

# Pilot A. T. Piner Brings Ship into Morehead City Harbor

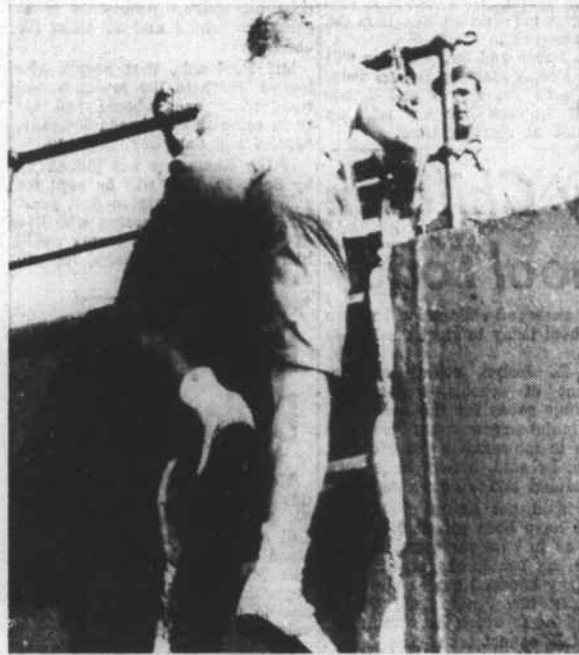


News-Times Photos by McComb

A. T. (Teenev) Piner stands on the bow of the pilot boat off Beaufort bar as the Esso tanker Annapolis approaches. In a few minutes captain Piner will board the tanker and take over as the ship's captain until the vessel is berthed at the Morehead City port terminal.



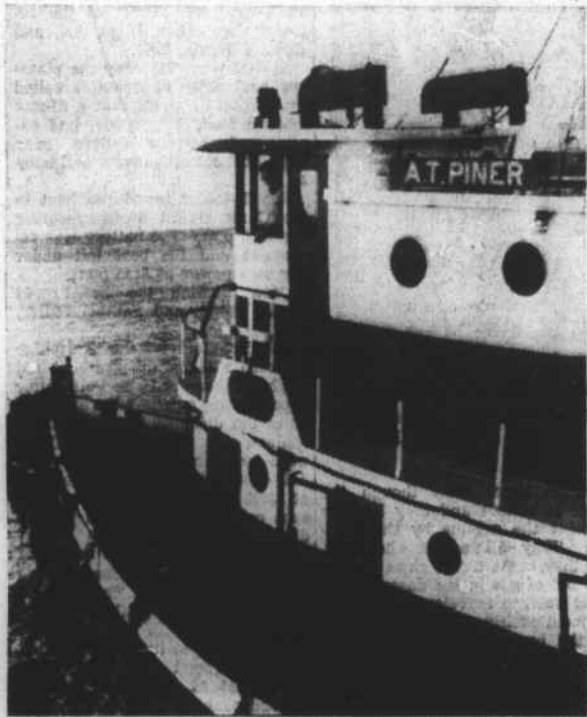
A view of the state port seldom seen by landlubbers is this one taken from aboard the Esso tanker Annapolis as she is being docked. The ship at the pier is the Coast Guard cutter Chilufa.



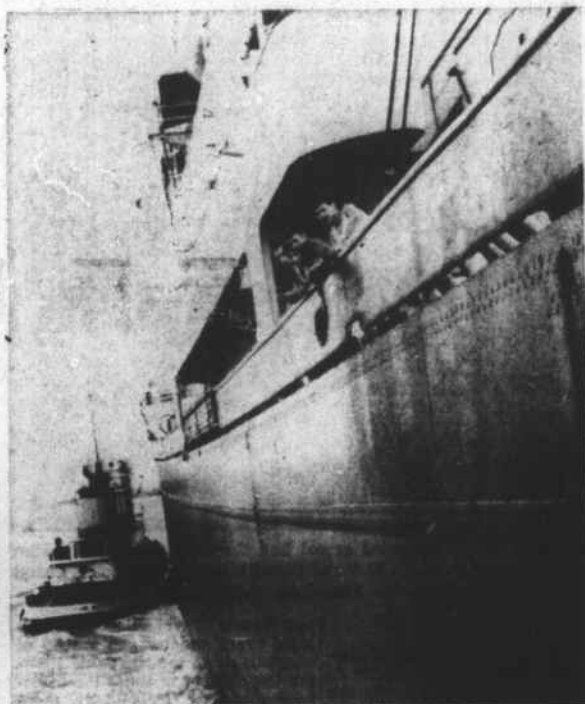
From the pilot boat, captain Piner climbs the Jacob's ladder to board the tanker. On a calm day, this is easy. But on a rough day, with the pilot boat bouncing and waves 10 feet high, the pilot has to be agile and alert or he stands a good chance of getting dunked or squashed between the two vessels.



The big ship hasn't reached the tugs yet so the crew takes time to buy from a local fisherman a bucket of shrimp.



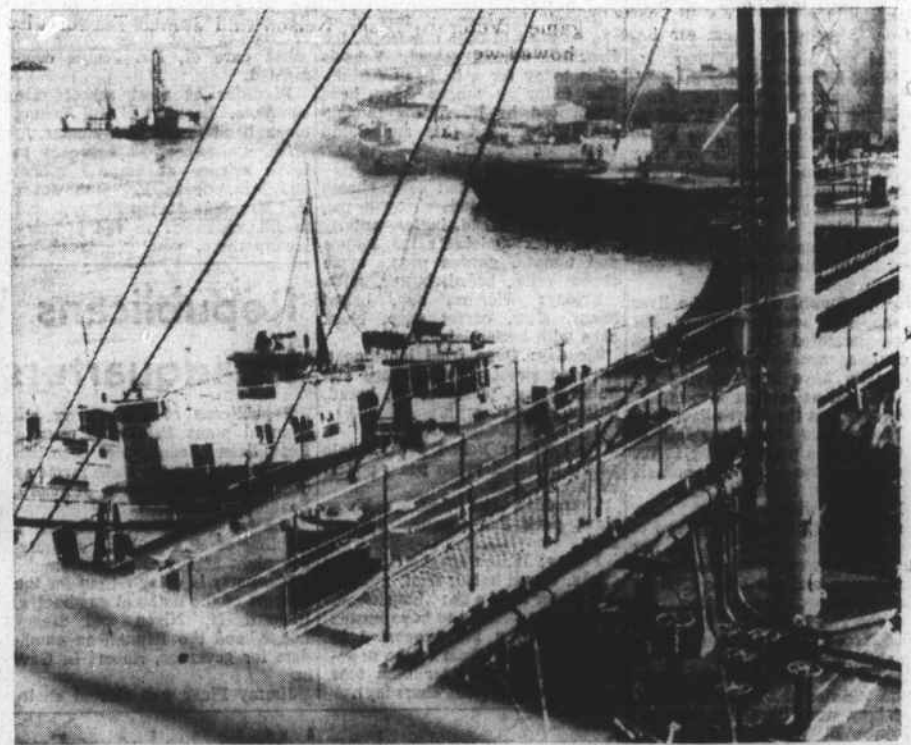
The tug, A. T. Piner, captained by Charles Rose, Harlens Island, waits for the large ship to maneuver the channel under its own power. It is usually only about 45 minutes from the time the tugs tie out, in the harbor, until the ship is docked.



As the ship nears the port the tug boats are waiting and tie on to bring it the rest of the way in.



Piloting in most harbors is a "family affair." Father teaches son. Morehead City harbor is no exception. Three of the four pilots are Captain Charlie Piner, above, and his two sons, A. T. and Charles Jr. Capt. Ira Willis, though licensed, is no longer active.



Both tugs are now on the port side as the tanker is swung alongside the dock. Dredging operations in the harbor can be seen in the left background.



Dwarfed by the large ship, a tug boat runs alongside to tie off to the ship's bow. Another tug, on the opposite side, handles the stern.



From the pilot house aboard the tanker captain Piner keeps the ship on a safe journey through the channel by telling the navigator where to steer. From the moment he steps aboard the ship, the pilot is the ship's captain and solely responsible and liable for both the ship and its cargo which is valued at approximately \$10 million.



By way of a walkie-talkie, captain Piner directs captains of the tug boats nudging the tanker toward its berth. Orders like, "On the A. T. Piner" back down one, or the "A. T. Piner" come about two, are acknowledged by blasts of the tugs' whistles.



To secure the stern of the ship while the bow is being manipulated by the tug, a line is passed by the dock. A steam-whistle on the ship tightens and loosens the line.