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## Port's Golden Anniversary

Tuesday will be the 50th anniversary of a great event in Houston's history; one might say the greatest, in its ultimate effects.

On the morning of Nov 10, 1914, nearly one-half of the city's population, lining the banks of Buffalo Bayou, cheered a nearby cannon shot, fired by remote control when President Woodrow Wilson pushed a button in the White House. This signalized the official opening of the Houston Ship Channel to seagoing ships from Bolivar Roads at Galveston to the Turning Basin, with a new depth of 25 feet and a bottom width of 100 feet.

Miss Sue Campbell, daughter of the then Mayor Ben Campbell, christened the new world port by tossing a floral wreath into the water at the Turning Basin, and a 21-gun salute from a revenue cutter followed. Next, water craft from almost every city and town on the Gulf Coast joined in a boat pageant.

**IN THE GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY** celebration Tuesday those ceremonies will be reenacted insofar as is possible. It is hoped that arrangements can be made for President Lyndon Johnson to press the button at his Texas ranch, where he has been since last Tuesday's election. Also the President has been invited to be the principal speaker at an anniversary banquet Tuesday evening at the Shamrock-Hilton Hotel, if he can come. Gov John Connally will speak at the dinner.

In the forenoon program at the Turning Basin, the floral christening ceremony will be repeated by Mrs George E. Woods of Houston, granddaughter of Miss Sue Campbell who performed it in 1914. As in 1914, there will be a parade of port and private boats on the Ship Channel, and in addition, an essay contest for Houston area school children.

**IN A SENSE, HOUSTONIANS** have more to cheer on the 50th anniversary of the Ship Channel's opening than did those who witnessed the actual event. For we know what it has meant to Houston, while they could only hope and dream. And the actual consequences doubtless have exceeded their fondest dreams.

Shallow-draft steamboats and sailing craft had plied the sluggish Buffalo Bayou since the founding of the town of Houston in 1837. Early in the 20th century the federal government deepened the channel first to 12 feet, then to 18½ feet. That helped, but not enough to ac-

commodate ocean-going vessels. Then, beginning in 1910, aggressive civic leaders persuaded Congress to match local funds to dredge it to 25 feet. It was the completion of this project, making Houston a deepwater port 50 miles inland, that was celebrated 50 years ago. Since then the channel has been progressively deepened and widened to its 40-foot depth and 400-foot width part of the way, and 36-foot depth and 300-foot width the rest of the way. But, since the 1914 event, as Howard Tellepsen, chairman of the Port Commission, said in his annual report last year, "we have grown from the terminus of a dredged-out muddy stream to one of the leading ports of the nation and the world. "Approximately one-third of Houston's economy is directly tied to the Ship Channel, the port itself, and to the industry which has located along its banks."

**SINCE 1910, THE FEDERAL** government has spent \$6 million deepening and maintaining the channel. And the investment has paid off fabulously. Customs revenues collected by the government amount to almost half that much each year. Nearly 4,000 ships annually visit the port.

Metropolitan Houston's population today is 10 times what it was at the time of the Ship Channel dedication 50 years ago. Most of its phenomenal growth to sixth place among United States cities has resulted directly or indirectly from its port, which ranks third in the nation in point of total tonnage shipped.

**ALL THIS IS** what Houston will celebrate on the port's 50th anniversary. And what of the next 50 years? More and more wharves are being built, port facilities are being expanded and improved. The port is preparing for even greater growth in the future. "We have just begun to grow," declares Port Chairman Tellepsen.

In the golden anniversary observance we should pay tribute to the pioneer business and professional leaders whose determined civic zeal was responsible for the Ship Channel's development up to the point it reached in 1914. Also to those of the succeeding half-century who have carried on and with equal enterprise have built it up to its present proportions.

The port is still our chief material asset, and will continue to be, for another 50 years and more.