

# Container Pioneers

By Ulrich Cramer

Leo Mellam and Cecil Henkels of Flexi Van in New York were the pioneers (for operators of "Rail & Road" intermodal equipment; and Sol Katz (of Strick) was the engineer and manufacturer of the first "Sea Trailer" equipment.

When developing the steel container for ACL, the first European container consortium, I was confronted with Leo Mellam and the container corner casting patent. Here are the documents which made the standardisation of the container casting possible:



ISO/TC 104 (Sec. 83) 184E  
(Revision of 104 N 129)

ANNEX Y

STRICK CORPORATION, PHILADELPHIA, PA (CODES: 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100)

March 7, 1966

Mr. V. G. Grey  
Mechanical Engineer  
American Standards Association  
10 East 40th Street  
New York, New York 10016

Dear Vince:

In reply to your letter of February 7 I would like to confirm the understanding which Strick has with the American Standards Association regarding our patent number 2963310 covering the twist lock lifting mechanism with the non-rotating collar.

This letter confirms the fact that we have released this patent on a nonexclusive royalty free basis for its use in container handling.

I trust this will comply with your need for an official statement.

Very truly yours,

STRICK CORPORATION

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Eugene Hindin".

Eugene Hindin  
Executive Vice President

EH/sad  
cc: Fred Muller, Jr.  
K. W. Tantlinger

ANNEX Z

A clarification of the patent position with regard to end-to-end coupling of freight containers is deemed pertinent.

End-to-end coupling of Freight Containers is subject to the rights granted by the issuance of USA Patent No. 3,004,772 to the Strick Trailer Company.

Because of the proprietary nature of end-to-end coupling of containers, this function could not be included in the design of the corner fittings recommended herein. However, if this function is desired, permission for its use must be obtained from the patent holder. In such circumstances, designers are cautioned to follow all the prescribed requirements for the fittings given in this ISO Recommendation.

# Sea-Land Service, Inc.

P. O. BOX 1080 NEWARK 1, NEW JERSEY

M. R. MCEVOY  
PRESIDENT

January 29, 1963

Mr. Vincent G. Grey  
American Standards Association, Inc.  
10 East 40th Street  
New York 16, New York

Mr. Morris Forgash, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Containerization &  
Standardization - NDTA  
United States Freight Company  
711 Third Avenue  
New York 17, New York

Mr. John B. Hulse, Managing Director  
Truck-Trailer Manufacturers Association, Inc.  
1413 "K" Street, N.W.  
Washington 5, D. C.

Mr. Fred Muller, Jr.  
Chief U. S. Delegate  
International Standards Organisation/TC/104  
Arthur D. Little, Inc.  
630 Fifth Avenue  
New York 36, New York

Gentlemen:


In the interests of furthering standardization within the transportation industry and to permit the eventual maximum interchange of shipping containers between all modes of transportation, Sea-Land Service, Inc., will assign to all who wish to use it a royalty-free license for the use of the box type shipping container corner fitting and its mating rotatable engaging lug.

This offer is above and beyond our previous offer to let the industry use our corner fitting design, at which time we naturally expected that the dimensions of this equipment developed by us would be adhered to. Because of the desire by some users of containers to modify the dimensions of our fitting to accept all conventional stevedoring gear as well as the automatic and semi-automatic engaging lugs, we hereby offer the basic concept of the fitting and its engaging lug, even though it be modified dimensionally to make it more acceptable as a standard.

We trust that this gesture on our part will assist in achieving a national and, hopefully, an international standard that will serve all modes of transportation well.

Sincerely,

SEA-LAND SERVICE, INC.



M. R. McEvoy, President

MRM/bb

Together with Carl Röper, chairman of the German Standardisation Organisation and Helmut F H Hansen of Contrans, I was a member of the German delegation of ISO/TC104 to meet Fred Müller, leader of a US-delegation, Vincent Grey, former secretary of ISO TC 104 and George Bowen, secretary of ISO TC 104, who were visiting Germany to establish an international

standard on container equipment. At that time I could find only a few samples of “European Containers”



In February 1968, the first European containership called at the first specially-built container pier in Europe. It was the *Atlantic Span* of ACL calling Bremerhaven.



The container crane had not yet been erected; and the Ro-Ro-Ramp was still under construction. We had to load the containers and flatracks without a linkspan, by using MAFI Rolltrailers



*Bremerhaven's first container pier after completion*

On its way to New York, the *Atlantic Span* called at Rotterdam. However, the ECT Terminal was still under construction - everything was on wheels