

60 years ago the first commercially successful container ship "Ideal X" started her voyage



On April 26, 1956 the "Ideal X", a converted oil tanker, carried 58 containers from New Jersey to Houston during her first voyage. 58 trucks were waiting to be loaded with the containers. This turned out to be the beginning of new container transportation / transport technology / international standardization of shipping containers.

The ship was owned by Malcom McLean of McLean Trucking. McLean wanted to increase the efficiency of loading and unloading. Instead of shifting individual contents he thought about loading complete trucks onto ships. This would reduce the time to load and unload ships significantly and would also save costs, space and time – the development of standardized shipping containers started.

The aim was a container that can be transported and transferred between ships, trucks and trains without problems. The first ones were constructed to the American standard truck size of 35 feet (8 feet wide by 8 feet high). Nowadays five common standard lengths exist: 20 ft (6.10 m), 40 ft (12.19 m), 45 ft (13.72 m), 48 ft (14.63 m), and 53 ft (16.15 m).

This new cargo transportation simplified the logistical process and increased the international trade within the last 60 years.

As of today more than 5,000 container vessels are sailing around the world.

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