass base
- Binnacle (largely intact, missing cover and some brass rod rails on the wooden base)
- Wood chart table and settee in wheelhouse

In addition, there are extensive amounts of smaller historical details such as brass speaking tubes, interior and exterior brass rail, vintage brass electrical light switches in all cabins, fidley bell (gong) and jingle, tiled floor in the galley, original woodwork in all the intact cabins and some woodwork in the cabins cannibalized to make offices by the last owner Hughes Marine.

A narrative discussion of the vessel's setting and location

PortSide New York is currently in negotiation with a part of New York City's government, the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) for the permanent home for the *Mary A. Whalen* and other PortSide programs and functions. This home will be on Pier 11 in Atlantic Basin, Red Hook, Brooklyn adjoining the active containerport pier 10 and the active cruise terminal pier 12. The rest of Atlantic Basin will be occupied by workboats of some type (the EDC is currently running a wharfage RFP.) PortSide is creating a maritime hub and cultural center at this location and will have 600' of pier, some 6,500 square feet of interior space and extensive use of adjoining outside space. This will place the *Mary A. Whalen* in the neighborhood where she began and was based much of her working life, on a pier where she once worked, and in a complex of active maritime users owned by the Port Authority. PortSide will be interpreting the *Mary A. Whalen*, the adjoining maritime activities, hosting visiting vessels (historic and active duty workboats) and is creating a maritime trail "WaterStories" throughout the peninsula of Red Hook where other maritime facilities are located. All this means that the tanker will be enveloped in a maritime context greater than the boundaries of a typical maritime museum.

Supplemental history known to be available

- 10 log books -- need of conservation and then assessment of content
- Collection of Captain Alf Dyrland (Died 1996), Captain from rechristening of *Mary A. Whalen* in 1958 to 1978. 2 suitcases and one banker's box yet to be inventoried but known to contain photos (one of the 1938-1958 period with the word GASOLINE marked along her side, several from her rechristening festivities, coast-pilot notes that he created, Grub Books (provisioning records), his Merchant Marine license and that from his father who worked as an engineer for Reliable during WWII, some correspondence relating to his duties as a captain, newspaper clippings, his funeral mass memorial program and card. In addition, there is his chair from the Captain's cabin, vintage ship signal flags believed to be from the *Mary A. Whalen*, possibly some 8mm films shot by his son Bill during visits to the ship.
- Extensive contact with daughter and son-in-law of Captain Alf Dyrland which provides oral history including family memories of when the *Mary A. Whalen* went aground in 1968 which led to the Supreme Court case.
- Contact with former crew (29 and growing)
- Contact with Carl Eklof, Sr, the last owner to run her as a tanker
- Contact with former owners Hughes Marine who used her as an office
- Contact with Charles Cushing, the young naval architect who boarded the *Mary A. Whalen* while aground during the famous 1968 situation that led to the Supreme Court legal decision. He is the principal of C.R. Cushing & Co, and we are requesting papers from his company's archive about the matter.
- Contact with descendants of Solomon Thomas Kiddoo, for which she was originally named, a banker of some prominence from South Dakota who moved to the Chicago area, became the Treasurer of the Fairbanks Morse company who manufactured the engine she carries. Ira S. Bushey & Sons, who we believe to be her first owner, was a distributor of Fairbanks Morse engines.

Significance as a teaching tool due to her place in development of American maritime trade.

We believe she is the only repurposed and publicly accessible tanker in the USA. She is certainly the only one in the northeast.

PortSide New York gives tours of the *Mary A. Whalen* under the brand TankerTours. We have done this for the general public and as professional training for college professors as part of the City Tech program "Along the Shore" about Brooklyn's Industrial waterfront, a precursor to their upcoming Brooklyn Waterfront Center. We have given Spanish-English bilingual tours, the first free, public, bilingual, historic ship tours in New York City. (See videos at <http://bit.ly/gGXwW4>, <http://bit.ly/PortSideOHNYshiptours>, <http://bit.ly/fSKGZB>)

As a tanker *Mary A. Whalen* is a powerful platform for discussing the important history of fuel delivery and fuel consumption in America—especially given the geographic range she served (from NYC to Maine, up many regional rivers), the range of fuels she delivered, where she delivered them. The first 20 years of her working life, as the *S.T. Kiddoo*, she delivered gasoline going as far away as Maine (this provides an index of the limited number of vehicles being driven from 1939-1958). When she was rechristened the *Mary A. Whalen*, she was converted to heavier oil products and then delivered home heating oil and directly fueled ships (bunkering). In the New York City area, she did a lot of “creek work” delivering fuel to terminals up the Gowanus Canal, Newtown Creek and other narrow waterways. This means she represents part of the history of many local waterways. She fueled cargo ship and cruise ships. Additionally, she served as a de facto training vessel, even when in commercial service, because she was a starter boat for so many crew over the fifty six years of service.

Vessel's significance to local community, state and nation

Local Significance:

She is one of the few surviving vessels of the Ira S. Bushey & Sons yard which was significant to Red Hook, to Brooklyn and to the region. She is the only floating Bushey structure in Brooklyn. (Some Bushey buildings remain and the site continues to be a fuel terminal. Ship building and repair no longer occurs on site.) She is significant to Red Hook, to Brooklyn and to the region in her non-profit role as home of PortSide New York.

We have yet to research how and where she served in New York State out of New York City.