

Port of Klickitat: The First 25 Years, an Annotated Chronology

Historic Background

The Port of Klickitat and its neighboring port districts on the Mid-Columbia River came into existence in the wake of Bonneville Dam construction (1933-37). Bonneville was the initial project in the series of dams eventually built on the Columbia. Its construction stemmed from the transmittal of the first “308 Report” to Congress by the Secretary of War, Patrick J. Hurley, on March 29, 1932. The stated purpose of the report was ‘the formulation of general plans for the most effective improvement of the [Columbia] river for the purposes of navigation, and the prosecution of such improvement in combination with the most efficient development of the potential water power, the control of floods, and the needs of irrigation.’ Navigation was of particular importance to the Mid-Columbia, where the obstruction of rapids had only been partially mitigated by locks and canals at Cascade Locks and The Dalles. As the report noted, ‘the present commerce on the middle section is unimportant, but there is every reason to anticipate a substantial commerce with large transportation economies if the river is improved for efficient and economical barge navigation.’ President Franklin Delano Roosevelt underscored this point during his August 1934 visit to the Bonneville construction site. In a speech delivered there, he said that ‘I hope it will be found the part of wisdom to install ship locks in this dam at this time, so that navigation may be extended to the interior.’ Roosevelt’s lobbying on behalf of a ship lock has been credited with influencing the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers to alter the dam’s planned lock dimensions of 56-foot wide by 360-foot long (with a 9-foot sill depth) to 76 X 500 feet, and a sill depth of 27 feet. The stage was set for port facility development under the aegis of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, with project participation by the respective Mid-Columbia port districts. One of those was Klickitat County Port District #1, approved by County Commissioner District #1 voters in the general election of November 1944.

Chronology

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| 9-30-1944 | Certificate of Sufficiency to petition for port district filed with Klickitat County. |
| 10-2-1944 | Port district hearing to determine boundaries (less than the entirety of Klickitat County) advertised in Goldendale <i>Sentinel</i> . |
| 10-16-44 | Vote to form a port district authorized by Klickitat County. |
| 11-1-1944 | Hearing on formation of port district within boundaries of county commissioner’s district #1 held at Goldendale. Klickitat County Port District #1 is approved for inclusion on the November 7, 1944 general election ballot. The port is to be organized as three districts, with commissioners representing each district: District #1 (Bingen, White Salmon, Columbia and Burdoin Heights); District #2 (Lyle, Klickitat, |

Hartland, North Dalles, Wahkiacus and Appleton); District #3 (Fruit Valley, Husum, Trout Lake, Laurel, Glenwood and Major Creek).

- 11-20-1944 County commissioners officially recognize successful outcome of Klickitat County Port District #1 vote and its specific results. The elected commissioners for Districts 1-3, respectively, are Leon D. Killian, Homer H. James, and S. F. Wnuk. Length of terms (all initially four years) and timing to general elections is recorded.
- 1-12-1945 *Mt. Adams Sun* newspaper headline announces “Port Commissioners Take Oath.” This was in accord with the direction that port commissioners ‘shall take office on the second Monday in January following their election.’
- 4-16-1945 *Mt. Adams Sun* reports that “Fire Destroys Pole Plant Monday.” The Twin Harbors Lumber Company operation, a WWII defense production plant was consumed by fire, along with the neighboring Nordby Lumber and Box Company office. Port district records were among the fire losses.
- 5-12-1945 Port meeting minutes note earlier fire loss of port records and record election of Homer James as commission president and Leon Killian as secretary. Meetings on the second Monday of every month approved.
- 7-11-1945 Port files first budget (Resolution 1-45) with Clerk of the Board of Klickitat County Commissioners. The budget is based on a tax levy of 2 mills per dollar of assessed valuation on property within the port district. The 2-mill tax levy provides ‘sufficient evidence that the Port district will construct, maintain and operate suitable public terminal facilities to justify the improvement by Corps of Engineers, United States Army.’
- 12-10-1945 Port meeting minutes note that Bingen Point is favored as a location for a Corps of Engineers’ proposed barge channel, due to its protection from Gorge winds. Bingen Point, part of the present Port of Klickitat holdings, was located in the parcel referred to as Bingen East, and was not under Port control at that time. Initial property purchase and development occurred in the parcel known as Bingen West, near the Hood River toll bridge. Starting in 1952, 126.49 acres were acquired.
- 2-26-1946 U. S. Army Corps of Engineers recommends modification of Columbia River improvement project to include ‘a barge channel to the waterfront at Bingen, Washington...provided local interests furnish free of cost to the United States all rights of way, agree to maintain depths in the mooring basin, and to construct, operate and maintain necessary mooring facilities in the basin.’ Congress authorized funding

- for the cooperative harbor project later in 1946.
- 11-4-1946 Port commissioner Homer James receives notification of his election, at the October 25, 1946 meeting of the Inland Empire Waterways Association meeting, 'to the office of regional county vice president for Klickitat County.'
- 5-12-1947 Harold Harris replaces Leon Killian on the Port Commission.
- 12-9-1947 Port minutes record proposed port at North Dalles (Dallesport) by parties from The Dalles.
- 11-16-1948 R. J. Bates Jr. and Oscar Wallace are newly elected commissioners, replacing Harold Harris and S. F. Wnuk.
- 9-15-1950 Deane R. Nichols fills the commission vacancy left by Commissioner Bates departure.
- 12-18-1950 Joe Crowe is a commissioner-elect, replacing Oscar Wallace.
- 2-23-1952 Discussion on employing a Port manager results in Resolution 1-52, the hiring of Deane R. Nichols as the first Port of Klickitat manager. Port commissioners approving the position are Homer James, Roy Cain (Nichols' Commission replacement) and Joe Crowe.
- 3-3-1952 Manager Nichols discusses cooperative efforts with The Dalles Port District, and is encouraged to seek membership in Northwest Rivers and Harbors Congress and Washington State Public Port Authorities Association.
- 4-24-1952 Port officially adopts 'a Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvement within the Port District' (Resolution 3-52). The Comprehensive Scheme is centered on (1) 'acquisition by purchase or condemnation' of described lands within Section 30, Township 3 North, Range 11 (Bingen West) and (2) 'the dredging of a channel...in accordance with the approved plan of the Department of Army Engineers.' A variety of port facilities are described in the Scheme, but the emphasis is on 'storing and transporting of logs, lumber and other wood and forest products and by-products and freight.'
- 8-4-1952 \$6,000 in vouchers approved for purchase of the Hearn & Thompson properties in Bingen West.
- 9-2-1952 Nichols resigns as Manager, but returns in November 1952 as a Commissioner.

- 12-9-1952 Roy H. Cain acting as Secretary/Manager for Port of Klickitat.
- 1-23-1953 A. C. McCormick replaces Joe Crowe on the Port Commission.
- 1953 The first barge channel is dredged at Bingen West 'from the main river to the harbor area, 2000 feet length, 200 feet wide and 10 foot depth at low water.'
- 5-12-1953 Don Reed, Jr. succeeds Deane Nichols on the Port Commission.
- 7-14-1953 Port of Vancouver representatives confer with the Port of Klickitat on barging lumber to Vancouver for overseas shipment. Vancouver encourages transportation as a Port priority, with industrial development secondary. Roy H. Cain is officially Port Manager.
- 8-11-1953 Eversole property in Bingen West is purchased by the Port for \$15,000.
- 3-9-1954 The Port owes \$42,000 for dredge and filling work performed by General Construction in 1953.
- 1-11-1955 Seaton and Sprague property (Bingen West) purchase authorized for \$4,175.
- 4-27-1955 N. W. Haner Company presents plans for Comprehensive Scheme, expressing preference for Bingen East property 'as being the best and cheapest for a long time proposition.'
- 5-4-1955 N. W. Haner & Associates issue Comprehensive Scheme of Development for Klickitat Port District No. 1. The report describes dredging and filling activity for the log handling facility at Bingen West and notes 'that its full utilization will be dependent on adequate protection from the strong westerly winds to which the area is exposed.' Haner recommends a focus on logging-related port infrastructure and development of a small boat marina. Bingen East is mentioned as a site to 'be acquired by purchase or condemnation.' Dallesport North Site receives mention as a location with access issues tied to dam construction at The Dalles. Haner concludes that 'there is no present justification for development of Dallesport North.'
- 1-4-1956 Lumberman Wallace E. Stevenson expresses opinion favoring development of local industry over log rafting and transportation, at January commission meeting.
- 2-8-1956 Port commissioners vote to initiate property price inquiry of Bingen East property owners. From this time forward, further development of Bingen West is seen as increasingly unattractive.

- 3-15-1956 Columbia River Development Association organized after Port of The Dalles submits Articles of Association for Upper Columbia River Development Association on March 7, 1956. Port of Klickitat is one of nine members, six of which are Mid-Columbia port districts.
- 11-13-1956 Oliver P. Kreps is elected as Port commissioner, replacing A. C. McCormick.
- 2-12-1957 Washington House Bill No. 144 seeks to raise an additional 2 mills for acquisition and development of industrial sites. The resulting act is codified as the amended RCW 53.36.100 and ‘provides that a port district having adopted a comprehensive scheme of harbor improvements and industrial developments may raise revenue...by an annual levy not to exceed 2 mills on each dollar of assessed valuation of the taxable property in the district.’ RCW 53.36.100 limits the levy to six successive years.
- 3-12-1957 R. T. Anderson joins Port commission, replacing Commissioner Reed, who had resigned on 2-26-57, citing his position opposing further Bingen West expenditures.
- 7-28-1957 Recommended purchase of Duncan property in Dallesport cannot take place, because the Comprehensive Scheme does not include Dallesport property outside of Spearfish location.
- 8-13-1957 Comprehensive scheme amended, after a public hearing, to include greater Dallesport for future land purchases.
- 2-11-1958 K. C. Langfield replaces Roy H. Cain (resigned December 30, 1957) as Port manager.
- 4-22-1958 O. R. Kreps appointed to Port commission, replacing R. T. Anderson.
- 7-8-1958 Port orders copies of *Mid-Columbia Golden Gorge* industrial brochure, offered by Columbia Ports Traffic Bureau, featuring upriver ports.
- 7-10-1958 Commissioner James, Manager Langfield and Port attorney Edward P. Reed meet with Port of Tacoma manager Marcus E. Anderson for advice and discussion of port financial and development issues.
- 9-23-1958 Following a public hearing on September 9, 1958, the Port of Klickitat adopts Resolution 4-58, ‘amending the district’s Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Development and creating a special fund to be known as Industrial Development District Cumulative Reserve Fund, pursuant to the provisions of RCW 53.36.100, laws of the State of

Washington.’ The industrial development district’s boundaries are coincident with the parcel known as Bingen East, which is also designated as ‘marginal lands’ for acquisition and reclamation by the Port. With this resolution, Bingen East becomes the focus of future development.

- 12-8-1958 Port prepares purchase and development estimate for tracts in Bingen East Industrial District. Tract 1 encompasses 152 acres and is comprised of parcels owned by the Bartholomew Estate, Luella B. Leathers, Mount Adams Forest Products and Mount Adams Loggers Association. Tract 2 consists of 81 acres owned by John and Ruth Dickey. 4,567,498 cubic yards of fill are required to bring the property to development elevation.
- 1959 Inland Empire Waterways Association Resolution 34, passed at their meeting in October, calls for Federal funding of the Bingen Harbor Project, in accordance with the 1946 Congressional authorization. Planning funds were added to the 1959 Federal Budget appropriation.
- 10-27-1959 \$13,000 purchase of 62-acre Leathers property agreed to by Port and Leathers representatives.
- 4-22-1960 Washington State Public Ports Authorities Association reorganizes as Washington Public Ports Association, and Commissioner Homer James is named as a trustee.
- 8-11-1960 Corps of Engineers field crew performing preliminary work on Bingen Channel project.
- 10-25-1960 Mt. Adams Forest Products land purchase approved, after contact with Small Business Administration ‘cleared the way for the peaceable purchase of their marginal lands’ at Bingen Point. Mt. Adams signs the agreement on November 8, 1960, receiving \$211 per acre for 39 acres.
- 12-27-1960 Bartholomew land deed forwarded to Klickitat County Title Co. for recording. The Bartholomew heirs receive \$211 per acre for 7 acres and \$527.50 an acre for 3 upland acres.
- 1-24-1961 Mt. Adams Loggers Association agrees to sell marginal land. They retain 7 acres, while the Port obtains the remaining 32.
- 2-28-1961 Corps of Engineers advises ‘extreme end of east Bingen tract, adjacent to the Dickey dike’ for barge channel location.
- 10-25-1961 Tenneson Engineering ‘engaged to prepare project specifications’ for low dike and temporary road at East Bingen location.

- 11-28-1961 Duhrkop and Wallace bid of \$9,524.50 is accepted for low dike and temporary road work, a task that they finished by February 7, 1962.
- 2-13-1962 John Dickey 'will deed the small triangular tract at the (barge) channel entrance' to the Port. The Dickey parcel covers 1.2 acres.
- 3-13-1962 Harold L. Hull awarded land clearing project at \$149.50 per acre. Tenneson Engineering invoices the Port for \$6,506.05 for project specifications work.
- 3-27-1962 The Port Commission passes the Bingen Barge Channel Resolution (1-62), clarifying theirs and the Corps of Engineers' role in developing the barge channel, turning basin and associated improvements.
- 4-13-1962 Low Dike section B work awarded to Duhrkop and Wallace for \$12,804.50.
- 4-10-1962 Comprehensive Scheme of Development is altered (Resolution 2-62) to conform 'with revised and approved plans of the Corps of Engineers and Port Commission,' regarding development of East Bingen.
- 4-10-1962 John Dickey signs temporary spoil disposition permit for protection and fill and executes deed for entrance channel land. The Port notes that 'all phases of this transaction are completed.'
- 6-5-1962 Corps of Engineers opens bids for dredging barge channel and turning basin. The work is awarded to Willamette Tug and Barge.
- 8-28-1962 Dry fill is completed in Area A (Dickey land) and 61,000 cubic yards of fill have been deposited in Area B. Port minutes state that 'the dredge has cut through the neck of land and is operating in the old lake.'
- 10-23-1962 With work mostly completed, 34,106 cubic yards have been dredged since September 10, 1962 (at a cost of .32 per cubic yard). An additional \$900 for shore work is also incurred.
- 11-27-1962 Ledge rock in northeast corner of barge turning basin to be removed
- 12-28-1962 Harold L. Hull to be paid \$381.33 per acre for land grubbing in Unit B spoil disposal area. Land clearing and burning complete by 4-23-1963.
- 3-12-1963 Port accepts Duhrkop and Wallace bid of \$16,776.25 for construction of high dike B. Port also accepts Tenneson estimate of \$5440 for west bank Unit A work.

- 4-9-1963 Leon Berry, Port Auditor since 1946, is to be compensated for the first time ever, at \$25 per quarter.
- 5-14-1963 Bank protection in Unit A 'completed with the exception of several small work items.'
- 6-11-1963 Port seeking Federal Department of Commerce construction grant to help finish dredging, dike A, and marina work.
- 7-9-1963 Total cost of high dike B is \$34,498.02.
- 7-23-1963 Port authorizes 'proposed development plan based on the full borrowing capacity of the port district, plus a Federal matching grant to accomplish dredging of northwest corner of the new harbor, complete construction of dike A and road to elevation 91 feet, and construct a boat marina.' The \$185,000.00 Port borrowing capacity will be utilized through issue of general obligation bonds.
- 7-23-1963 Corps of Engineers' contract dredge is removing ledge rock by 'using a giant spud to break the rock' as opposed to drilling and blasting.
- 9-24-1963 Rock ledge work nearly complete and 'rock has been stockpiled on east disposal area.'
- 10-8-1963 Bingen Harbor project costs are estimated at \$363,245.00. The Comprehensive Scheme of Development is to be amended to include construction of its associated improvements
- 11-12-1963 Resolution 3-63 amends the Comprehensive Scheme 'to provide for construction of additional improvements in East Bingen area' (dike A and its road, marina dredging and facility construction, barge dock, and additional dredge and fill work).
- 1-28-1964 Willamette Tug and Barge estimates 80,000 cubic yards of material to be dredged in northwest corner. \$40,000.00 is the estimated cost.
- 2-11-1964 Corps of Engineers states that it 'has done all the work for the Port at Bingen that has been authorized by Congress.'
- 3-24-1964 D. R. Montgomery bid of \$9882.50 accepted for rock removal and land leveling in East Bingen. The price is lowered by \$1500, with the deletion of work west of the access road.
- 8-11-1964 Port agrees to sell 3.05 acres of surplus East Bingen land to SDS Lumber for \$450 an acre. The sale is formalized as Revised Resolution

- 2-64 on August 23, 1964.
- 12-21-1964 Blockage on Jewett Creek leads to extensive flood damage on the Port's West Bingen property.
- 1-30-1965 A second flooding of West Bingen occurs, when a dam breaks above White Salmon.
- 2-23-1965 An estimated 10,716 cubic yards of debris clog the West Bingen marina. Port seeks disaster assistance.
- 3-28-1965 Port agrees to sell to SDS 'property east of Jewett Creek (5 acres) and interest in the offshore island for \$70,000.00 cash,' 35.1 acres in all.
- 5-25-1965 Resolution 5-65 amends the Comprehensive Scheme to reflect sale of property to SDS.
- 7-27-1965 John J. Winn, a port consultant (formerly general manager of the Port of Portland), is hired to evaluate the West Bingen Port property.
- 9-14-1965 Corps of Engineers land adjacent to The Dalles Dam is under discussion for Port acquisition.
- 11-9-1965 Resolution 9-65 formally authorizes sale of land to SDS.
- 11-23-1965 Draft of plan for land acquisition and port development at Dallesport is being prepared.
- 4-12-1966 Port commissioners engage Tenneson Engineering to 'prepare an application for Federal assistance under the Public Works and Economic Development act of 1965 for the Dallesport project.'
- 6-14-1966 Dike A and its floodgate reach an eventual cost of \$8636.42.
- 6-28-1966 Port commissioners vote to form an Industrial Development District at Dallesport.
- 7-12-1966 The Corps of Engineers reports that 'the Port's application of December 21, 1965 is approved for purchase of the surplus government land at The Dalles Dam.'
- 8-9-1966 Resolution 4-66 approves the advertisement of Port property west of Jewett Creek for sale: 'This comprises the former Seaton & Sprague and the remainder of the Eversole tracts and includes the 9 acres of industrial land.'

- 8-23-1966 SDS offers the only bid for the Port's West Bingen land. Port minutes note that 'the bid of SDS Co. of Bingen for \$55,002.00 for the purchase of the real property as advertised be accepted and approved.
- 9-12-1966 An Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant application is approved for submittal by the Port.
- 6-27-1967 The Magnesium Project, a proposed tenant for Dallesport, indicated that they 'may not accept this site for their proposed plant.' The EDA grant is imperiled.
- 12-1-1967 Port meeting minutes record the death of Commissioner Homer James, on November 24, 1967. He had served as commissioner since the inception of the Port, more than twenty-two years earlier.
- 12-28-1967 Lawrence Tidyman takes the oath of office as a Port commissioner.
- 3-26-1968 Resolution 2-68 amends and expands the boundaries of Industrial Development District #2 'to provide for the acquisition of power line easements essential to industrial development in the Dallesport area.'
- 5-14-1968 The Dow Company expresses 'interest in evaluating the (Dallesport) site, which will take about one year.' The Port Commission approves depositing \$8,400.00 in escrow for '40 acres of land and power line easement under option to purchase' from the C. T. Smith estate.
- 5-28-1968 Economic Development Administration is willing to reactivate the Dallesport grant application.
- 7-23-1968 Eugene Dennis offers to grant a power line easement through his Dallesport property for \$15 an acre.
- 11-12-1968 K. C. Langfield formally retires as Port manager and is replaced by acting manager Clarence Irwin. Early placement of the Eddins property in escrow is discussed.
- 2-11-1969 Port accepts EDA grant offer of \$2,073,000.00 for Dallesport project.
- 8-12-1969 The Port votes to take up 'the option on the C. T. Smith property at once.' \$17,480.00 is deposited in escrow on August 26, 1969, for '87.4 acres of Dallesport property, pending and conditioned on clearance of the estate of C. T. Smith.'
- 12-9-1969 Payment of \$105,000 for 374.66 acres is authorized by the Port, for 'land adjacent to The Dalles Dam at Dallesport presently owned by the Corps of U. S. Engineers.'

