

Fellow Apprentices: Recently, as so often happens to me, I found something unexpected while perusing old periodicals at the Mariners' Museum library.

I found the following in the September, 1944 issue of the Shipyard Bulletin.

This is a scan of a Xerox copy of the publication's repro, so its not all that clear. But it pretty much proves that 'the apprentice experience' started in 1890. The person that signed it was Sommers N. Smith (namesake of the shipyard's ill-fated Hull #17 - a pilot boat - which slipped off her launching cradle and capsized on launch in 1896). Fortunately, and because of her small size (118 feet long & only 311 tons displacement), she was righted, completed and served until scrapped in 1937.

Turning back to Apprentice #1 - that issue also indicated that a small celebration was held to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Norwood Jones' apprenticeship completion. Of equal interest was a picture of him in a Hampton, Virginia Fire Department uniform and some scanty info referring to him as that department's chief engineer (apparently, he left the shipyard at some point and served as a paid fireman nearby). Alas, no other info was provided...

But I just found a reference to him (in a list of HFD retirees on their website) as **Norwood "Casey" Jones, Chief Engineer**. I have dispatched an inquiry to the assistant to the fire chief in Hampton, seeking any further info that they may have about 'our' illustrious Mr. Jones. Hopefully, at some point, I can provide you 'the rest of his story'.

*Bill Lee*

