

## Raleigh Tiller Delivered by Train, May 1958

11/10/15 583 W, 7 I - + 11 - 2

More apparatus history for your morning enjoyment. (It's Tiller Week in Raleigh, with the new Ladder 9 in service on Thursday.) On May 4, 1958, delivery was planned of the city's second tractor-drawn aerial ladder fire engine. Or tiller, as it's commonly called. The apparatus was listed on the letter of notification as "One (1) American LaFrance Rescue 'L' Tractor Drawn Aerial Fire Truck." The 700 Series truck 'n' trailer was a 1958 model year and with the serial number N-374.

The apparatus was shipped on April 30, 1958, via Pennsylvania Railroad. The freight car contained one "self propelled fire apparatus" and seventeen cartons and two bundles of "fittings". The weight was 29,444 pounds. It arrived on May 4. The manufacturer confirmed delivery on May 16. (The original contract was dated January 7. Talk about a turnaround! The purchase price was \$38,706.99.)<sup>1</sup>

Truck 1 was equipped with a 100-foot aerial ladder. As well as a Browder life net, which American LaFrance had shipped in April. (Built with "special heavy canvas" bottoms and "molded rubber hand grips.") Plus the usual assortment of ground ladders, forcible entry tools, smoke fans, play pipe, and such.

It served at Station 1 on Dawson Street until 1977, when the Mack Aerialscope was delivered. The tiller was replaced with a new tractor three years later. The "front end" was replaced with a 1979 Mack MC tractor and the apparatus was moved to Station 5 by May 6, 1980. It was returned to Station 1 on March 16, 1987. (What happened to the truck between 1977 and 1980? Presumably was a reserve ladder.)

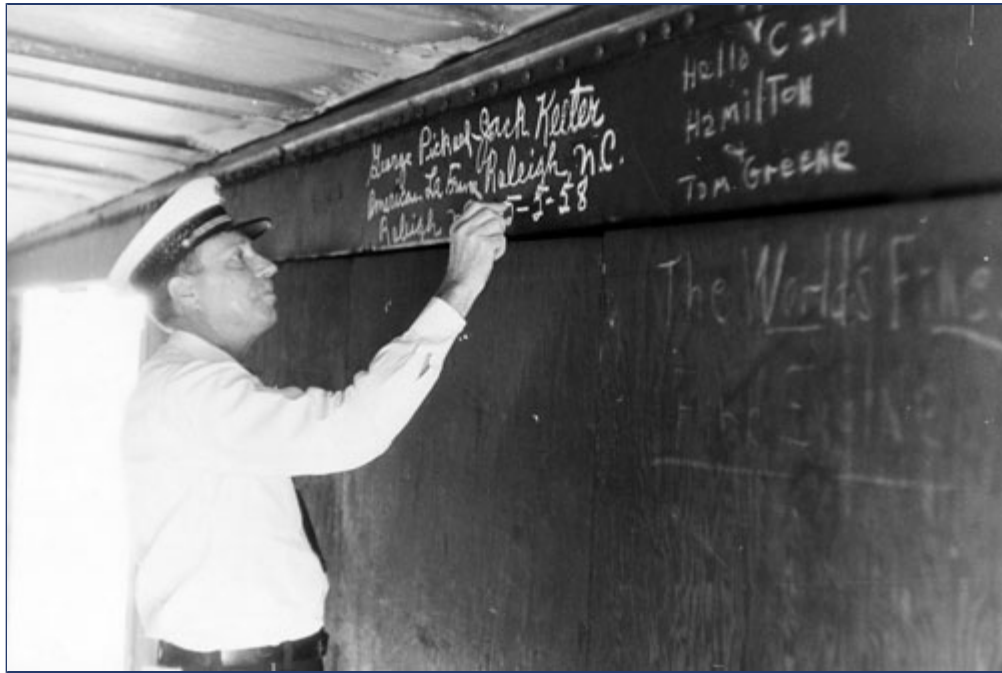
After being refurbished by American LaFrance in 1988 (which added a cab to the tiller, jump seats to the tractor, new paint job, and more), it was moved to Station 16 on September 21, 1988. The truck was removed from front line service after February 27, 1995. It served as a reserve truck until 1999, when it was sold as surplus. [See my apparatus register](#) for pictures.

The apparatus was purchased by a private party down east, and soon sold to the Wendell Fire Department. From my [WFD history page](#):

*Formerly owned by City of Raleigh, the apparatus was first purchased at a surplus auction on April 24, 1999 by a speculative buyer in Beaufort, N.C. The ladder truck is spotted three or four months later sitting unsold in a lot and is subsequently sold to the fire department for \$5,000-\$6,000. Another \$6,600 is spent on refurbishing the ladder, which is repaired in places and finally tested by Underwriters Laboratories. The 1980 Mack tractor has only 40,000 miles on it. Diamond-plate purchased at an EEI auction in Raleigh is added to the trailer. Three months pass before the apparatus is placed in service. The fire department spends about \$16,000 total on the truck.*

In 2006, they sold the truck to Civietown Fire Department in Brunswick County. One year later, the tiller was posted to eBay, with a starting price of \$13,000. Here's a [blog post about that](#). Where's the truck today? To be determined! (Also, search the blog for numerous related postings, including this recently updated [history of Raleigh's tillers](#).)

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*News & Observer photos*



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<sup>1</sup>How common were deliveries by railroad? Unsure. Believe there's a picture of a Raleigh engine being unloaded from a box car, also in that decade. Guessing that this was delivery method from the 1910s through the 1960s or 1970s. Maybe when the first Mack pumpers were delivered, though they may have been shipped to a local dealer, and then driven for delivery.

Posting updated with a correction. The 1958 tiller served at Station 1 until 1977, not until 1980.

**Legeros** - 11/12/15 - 07:36

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