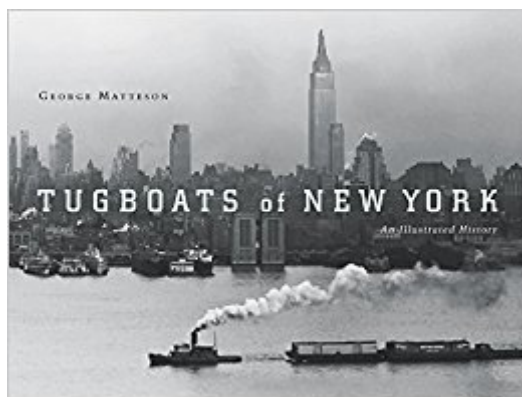


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# Tugboats Of New York: An Illustrated History



## Synopsis

2005 Author of the Year Award  
•Working Harbor Committee of New York and New Jersey  
2006 AAUP Book, Jacket, and Journal Show in the category of Trade Illustrated Book Design  
Tugboats are the workhorses of the greatest harbor in the world, easing massive ocean liners and garbage scows alike cleanly into their berths. *Tugboats of New York* captures the history and lore of these iconic craft, from their precursors in the early 1800s to their heyday in the 1950s, when more than 700 small but potent boats dotted the harbor. They are the most versatile of vessels, not only guiding large oceangoing ships safely into harbor, but also conducting rescue operations and navigating vast quantities of oil, cement, and scrap iron through traffic-clogged waters. A twenty-year veteran of New York tugboats, George Matteson knows the tides and currents of New York from the Bronx to the Verrazano Narrows. His history of tugboating shows how this inherently risky business pits men and their boats against weather, water, and the scarcely measurable physics of ships and barges of far greater dimension. The story of New York's tugs parallels the broader history of New York's industrial development, from the rise of railroads to the decline of the port in the wake of labor disputes and large container ships. It is also a story of remarkable seamen who pass their craft from pilot to apprentice over generations, along with the lore of great waterways that remain unchanged despite the lengthening shadows of skyscrapers and commerce. Rich with first-person anecdotes of life on the New York waterways and one hundred and fifty black-and-white illustrations, including rare and sumptuous photographs from the likes of Gordon Parks and Todd Webb, *Tugboats of New York* will fascinate readers interested in New York history, boating, and maritime history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In this illustrated history, Matteson, a twenty-year tugboat veteran, narrates two centuries of the city's history from the decks of its tugboats, whose fortunes "powered up with the rising tide of the nineteenth century and then powered back down with the efficiencies of the twentieth." The first boat in New York meant exclusively for towing entered service in 1828, but business was sporadic; her captain was "more likely to be found in the local saloon than at the helm." In 1871, a tugboat was lured up the Hudson to Sing Sing and shanghaied by escaped Tammany men, then chased by a flotilla of guards in rowboats, who finally ran it aground near Nyack. The peak of the tugboat era was 1929, when eight hundred of them plied the city's waters. Today, there are fewer than two hundred, which are used to dock larger ships, though a handful, Matteson notes elegiacally, still "trundle back and forth across the harbor on an indifferent schedule, carrying mostly Long Island garbage and incinerator ash to the mainland." Copyright © 2006 The New Yorker --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"Matteson narrates two hundred years of city history from the decks of its tugboats." -The New Yorker  
"Matteson knows the lore in depth, telling us how tugs work and how crucially they've served the great port." -San Diego Tribune  
"This sturdy, if little lauded, workhorse of the city's waterways has found a champion in George Matteson, himself a veteran tug operator. His marvelous, handsomely designed Tugboats of New York is both an evocative photo album of tugs at work and a detailed essay on nearly two hundred years of tugboat history." -BookForum  
"A brave and jaunty disquisition, copiously illustrated, on the history of tugboats in the port of New York - written with boundless enthusiasm and affection for its subject, and with more than a little longing for the days when ships of all kinds dominated the rhythm of life in and around the city's endless waterways." -Ric Burns  
"Breathtaking photographs.... Matteson's fascinating account of the evolutionary era begins with the geographical formation of New York Harbor, but quickly moves to the era of the vessels themselves.... Anyone fond of books about the way things work will enjoy Matteson's detailed explanations; others will relish his metaphors." -New York Times Book Review

As soon as I'd read the New York Times Book Review of this book, I had to have it. Because I was brought up in the New York metropolitan area I was able to enjoy riding the Staten Island ferry to and from Manhattan to enjoy the sights and sounds of the harbor and the tugs going about their business. I also listened in on a short wave radio to the messages relayed through the New York Marine Operator as the tugboat captains got their orders from their bosses on what barge to pick up, where to take it and so on. This book is delightfully written by someone who certainly knows the towing business and who seems to cover every conceivable aspect without becoming excessive. The photographs chosen are of the highest quality and taken by some of the top names among photographers of that era. Many of them are so good, they are "suitable for framing" as the saying goes. Their rendition in the book are of equally top quality and the captions are full of interesting facts and are not just taken from the text of the book but can stand on their own. Very informative and at the same time, easy to read, I thoroughly enjoyed this book and recommend it to all, especially to those of us who still carry that little boy or girl inside of us.

While the content (pictures, writing, etc) is well done, the book, unfortunately, suffers from it's paper back cover. A book this size and shape needs a hard back. I know it sounds like a trite point, but trying to comfortably read this book is very difficult. Thus, the 3 star rating rather than a 4 or even possibly a 5 star.

I really enjoyed this history of tugboats on the Hudson River and New York Harbor. The book has many excellent black and white images of very good quality. The writing is excellent and coverage of the subject is excellent.

The book was in excellent conditioned and was delivered before the due date!

Very pleased.

All great!

Mr. Matteson did an excellent job in creating a book that covers the historical, current and practical aspects of the "Tugboat" industry in the New York area. If you have any interest in New York harbor, commercial maritime, or industrial archeology this is a worthwhile addition to your collection.

Very nice coffee table book

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