A guide to the Avon Refinery Crude Oil Shipping, Receiving and Handling Study and Utah Construction Company Dredge specifications, 1957, 1956

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A Guide to the Avon Refinery Crude Oil Shipping, Receiving and Handling Study and Utah Construction Company Dredge specifications

HDC1662

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**Title:** Avon Refinery Crude Oil Shipping, Receiving and Handling Study and Utah Construction Company Dredge specifications

**Date:** 1957, 1956

**Identifier/Call Number:** HDC1662 (SAFR 23819)

**Originating agency || Utah Construction Company:** Tidewater Oil Company

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**Abstract:** The Avon Refinery Crude Oil Shipping, Receiving and Handling Study and Utah Construction Company Dredge specifications (SAFR-23819, HDC 1662) consists of a report produced by the Bechtel Corporation, Refinery Division of San Francisco for the Tidewater Oil Company about the feasibility and strategies for lightering deep draft super and hyper tankers in order to accommodate their transit to the Avon Refinery located upstream of the Carquinez straits, and a specifications document produced by the Utah Construction Company for a 30 foot hydraulic dredge driven by a steam turbo-electric plant.

**Physical Location:** San Francisco Maritime NHP, Historic Documents Department

**Language(s):** In English.

**Access**

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**Acquisition Information**

SAFR-02213

Field Collection

**Historical or Biographical Note**

The Tidewater Oil company operated the Avon refinery in 1957, and the Utah Construction company purchased dredging machinery in 1956.

In 1913, the Associated Oil Company, a small drilling and pipeline manufacturer owned by the Southern Pacific Railroad, built a refinery at the point where the railroad crossed the Carquinez straits and where the Suisun bay empties into the
larger San Pablo bay, near the city of Martinez, California. The refinery was named the Avon refinery because it was located within the Avon section of the Southern Pacific Railroad track system. The refinery was acquired in 1920 by the Pacific Oil Company which expanded the operations in 1923 and 1924 to include the manufacture of gasoline. In 1931, the Avon refinery was purchased by the Tidewater Oil Company, which was a subsidiary of J. Paul Getty's Standard Oil of California. In the mid 1950's, Tidewater Oil needed a plan to deal with the advent of supertankers and hyper-tankers to transport oil and gasoline in and out of the Avon refinery. These much larger draft vessels could enter San Francisco Bay, but not the shallower waters beyond the Carquinez straits. The plan involved a system of "lightering" the ships by offloading a portion of their cargo into smaller tankers thereby raising the draft of the super-tankers sufficiently to allow them to continue to the wharf. This system, developed in 1957, is still in effect and supertankers that have too deep a draft are "lightered" to this day.

The Utah Construction Company was founded in 1900 by Edmund Wattis and his three brothers to support the building of the Western Pacific Railroad through the Sierra Nevada Mountains. After the completion of the railroad route from Salt Lake City to Oakland, California the company expanded to other construction projects and in 1931 was the leader of a six company conglomerate that built the Hoover Dam. In 1942, the Utah Construction Company with US Army and contractor help built the 1,500 mile Alaskan Highway in just seven months. In the early 1950's the company diversified into mining and dredging operations, and in 1955 signed a contract with the city of Alameda to fill in the tidal mud-flats beyond the old sea wall and created the area now known as South Shore. In 1971 the company changed its name to Utah International, merging with General Electric in 1976. In 1984 the company's assets were sold to a multinational conglomerate (BHP) and the company ceased to exist.

**Collection Scope and Content**

The Avon Refinery Crude Oil Shipping, Receiving and Handling Study and Utah Construction Company Dredge specifications (SAFR-23819, HDC 1662) consists of a report produced by the Bechtel Corporation, Refinery Division of San Francisco for the Tidewater Oil Company about the feasibility and strategies for lightering deep draft super and hyper tankers in order to accommodate their transit to the Avon Refinery located upstream of the Carquinez straits, and a specifications document produced by the Utah Construction Company for a 30 foot hydraulic dredge driven by a steam turbo-electric plant.

The Avon Refinery study, produced in 1957, was created at a time when the Tidewater Oil Company was considering expansion options at the plant and contains maps, charts, tables, drawings, foldouts, economic data and narrative studies of recommendations for the problems of lightering ships in the channel prior to their transit up to the existing wharf facilities. The 117 page report is contained in a three posted cardboard binder with seven tabbed sections labeled as follows: (1) General; (2) Shipping; (2.6) Charts; (3) Receiving; (3.7) Drawings & Charts; (4) Handling Facilities; and (4.7) Drawings & Charts.

The Utah Construction Company Dredge specifications is a 133 page document created in 1956, that lists in detail the company's requirements for a dredge to be built by a contractor. The document was bound at the top margin with an Acco clip and a cover and is divided into 15 tabbed sections labeled as follows: Addendums; Dredge Hull; Turbo Generator; Condenser; Small Pumps; Machinery; Boiler; Heat Exchanger; Deaerator; Distilling Plant; Duplex Fuel Oil Pumps; Electrical Equipment; Pneumatic Controls; Swing and Spud Hoists; and Gear Reducers.

**Collection Arrangement**

Each report in a single folder

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Dredging.

Associated Oil Company

Tidewater Oil Company

Utah Construction Company

San Francisco Bay Area (Calif.)

Official reports

Corporation reports

Economic development