

August 21, 1940.

Personal and Confidential

Mr. Harry W. Kaley,

Dear Harry:

The following is a summary of the information available in Baltimore, pertaining to the cleaning of a leaded gasoline storage tank at the Tidewater Terminal, Curtis Bay, Maryland. This information was obtained following a telephone call on Tuesday morning, August 13, from the private physician of one of the men engaged in the tank cleaning work and covers the situation as we know it up to the present date.

Work started at the Terminal in question about the first of July, involving pipe line changes and the cleaning of a fuel oil storage tank, the work being done under the immediate supervision of Mr. E. W. Dorsey of the Engineering Department of Tidewater's Eastern Division, with offices in New York City. It was later decided to clean leaded gasoline storage tank #T-1, a tank of 80,000 bbl. capacity. Sometime prior to the start of the work on tank #T-1, Mr. [REDACTED], Assistant Chief Engineer of Tidewater's Eastern Division, and in authority over Mr. Dorsey, came to Baltimore to supervise the work. The tank was pumped out Saturday night, August 3, Mr. [REDACTED] reported to have worked all night. The tank was entered Sunday, August 4, with airline masks, and some "heavy stuff" was removed. Complete information is not available on the names or the number of men in the tank on this date. It is thought that a man by the name of McQuay, a helper to Mr. Dorsey, was in the tank on that date. Possibly Mr. Dorsey can clarify this point.

The tank was steamed for nine hours on Monday, August 5, and allowed to cool and air through Tuesday, August 6. There is no definite information indicating that anyone was in the tank from Sunday until Wednesday morning. Mr. Dorsey left Baltimore "about Tuesday" for a tank cleaning job in Renselaer, New York, taking with him, it is reported, his helper, Mr. McQuay.

On Wednesday morning, August 7, the cleaning was started, the workers wearing airline masks and boots, but some at least without gloves. On Thursday, August 8, the work continued, some of the workers working part of the time, at least, without masks. One worker, Curtis Herman, not using a mask, refused to continue work in the tank at 10:00 A.M. Thursday morning.

Packing of masks for shipment to Mr. Dorsey in Renselaer was reported to have started at noon on Thursday. However, apparently there was some question on the advisability of working without masks, for there were comments indicating that the masks were then unpacked, or at least the packing was delayed until later in the day. Some masks were used during the afternoon. It is not known at this time whether or not all the workers in the tank during the afternoon used masks.

The masks were shipped sometime late Thursday to Renselaer, and the work continued Friday without this equipment. It seems well established that the actual removal of sludge had not been completed when the masks were shipped. Part of Friday, August 9, was devoted to sweeping a rusty material from the bottom of the tank. Considerable water seems to have been used throughout the cleaning process. In addition to [REDACTED] one other man is said to have noted some illness during the work on Thursday or Friday and did not continue work, at least inside the tank. During the period Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, a total of nine men had entered the tank, and their names are as follows:

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Mr. [REDACTED] felt ill when he was bathing Friday evening, complaining of the gasoline fumes in the shower room. He returned to work Saturday morning, finding that some of his crew, at least, were at the plant, but reporting illness. He called or had someone else call Dr. Rubine, one of the Doctors handling compensation cases for the Lumbermen's Mutual. A Dr. Wilkerson is said to head the group of Doctors handling compensation cases for that insurance company.

Mr. [REDACTED] obtained three more employees, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and finished the cleaning of the tank Saturday morning. This work is said to have consisted of cleaning the rusty material from a small area adjacent to the manhead. This is reported to have required two or three hours, with the impression that the usual schedule of fifteen minutes in the tank and forty-five minutes outside the tank was being maintained. One of the men, [REDACTED] advised that he had been in the tank only about fifteen minutes, and that just prior to the time the tank was closed. Mr. [REDACTED] was examined by Dr. Rubine after the work was finished, apparently about noon, and was told to go home and go to bed, and that he would be all right Monday morning.

KE 0021166

Few details are available on the happenings between Saturday noon, August 10, and Tuesday morning, August 13. Five men in addition to Mr. [REDACTED] were known to be ill, and their names are as follows:

[REDACTED]

A. C. Soboleski was reported to have been taken to the hospital sometime Monday, August 12.

Tuesday morning, August 13, we received a call from Dr. James G. Howell, private physician for many years to Mr. [REDACTED]. Telephone conversations followed between our Baltimore Office and Dr. Machle in Cincinnati. I called on Mr. S. P. Wise, Superintendent of the Tidewater Terminal in Baltimore, and on Mr. [REDACTED] obtaining information on the tank cleaning. Mr. Witter was rambling and somewhat confused in his conversation, but most of his comments were relevant. Mr. Wise advised that the five other men ill were under the care of a physician. Dr. Schradin arrived late Tuesday night.

[REDACTED] died early Wednesday morning, August 14. We definitely learned, for the first time, that more than six men had been in the tank, and the names, addresses and some direct or indirect information was obtained on each.

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] reported some illness. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who were in the tank Saturday morning, apparently noted no ill effects.

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were taken to the hospital Wednesday and Thursday, August 14 and 15. [REDACTED] was taken to the hospital on Friday, August 16.

Tidewater engaged workmen for covering the sludge pits and areas where liquid had overflowed. These men were completely equipped with special clothes, rubber gloves, boots and canister masks. The pits were covered Thursday afternoon and Friday, August 15 and 16, but because of the large area over which liquid was said to have flowed, the turning of that ground was not completed until Monday afternoon, August 19. All of this work was supervised by members of the Baltimore Division.

Dr. Schradin left Baltimore Friday night, and no effort will be made to include in this letter a resume of his many calls and conferences during his three days in Baltimore. Dr. Schradin may have some information on the procedures used during the tank cleaning, in addition to that contained in this report.

KE 0021167

Reports that [redacted] and [redacted] were critically ill continued over the week end, but Tuesday it was learned through Mr. S. P. Wise that both men had shown improvement, especially [redacted]. Their reports continue to be favorable today. [redacted] and [redacted] were released from the hospital Saturday, August 17, one of them, at least, returning for treatment over the week end. There is little specific information on the other men in the hospital, who were not as seriously ill as [redacted] and [redacted], except that their condition seems to be satisfactory.

The Baltimore American, Sunday, August 18, published information on the accident. This paper has been forwarded to Mr. O. B. Lewis. No news item was noted in the other Baltimore papers.

Mr. R. E. Benner, Chief Engineer of the Eastern Division of Tidewater, arrived in Baltimore on Wednesday, August 14, and Dr. Schradin, Mr. Cronin and I talked with him Wednesday evening. Mr. Cronin and I continued our discussion with Mr. Benner when Dr. Schradin left for a call at the hospital. As Mr. Benner is listed as the "authority man", we feel that you will be especially interested in a brief resume of our discussion.

Mr. Benner commented at some length on his Safety rules and regulations, apparently wishing to establish the thoroughness of his department in this respect. He also commented at some length on the ability of Mr. [redacted] his Assistant, indicating that he felt Mr. [redacted] must have been affected by the fumes, intense heat, etc., prior to the time that the masks were removed; otherwise, he would not have permitted this violation of their Safety practice. We did not discourage Mr. Benner's thought that Mr. [redacted] was not in complete possession of his mental faculties at the time he permitted the removal of the masks and the shipment of the equipment from Baltimore. This possibility was pointed out to Mr. Benner as another reason for his accepting the assistance of the Safety Engineers of the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation in tank cleaning supervision work. He heartily agreed, and when notification plans were discussed, he advised that he would establish a dual notification system whereby a member of his office staff and the Engineer in charge of the work would both notify the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation, advising him in turn that the notifications had been given; further, that he would, on his chart pertaining to tank cleaning work, establish a column for checking to see that these notifications were handled. Prior to this time, when Dr. Schradin was participating in the discussion, the latter asked Mr. Benner if he made a practice of notifying the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation of his plans to clean leaded gasoline tanks. Mr. Benner advised that sometimes he did and sometimes he did not. This comment, with those of later in the evening, left me with the impression that Mr. Benner had not in the past felt that the assistance of the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation was that which he should have but rather that which he could have if he

KE 0021168

chose. It was no apologetic comment or tone when he advised that sometimes he did and sometimes he did not notify the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation. He gave no impression of having previously felt that he considered it advisable or necessary to arrange for the assistance of an Ethyl Safety Engineer in the cleaning of all leaded gasoline tanks. At one point he inquired if there were any charge for the services of one of our Safety Engineers, stating that he had never received any bill when one had been present on his tank cleaning work. Mr. Benner, throughout the conversation, seemed to express a very favorable attitude toward the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation.

During the evening Mr. Benner stated that he had tank cleaning notification cards on hand and that a representative of the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation had called on him in the past. In fact, he used the term "called regularly."

In spite of the calls made on Mr. Benner, it seems obvious that he did not consider the notification of the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation of tank cleaning plans as a "must." Without any such direct statements on his part, I gained the impression that his previous attitude had been that the services of an Ethyl Safety Engineer were available if he wanted them, and I am inclined to believe that he honestly looked at the matter as one of being "his choice." It is obvious that he had confidence in his Safety rules and regulations and in his Engineers in charge of the tank cleaning work. Most men in such a position naturally have that feeling of confidence. It is also obvious that a representative of another company, the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation, faces a difficult problem in implanting in the minds of such men that notification is a "must." A representative or a Safety Engineer may be successful in convincing most Authority Men, or even a very high percentage of them, that notification should be a "must," but the chances of establishing it as such in the minds of the necessary 100% of the men they contact seem questionable.

Although through the requests of the members of our organization directly to this group we may be successful in a high percentage of the cases, I believe that to clearly establish the notification as a "must," specific orders from those to whom they are responsible are required, if we are to obtain complete cooperation from all Authority Men. You, no doubt, have given consideration to this, and I hope to have an opportunity at the coming Division Meeting for a discussion with you on this point.

Yours very truly,



H. C. Dees.

HCD:R

CC: Dr. R. A. Kehoe. ✓

KE 0021169