Anniversary Issue
A PUBLICATION OF THE GREATER BATON ROUGE PORT COMMISSION
PORT OF GREATER BATON ROUGE

DEEP WATER

1952-2002

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Serving Our Region For 50 Years And Counting...

From rough-hewn birchbark canoes to the steamships of the early 1800s, vessels on the mighty Mississippi have found safe harbor at Baton Rouge.

In the early 20th century, private docking facilities constructed by Standard Oil served most of the area's growing commercial, industrial, and agricultural shipping traffic. The need for public docking facilities became apparent in the early 1920s, and in 1926 the Baton Rouge Municipal Dock opened. Located on the east bank of the Mississippi adjacent to the present I-10 bridge, this structure can still be seen today.

But Baton Rouge continued to grow, stimulated by a burgeoning petrochemical industry and dynamic agricultural growth. According to Jack Burk, consulting engineer with the firm of Barnard and Burk that built the initial port facilities, it was the railroad industry that pushed for the creation of a true, "first-class" deep water public port.

Several of the rail transport companies hired Ernest Wilson, an attorney working in-house for Kansas City Southern, to lobby for the project. Several cities were looked at as potential sites, but the Greater Baton Rouge area – specifically, the west bank at Port Allen – presented the ideal place for a deep water port.

Governor Robert F. Kennon signed legislation creating the Greater Baton Rouge Port Commission on November 4, 1952. Present at the ceremony were (standing, left to right) Ernest Wilson (first Port Commission president), Rolfe McCollister, Sr., Stewart Wallace, Charles Duchein, J.E. Jumonville, Sr., Thomas Jewell, Percy Roberts, Horace Wilkinson, and Paul B. Landry.

Thanks to the efforts of Wilson, the railroad representatives, and others in the petrochemical and maritime communities, the Louisiana legislature established the Greater Baton Rouge Port Commission in 1952. Wilson served as the first commission president, overseeing the initial site selection, purchase, financing, and construction. Building began in 1954, and the first vessel, a molasses carrier called the *S.S. Clarisse*, called on the port in 1956.

A molasses carrier, the S.S. Clarisse, was the first vessel to dock in 1956, once construction was completed in 1954.

Al Genre, who worked for many years at Rogers Terminal and Shipping, remembers that as a high schooler in Port Allen he could hear the noise of construction while the port was being built. Ralph Hill, a longtime employee of Baton Rouge Marine Contractors, saw the No. 2 Cargo Dock being built when he first returned home from the military in 1955.

Gary Pruitt, who worked at the port starting as a payroll clerk in 1964 and served as executive director from 1987-1998, recalls attending the port's dedication ceremony with his father. He was a freshman in high school. The governor attended, and Pruitt's dad told him, "This port is going to be a real big deal one of these days." Pruitt's father could not have been more accurate. The port's economic impact has been vast, generating an estimated 3,604 direct jobs yearly, with a payroll of $107 million a year. State and local spending and tax revenues have grown continually over the years. And the potential for continued future growth is tremendous.

The past 50 years have seen a great deal of change on the river and at the Port of Greater Baton Rouge. It is inevitable that the next 50 years will bring changes and challenges as well. But one thing is certain: the port will continue to play its vital role in river commerce and in the prosperity of Louisiana.

"Direct Quote"

Roger P. Richard, CEO

I'd like to welcome all of you to this special edition of the port's *Deep Water* newsletter, commemorating the port's 50TH Anniversary – 50 years since legislation was signed creating the Greater Baton Rouge Port Commission back in 1952.

We've taken a step back in time in this issue to remember the early days of site selection, construction of the port's first facilities, its growth and expansion and its impact on the Greater Baton Rouge area over the years.

I can't tell you how proud I am to be part of the leadership of this long maritime tradition. With my own upbringing, growing up in and around the docks in New Orleans, I feel a great sense of duty and responsibility for all of the dedicated port employees who have served this community in the past and those who will serve in the future. As the seventh director of the port since its establishment, I look back upon our port's accomplishments with pride and with appreciation toward its previous leaders, and those individuals who have worked at the port to make it what it is today.

The port, the area, and the maritime industry have experienced tremendous growth since the early years, and the port has grown with the changing times and demands. While we celebrate with pride the port's 50 years of contributions to the economic vitality of Greater Baton Rouge, we must build on that success by constantly looking for opportunities to upgrade port facilities or improve the port's infrastructure.

The port's potential is limitless. The future will rely on our creativity and ability to attract industry and cargo. The port will require good facilities and management that takes into account the entire realm

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Port Partners

While the petrochemical industry is, of course, a vital component of the port's commerce, another large segment of its clientele has been – from the very beginning – agriculture.

Cargill, Inc., played an important part in the port's construction, signing on to operate the grain elevator and wharf that was built in 1954. Also important to the port's initial financing and construction was its lease agreement with Industrial Molasses Corporation to operate a molasses terminal at the facility.

Today, the port's 7.5 million bushel grain elevator handles soybeans, soft red wheat, oats, corn, and other grain products – just part of the diverse array of agricultural products that make their way through the port each year. An average of 1.4 million tons of grain, or 25 percent of the state's total grain production, moves through the Port of Greater Baton Rouge annually.

The port provides oats and corn for feed for the dairy industry in the Florida parishes and about eight parishes west of the Mississippi River. The public grain elevator serves as an export outlet for 31 Louisiana parishes, handling 30 percent of the state's soybean crop, 26 percent of the corn crop, and 25 percent of the wheat crop.

On an average day during harvest, as many as 300 trucks visit the port with their cargoes. The grain elevator's location places it close to the state's major grain production areas and is estimated to save the state's farmers more than $1.25 million annually. Another example of the port's focus on choosing partners in agribusiness is a new, state-of-the-art raw sugar storage and distribution complex.

Cargill, Inc.'s grain elevator and docks, prior to the construction of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.

Construction of the Molasses Terminal, Port of Greater Baton Rouge docks looking west. 1955

The sugar facility adds another dimension to the port's goal of being an agribusiness-centered port serving the agricultural industry throughout the heartland of the United States and the state of Louisiana.

Community Coffee's plant at the port receives coffee beans and then roasts and blends them before shipping them out to new destinations.

Port's Engineers Recall the Challenges of Deep Water Construction

Obviously, the Port of Greater Baton Rouge did not spring up overnight. Its current facilities are the result of 50 years of nearly continuous planning, building, expansion, renovation, and improvement. Once an ideal site was chosen, the initial construction project consisted of a general cargo wharf and transit shed, two finger piers, the grain elevator, and the molasses terminal.

K.J. "K" Thomas, Project Engineer, and Jack Burk, Consulting Engineer, both with Barnard & Burk during the early construction years of the port.

This project was a massive undertaking that challenged the ingenuity of the young engineering firm awarded the design contract. The docks, grain elevator, and molasses terminal did not stand alone. Each required railroad tracks and yards, water supply and fire protection, cargo handling equipment, and other associated facilities.

"We were young engineers at the time," remembers Jack Burk, who was a consulting engineer with the firm of Barnard and Burk when construction began on the port in 1954. "Our competition was just appalled [that we were awarded the contract]."

Young or not, the engineers of Barnard and Burk knew their business and were intimately involved with the selection of the site for the port, its planning, financing, and construction. For the first decade of the port's construction, the firm helped survey and obtain markets, prepare economic feasibility studies for each phase of development, assist in the issuance of revenue bonds for financing, prepare plans and specifications for construction, and last but not least, supervise the construction process itself.

The first consideration in building the port was selecting the ideal site. Although there was already a Municipal Dock on the east bank of the river, the west bank actually provided the ideal channel depth and alignment for a deep water port. "There's an engineering factor as to the depth of the river and things of that sort that are paramount," Burk says.

The stretch of the Mississippi River along which Baton Rouge and Port Allen are located is the longest stretch of the river without a curve in it. Where it does finally curve, the water's natural action makes the channel deeper on the west bank side, forming what Burk calls "a perfect setup" to change very little over time.

Construction began in 1954, with the onshore and the deep water phases being built at the same time. The construction period was long, in Burk's recollection. Thomas says the river's level fluctuated throughout the project depending on rainfall farther upstream. But neither engineer believes that the port's construction was any more risky than other deep water projects. Thomas says that no lives were lost during the construction.

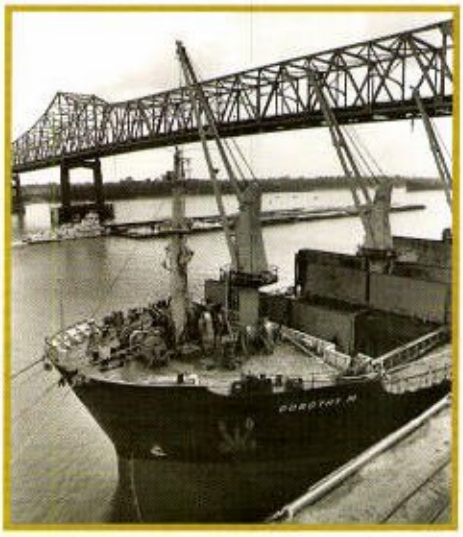
However, the sheer volume and strength of the mighty Mississippi did present engineering challenges to the port's builders. For one thing, the usual depth and alignment of concrete pilings supporting the docks and piers was not sufficient for the swiftness of the Mississippi's current. Barnard and Burk had to sink pilings much deeper than normal and set them farther apart so that logs and other large debris could flow between them.

"We had a very clever arrangement," Burk says proudly of this setup, which was unique along the river.

Thomas also mentions a unique system of floating forms the firm devised to build concrete silos for Cargill – an idea that, while not brand new, was relatively unknown along the river before the port's construction.

Though both engineers modestly downplay the difficulty of their achievement at the Port of Greater Baton Rouge, they will admit to a sense of pride. "I am proud of my accomplishment," Burk says. "I'm proud of K, too, because he built it and it stayed built."

Connecting Greater Baton Rouge *with the World*



The port can accommodate both ocean-going and shallow-draft vessels, providing unique accessibility to international and domestic customers.

Cargo from the Port of Greater Baton Rouge finds its way to other ports of call literally all over the world. An example would be the Japanese ship specially built to bring automobiles from Japan to the United States and return to Japan with cargoes of grain or coal.

Other ships in the last 50 years have transported from the port...

- **forest products to Italy, Greece, and other Mediterranean countries**
- **scrap to Japan, Korea, and China**
- **logs to Turkey**
- **wood pulp to Asia**
- **corn to Africa and Germany**
- **pipe to South America**
- **general cargo to Australia and New Zealand**
- **lead products to Yugoslavia**
- **flour destined for Egypt**
- **barrel staves to Australia**
- **Liquid bulk commodities, such as sweeteners for soft drinks, to Mexico, Australia, and South America**
- **Various cargoes to other exotic ports like Indonesia, Eastern Europe, and Russia**

Fifty

General Cargo Dock No. 1 under construction. It was the first facility to be completed at the port.

The General Cargo Dock Transit Sheds followed the completion of the cargo dock.

The Baton Rouge Barge Terminal was dedicated amid much fanfare in 1959.

Construction of the Port Allen Locks began in 1957 and allowed tugs and barges to move between the Mississippi River and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.

DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION

1952

The Greater Baton Rouge Port Commission was created by Act No. 9 of the 1952 regular session of the Louisiana Legislature, which was adopted as an amendment to the constitution at the general election on November 4, 1952.

A. Stewart Wallace, Jr., appointed executive director of the Port Commission.

1953

Dedication ceremony for the grain elevator and wharf in July; both are in operation by October.

1956

S.S. *Clarisse* discharges first general cargo at port's new general cargo wharf on June 22.

1956

Ascension Parish added to the port's jurisdiction which already included East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge and Iberville parishes.

1957

Port Allen Locks under construction; Colonel E. Monnot Lanier named port executive director.

1958

George W. Altvater succeeds Colonel E. Monnot Lanier as executive director.

Construction begins on new public warehouse and the Baton Rouge Barge Terminal.

RAPID GROWTH AND EXPANSION

1959

Burnside Bulk Marine Terminal dedicated on January 21.

Baton Rouge Barge Canal Terminal opens for traffic in March.

Bill Herbert appointed executive director on May 15, succeeding George Altvater.

Baton Rouge Barge Terminal dedicated June 9.

1961

Port Allen Lock dedicated.

1962

Car unloader facility at grain elevator completed.

1963

End of Port Commission's lease of the municipal dock from the City of Baton Rouge.

THE BAD, THE GOOD, THE RHINOS

1964

Longshoremen go on strike in March.

Port of Greater Baton Rouge ranked 7TH among major ports in U.S.

Construction begins on Dock No. 2.

1965

Two white rhinoceroses come through the port on their way to a zoo in Omaha, Nebraska.

Port of Greater Baton Rouge, Port of New Orleans, and Port of Lake Charles associate themselves as Mid-Gulf Seaports Marine Terminal Conference.

Port provides import/export services from Japan with inauguration of cargo vessels serviced by two Japanese lines.

1968

Community Coffee leases land from the port for construction of a coffee roasting plant.

1970

Bids accepted for expansion of General Cargo Dock No. 1.

1971

First shipment of Honda automobiles received at the port.

1975

Contract awarded for construction of Transit Shed No. 3.

ANOTHER PERIOD OF GROWTH

1982

Bids taken for construction of Transit Shed No. 4.

1983

John Dutton begins term as executive director, replacing Bill Herbert.

1985

Executive director given authority to apply for foreign trade zone status for Port of Greater Baton Rouge. Contract awarded for construction of new administration building; completed in May, 1986.

1987

Gary Pruitt named executive director, replacing John Dutton.

1990

A 715-foot connection to tie the port's two existing docks together dedicated. The new $8.6 million dock allows for 3,000 feet of continuous berthing space for vessels.

1994

The humanitarian vessel *SPIRIT*, sponsored by the "Feed the Hungry" organization, docks at the port and is loaded by contributions from the port and others in the maritime community.

$9.3 million river-deepening project creating a 45-foot Mississippi River navigation channel completed.

1995

The *Petersfield* hauls two record loads of forest products in the summer from the port to the Mediterranean, loading 27,389 short tons.

1997

German luxury liner, *C. Columbus*, docks at the port and brings 300 tourists to the area.

MASTER PLANNING FOR MODERN TIMES

1998

Roger Richard selected as executive director to replace Gary Pruitt.

Contract awarded for reconstruction of Inland Rivers Marine Terminal, its Transit Shed, and the extension of Transit Shed No. 3.

The luxury yacht, *Mediase*, owned by former partner of Microsoft, Paul Allen, visits the port.

1999

Commission institutes "Port Partners" program, sponsors WBRZ Channel 2's "WeatherNet 2" as community education initiative.

Inland Rivers Marine Terminal completed.

2000

Port provides Baton Rouge Magnet High School and Holy Family Catholic School in Port Allen with a WeatherNet 2 monitor in association with WBRZ.

Strategic Master Plan developed by TranSystems, Inc. charts course for Port of Greater Baton Rouge.

Port ends 2000 with $12 million in reserves and a 12% increase in tonnage.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

2001

Port CEO, Roger Richard, elected president of the Ports Association of Louisiana (PAL).

Nine port employees recognized as volunteers for the Senior Olympics.

Accounting Department receives Certificate of Achievement for Excellence from the GFOA for the 7th consecutive year.

Louisiana Sugarcane Products Cooperative, Inc. begins construction on state-of-the-art sugar distribution and storage complex.

2002

Port teams with Osprey Lines to launch new container-on-barge service at Inland Rivers Marine Terminal.

A view of the port prior to the construction of the U.S. I-10 Bridge. Note the old Municipal Dock directly across from the port, between the two ships.

In 1990, almost 25 years after Cargo Dock No. 2 was completed, the two docks were connected to create a total of 3,000 continuous feet of berthing space.

A ground-breaking ceremony in 1997 launched the port's intermodal terminal and barge facility, named the Inland Rivers Marine Terminal (IRMT).

A new millennium was celebrated with the addition of two locomotives operating on port property, displaying distinctive Port of Greater Baton Rouge insignia.

Louisiana Governor Mike Foster noted the importance of the port's partnership with Louisiana agribusiness in a 2001 ceremony to initiate construction of a new sugar distribution and storage complex at the port.

RHINOS, PIANOS, AND DIRT... *Oh My!*

Anyone who's been around the port a long time will probably say that the most unusual cargo ever seen is white rhinos.

In November 1966, two rare white rhinoceroses were transferred at the port from their ocean-going vessel to a train for the remainder of their journey to a zoo in Omaha, Nebraska.

Some other strange, unusual, and exotic cargoes that have passed through the port in its 50-year history include:

— "Mr. Sugurata," a 1,600-pound Brahman bull shipped from Houston to Shanghai as a goodwill gift from a wealthy Texas rancher to the Chinese vice premier

— military explosives

— 126 cases of scientific equipment used in a study by LSU researchers off the coast of Nicaragua

— corn and cotton combines

— huge fuel capsules for the space shuttle, which passed through Baton Rouge in March 1978 on their way to Huntsville, Alabama, to be filled with a specially prepared fuel

— a piano, a Mercedes, and a Volvo, among other personal items shipped back to America by overseas travelers

— a "goodwill" shipment for the poor in Africa, organized by a local humanitarian group and made up of tons of individual donations that took nearly a month to accumulate

— Louisiana topsoil – also known as good, old-fashioned dirt – from the digging of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway

— a trolley car, 41 containers of wine and motorcycles, and 12 new Opal automobiles, which made for some atypical cargo unloaded from the Russian vessel *Sverdlovsk*

CARGOES *Changing with the Times*

At the Port of Greater Baton Rouge, the well-known adage is true: change is the only constant. Gary Pruitt, who worked at the port for a total of 34 years, says the cargo handled has changed over time in type as well as volume and method of shipping.

When Pruitt started working at the port as a payroll clerk in 1964, he remembers a lot of the cargo he saw was from Dow Chemical Co. "It evolved from Dow to forestry products and scrap to handling pipe," Pruitt says. "And we got into the log business."

Another major type of cargo in the 1960s was cars, tractors, and motorcycles. In those days, the port employed prisoners from Angola State Penitentiary to drive the cars one at a time off the ships. This method eventually became too expensive, and the traffic in automobiles diminished over time, although it hasn't stopped entirely.

Forest products included liner board, wood pulp, lumber and logs.

Cargill, Inc. had a "tremendous" grain business from the port's very beginning, bringing grain from the Midwest by rail to Baton Rouge. Soybeans, corn, and wheat are still major cargoes handled at the port today, in addition to bulk sugar, molasses, fertilizer, coal, coke, ores, alloys, and other dry bulk cargoes.

The biggest changes have been in the demand for certain products and the development of new technologies. According to Richard Savoy, Director of Terminal Operations, Port of Greater Baton Rouge, there currently is a global slump in demand for forest products, whereas "just a few years ago we were setting records." Savoy has seen this kind of fluctuation before and believes it's all part of a natural economic cycle. "History tells me that it will come back," he says.

As for new technology, shipping methods have changed with the times, moving steadily from labor-intensive loading techniques – carrying individual sacks by hand, or driving

Cars, trucks and other vehicles were common cargo in the 60's.

cars off a ship one by one – to increased mechanization and containerization. Many of the changes allow the port to compete effectively with other transportation options.

"What they're going to do with containers is certainly a move in the right direction," says Ralph Hill, retired president of stevedoring firm Baton Rouge Marine Contractors. He's referring to the port's new container-on-barge service that will allow the petrochemical industry and others to move containers through the port to New Orleans or Houston rather than using trucks or rail.

Innovation and strategic thinking are helping the port to attract new clients with entirely new types of cargo never before seen at the Greater Baton Rouge docks, such as bauxite and steel plate.

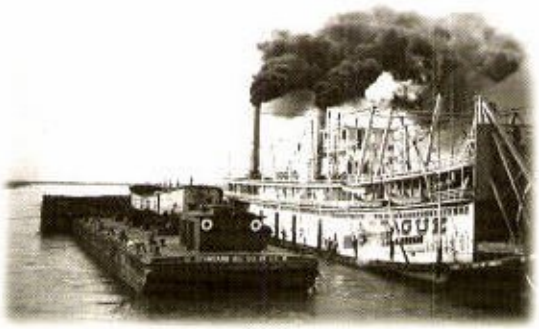
"Absolutely, there have been changes," Ralph Hill says. "But changes are good."

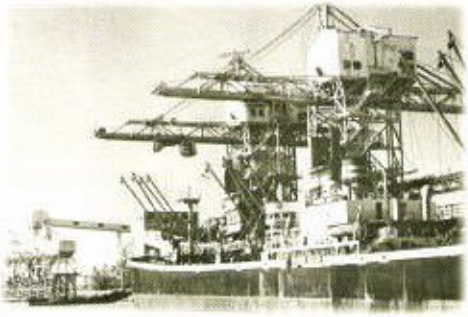
Container-on-barge cargoes are the latest change and are an important part of the port's strategic plan.

Around The Port

OUR HISTORY

1952-2002





1. In 1909, the completion of the Standard Oil Refinery (now Exxon-Mobil) energized the economy of the Baton Rouge area and accented the importance of the Mississippi River to the future growth of the region. *The Sprague*, one of the last working paddlewheelers on the river, ties up at the refinery's private docking facilities.

2. The Baton Rouge Municipal Dock was completed in 1926. It pre-dated the Port of Greater Baton Rouge and can still be seen today on the east bank of the river just south of the U.S. I-10 Bridge.

3. From the arrival of the first ship at the general cargo docks, the port has been an economic engine for the parishes of East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, Iberville and Ascension, providing jobs and attracting industry to the area.

4. Early cargo handling methods were labor and equipment intensive. As technology improved, production capabilities increased, as did the size of vessels calling on the port.

5. A 45-foot deep channel from Baton Rouge to the mouth of the Mississippi, constantly dredged by the U.S. Corps of Engineers, allows deepwater, ocean-going vessels to reach the port.

6. The luxury cruise liner, *Royal Vicking Queen*, stopped at the port for tours of plantation country.

7. The Navy ship *U.S.S. Halyburton* made two visits to the port and was toured by hundreds of excited school groups and curious residents.

8. The largest ship ever to call on the port, the *Arafura Sea*, measured the length of two and one-half football fields.

Direct Quote *continued from page 2*

of international trade. Our job will be the same as it was since the beginning: to promote international commerce and provide jobs and economic development for the region.

As you enjoy some of the stories of the port's "good old days," I hope you will become even more aware of its importance. I urge you to continue to help promote the port and support its initiatives so it can contribute to the economic vitality of the region and create jobs for our citizens for at least another 50 years.

PORT OF GREATER BATON ROUGE

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 25-26, 2002
Louisiana Business & Technology Expo
Centroplex – Baton Rouge, LA

November 7, 2002
Ocean Commotion 2002
LSU Pete Maravich Assembly Center
Baton Rouge, LA

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