A FAREWELL TO THE CHANDLERS
FROM TRAPLINE TO TAPLINE: The Story of Bill Chandler

The Early Days

If there is one thread that stitches the diverse chapters of Bill Chandler's life together, it is an uncompromising commitment to the kind of hard work that not only shapes a man's backbones, but builds a character to match it. At nine he delivered pedicures. In his middle teens he ran a trap line, and drove spires with a railroad section gang. As a college student he spent summers hauling highway trucks with loads of blacksmith coal, barrels of oil and cases of dynamite. It was hard, demanding, sometimes exhausting work, but—he always has, and will until June 30, when he steps down from the presidency of Tap—"it was a very reliable way to raise a family."

And one year Chandler said, things were so bad he had to live off a moose his father shot along the rut of roads. "One of the things I used to shudder about was blacksmith coal, because he had had to drop out from time to time to replenish his funds, college was work. "I'd have to say my college life was a lot more strenuous—lots of lights—then went out four miles to the lake. All you could see were the lights and the pilot."

"That assignment in the Kuskokwim Valley came at the end of some years of off-and-on work for the Alaska Road Commission, which built and maintained roads in the area in the days before statehood. "This was a federal agency under the U.S. Corps of Engineers," Chandler said.

Chandler joined the commission while still a high school senior and his first assignment was right in keeping with what was already shaping up as a lifetime pattern: long hours, hard work. "I was doing all the driving, making contact with the oil business—since gasoline was among the supplies we had to wrestle 100-pound empty steel drums to the dock. He had to wrestle 100-pound empty steel drums to the road shipping dock. He had to wrestle 100-pound empty steel drums onto the truck, tip them onto a handcart and roll them off the truck."

If hard, the work was also welcome, because by then he had plans to go to college and he had to provide his own tuition. Not many years before his death, Chandler's iffy, cautiously conceding that the free woodworker's life was no longer possible, had gone to work for the railroad. "It was a painful process for him," Chandler says, "but he couldn't provide the kind of money you needed for college in 1930." And neither, he added ruefully could he. "After two years of work with the Road Commission I saved up a little nest egg, and in 1932, I went to my first year of college at Washington State, and then two quarters at the University of Washington. I ran out of money, come back to Anchorage in the spring of 1934, worked until that fall, went back up for two more quarters, and then worked for about a year and a half and accumulated enough money to get through the last two years. I was able to make the last two years on a continuous basis, but all told it took eight years after high school graduation to get through college."
Building a Pipeline...

In 1945, Bill Chandler, then winding up an assignment in Whitehorse, Alaska, got a letter from H. H. Hall, Chief Engineer of Standard Oil Company of California, asking him what he wanted to do after the war was over. "I had heard about this pipeline to be built across the Arabian Peninsula to the Mediterranean," Chandler said. "So I wrote back to Hald that when the war was over I would like to be involved in the design, construction and operation of the pipelines." Chandler chided. "And I sure am now my way." He sure did. In April 1946, Hall called Chandler and told him he was to leave at once on a reconnaissance trip to the Middle East during which he and two other engineers, one from SOCAL and one from Texaco, were to scout possible routes for a pipeline from Saudi Arabia to the Mediterranean.

Chandler was no longer the super recruit who had, in 1938, graduated from the University of Washington and turned to its back on the Alaska Road Commission for a chance with SOCAL thanks to the quirk of fate that so substantially affected a man's career. Chandler, in 1946, was a seasoned engineer with exactly the qualifications SOCAL would need for its projected pipeline in Arabia. Two years in Saudi Arabia as an engineer (during Aramco's prewar construction boom), two years of pipeline engineering in SOCAL's Engineering Department (including a crash war-time program of converting a 26-inch pipeline in California's San Joaquin Valley from gas to crude oil) and another turning point in his career—three years as field manager of one of World War II's costliest undertakings: the Canol Project—were to scout possible routes for a pipeline from Saudi Arabia to the Mediterranean.

It was H. H. Hall who was behind all this, too, Chandler recalled. "In the spring of 1943 he called me into his office one day and asked me one question: how would you go about building a road in a tundra and permafrost area. Thanks to my experience with the Alaska Road Commission I knew the answer: build on top of the ice. If you just dump the mass insulation the permafrost melts and you're grading a road you wind up with a swamp."

"I guess it was the answer he was looking for, because he sent me up to Skagway, Alaska, as a SOCAL consulting engineer to the U.S. Corps of Engineers. SOCAL had a contract with them under which SOCAL advised the Army and the contractors on planning, design and execution of the Canol Project."

"That wasn't long enough for us," Chandler said, "so we had people conducting route surveys in temperatures as low as 55 Fahrenheit, but that's more 40 degrees in the Makkah Mountains. In fact we had people out surveying using dog sleds."

"However, if it was long enough, for a man who would one day take on the presidency of Tapline, a marvelous education. At the peak of his war time he was in charge of 1,000 men and was in charge of a web of contractors and sub-contractors so large they had to build a camp for 1,000 men. After the project was finished, Chandler was made pipeline superintendent and eventually project manager of the operating company, SOoil Company of Alaska. His final responsibility was the potentially costly job of extracting SOCAL from their east-west arrangements with the U.S. Government."

"Now, in 1946, Chandler was not only facing a new challenge, but getting an important promotion, one that may to some have seemed insupportably fast."

"I think," explained Chandler, "that I just happened to be in the right place at the right time. I had pipeline experience and this was to be a pipeline project. I had experience with project management and this was to be a major project management. I had experience in Saudi Arabia and a large part of the construction would be in Saudi Arabia."

"Whatever the reasons, Skagway, in 1946, sent Chandler and two other men to the Middle East to inspect the proposed routes for the proposed pipeline. Time was important so they flew right to Egypt, checked into Shepherd's Hotel and chartered an Egyptian Airways DC-3 flown by TWA pilots. For three weeks they criss-crossed the area looking at all possible ways of getting a line across the mountains east of the Gulf of Aqaba, across the Sinai Peninsula and the Suez Canal—and also at the possibility of building a line from Suez to Alexandria building today."

"After three weeks, Chandler's two colleagues went back to report on the possibility of a pipeline to Egypt and Chandler went on to what was then Palestine, and for two months explored Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. He looked at the ports of Haifa and Conver and he looked at Sana and Zeined. He looked at Beirut and at Tarsus. He rode and flew over the mountains and hills, along the coastline and into the interior. He concluded that Sana was the best site and so in his report, but added favorable estimates of Sana and Tarsus (to which IPC and the Britans Government have subsequently contracted pipelines)."

"In his exploration Chandler also became aware that engineering was going to be one only aspect of the problem and not necessarily the most important."

"By then," Chandler said, "the two Zionist underground organizations, the Irgun Zvai Leumi and the Stern Gang, had launched their terrorist campaigns to drive the British out of Palestine. While I was there, for example, two British soldiers were killed in an ambush grove and about 100 people, many of them British soldiers, were killed when the terrorists blew up the King David Hotel. Bill Lenahan, the man who did the work, was in the far wing of the hotel at the time. He was negotiating for the rights to build our pipeline through Palestine and Trans-Jordan."

"In his report, therefore, Chandler thought it wise to add a note on how political developments might affect the operation of a pipeline: Twenty-six years later his words, which conclude a report called 'Reconnaissance of Trans-Jordan Pipeline Route to the Eastern Mediterranean,' (By W.R. Chandler, September 6, 1946) sound eerily prescient."

"The impact of American intervention in the Palestine issue is being felt most strongly in Syria, which is rapidly becoming a battlefield of anti-American feeling. An attempt has been made to stir up anti-American feeling, an attitude previously directed against the French and to a lesser extent the British. While it is considered unlikely that the Syrian and Lebanese Governments will take any direct action against the American interests, a decision unfavorable to the Arabs on the Palestine issue may furnish an adequate excuse for major reprisals by some of the militant desert tribes against anything American. In any event, individual acts of violence, such as the recent bombing of the American Consulate in Beirut, may be expected."

"Six months after he submitted that report, Chandler came back to Beirut and moved into the Normandy Hotel. The pipeline was "got" and he, with the title of Chief Engineer, had a large share of the responsibility. After getting the route surveys under way, he moved his headquarters into the Metropole Hotel, which had been laid out as an office building, and, with all but one of the major obstacles out of the way, set out to construct the line."

"There was a long delay when the Syrian Government failed to notify the engineers giving permission to build and maintain a pipeline across Syria, but in 1949 the convention was finally ratified and construction got underway again, this time with Chandler as Assistant General Manager charged with the Saudi Arabic portion of the construction. In the interim Chandler had worked on above-ground techniques that would figure prominently in the construction of the line in Saudi Arabia."

"It was in this period that Tapline had its most visible impact on the Middle East. As Pipeline's needs grew, trade, shipping and transport boomed in Beirut and the Gulf. So, to an even greater degree, did restaurants, hotels and nightclubs in Beirut. In Saudi Arabia, Stu Bechtel's crew of men was building the line across the formidable plains and desert country between the Gulf and the borders of Jordan. In Lebanon, Syria and Jordan Willams Brothers' crew was climbing
mountains, digging trenches, and wrecking their equipment on the durable volcanic rock running east through Syria and Jordan. At the peak some 13,000 men worked for Tapline, including some 1,500 energetic, well-paid Texans and Oklahomaans, most of whom fished to whatever excitement they could find on days off.

"Which more," Chandler said with a grin, "the Kit Kat and a few other such establishment whose reputations and fortunes were made forever."

In the fall of 1950 Bechtel's now smoothly-functioning crews brought their section of the line to the border between Jordan and Saudi Arabia. William Brothers, still plagued by tough country and durable stone, didn't get there for another three weeks, and when they did all they found was a deserted pipeline mining at them. Bechtel's crews had already packed up and gone home.

After the link-up of the two sections—rather like the famous joining of the Union Pacific Railroad—there wasn't much else to do but turn on the oil, and on December 2, 1950, the first tanker was loaded at the terminal in Sidon. "It was," says Chandler, "a big day for Lebanon."

They were not qualities to criticize in the 1960's, however. At no time had Tapline, either internally or externally, faced worst challenges.

Internally, Tapline was faced with its first labor tension and for Bill Chandler that was a matter of personal anguish. As a direct offshoot of his interest in management and industrial relations, Chandler had been responsible for many benefits Tapline voluntarily granted—bit—
tons that had made Tapline a leader in Middle East labor practice. He was directly responsible, as one example, for the creation of the Basic Loan Assistance Plan in Lebanon, which made it possible for Lebanese employees to obtain long-term, low-interest loans for the purpose of building or buying their own homes.

"It took nearly four years for us to accomplish this, to find, for example, a financial institution that would accept accrued indemnities and Thrift Plan savings as collateral. And we had to convince the Board of Directors to go along."

In some ways he had not changed, however. He was still single—

minded, disciplined and determined. He still believed unwaveringly in the economics of pipeline operation and the work reduction that resulted. When 100 men were laid off, the work, occupied by job security, formed syndicates at Sidon and Beirut.

Internally, the problems were much more severe. Starting in 1963, the Middle East governments had begun to demand and get much higher transit fees—at a time when tankers were getting larger, more plentiful, and much less costly to operate. As a consequence the economic advantage of the pipeline over tankers almost disappeared, and the operation of Tapline became marginal. Not once, between 1963 and 1967, Chandler said, was the pipeline working at capacity.

After the 1967 Arab-Israeli war closed the Suez Canal, Tapline was, to say the least, temporarily accessible again. But that was only after a three—

month closure because of the war, and in the meantime political hostility had reached such a point that ordinary closures tended to go on and on. In 1969 the pipeline was closed for three months after it was sabotaged in the occupied Golan Heights, and from May 1970, to January 1971, it was closed because Syria was making claims the company felt unable to meet. Not only were each of these closures costly in themselves, but each time higher costs had to be assumed before operations could be resumed.

In the meantime, shipments around the world had begun to turn out the "mammoths," tankers so big that even going around Africa they can compete with Tapline and which, in the future — "in the not too distant future" — may render Tapline useless. Spot—tanker rates, says Chandler, are so low nowadays that they were in 1970.

"We have tried to convince the governments involved," Chandler said, "that if they would modify their demands on Tapline they would in the long run make more revenue from the pipeline operating at full capacity. We can demonstrate this conclusively. But … Chandler shrugged, "so far it's been to no avail."

And the future? Well, Chandler says, with a mixture of relief and sadness, that the problem of Brock Powers, the Senior Vice President of Arabian who, on July 1, will also take on the presidency of Tapline, and of George Larson, Tapline's Executive Vice President. "Me, I'm going to be concentrating on golf, hunting, fishing and other hobbies in Idaho."

Another landmark passed!
THERE WAS A GIRL

Once upon a time there was a shy farm girl in New Plymouth, Idaho, who decided she wanted to see the big city. She went off to see it, fell in love with equally shy but very determined young man, flew off to the South Pole for a fairy—tale wedding and then went with him to live in a city by the sea for the rest of her life.

Well, most of her life. Because that shy farm girl is Clair Good Chandler and although she has been living by the sea for nearly 25 years, next week she is going back to Idaho with the man she married long ago: Bill Chandler, President of Tapline.

The farm that Clair Chandler grew up on was not a big farm. Her parents, immigrants from Switzerland, couldn't afford a big farm, but in those days a man could make a decent living with 15 acres of fruit trees. Clair Good's father did, and Clair and her brothers and sisters—we altogether—were content.

But at 17 the world beckoned. Clair went off to Seattle, Washington, to spend two years as a student nurse at Providence Hospital and seven years as a nurse for a Seattle urologist.

But then came Canol, and Chandler was off again, this time until 1945. On behalf of the Palestinian refugees.

One of the reasons they chose Hawaii was that a friend of Clair's was there, her half brother, Nido Grew, then the U.S. Ambassador to Japan. Chandler accepted and heard Grew, 17 months before Pearl Harbor, say that the U.S. and Japan could not avoid a war.

But at last he got to Hawaii and there, amid the simple beauty of an island then untouched by the flight of tourism, made shy Clair Good of Idaho Mrs. William Chandler.

One of the reasons they chose Hawaii was that a friend of Clair's was there in Hawaii with her husband, Tom Christopher, a young naval lieutenant. Tom was Chandler's best man, but later their paths diverged. Then during the 1958 troubles in Lebanon, Tom Christopher showed up as captain of one of the carriers that the Sixth Fleet sent to Beirut, and Chandler learned about it and mentioned it to his friend Admiral Yeager, who ordered a helicopter to be made available the next day to take Chandler out to Christopher's carrier.

But the oil industry is a hard master sometimes, and just about the time Bill started talking to Clair about marriage Socal started talking to Bill about going to Saudi Arabia. Since they both said yes, something started making faces at the muezzin and he stuck his tongue out at them. He was aware of them too.

Still, there were compensations. Beirut, to an Idaho farm girl, was a marvelous experience. "There were so many interesting people to meet, both residents and visitors. It was a very rich experience. One never had time to do everything you wanted to do, even when you had plenty of help with the house and children."

There were also laughs. The first apartment Clair and Bill moved into was on Rue Sadat. It was a fourth-floor walkup and their balcony was level with, and only a few feet from, the minaret of a mosque.

"We were fascinated with this touch of local color," Chandler says, "and the first few days we rushed out to watch the muezzin sing the evening prayers every time he came. After a few months of that, however, the 2 a.m. prayers weren't quite so interesting. Then one day the kids started making faces at the muezzin and he stuck his tongue out at them. He was aware of them too."

As Bill rose in the company Clair's duties as hostess to the oil industry expanded accordingly, but it was to her self—imposed duties that she gave much more of her time. These duties included teaching, and usually little-hours dedication to charitable works in Lebanon. As a member of the Catholic Women's Guild, for example, she was the frontl ine of that group's canned—chow dinners. She was very active on behalf of the Palestinian refugees.

And now, Clair put it in a recent interview on her balcony by the sea: "It's time to go."

"When we were first here," Clair said, "we knew everyone, the legato people, the AUB people, the businessmen. We were a small community and very close. But you know, except for Archie Crawford over at International College, we're about the only ones left of the old community. She was active on behalf of the Palestinian refugees.

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During the month of June, Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Chandler were bidden a heartfelt ma‘salameh by their Tapline and Aramco colleagues and friends at a number of farewell functions given in their honor up and down the ‘Line from Qaisumah to Sidon, as well as in Beirut and Dhahran.

In Lebanon, the Chandlers were entertained at a cocktail party held on June 14 at the Tapline Sporting Club to which all Beirut-based employees were invited; a reception June 16 at the Zahrani Country Club at Sidon Terminal; a retirement dinner for Mr. Chandler at the poolside area of the Phoenicia Hotel at which Company employees presented the Chandlers with a gift of ancient mosaics and during which the famous belly dancer Nadia Gamal performed; a black-tie dinner on June 26 at Hotel Phoenicia’s l’Age d’Or to give the Chandlers an opportunity to say goodbye to personal friends in the business and professional community; and another reception held two days later at the Bristol hotel roof garden by Vice-President—Relations and Mrs. W. A. Robinson, to give the Chandlers an opportunity to say goodbye to members of the government and other members of the community.

During these functions the Chandlers were also presented with souvenirs from their colleagues and friends, including a painting by Saliba Doueihi of St. Charbel, by Government Relations Specialist Chery Nacouzi; a brass tray with the map of Tapline, by Chief Engineer F. N. Khabbaz on behalf of Beirut employees; and the three genuine antique mosaic plaques mentioned earlier.

Many other parties were held in Saudi Arabia in honor of the Chandlers during their farewell tour of Tapline pump stations and Aramco-Dhahran between May 30 and June 12.

The starting point of the Chandlers’ ‘Line tour was Qaisumah, where they were entertained at a station-wide reception held May 30 at the Recreation Center, and at a dinner party hosted by Superintendent Qaisumah and Mrs. Clarence P. Booth.

Arriving in Rafha the next day, the Chandlers got together with all Rafha station employees and their families at the Recreation Hall. During the reception the Chandlers were presented with a silver dagger made in southern Saudi Arabia. They were dinner guests later that evening at the home of Superintendent Rafha and Mrs. Ed Ritter, which was also attended by senior staff employees and their families.

Social affairs in Badanah in honor of the Chandlers included a luncheon party given by Deputy Company Representative-Representation and Mrs. Abdul-Rahman; a station-wide reception at the Recreation Hall; and a dinner hosted by Dr. and Mrs. C. Soulban, during which Mr. and Mrs. Chandler were both presented with the Saudi national dress by Badanah station employees, also a painting by Mrs. C. Soulban, and silver slave bracelets by Abdallah Ghamdi, Supervisor Community Services.

Turaif station activities in honor of the Chandlers featured a luncheon party hosted by Superintendent Turaif and Mrs. E. C. Olsen and attended by senior staff employees; a station-wide reception at the Guest House and later a smaller one hosted by Superintendent (Acting) and Mr. and Mrs. R. R. Permane, followed by a dinner party organized by the senior staff employees, and next day a small coffee hosted by Hathal Saud. During these functions the Chandlers were presented with a Bedouin carpet by station employees, a brass tray inlaid with copper, and six brass cups by Hathal Saud, and two Saudi national dolls.

At most stations, the Chandlers visited the hospitals, various job sites and the Turaif school, to give them a chance to say goodbye personally to doctors, nurses, pumphouse employees and teachers.

During their farewell trip to Aramco-Dhahran, Mr. and Mrs. Chandler visited a number of friends and operational sites. They were entertained by former Tapline Vice President—Operations and Mrs. J. J. Kelberer at a dinner party held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Curry, Associate General Counsel—Aramco. The function was attended by former Tapliners and their families who have transferred to Aramco and by a number of Aramco executives. During the party Mr. Kelberer gave a farewell speech to the Chandlers and presented them with an ancient Saudi musket.
TO ALL TAPLINE EMPLOYEES

After some 26 years of association with the Tapline enterprise, I am now leaving the Middle East on retirement.

These have been fascinating and busy years for me. When I joined Tapline it was only an idea in the minds of a few people. We knew that a pipeline would be built from Saudi Arabia, but we didn't know where it was to be located, or even where it would terminate on the Mediterranean. It has been a matter of great personal satisfaction to have participated in the creation and growth of Tapline, an experience which a great many of you have shared with me for many years. I understand there are presently 355 employees with 20 years or more of Company service. In this respect it has been particularly gratifying to me to have watched the growth and development of the people who make up the Tapline workforce.

I am proud of the history of Tapline's operations, and of the demonstrated ability of the Company to cope with the many difficult problems it has faced over the years. I am equally proud of Tapline's employees, who have carried out those operations and who have helped to solve the Company's problems. Your dedication, cooperation and fine spirit have made my association with Tapline interesting and enjoyable.

Retirement is not something to be feared. I look forward to it eagerly, as an opportunity to indulge in many activities, interests and hobbies for which heretofore there has been insufficient time. Perhaps I may find it possible to be of use in some form of public service. But at the same time I realize that nothing I may do in retirement will quite take the place of the experiences I have had in working closely with so many of you in pursuit of common objectives.

In parting, Mrs. Chandler and I want to thank all of you through whose kindness, courtesy and unfailing hospitality we were made to feel at home. We depart knowing that we are leaving behind many good friends, which makes our going away more difficult. We shall never forget you, and we hope that it will be possible to keep in touch in the years ahead.

Wm. R. Chandler