

June 12, 1931

Mr. W. V. C. Bulkeley,
Gulf Refining Company,
31 St. James Avenue,
Boston, Massachusetts.

Re: [REDACTED]
Toppsfield, Massachusetts

Dear Sir:

Some days ago I received word from your office, through Mr. Mittnacht of the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation, concerning an alledged case of lead poisoning at Toppsfield, Mass.

I asked one of my assistants, Dr. Schradin, to investigate the matter, and through the courtesy of Dr. Thomas L. Jenkins he was able to see the case, go over the entire matter and have a very frank talk with Dr. Jenkins. The case was one in which it was a little bit difficult to arrive at a certain diagnosis. The man was so nearly well when he was seen by Dr. Schradin that he could not elicit physical signs which would make certain the character of his illness. It seems quite certain however, that whether or not an acute infection was involved the factors of exposure to exhaust gas containing a high concentration of carbon monoxide and perhaps other partially unburned products of gasoline, together with a rather unusual temperature, contributed the most important items to Mr. [REDACTED] illness. In any case there were no characteristics of his illness which suggested lead intoxication. In the first place, one knows that the exposure to lead under these conditions is negligible from a practical point of view, and, secondly, the man's symptoms, especially his fever, were the exact reverse of what one would expect in lead intoxication. The entirely negative findings in the examination of the blood only add so much more evidence to the point. Dr. Schradin's opinion after having discussed the case with Dr. Jenkins was to the effect that Dr. Jenkins himself was convinced that lead had played no part in the picture. If anything else were needed to prove the point it would be adequately demonstrated by the speed of recovery, which required only a few days.

As a consequence of these facts it is my feeling that the case is a closed one so far as the question of lead is concerned.

Allow me to thank you for the dispatch with which this case was brought to our attention. The quickness in handling the matter made it possible for us to arrive at a fairly definite conclusion, and to avoid what might have been an uncomfortable situation.

Very truly yours,