

A. L. WALDRON

From time to time Alaska Construction News Magazine will present a personality sketch of some individual whose career, achievements or ideas make an interesting story for his fellow Alaskans.

—Editor.

By DICK OLIVER

“IS it the Truth?”

This is the first line of Rotary International's 4-point creed and to any visitor to the office of A. L. (Art) Waldron at Anchorage Sand & Gravel Company, it is the first thing he sees, and, the more he talks with Mr. Waldron, the more certain it is that he lives by this creed.

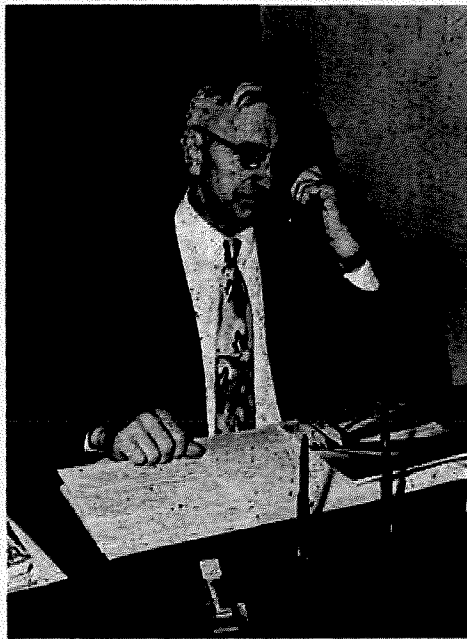
Born in Monroe, Wisconsin, on July 17, 1895, Mr. Waldron explains the location of the event this way. His parents really lived in South Dakota where his seven brothers and sisters were born. The drouth of 1895 hit the Dakotas and his father, being a sod farmer, sought greener pastures in Wisconsin.

The family literally starved out during that drouth. Mr. Waldron recalls his mother saying she didn't write her relatives back in Indiana for many months because she really didn't have the price of a postage stamp.

The elder Waldron looked around for other fields of endeavor and dabbled a bit in the concrete business, then virtually unknown. It was under him that young Art learned something of the trade and has never ceased to keep reading, learning, and finding out all that can be done with concrete.

The family moved to Oregon in 1905, in part seeking greener pastures and in part due to the ill health of one of the boys. Here young Art finished his education in a one room high school some 25 miles south of Portland. Soon afterwards he went to work for a contractor on the handle end of a No. 2 shovel. It's been his trademark ever since, although he did serve some apprenticeship as a carpenter's helper.

Mr. Waldron continued to work for different construction companies and along the way found time and money



A. L. WALDRON

to marry a grade-school sweetheart, who remains his sweetheart today.

Mr. Waldron came to Alaska for a six months job in 1936 as one of the superintendents for the Gastinoux Construction company when it received the low bid on the present city office building on Fourth avenue. He liked the country, the work possibilities here appealed to him and he's been here ever since. He still likes everything about the country, its possibilities and the people.

In 1938, Mr. Waldron began his now famous Anchorage Sand & Gravel firm by building the first gravel washing plant in the territory. Later he was the first to bring in a mixer for concrete. It was his son Roger, now in charge of the concrete division, who mixed and poured the first concrete in Alaska from a gasoline powered yard-and-half-mixer. The site was 'L' Street and the scene was the Providence hospital.

Among other firsts, Mr. Waldron can also go down in the record books as having brought the first concrete mixing trucks that carried the mix right to the job.

Hobbies, yes, though not many men as attached to that No. 2 shovel as Mr.

Waldron has been, ever find time for such activities. Hunting and fishing are most natural in Alaska, anytime, anywhere, anyplace. He is justly proud of a lake-side cabin not too far distant from Anchorage, where he spends many an evening fishing. He is equally proud of his flowers and hot house next to his home at the corner of 15th and 'L' streets, although he gives his wife most of the credit for the flowers except when it comes down to using that No. 2 shovel. The home is a show place during the summer months and is always included in the Anchorage Daily Times tour of gardens.

An active Methodist and one of the founding fathers of Methodism in the Anchorage area, he took a great pride last year in being chairman of the finance committee which obtained pledges of more than \$700,000 for the new Alaska Methodist university.

Mr. Waldron has also served Anchorage well, being a past-president of the Chamber of Commerce, one of Rotary's charter and still most active members and as a worker on many civic committees.

Mr. Waldron was able to have a hand in lowering the price of cement through working out a system of shipping cement in regulation tank cars rather than in sacks. Now all the cement sold in this area is sacked right here in Anchorage.

There's many a story Mr. Waldron can tell about Alaska since he's been here. One he enjoys is about the time in 1942 his company was supplying the aggregate for the paving of Fourth avenue. Up out of the bowl, that wooded area just west of the present Alaska railroad depot, came a cub bear who calmly walked right across the wet pavement and took off south. Nobody bothered the cub and its tracks remained visible in the pavement until the city covered the concrete last year with its present black-top coating.

Art Waldron today is ready anytime to show how he can use his No. 2 shovel with the best of them. He is just as ready to discuss a million dollar job or a civic problem as the true executive he is. Always with the motto, "Is it the Truth?" governing his thoughts and actions.