

The Boat No One Wanted

Historical Perspective:

My Uncle, L. Paul Reno, bought a Wolverine boat from Wagemaker of Grand Rapids, Michigan, in late 1954. The boat was delivered to Paul in Oakland, California, in the spring of 1955. Paul was both proud and delighted with the boat. In fact, shortly after the boat was delivered, he organized a fishing "trip/expedition" to the Colorado River, downstream of Boulder Dam for trout and in Lake Mead, upstream of the dam for whatever was "biting." That was the spark Paul needed to begin fishing everywhere in central and northern California. And, it was my good fortune to have shared fishing adventures with him between 1954 and 1957, and again in 1961.

Fast forward to 1982: Paul retired from fishing, parked the boat in his garage, and left the main doors closed for 26 years. His attentions had turned to refurbishing horse drawn machinery and restoring antiquated military harness. He occasionally talked about the boat during summer vacations at my home in Idaho, reminding me, "Someday one of my nephews in Oklahoma will own my Wolverine."

In the fall of 2008, Paul's medical condition deteriorated markedly. He whispered to me while in the hospital "None of my nephews in Oklahoma wants the Wolverine." Then he asked me, "Are you interested in the boat?" "Of course!" was my answer. "I have dreamed of restoring, and rebuilding the boat for more than 50 years." Shortly thereafter, two cousins and I spent most of one day freeing the boat and trailer from the mountains of accumulated junk, greasy harness, and other debris in the garage. Once freed, the boat was trailed to Idaho. That marked the beginning of *The Boat That No One Wanted*.

Chronology of Enhancements:

(1) In Idaho, the first job was washing the boat inside and out. My cousin owned a vertical scaffolding system equipped with a hoist. The bow ring of the boat was hooked to blocks and hoisted off the ground. The dirt, grim, and leather preservatives were scrubbed off most surfaces. The boat dried in