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Maersk Line 80th Anniversary

On 12 July 1928, Leise Maersk, the first Maersk Line vessel to depart in its liner service, sailed from Baltimore on the U.S. East Coast en route to the Far East via the Panama Canal.

In her holds were Ford car parts and general cargo. Leise Maersk was carrying 3,600 tons of cargo, the equivalent of 200 twenty-foot containers (TEU). She reached Japan 59 days after departing from Baltimore; her next destination was the Philippines where she arrived on the 72nd day. On her homebound voyage, she carried sugar, silk, and oil products.

During the 1930's, Maersk Line expanded this service, called the Panama Line, which numbered nine modern vessels. There were no containers and cargo was transported on trucks and trains to the port and stored in warehouses. When the ship arrived, the cargo was moved from the warehouse to the quay and then lifted on board in cargo nets and stacked in the cargo holds. A port stay of a week or more was common, due to intensive labour.

Prior to 1950, Maersk Line also offered passenger transport. Cargo liners could carry 12 passengers who, for a reasonable fee, could enjoy a carefree and restful time.

During the 1950's Maersk Line expanded in the Far East, connecting Japan with South East Asia and the Middle East, introducing a "Round-the-world" line, including West Africa. In 1956, the first container was shipped aboard the Ideal X from Port Newark, New Jersey to Houston, Texas. The container was the invention of Malcolm McLean.

It was not until the late 1960's and early 70's that agreement was reached on the standards of containerisation we know today. In 1973, Maersk Line ordered its first dedicated container vessels and in 1975, Adriaan Maersk with a 1,400 TEU capacity undertook Maersk Line's first containerised sailing.

The container revolution gained momentum in the 1970's and 80's. In order to best support containerisation, A.P. Moller applied a more holistic approach to the transport chain which led to further involvement in terminal and port development and the establishment of a logistics company, Maersk Logistics, originally Mercantile.

In the 1990's, Maersk Line's focus was cooperation with other lines, P&O Container Lines and Sea-Land, as well as acquisitions, East Asiatic Company in 1993 and Sea-Land in 1999. The objective was to grow with the customers and meet their requirements as driven by increasing trade and globalisation. Simultaneously, Maersk Line developed its vessels. In 1996, Regina Maersk became the world's largest, most modern container vessel with a 6,000 TEU capacity and a crew of 15. She only ruled the seas for a year as in 1997, the 6,600 TEU Sovereign Maersk took over.

In 2006, Emma Maersk with a capacity to carry more than 11,000 TEU (Leise Maersk times 65) set new standards for economical, safe, and environmentally friendly shipping.

Today, 80 years after it all began, Maersk Line is an industry leader and the largest liner shipping company in the world. Maersk Line will continue to pursue a balanced and sustainable approach towards its business, trade in general, and long term economic growth.

'Thank you' to all our customers, suppliers and partners for the past 80 years.

For more information on the container shipping industry:

[» Container Shipping Information Service](#)

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