ETHYL GASOLINE CORPORATION

CHRYSLER BUILDING
405 LEXINGTON AVENUE

NEW YORK

May 9, 1940

SAFETY DIVISION

ROBERT A. KEHOE, M.D.
CHAIRMAN

OSCAR B. LEWIS
MANAGER

RUSSELL SCHELL
ASSISTANT MANAGER

Dr. R. A. Kehoe

Dear Dr. Kehoe:

You have a copy of Mr. McCooley's letter of May 4th, in which he discusses at length the arrangements for cleaning a tank at the Orange State Oil Company, Jacksonville, Florida. As you know, Mr. Costello and Mr. McCooley have both had a number of discussions with the officials of that company since their very recent accident. Despite the trouble they have had, they do not seem inclined to take our warnings and instructions very seriously.

It seems to me to be an extreme example of lip service on the part of certain of our customers that they are willing to cooperate with us 100%, but that when the actual job arises, they either forget us or revert to inadequate or dangerous practices. The one redeeming feature in this present instance appears to be that Orange State at least did notify us a tank was to be cleaned. Thus, our safety engineer was able to prevent what might have been another serious situation.

Very truly yours,

O. B. Lewis

W:GCL
Enclosure

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C Excerpt from McCooley's weekly letter of May 4, 1940
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Mr. J. A. Costello

Dear Joe:

The past week was spent working in Jacksonville, Port Everglades, Miami, Miami Beach, Naples, Port Tampa, Tampa and Dade City, Florida.

Monday of this week was spent at the Orange State Oil Company terminal in Jacksonville. Here Orange State was planning the purchase of a 6000 barrel storage tank from the Commodore Company, this tank had previously been leased from Commodore, and was known as #4 tank, that had been used for Koolmotor service, but has been empty for the past year. Orange State wanted to get ready to clean this tank, in order that it may be inspected, and an estimate made on the necessary repairs, before they would consider purchasing the tank. This particular tank had a boiler type manhead with only a 12" x 18" opening. I therefore suggested that the tank be steamed and gas freed, and that a larger hole be cut in the tank at the opening, in order to enable the men to enter the tank for cleaning, and later a new manhead could be installed.

My discussion at this terminal was carried on with Mr. Harry Glover, construction superintendent for Orange State, and Mr. E. Glover, construction foreman. Earl Glover was the man in charge of the Orange State tank cleaning in Tampa recently. Both these men wanted to turn the tank cleaning operations over to the Rubin Iron Works, who was to give the estimate on the repairs necessary to the tank. I convinced these men that they should clean this tank, prior to an inspection tour, and that additional cleaning should be done to them, as was necessary depending upon the nature of the repair to be done on the tank, before turning the tank over to the Rubin Iron Works.

The blower type air mask that was on hand at the Tampa cleaning, was brought out after I asked to see the equipment they had for tank cleaning, and it was found that this equipment was in very bad condition, having the head straps on the mask broken, the inside of the mask was very hard, the hose leading to the face piece was taped where it had been cut or torn, only 25 foot of hose was in the box and the tank to be cleaned was 40 foot in diameter, and Earl Glover claimed that the blower did not give sufficient air for a man to breathe, the box had all the hinges and locks broken off of it, and neither of the men knew where the mask came from or who bought it. I suggested that the equipment be shipped back to the Mines Safety Appliance in Pittsburgh, to be repaired or replaced as was necessary, as this equipment could not be used in its present condition. I also arranged for them to buy the necessary rubber boots, rubber gloves and clothing. They had a pair of rubber boots that had been worn in the tank at Tampa, having been removed inside of the tank and the man worked in his bare feet and then put on the boots before coming out of the tank. I had these boots destroyed.