



We recently purchased a Holmes 850 wrecker, one of only about 329 made. This wrecker although rated at 40 tons, it's mechanical and winching power can be compared to a 70 ton unit built today. A brochure came out when I was 15yrs old and I pinned it to my wall, picturing what it would look like in our family's towing company. Unfortunately, dad passed in 2012. After having memories of all the talks with my dad about wrecks etc., and all my dreams rekindled by watching Highway thru Hell. I joined the 850 group and on one of the postings I noticed a fellow by the name of [George McRae](#). He mentioned he knew of an 850 for sale that a retired tow man had. I contacted George, because I just had to know more about it. It was then I heard about Wayne Blaisdell and his towing company in Vermont. Wayne is kind of a legend in those parts, as his business had been around over 40 years. I gave him a call, and I could immediately tell this guy was someone I could talk to for hours about towing, and it never get old. In November of 2018, we had the chance to see the classic 850 (Big Red) and talk with Wayne, and his son Tim. Tim led us to the garage, and it wasn't long before Wayne came in like mach 2 on his Wheelhorse tractor, literally on just the back 2 wheels after hitting the lip to the garage door entrance. The 850 was the last of his company, and very special to him. Many have dreamed of just having an 850, well he had his remounted from a 63 B model Mack, onto this Kenworth T800, by Tim at Roseledge in 2002, exactly how he wanted it. "After every call, the truck was washed and put in a heated garage, and only #1 grease used on it". The truck was ran for 6 years, and parked since 2008. Sadly, the only reason he stopped towing, is his legs couldn't do it any longer, and he had to have a walker. He may be in his 80's but I tell you he had the energy of a 12 yr old! I knew what he was asking for it, and I wasn't going to negotiate it. In February, we went back out to Vermont and pickup "my dream". Wayne couldn't come out to the garage as his legs were getting worse. Tim came out and had already prepped some things for us, for the drive back to Buffalo. I went inside to finish up with Wayne, and it wasn't long before I could hear his voice crack, and see the tears in his eyes, he dreaded this day would come. I know how much this truck and towing had meant to him. If he was able to, he'd still be operating it. I promised him I will take good care of it, and get him some pictures of it in action. Not knowing if I'd ever see Wayne again, I was tearing up leaving his property. He so much reminded me of my dad, and those old school values. I can just imagine the stories we could have shared.