

They Talked Of Putting Port Here Back In 1903

By EVELYN DUNNE
Daily News Woman's Editor

The history of the Port of Anchorage is older than the town itself.

As early as 1903 there was talk of establishing a port at Anchorage to be connected with the Matanuska Valley coal fields by the then-proposed Alaska Central railroad.

In 1919 the port became a reality in the form of the "Ocean Dock." That facility still stands just past the main Alaska railroad yards on Ocean Dock road. Until recently the only deep-water pier in the area, the dock is operated by the U.S. Army for military freight, principally petroleum products.

When plans for a city port again came to mind, it was to meet the needs of a small boat harbor, probably to be built at the mouth of Ship Creek.

A city Port Commission was established in 1946 to consider this matter, but its problems soon grew beyond the small boat stage. Purpose of the Port Commission became to promote port development and to administer the operation of a port facility at Knik Arm.

One of the first detailed studies of the Anchorage port requirements was completed in 1952 by George T. Treadwell, then the chief engineer of the Port of Seattle.

Treadwell, reporting to the Port Commission, favorably recommended a port for the area.

He said:

"The installation of a deep water port and necessary terminal facilities to serve the Greater Anchorage area . . . is feasible from an engineering standpoint, is economically sound and its construction is recommended 'on the basis of further engineering investigations.'"

Alaska was still a territory in 1952, but the questions which Treadwell included in his report still seem pertinent:

"One of the big questions that remains to be answered is, 'What is going to happen to the Greater Anchorage area and other regions of interior Alaska when defense construction levels off?' Will incoming cargo be of sufficient volume to permit sound, economical operation of a port facility in Anchorage? What are prospects of developing out-bound shipments of Alaska materials and resources through the Port of Anchorage?"

For a while the Port Commission attempted to have the federal government build the needed port facilities through the Corps of Engineers. After protracted negotiations, local assistance was offered to supplement the federal funds when Anchorage citizens voted the issue of \$2 million in general obligation bonds for port improvements.

Another year's negotiations proved the idea of federal aid was impractical so the city retained two private engineering firms to study the port further.

Coverdale and Colpitts, consulting engineers from New York, considered the economic feasibility of the project; the firm of Tipples - Abbett-McCarthy-Stratton, engineers and architects, made engineering studies including the preparation of a master plan for long-range development of the port as well as preliminary designs and cost estimates for construction of the first stage of the facilities.

On the basis of these favorable reports, the Anchorage voters again approved a bond issue, this time in 1956 for an additional \$6,800,000 in revenue bonds.

The final designing of the port began in September, 1957, when the T-A-M-S firm was again employed by the city to prepare plans and specifications and to

supervise the construction work.

Bids were received in June, 1958.

On August 15, 1958, then-Mayor Anton Anderson, a long-standing opponent of the proposed port, traveled to New York City with city clerk Ben Boeke and former city attorney, James Fitzgerald, to handle details of port financing.

The investment bankers headed by Ira Haupt and company of New York underwrote both the general obligation and revenue bonds. Immediately afterward the go-ahead was given to the successful bidders, De Long corporation of New York, on construction of the port facilities and the Washington Iron Works of Seattle on the fabrication of dockside cargo cranes. And the work began.

The first portion built was the embankment leading to the proposed port site.

"If all goes well," a city official predicted, "the work may be completed in 1960." Progress reports issued in February, 1959, said that \$1,375,000 worth of the \$6 million project was completed. By October 24 of 1960, an estimated 85 per cent of the work was finished when newly-hired Port Director Henry Roloff, the port commissioners and the city council toured the facility.

"The dock is expected to be finished by Nov. 23," a newspaper article said.

It was no easy path to completion. Years filled with scientific studies and unscientific but heart-felt arguments led to the building of the Port of Anchorage . . . and they are not over.

In recent months the city has negotiated for long hours with the contractor to settle disputes about the completion. The city council finally issued notice of completion on June 20, 1961, and thereby approved finishing of some construction by other firms.

The "Kev Alaska," a barge owned by Pacific Western Lines, was the first barge to dock at the new port when it opened for business this spring. Arriving April 21, the barge used the Port of Anchorage by default. Tides prevented its landing at its own ALAGCO dock.

The Port of Anchorage is a city facility, ruled and regulated by two city ordinances, numbers 1459 and 1460. It is also subject to public opinion, which has been

as ardent as ever — both pro and con — since the port was completed.

At its dedication Saturday, the Port of Anchorage will be commemorated to a "new era" in international trade. That "new era" is something both the port director, Henry Roloff, and the port commissioners believe in.

Chairman of the Port Commission is Harold D. Strandberg, member of longest standing on the commission and chairman for the past six years. The other members are Jack Ferguson, Lyle Anderson, Rodney L. Johnston and C. R. Ross. Roloff is the executive secretary of the commission.

On Roloff's staff are Grove G. Lautzenhiser, traffic manager; Bill Burnett, assistant terminals manager; port accountant and business manager Don Walter, and pier foreman Ted Schwartz. Briefly that is the history. The future of the port depends on acceptance of the modern and ready \$8,200,000 facility.

TV Schedule

KENI-TV CHANNEL TWO

FRIDAY, JULY 7, 1961
6:00—Karlson Kariva
6:25—Weather
6:30—News
7:00—Quick Draw McGraw
7:30—Adventures in Paradise
8:30—Leave it to Beaver
9:00—Naked City (ABC)
10:00—It Could Be You (NBC)
10:30—News & Weather
10:40—Channel 2 Playhouse
Closing Thought for the Day

KTTA CHANNEL ELEVEN

FRIDAY, JULY 7, 1961
5:00—Buckaroos
5:45—Town Topics
6:00—Texas Rangers
6:30—CBS & Anchorage Newsreel
6:55—Sports Special
6:55—Weather Report
7:00—Rawhide (CBS)
8:00—Route 66 (CBS)
9:30—Way Out—CBS
9:30—Twilight Zone (CBS)
10:00—Tightrope
10:30—Union Oil News Highlights
10:40—Overseas Adventure
11:10—Jim Bowie

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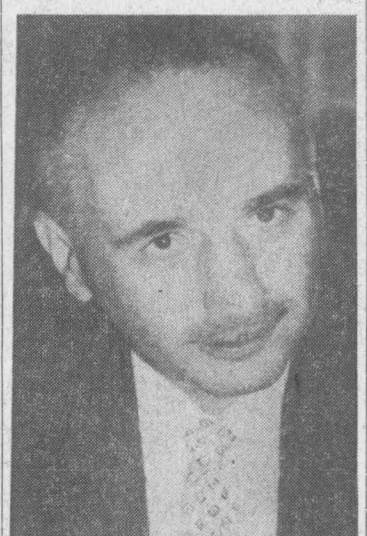
Newcomer Manages New Port's Traffic Division

Grove G. Lautzenhiser is a cheechako, even in terms of the Port of Anchorage staff. But he's dedicated to his job as Traffic Manager for the new port and anxious to have everyone approve of the facilities and the job they can do.

"What do you think of the place?" is a frequent question when someone visits the area, and it is asked proudly by Lautzenhiser.

The traffic manager arrived here about two months ago. His

in the Los Angeles area. on the Port of Anchorage, so maybe he isn't so much a cheechako after all.



GROVE LAUTZENHISER
Proud Questioner

family, including wife Marion and 13-year-old son John had been planning to come up for some time but just arrived by plane Wednesday morning. They will make their home at 630 Eighth avenue.

Born and raised in Indiana — North Manchester was his home for many years, Lautzenhiser received his bachelor of science degree from the University of Southern California with majors in transportation and accounting.

For the four years previous to his acceptance of the position with the Anchorage port, Lautzenhiser was traffic director for the Luckenbach Steamship company of Los Angeles. Prior to that he was in the traffic division of the Alco Transportation company, also.



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