

Executive **DIRECTOR'S** Letter

Early in the 20th Century, Delawareans realized the great potential Wilmington has in the maritime industry and decided to build a port on the Christina River.



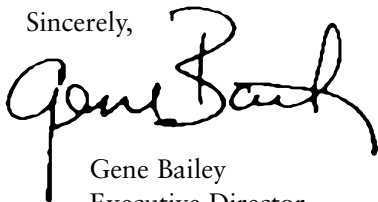
As early as 1923, the Port of Wilmington already unloaded its first vessel just prior to the terminal's official opening that year. The schooner, Jean d'Arc from Nova Scotia, sailed on an 18–21-foot deep Christina River and brought in a load of wood pulp for Maryland paper mills, according to a 1923 (Wilmington, Del.) *Evening Journal* report. The Port continues to handle paper products today.

The Christina River has since been deepened to 35–38 feet and widened to 650 feet for much larger ships. Port expansion projects have included new warehouses and berths, including a one-year-old auto and RoRo berth on the Delaware River which is connected by a dedicated roadway to neighboring vehicle processors.

This issue of Port Illustrated features key automotive companies that chose Wilmington as their auto hub. Volkswagen, which has been importing automobiles here since 1974, recently renewed its contract with the Port for five additional years, and began importing new models through our Port. In addition to its General Motors exports, RoRo transportation specialist HUAL North America loads reconditioned U.S. Military trucks and other heavy equipment exports to the Middle East here in Wilmington. AutoPort, a full-service processing and fleet modification company has just received a contract to process vehicles to aid in the reconstruction of Iraq.

We are pleased to serve and support growth of the automotive industry. Our personal service, experience, facilities, transportation infrastructure, and geographic location are key competitive advantages that make Wilmington a very attractive port to foreign and domestic RoRo equipment and automobile manufacturers. In celebration of 80 years of maritime operations at the Port and the one-year anniversary of Wilmington's new auto berth, Happy "Berth" Day, Wilmington!

Sincerely,



Gene Bailey
Executive Director

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