

The History of the Anchor at Lago's Gate 6

I am now sending you a revised version, but we have to admit that after two years of research, we had not been able to find the name of the VLCC which lost the anchor, nor the date that it happened.

Nevertheless, our research will not end here, as we are positive that we will find the other information pronto, based on our concerted efforts.

I am attaching four photos of the anchor: (1) the black and white is Mr. Hans Henrich Schulz from Germany pointing to the symbols on the anchor in September 2005; (2) a colored photo with family Arnolds standing at the anchor; (3) a colored photo of the anchor illuminating the scenery; and (4) family Charles Smith at the anchor.

Best regards,

Dufi Kock

THE STORY OF AN ANCHOR

The large ship's anchor located at the entrance of Gate 6 to the former Lago Colony concession stands as a lonely sentinel, its history as varied and unique as the place that it resides. The story begins sometime in the 1960's, when this type of anchor was manufactured by Hoesch Dortmund Horde, a German foundry, and patented by the "Deutch Bundes Patent" (DBP) also in Germany.. The small numbers "4112" and "4115" are believed to be serial numbers that refer to the "fluke" or horizontal and vertical parts of the anchor, respectively. The number "21772K" refers to the weight of the anchor in kilos. The anchor is approximately 10 feet 6 inches wide and 15 feet 6 inches tall.

According to Mr. Manuel M. Curiel, an ex-Lago Tug Captain, a fully laden VLCC was seeking a mooring at the 15-mile anchorage, known as Bara, on the southern part of the island. This is the usual shallow mooring location for ships awaiting orders, etc. The weather was rough with strong current. The normal procedure is that they would walk out three shackles (about 90 feet) until the anchor touches the bottom while the chain must rest on the bottom. Subsequently, they will walk out some extra shackles and when the ship starts to swing or lean on one side, the anchor is properly set. Because of the rough weather, unfortunately they did not get the time to walk out the extra tackles and because of the tension exerted on the winch, it broke and they lost the anchor and its chain.

Mr. Curiel also said that at one time a small tanker with a Korean crew, while lifting their anchor also lifted another anchor near the inner harbor. When the ship asked for assistance, he went with his tugboat along with a barge, to help. But eventually they had to cut the chain and let the anchor go to the bottom because they could not untangle them. Throughout the research, it was found that several anchors were lifted during Lago's history. For instance at one time one was lifted and placed at the HDS pier and another placed at the Old Barge Dock. At the present time there is one at Casi Bari in Santa Cruz, which is also being investigated.

According to Mr. Juan P. de Palm, who was working at the Marine Office at that time, remembers that a tanker with a 300,000DWT lost an anchor and chain after 1972, which would definitely be a VLCC, because dead weight tons for VLCC range between 160,000 – 320,000DWT and ULCCs' deadweight tons is over 320,000 tons. Also, in accordance with the International Maritime Organization (IMO), VLCC's have anchors about 22 tons. Based on the calculations that one ton is equivalent to 1000 kilograms, there is no doubt that this anchor was lost by an unidentified VLCC. Furthermore, the version that it was a smaller tanker that lost this anchor and chain at the inner harbor at the moment does not seem to be correct. Additionally, VLCC's do not berth at the inner harbor, but normally at the reef berths.

The anchor lay on the bottom of the sea with its broken chain until it was discovered accidentally according to Mr. Tony Bosch, who was also involved in the project of lifting another anchor. He said that they were trying to lift an anchor for a company whose tanker also lost an anchor in the same location. By accident they lifted the anchor, as referred to in this story, first. Subsequently, they lifted the one that they were after and placed it at the Barcadera wharf and the ship's company picked it up later.

According to Mr. Glicerio Walle who was running the Bunker Station in Oranjestad, a tugboat was initially contracted from Curacao for the lifting operation. When they tried to lift the anchor, the mooring wire broke. This was due to the friction caused to the mooring wire because the tug did not have a cylindrical roller in the back. The tugboat immediately returned to Curacao.

Another Dutch tugboat, the Smit Tak Rotterdam was contracted from Jamaica. The salvage operation was conducted by Smit Tak Towing and Peter Divers, as told by Mr. Peter Creutzberg, who was with Peter Divers at that time. Mr. Creutzberg said that it was a huge salvage tug. They dredged the anchor

chain with a special dredging anchor and then connected the chain to a winch of the tug which then hauled everything on deck and placed it on a barge, an operation of about 24 hours. Subsequently, the anchor was taken to Oranjestad and placed on the wharf in the harbor area where Custom Officers had to keep watch on a rotating shift. This brought much problem later because the government decided to charge for Customs' services. It was then decided to place it in the enclosed fence near one of the two bunker tanks, being operated by Maduro & Sons, ships' agent for tankers.

How it came to rest in its present location, is a story as interesting as history itself. The idea of placing it where it's at, started between 1980 and 1985, when one day Messrs. Wim Martinus (Harbormaster of Aruba); August (Gus) Genser (ex-Division Superintendent in Lago's Laboratory and later with Maduro & Sons); and Willie Davis (Owner of Filtec at Zeewijk in San Nicolas), were conversing with Mr. Charlie Brouns Jr. at his famous Charlie's Bar & Restaurant in San Nicolas. Charlie, a person who had many ideas for his people in San Nicolas, told them that he would like to come up with something innovative for San Nicolas. It was then that Wim Martinus asked Gus Genser: "What about the anchor in the Oranjestad harbor? This idea struck Charlie right away and Willie Davis immediately volunteered to transport it to San Nicolas, if and whenever it was ready to be moved.

Always eager to seize an opportunity, Charlie, by means of a letter, petitioned Lago's President, for permission to acquire the anchor, which was granted to him. With the assistance of Westcar and Filtec, two local companies, the anchor was relocated to its present location and dedicated "To All Seamen" on the occasion of the closing of the Lago Oil Refinery on March 31, 1985. (The existence of the letter was confirmed by Mr. Henry Coffie, an ex-Lago Manager, but we could not locate the letter).

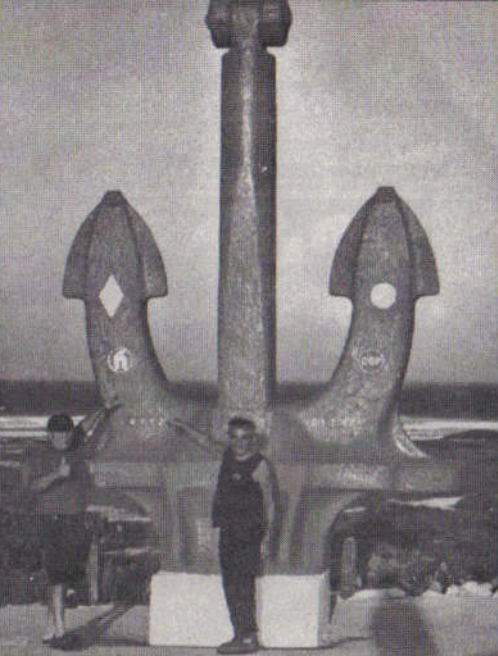
Through the years, the anchor held its ground, slowly weathering from the wind and salt spray. As time passed by, its origins and purpose slowly faded away until one sad day, on September 15, 2004, Charlie Brouns Jr. died in a tragic fall that many still recall. Thereafter, with a purpose and mission in mind, Mr. Sam Speziale, a good friend of the Brouns family, requested assistance from the management of Valero Aruba Refinery, who graciously sandblasted and painted the anchor and poured a concrete pad around it. On April 17, 2005, this monument was rededicated to "To All Seamen" in a formal ceremony in memory of Charles Brouns Jr. It stands today as a silent reminder that Seroe Colorado is part of San Nicolas and that San Nicolas is still a vibrant part of the island. The anchor continues to be "a must see" and also the most photographed historical mark on the island, by both locals and visitors alike.

Unfortunately, to this date it was not possible to find the name of the VLCC which lost this anchor and chain and neither the exact date that it happened, but research will continue. A word of thanks goes to Mr. Sam Speziale who is continuously maintaining the anchor in top condition.

Additional information: On September 16, 2005, a reporter from our local newspaper, the Diario, had a conversation with Mr. Hans Henrich Schultz from Germany. Mr. Schultz and his wife have been visiting our island for the last 22 years. He presented Diario with a lapel pin from the Hoesch Dortmund Horde Company, the company for which he works. On the lapel pin is a letter "H" which coincides with the emblem on the anchor. He said that there was a German Professor who was doing a research to find the name of the ship and also for which ship/vessel the anchor was manufactured. .

Recognition is given to: Messrs. Sam Speziale; the Brouns family; Willie Davis; Wim Martinus; Gus Genser (rip); Peter Creutzberg; Manuel Curiel; Glicerio Walle (rip); Juan de Palm; Richard Sweetnam; Celestin Semeleer; Henry Coffie; Livia Henriquez; Apolonio Werleman; Tony Bosch; Dufi Kock; International Maritime Organization; Auke Visser's International Esso Tankers Site; Ships Nostalgia Website; Lloyd's List, and Dan Jensen's website.

Dufi Kock/September 17, 2007



Mr. Hans Henrich Schulz from Germany points to the symbols on the anchor in September 2005



TO ALL SEAMEN
IN MEMORY OF
CHARLES BROWN, JR.
1941 - 2004