



... BUT THE WHALE CAME BACK

The tugboat Knik Wind chugs toward the Cook Inlet tidal current yesterday towing a dead whale that had been snagged by the Sea-Land vessel Galveston. But the whale came back. According to Bill McKinney, port director, the carcass floated under a port railroad trestle last night, so

Carl Grumbles, acting assistant port director, ordered it out again. This time it was attached to the Chevron tanker Washington. No one had seen it this morning. (Times Photos by Kerry Coughlin)

Whale Tail Ends Where Tale Began

By BARBARA ROGERS
Times Staff Writer

"Now that we've got him, what do we do with him?" was the big question yesterday afternoon when a 45-foot whale came into the Port of Anchorage stuck on a cargo ship.

The whale, thought to be a Minke, was caught on the bow of the Sea-Land vessel Galveston by a fin, Tim Titus of Sea-Land said.

U.S. Marine Fisheries Service biologists were on hand but they had no facilities to examine the animal for cause of death or other research, Tom Hablett said.

"Our nearest whale research facility is in Seattle," he said.

The state Department of Fish and Game has no jurisdiction over the federally controlled marine mammals, so that agency could do nothing with the whale, a spokesman said.

Since the whale is protected for use only by natives, no one else could take responsibility for the mammal and officials at the scene did not want to take the chance of bringing it out of the water.

The tugboat Knik Wind, which had roped the tail of the whale and brought it into the dock about 1 p.m., turned around and took it back out to sea — hopefully to float ashore anywhere but Anchorage, Titus said.

Port director William McKinney said this morning that the whale apparently has drifted away with the tide. "We just hope it doesn't beach itself near a populated area," he said.

No one really knows when the whale became attached to the Sea-Land ship or how the animal died. Titus said no puncture marks were visible in the 35 feet of whale that was out of the water.

The ship, coming to Anchorage from Seattle, took on its pilot by helicopter at Anchor Point at 4 a.m. yesterday, Titus said.

The ship was due in port at 10:30 a.m. and Titus said the captain radioed at 9 a.m. that he was doing slower than expected and would not dock until 11:30 a.m. The ship finally arrived at 12:30 p.m., Titus said.

He would not speculate on whether the whale slowed the general cargo vessel or if tides or winds affected her passage up Cook Inlet. "I only know she was late," he said.

The tugboat crew from the vessel that led the ship into port first noticed the whale, Titus said. "We don't know how long it was attached to the ship or how it got there," he said.

Carl Anderson, captain of the Knik Wind, said he thought the huge mammal had been dead for some time. "Although there is no smell," he said, "she looks pretty rotten."

The Minke, a type of baleen or filter-feeding whale. Baleen is used by native craftsmen for jewelry, baskets and other artifacts. "Some have washed ashore in Turnagain Arm," a marine biologist said, "Many of this type are found up near Barrow."

Biologists were concerned that the whale would wash ashore near Anchorage and cause a health problem or that the valuable animal would fall into hands other than those of natives. That would constitute a violation of federal law, Hablett said.

The whale dropped off the ship soon after it docked and drifted a short distance away from the dock area. While officials were deciding on the dead animal's fate, Anderson and his crew took the tugboat out and, after many attempts, finally attached a heavy rope to its tail.

Moving the tug slowly against the current, he brought the whale back to the dock, only to turn around a few minutes later and drag it out to the middle of the inlet.

LASSO THAT CRITTER

Carl Anderson, captain of the tugboat Knik Wind ties up the carcass of a 45-foot baleen whale accidentally brought into Anchorage yesterday by the Sea-Land vessel Galveston. Port officials ordered it back to sea when federal fish and wildlife officials said federal law prohibits anyone but Alaska Natives from possessing a whale carcass.

Whale, whale, go away

The Port of Anchorage's unwanted whale has disappeared into the night ... well down the inlet anyway.

The dead whale arrived at the port Wednesday snagged on the bow of a Sea-Land cargo ship. It floated out of the harbor and down Cook Inlet Wednesday night, but not until it had caused much consternation and confusion for port authorities who hope the whale carcass will beach in an unpopulated area.

PORT DIRECTOR Bill McKinney spent the better part of Wednesday seeking out some government agency with responsibility for whales.

"It's not our whale," McKinney said Thursday morning. "We don't want anything to do with it; we hope it won't come back."

It's not that McKinney has anything against whales, it's the bureaucracy he objects to.

AFTER SPOTTING the whale Wednesday, port personnel dragged the body ashore. Then McKinney learned they might be in violation of the Marine Mammals Protection Act, and had the carcass returned to the harbor.

But later, when port authorities heard something go bump in the night, they knew the whale had returned with the tide. This time, it was lodged in a trestle at the south end of the dock.

Four port employees took to a small boat and dislodged the beast. They towed it into the inlet where the outgoing tide took it away.

If the visitor returns again, McKinney is ready for it.

He has obtained permission from the National Marine Service to dispose of the whale in the environmental interests of the community.

Federal Funds To Pay Port's Dredging Debts

Federal legislation approved by the 1976 legislature will save local taxpayers about \$90,000 per year for dredging at the Port of Anchorage.

The legislation increases harbor limits for federally financed dredging from 2,000 feet to 3,000 feet. Since the Anchorage port began extending its dredging area beyond the 2,000 foot federal limit in 1975, local taxpayers have borne the cost of additional dredging, said port director Bill McKinney.

In the past, the Army Corps of Engineers contracted with an outside firm for dredging to the 2,000-foot limit. Under the new legislation, the corps will pay for dredging up to 3,000 feet.

McKinney said the cost of the additional dredging this summer was \$89,222.

McKinney, who noted that dredging costs are just as sensitive to inflation as other prices, said the additional 1,000 feet will cover the port's annual dredging needs for the foreseeable future.

NEWS REVIEW Pac. Shipper Anchorage Port Grant 7/13/77

The Port of Anchorage, Alaska, has been awarded a \$1.9 million grant by the Federal Economic Development Administration for a port expansion project.

According to Carl E. Grumbles, assistant port director, the Municipality of Anchorage will add \$2.5 million to the Federal grant.

Mr. Grumbles said that the project includes construction of a new maintenance building, paving of transit area A and extending the dock 180 feet. Rail access and gantry crane reach also will be extended, he said.

The expansion is being undertaken to accommodate roll-on/roll-off cargo as well as breakbulk

TOTE Anchorage Change

A preferential berth agreement (T-3130-3), under which the number of annual calls at Anchorage by Totem Ocean Trailer Express, Inc. (TOTE) are doubled to 104 a year, has been approved by the Federal Maritime Commission.

The agreement—providing for the preferential berthing rights at the City of Anchorage's Petroleum Terminal and Terminal No. 1—was approved despite the protest of Shell Oil Company that the increase in TOTE's calls "could result in extensive delays and additional operating expenses for Shell tankers calling at the port."

The approved pact also grants to TOTE preferential use of apron, transit area and trestle facilities at the Anchorage City Dock. It changes the advance filing requirements for a schedule of estimated arrival times to at least 10 days (from 15 days) prior to each arrival.

Shell's opposing comments were filed 25 days after the deadline for filings published in the Federal register, the FMC noted. "Notwithstanding the untimely filing by Shell, we have considered the merits of the protest," which the agency found lacking.

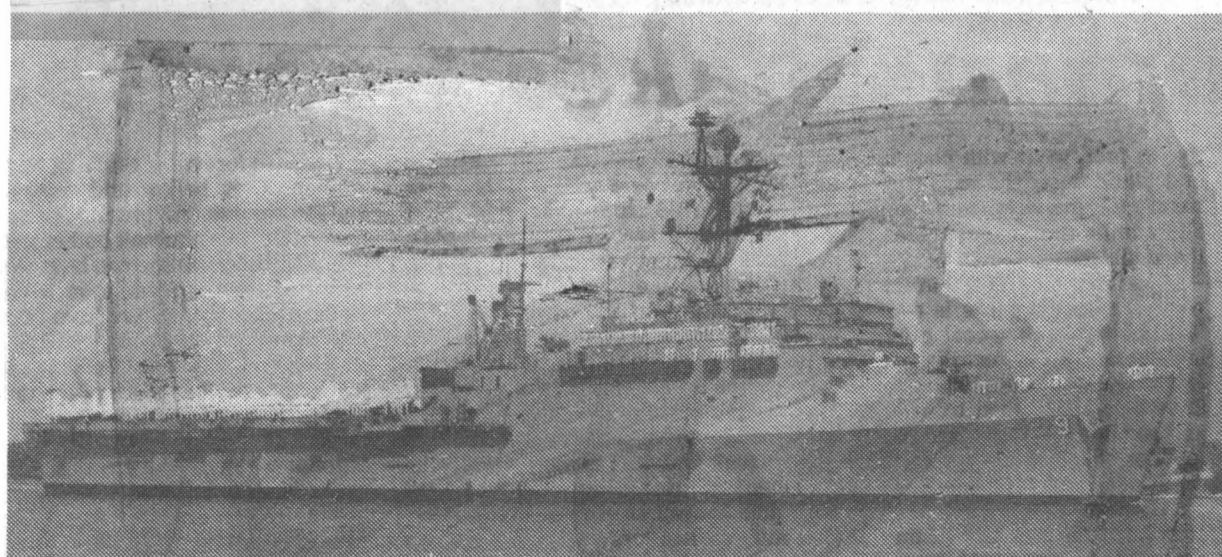
"...Circumstances at the port have changed," the FMC explained. "...An additional berth (Terminal No. 3) has been fully completed and is now suitable for use by a containership or by as many as two barges at a time.

"Also, use of the port's two petroleum offloading facilities... has declined drastically since the opening of the Nikiski-Anchorage petroleum pipeline and the introduction of larger tankers into the Anchorage trade...

"However," the FMC added, "to assure that our

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action herein does not impose any undue hardship upon Shell or other petroleum carriers utilizing the POL/Terminal No. 1 facility, we intend to monitor the impact of this agreement by requesting that the port furnish the FMC staff, on a quarterly basis and for a limited period of time, (with) certain information pertaining to the utilization of these facilities."



SHIP TO DOCK FOR FESTIVITIES

The USS Denver is scheduled to arrive at the Port of Anchorage at 7 p.m. Friday and remain until July 5. The ship is carrying about 1,200 Navy and Marine personnel who recently participated in amphibious training exercises held on Montague Island in Prince William Sound. Several community activities

are planned, including receptions Friday night at the Armed Services YMCA and the Anchorage Navy League. A softball game has been set at Delaney park strip field 3 Saturday at 1 p.m. between the ship's team and radio station KFQD.