



FORMER COAST GUARD CUTTER GUIDES SHIPS THROUGH ALASKA'S WATERS AS A TUGBOAT

In the wheelhouse of the tugboat Daphne, built as a cutter for the U.S. Coast Guard in 1932, Capt. Bill Rosenquist, above left, steers a course guided by the compass, housed in a brass binnacle, lower right. Round globes — red for port and green for starboard — with compensating magnets adjust compass readings. The Daphne's crew includes cook Al Sommie, whose 16 years in

the galley on the Seattle to Anchorage run equal the Daphne's length of service as an Alaska tugboat, and chief engineer Rocky Sullivan, who has worked nine years in the engine room.

Tugboat Daphne: Most Handsome Ship Around

About every three weeks, all summer long, the tugboat Daphne appears on the Anchorage waterfront, pulling a 50-foot barge behind her.

She's been coming into Anchorage for 16 years, ever since Ken Hinchey got her surplus to bring cement barges up from Seattle.

Built in 1932 in Bath, Maine, as a Coast Guard cutter, she's anything but young. But she's one of the most handsome on this waterfront.

Her wheelhouse is all tradition, with no autopilot and a wheel almost as tall as a man. Her cabinetry is of cherry and other precious woods. Every fitting is brass, well polished. You can't find a piece of plastic anywhere.

The binnacle — that waist-high brass housing that holds the compass — is the real kind. It's flanked, port and starboard, by globes that hold compensating magnets, necessary to correct compass readings.

They're painted in the traditional manner, red for port, green for starboard.

Modern bridges, like the one in the U.S.A. Chevron oil tankers, are sleek and shining, plastic gray and white.

The Daphne is definitely a re-cycled affair, one of Hinchey's typical recycles.

Hinchey, of course, is the man who built a waterfront

facility — Hinchey's dock — out of old and useless things, including the surplus World War II supply vessel Limestone. Since 1961 the Limestone has served as combination moorage, crane platform and cement storage area.

It's the Pacific Western Lines dock now, property of the Sealaska Corporation.

The Daphne carries a crew of eight and for the past six years Capt. Bill Rosenquist has been at the helm. The cook, Al Sommie, has been aboard all 16 years.

There've been a few changes aboard since Hinchey bought her. The galley was moved from a dark area forward and below decks to the main deck. Sommie likes his galley and the neat dining area.

"I guess that's why I stay aboard," he said. "I like having this corner all my own."

In Coast Guard days, the ship carried about 30 men and the below decks galley was built to accommodate them.

The below decks engine room and repair shop next door is a one-man operation, too. And Engineer Rocky Sullivan, on the Daphne nine years, likes to show it off.

This area was modified 15 years ago with newer 800-horse automated twin diesels replacing the old heavier engines. Sommie, the only original crew member, remembers how big and heavy they were.

The original engine room setup required a crew of engineers, with somebody on watch below all the time. With the automated system, Sullivan goes to sleep at night putting his faith in a detailed alarm system.

It's not necessary to stand around watching gauges any more. And crewmembers on watch at the wheel no longer have to call for changes in power settings and rudder control. They have controls right in the wheelhouse.

Capt. Rosenquist would enjoy an autopilot so a crewman's hand would not be always needed on the wheel. But installing one in the Daphne probably is not feasible. So much existing equipment would have to be ripped out.

Another modification, of course, is the giant winch and pulley arrangement built on the stern deck for hauling of the barge.

"The working end of the boat," he explained, "With-out the towing winch, she'd be just another vessel."

Sometimes the Daphne comes north in the winter, too, towing barges to the ice free port at Seward.

The barges — the ones originally procured by Hinchey and now owned by PacWest — are made to carry three layers of freight. The hold carries cement, with lumber sometimes stacked in the bow area. An assortment of general cargo — boats, cars, bulldozers, piling,

building materials — takes up the deck area. Stanchions built on the deck support a layer of trailers and mobile homes.

The Daphne positions the barge alongside the Limestone for unloading and then proceeds to the municipal dock to tie up until it's time to head south.

The captain has had 32 years of sea-going life, starting with his first job at 14 aboard a Seattle area passenger vessel. He's been sailing north much of that time. There have been incidents, of course, like when the barge Kivalaska, loaded with cement and pipe, turned over and lost its cargo near Flat Island south of Seldovia.

But he says he never actually experienced terror at sea.

"You just give the Inlet due respect."

This means keeping its shoals, large tides, strong currents and strong winds in mind, he said.

The Daphne was named for a star, its captain says. "I don't know which constellation, but it's not one of the navigating stars." (His chart books list at least 50 navigational stars, Arcturus, Aldebaran, Pollux, Venus.)

It's a busy crew. Sullivan is forever tinkering with his engines and generators. Everybody polishes brightwork and waxes cabinetry.

The Daphne doesn't look like it does for nothing.

There Was An 'Anchorage' Before Anchorage

Back in 1915, when the Alaska Railroad was under construction, there was no Anchorage but there was an anchorage.

For years the Ship Creek area had served as an occasional "anchorage" for Cook Inlet goldfield and trappers' traffic. So when the railroad construction got under way, the government began to bring equipment here by boat. At first crews anchored offshore and lighted cargo ashore.

Soon, the railroad put in a small dock toward the south end of the waterfront near the existing Pacific Western Lines Dock. Mail and supplies

were off-loaded here and a post office set up on the dock. Later, according to Jack C. Anderson Jr., this area silted in and the railroad put in another dock just south of the existing petroleum dock.

In 1917 the federal agency handling sales of Anchorage city lots promised prospective buyers that the new city would be a seaport — a promise long in coming as all freight was coming in on the railroad.

By the early 1920s, a couple of canneries, Emard and Soneke, were set up in the Pacific Western Lines area. The Emard cannery, now owned by Whitney Fidalgo Compa-

ny, operates at the same site.

In 1938, Jack C. Anderson Sr., started passenger service to Anchorage, tying up at the two old railroad docks. About the same time, the late Heinie Berger was running two freighters, the 65-foot Kaslof and the 95-foot Discovery, between here and Seattle and a small sawmill began operation just below the Government Hill bluff.

During the early '40s, the military provided materials and got the railroad to beef up its old dock, the one next the petroleum dock. Known as Ocean Dock, it provided moorage for vessels bringing supplies to Alaska

during the Japanese occupation of the Aleutian Islands. It was later also used by civilian shipping.

These old pilings are now rotting in place.

All through these years, Anderson recalls, the entire port area, up to the dirt road now named Ocean Dock Road, was mud flats. In 1947 his father acquired a railroad lease on what's now called Anderson Dock and started filling it in.

"We managed to get Al Ghezzi to start bringing his Alaska Freight Lines barges to our dock," Anderson said.

The two Andersons, father and son, also put up a wooden building.

Also in the '40s, city fathers began agitating for port development. In 1944, the late Anthony J. Dimond, then the territory's representative in Congress, introduced a joint resolution calling for a survey of Cook Inlet with a view to improve navigation, provide harbor facilities for Anchorage and develop hydroelectric power.

About 1951 Ken Hinchey started filling in mudflats to the seaward side of Cannery Row, and started bringing barges in. In 1960 he procured the old wartime supply ship

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Limestone with a crane on top for \$40,000 and stuck it at the side of his new-made land. Ever since, it's been used as a dock and also as a bulk storage plant for cement. His holdings were sold several years ago to Sealaska Corp., and are operated now as Pacific West Lines.

In 1948 the city tried to get some federal matching funds for developing the small boat harbor area. But the place remains the primitive launching area it's been throughout the years, a place where fishermen and recreational boaters take their boats in and out of the water.

The small boat area also has been utilized as a storage area for fishermen and other small boat owners and a couple of small boat service businesses occupy space next to the launching area.

In the '40s, various small, private boat marinas were established in the adjacent area. They're being phased out now due to increases in the railroad leases.

The oil companies started bringing tankers to Anchorage in the '40s, discharging the oil into lines leading to storage tanks. Earlier oil had

come into Anchorage via the railroad.

The city towed the old surplus military vessel, Sachett's Harbor, into place in 1947, just off the Anderson dock, and used its generating capacity to help provide power for the area. Actually the city managed to get just half of the boat all the way to Anchorage.

Oil to fuel the generating boat was brought up once a year via tanker and run over to the ship through a special pipeline.

Sachett's Harbor was sold and towed away about 1960. A new bow was built and now it's a wine-carrying tanker running from California to the East Coast.

In 1950 the Army Corps of Engineers issued a report favorable to development of a city port. So in 1952 the city contracted with George Treadwell, consulting engineer with the Seattle Port Authority, for a study. He reported that engineering was feasible and a port would probably pay its way.

The city then tried to get the port built by the federal government, but ran into roadblocks, partly because of opposition by the railroad.

In 1954 Anchorage taxpayers approved borrowing \$2 million in general obligation bonds and in 1956 they okayed another for \$6.8 million. The combination provided the legal authority for the city to proceed with arrangements for financing.

Two years later, the city started trying to get authorization for the Corps of Engineers to pay for the annual dredging chores that would be necessary. This was eventually accomplished.

Port construction started in 1958. The city's new port, with the first 600-foot section completed, was used for the first time in April 1961. A barge discharged cargo.

For the next three years the port didn't get much business. Alaska Steamship Company used the Seward dock and freight proceeded to Anchorage by rail.

The April, 1964 earthquake put the Seward and Whittier ports out of commission and gave the Anchorage port its big chance. Tonnage has grown ever since and the port has shown a profit ever since 1969.

The earthquake also finished off the old Ocean Dock. "It just kind of fell into the water," Anderson said.

In 1964, Sea-Land Service started service on a regular basis.

By 1965 the temporary wind, wave and work-battered petroleum dock at this end of the municipal port was said editorially "to resemble a roller coaster." It was replaced.

In 1968 the railroad extended a lease on acreage for a small boat yard. It was eliminated this spring when lease rentals were increased.

Toten Ocean Trailer Express started service the summer of 1975 with a 790-foot trailership, The Great Land.

Sea-land and Tote now come in twice a week on regular schedule, and preferential berthing has been provided for both.

The municipality's port expansion program will be finished this summer with completion of a new header system for the petroleum dock and a mooring dolphin and ship-to-dock trestles for use by Tote.

Port Director Bill McKinney said he thinks existing port facilities will be adequate for the next five or six years.

A marketing study to determine the port's future direction is in the offing.