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Anchorage, Alaska, Tuesday, October 20, 1964

Anchorage Daily New., I wester, October 20.

day. Low this morning, near 35; high today, mid 40's;

HOURS OF DAYLIGHT 9 Hours, 38 Minutes __4:33 p.m. 5:31 p.m. 32.1 12:17 a.m. 0.9

Sunrise tomorrow _____6:58 a.m. 5:55 a.m. 31.2

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All But One Aboard 'Santa Maria' Saved; Two Injured

Tug Played Major Role In Rescue

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By MARY O TOTTEN Daily News Staff Writer

seafaring family — the Jack C. Anderson Jr. family of Anchorage — played a dramatic part in the collision between two oil tankers that rocked Cook Inlet late yesterday afternoon.

Capt. Anderson, his wife, Lois, and their son, Andy Anderson, were all in on the rescue operation that saw every man except one taken safely from the accident scene following the ships' collision.

And it was, indeed, a dramatic part the family played.

CAPT. ANDERSON, with his wife aboard, was tied alongside the tank ship "Sirrah" in his 165-foot tug, the "West Wind" when it collided with a second tanker, "the Santa Maria."

Anderson's son, 17-year-old Andy, was skipper of another tug, the "Arctic Wind," circling in the area when the huge ships

the boy were instrumental in saving the crews of both tankers.

ANDERSON SAID of the collision that "we were just getting ready to bring the Sirrah in.

"She was lying at anchor with about 450-feet of chain out and wasn't moving in the water at

"It looked as if the tide set the 'Santa Maria' right down on

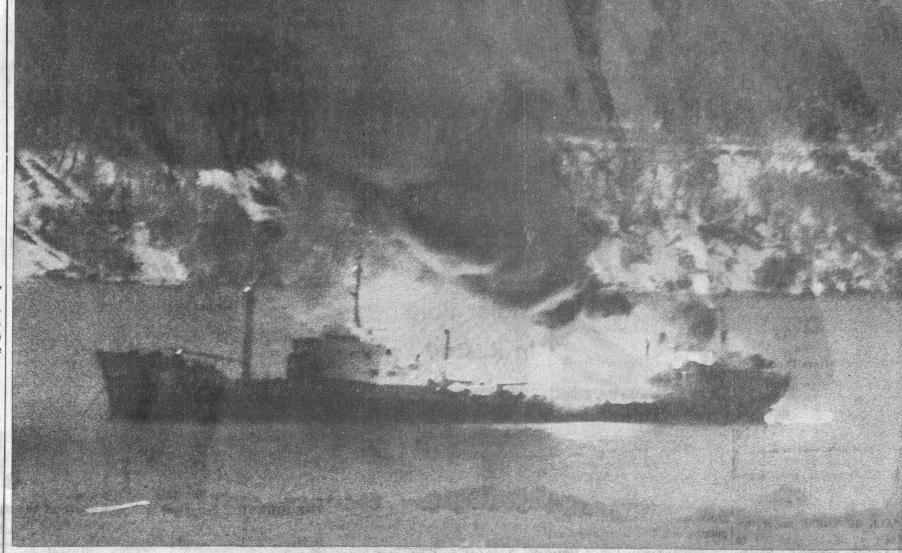
"I'd say the 'Santa Maria' was moving along at about three or

"AFTER THE ships hit, our lines burned away.

"The 'Arctic Wind' moved in alongside the 'Sirrah' and we moved alongside the 'Santa Maria.'

"The afterhalf of the 'Santa Maria' was all in flames. The fire was all up alongside of the port side of the ship and about halfway up the starboard side.

"We moved up on the star-. board side toward the bow and started taking off the crew. (Continued on Page 2)



TORN BY FLAMES, the stricken Union Oil tanker "Santa Maria" lies off the

"Sirrah" about 4 p.m. yesterday. The flaming hull drifted south with the (Photo by Tony Polecki)

fire room and said 'Let's get out

of here.' It was so smoky I don't

Santa Maria Skipper Old Hand At Sea

The captain who lost his ship yesterday along the Anchorage waterfront has spent a lifetime on the sea.

AUSTIN TOMTER, 63, of Long Beach, Calif., joined the fraternity of seafarers as a boy in his native Norway.

For about the last 20 years he has been captaining ships for the Union Oil Co. the owner of the Santa Maria, and for at least 10 of them he has been on the Alaska run.

He is the godfather of an Anchorage woman, Mrs. Thor Brandt-Erichsen,

TOMTER LIVES with his wife in Long Beach, Calif. A son recently became an Episcopal minister and is currently assigned to the Los Angeles diocese. A daughter is attending college.

Crewmen were high in their praise for their captain. While flames raced through his ship and the danger of rending explosions increased, the captain directed the removal of his men and only then jumped to safety

how are the rest of the boyens | fire (28,319 are boyene room or

Harold (Hank) Leland spoke just where. I was at my emerfrom an Alaska Native Service gency station when first assist-Hospital bed last night, obvious-ly in deep pain from the frac-ly in deep pain from the fractured ankle he suffered leaping from the flaming Santa us to abandon ship. I was working from the flaming Santa

A SHORT while earlier, Le- know if he followed me or not. land has been working at his job as dayman at the stern of the ship. Then came the collision, and Leland, with the rest was on fire. I ran up and jumpof the crew, said he raced to ed.", symmetry he him and the rail, ready to leap into a In jumping, Oliver broke both tue that had pulled along side. heels. Leland, 41, of Bloomington, Hughes is missing and pre-Calif., jumped the 12 feet to sumed to have perished on the safety, but in the process broke ship. his left ankle.

He grimmaced in pain as the triked about the sudden dis-

"I've lost everything I had." THE OTHER crewman jured, Edmond Oliver, 36, of Long Beach, Calif. said from his bed at the Presbyterian Hospital that he was painting in the upper engine room when heard the collision.

He heard the general alarm, got his life jacket and went to the boiler room where he is to assist the second engineer in emergencies.

"Smoke was coming in thick through the ventilators," he

Thousands View Spectacular Sight

By 1 a.m. today, officials had decided temporarily to forego any special operations to put out the fire on the 'Santa Maria.' The flaming ship was reported lying off Point McKenzie, with a tight radar watch keeping track of her movements in the event she floats back toward Anchorage.

Two oil company tankers heavily laden with aviation fuel collided near the Anchorage waterfront yesterday - a collision that turned one of the ships into a flaming torch.

All but one of the 39 crewmen aboard the ruined ship, the Santa Maria, escaped.

Missing is Eugene Hughes, 35, of Portland, Ore., a fireman on watch at the time of the collision.

TWO OTHER members of the crew were injured when they leaped to safety. Harold Leland, 41, of Bloomington, Calif., a day man, suffered a factured ankle. Edmond Oliver, 36, of Long Beach, Calif., a fireman water tender, broke the heels on both feet. Both are in Anchorage hospitals.

The accident occurred shortly before 4 p.m., in full view of many areas of Anchorage. Immediately black smoke from the fire raced skyward, blotting out the ships.

Thousands of persons, attracted by the tower of smoke, lined the bluffs rimming the waterfront to

THE SANTA MARIA, a 550-foot vessel owned by the Union Oil Co., was heading into port when the accident occurred. The second ship, the Sirrah, owned by the Shell Oil Co., was at anchor.

Acting Port Director Don Walter said that the Sirrah, loaded with jet fuel, apparently dragged anchor and hit the Santa Maria amidships on the starboard (right) side.

(Continued on Page 2)

Inquiry Planned

A Coast Guard Board of Inquiry may be formed today to investigate the collision of two tankers in Anchorage harbor.

Cmdr. Robert F. Hornbeck, officer in charge of marine inspection in Anchorage, said he has suggested the formation of such a body to Rear Adm. George D. Synon, commander of the 17th Coast Guard District at Juneau.

Normally, he said, a three-man board is formed to investigate all circumstances surrounding an accident. The board serves as a fact-finding body.

If negligence is determined, according to Hornbeck, another hearing will be heard to study possible disciplinary

Survivors Get Big Welcome

Anchorage opened its arms and welcomed the surviving 38 crewmen of the tanker Santa Maria last night.

They were brought from the port area to the Anchorage-Westward Hotel and immediately were invited to a reception and dinner being given for visiting New Mexico Sen. Clinton P. Anderson.

The Salvation Army was on hand to provide them with assistance, also.

And Anchorage merchant M. D. (Danny) Plotnick opened his store and clothed about 13 members of the crew with shoes, jackets and other apparel, all of whom, in their haste to leave the burning ship, did not stop to pack.