

## **Background on the Paddle Wheeler *Jean Mary***

Renowned Naval Architect Jack Hargrave was the designer of *Jean Mary*. Originally commissioned for a family in Alabama, she was designed to capture the beauty and romance of the age of paddle wheelers while incorporating modern conveniences. She is 86 feet long. Originally steam powered, she was later converted to diesel.

After changing owners a couple of times, *Jean Mary* was purchased by actress Debbie Reynolds. Unfortunately, her beloved boat sank in 2008. Ms. Reynolds donated the boat to the Maritime Museum so that she would be restored to her former splendor.

The *Jean Mary* was originally hauled out to begin repairs in May 2012 near Jacksonville, Florida and has been a hub of activity since actual renovation work started in September 2012. Once launched, the vessel will make the 800 mile journey to Apalachicola by traveling down the east coast waterway, through Lake Okeechobee, and then up the west coast waterway before making the open water transit from Tarpon Springs into her new home at the Apalachicola Maritime Museum docks, where the vessel will be re-christened as the *Samuel Floyd*.

When she arrives, she will be ready to begin river travel all the way to Columbus, GA in the fashion of historical riverboats that once flourished in the 19th and early 20th century. She will carry up to 12 passengers and offer opulent accommodations, extraordinary dining and an unparalleled educational experience.

The project was featured on WFSU's television show *Dimensions*. A link to the video segment can be found on our website, [www.AMMFL.org](http://www.AMMFL.org).

Below is the text of a newspaper article about the boat's sinking from the St. Augustine Record:

### **Debbie Reynolds' boat sinks 'Jean Mary' was carrying antiques to Tennessee museum Thursday, July 17, 2008**

Movie star Debbie Reynolds, who played the lead role in "The Unsinkable Molly Brown," bought a boat a few months ago. It sank on Friday in Green Cove Springs. Reynolds, an actress, singer and dancer who came to fame in the 1950s and continues to perform, is also known for her collection of movie memorabilia that will become part of the Hollywood Motion Picture Museum next year in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.

And that's where her antique-filled boat was supposed to be headed on Wednesday. "It was an adorable boat," Reynolds said, in a telephone interview from California. "You know, just really as cute as anything could be." She said she still didn't understand why a boat would go down. "When you have antiques you don't dip them in water," Reynolds said.

Todd Fisher, Reynolds' son, said "Jean Mary" was featured on television as one of the world's top 10 finest houseboats. Fisher said he's seen the salvaged boat from a live video feed. "It's pretty hammered," he said in a telephone interview from his office in California. "When I told her, she burst into tears."

John Hall, vice president of Mobro Marine in Green Cove Springs, said his team used a 450-ton crane to salvage the boat. Part of the boat was sitting in eight feet of water while docked at Reynolds Park Yacht Center a mile away. Hall said deterioration on the side of the 75-foot-long boat must have been overlooked when the boat was surveyed. That created a hole big enough to sink it in about 10 minutes. When lifting the boat out of the water, Hall said, his crew was careful not to damage it any further. "It's decked out with super-expensive stuff," he said, adding that it is not uncommon for boats to sink.

Fisher, also CEO of the Hollywood Motion Picture Museum, said about \$100,000 worth of antique furniture was in the boat. "'Gone With the Wind' Victorian furniture could've been in there," he said, laughing.

Reynolds' museum will hold the world's largest private collection of Hollywood memorabilia. Fisher said his mother visited the \$350,000 boat that was docked in St. Augustine by the previous owner.

"The family that owned it before put a lot of work into it for years and years," Reynolds said. "We were looking forward to living on it. We would sit out on the deck and sing and dance."

The plan was to float the boat up to Tennessee. Reynolds was to sing with her band on the boat around the museum as a publicity tour in October for a partial opening of the museum. Fisher said he still would have to figure out if the amount of repair the boat needs is worth it.

Reynolds said she wouldn't replace a boat "you can't top." She said she would focus on filling up the 40,000-square-foot museum while on tour for the next couple months. "You can see I won't be going by boat," Reynolds said.

Reynolds, an award-winning actress, has been acting for the past six decades and still performs. Alongside Gene Kelly and Donald O'Connor, she performed in the musical "Singin' in the Rain." She received an Oscar nomination for her lead role in "The Unsinkable Molly Brown."

She started a nonprofit corporation, Hollywood Motion Picture Museum, to preserve thousands of items she bought in an MGM auction in 1970. Her collection includes dresses worn by Audrey Hepburn and Marilyn Monroe.