

THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE
ROTOGRAVURE
MAGAZINE

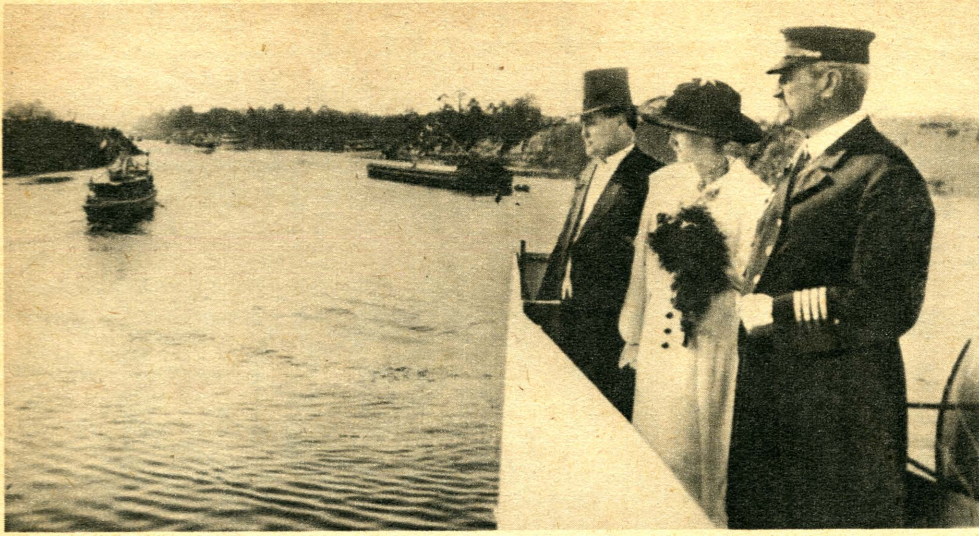
NOVEMBER 7, 1954



November 1954						
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November Girl--T. C. U.

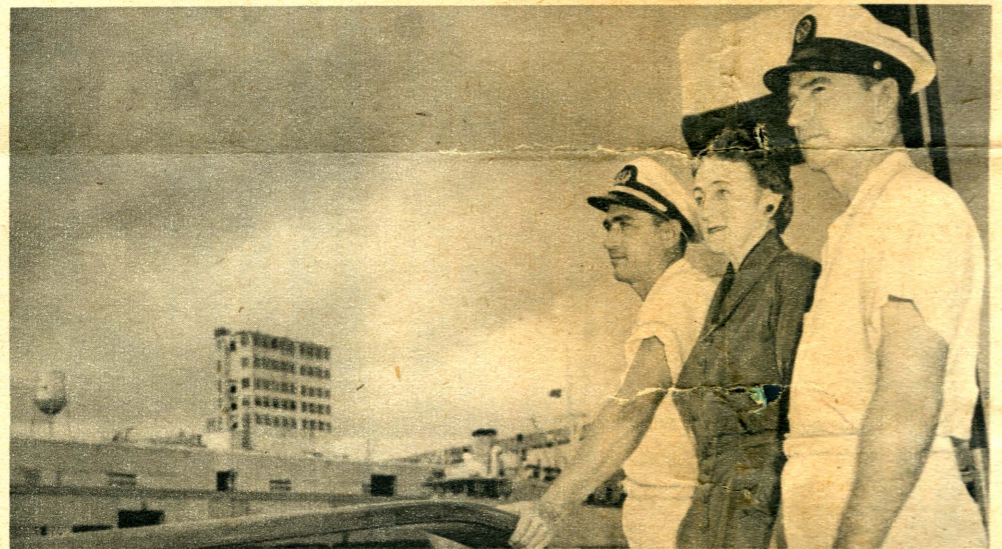
40 Years for Port Houston Pages 6 and 7



At the christening of Port Houston in 1914, Miss Sue Campbell, now Mrs. Norman V. Pillot, stood with Capt. A. W. Grant, first captain of the Battleship Texas, and Gov. O. B. Colquitt as a flotilla steamed past.

IT TOOK ONLY 40 YEARS TO MAKE HOUSTON A SEAPORT GIANT

At the same site, Mrs. Pillot takes a 1954 look at the booming port. At left, is Tom B. Gibson, captain of the port inspection boat, and at right, Ollie Cheairs, steward.



PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON interrupted a cabinet meeting, pressed a button and, on a bank overlooking the Houston Ship Channel, a mortar ripped the noonday silence.

Its report sounded the opening of what was to become the second busiest seaport in America.

Next Wednesday, the Port of Houston will be 40 years old, and the opening shot is still echoing 'round the world.

When the cannon fired in 1914, a young lady stepped forward and tossed a bouquet of white roses in the Turning Basin.

"I christen thee Port Houston," said Miss Sue Campbell, daughter of Mayor Ben Campbell. "Hither shall come ships of all nations and find a hearty welcome."

But nobody heard her.

Hurrahs and shouts of 10,000 spectators drowned out all but the raucous whistles and toots of steam yachts and locomotives present for the occasion.

Not so many decades before, the mere idea of a Port of Houston had been termed "the damdest fake out of doors."

In 1914, Houston didn't have much more than a

By Julian P. Fisher

brand-new 25-foot channel leading 50 miles to sea. Ships tied up to trees along the banks. The arrival of deep-sea vessels practically called for a city holiday. Ship captains were interviewed for their reactions to navigating the narrow waterway.

But the Port of Houston's days as a burgeoning terminus for world commerce were not far off.

Within a year, the first regular steamship service started with the arrival and departure of the Ss Satilla.

Bond issues for waterfront improvements succeeded and industry took hold. Refineries went up and tankers called at their deepwater terminals. Cargo piers began to stretch up and down the Manchester and Turning Basin portions of the channel.

Houston's population, which was 78,800 in 1910, rose to 138,276 in 1920.

The city came to be the nation's biggest cotton port. Grain from all over the Southwest found its way to export channels in the Port of Houston, and administration was turned over by pioneering city harbor boards to port commissions.

By 1925, the channel had been dredged to a depth of 30 feet and in 1927 total port tonnage had jumped to 13,000,000 tons a year. In 1922, the entire year's tonnage of less than 3,500,000 equaled a month's tonnage of today. By 1939, industries had invested more than \$200,000,000 along the waterway.

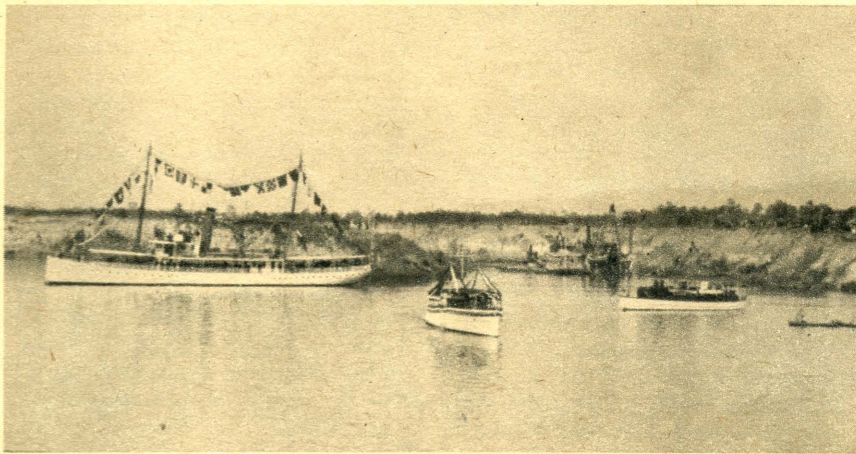
World War II brought a slump in Houston's world trade, but the port bounced back in 1945. A new peak was attained in 1948, when Houston became the second port in the nation on the basis of army engineers' reports on deep-sea tonnage. It hasn't lost that distinction yet.

A 36-foot channel authorized by Congress is 80 percent complete. More than 100 steamship lines offer their services in the port, and capital investments in the channel by industry now have been estimated at nearly \$2,000,000,000.

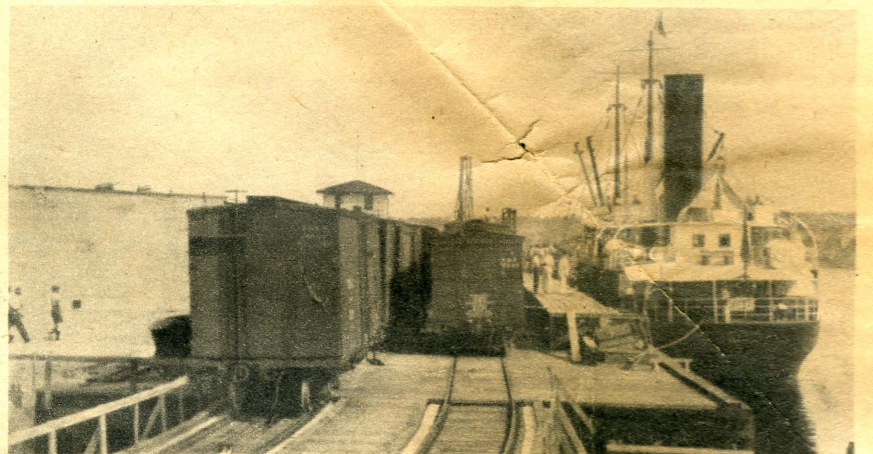
That was a pretty important bouquet tossed in the Turning Basin back in 1914. And for the future, Houston is striving for more bouquets—especially marking its eventual attainment of first rank among the nation's seaports.



Where ships once tied up to trees, deep-sea terminals provide steel and concrete avenues for world trade in the Turning Basin of Port Houston.



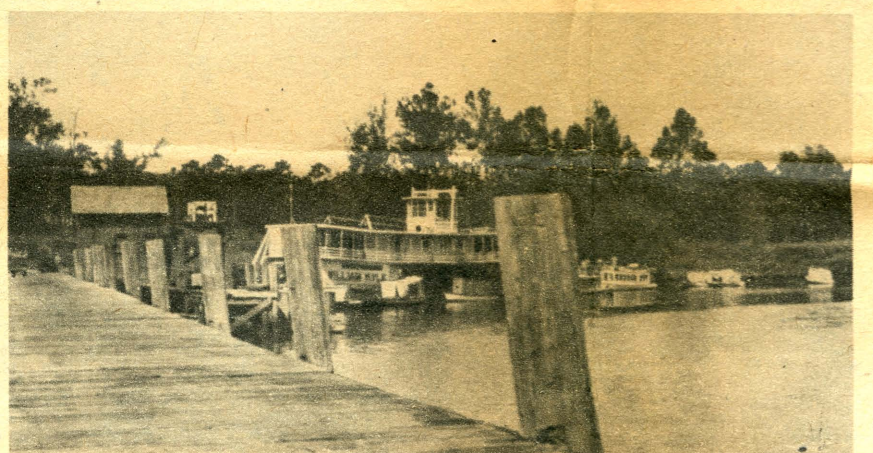
Opening day found the revenue cutter Windham and other flag-bedecked vessels assembling in the newly dredged Turning Basin.



The following year, Southern Steamship Co.'s Ss Satilla inaugurated deep-sea service in the port.



Satilla's cargo included barrels of oil discharged at the port's first public dock, site of Wharf 1.



Long Reach docks replaced this water front facility of the International-Great Northern R.R. Co.