

CONFIDENTIAL L.O.F.

1943 JAN 13 AM 10 34

NAVY DEPARTMENT  
DIVISION OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE  
COUNTER INTELLIGENCE BRANCH

Op-16-B-5  
AMS

Date 1/11/43

MEMORANDUM Intelligence Officer, Coast Guard Hdqts.  
1300 "E" Street, N. W., Room 7212  
Washington, D. C.

SUBJECT: SS "CITY OF HOUSTON" (AM.)

Enclosure: (A) LND Boarding Report, same subject, 12/22/42.

1. Enclosure (A) for forwarded for comment and such attention as may be deemed appropriate.

2. The information forwarded herewith is extremely confidential in character and its security must be preserved, by carefully safeguarding its existence and source, as well as the names of any informants mentioned therein. In no case, if the report covers an investigation of an individual, shall the report be shown to the subject, nor shall copies be made of it, nor shall the office of Naval Intelligence be mentioned in connection with any action taken on the basis of such report.

3. Ultimate return of this correspondence to ONI is requested. Room 4710.

*H. A. Burch*  
H. A. Burch  
Lieut., U.S.N.R.  
Comdr.,

BY HAND

CONFIDENTIAL

4/10/43  
*[Handwritten initials]*

*Em [Handwritten]*

vised

B-5

B-5

RECEIVED ON MAIL ROOM

QSI/EG

ljb

CONFIDENTIAL

BOARDING REPORT

COMMERCE AND TRAVEL SECTION OF D. I. O. — FOURTH NAVAL DISTRICT PHILADELPHIA, PA.

PM 2 52

Vessel & Nationality: S.S. CITY OF HOUSTON (AM.) Date of Arrival: DECEMBER 22, 1942

Boarded at: Philadelphia, Pa. Owner: Southern Steamship Company

Boarded by: Bos'n. J. W. Townsend, USNR Operated by: U.S. Maritime Commission

Gross Tonnage: 2609 Agent: E. J. Lavino & Company

Captain: William R. THOMAS Sailed from: Pastelillo, Cuba On 12/11/42

Radio: Yes Int. Call Letters: K K A D Next port: Havana, Cuba

Radio Operator: Francis J. SLATTERY Approx. date of

License No. (U. S. only) T-3-136 Departure: 12/31/42

Cargo & Tonnage: 3250 Chrome Ore Armament: Yes

Convoy: See below Degaussing: Yes

Routing Instructions or other

Secret or Confidential Publications:

Report

The Subject Vessel, after an extensive stay at the Kensington Shipyard in Philadelphia, departed on 19 November 1942 with a cargo of oats destined for Havana, Cuba. She proceeded through the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, joined a convoy at Cape Henry and proceeded to Key West, arriving on 29 November 1942. From Key West, she proceeded independently to Havana. After discharging her cargo, she cleared on 4 December 1942, and proceeded independently to Pastelillo in Neuvitas Harbor, arriving on 7 December 1942.

At Pastelillo, the Subject Vessel loaded 3250 tons of chrome ore, finishing on 10 December 1942, and departing on 12 December 1942. She proceeded independently to Key West, arriving on 13 December 1942. She remained at Key West until 16 December 1942, when she departed; went outside, and joined a convoy of nine (9) tankers proceeding from Galveston to New York. The convoy encountered extremely heavy weather on 19 December 1942, which caused some of the members to break station. The Subject Vessel took several seas on board which caused minor damage, flooding a portion of the quarters occupied by the armed guard unit, and damaging two of the winches. It was considered expedient on several occasions to drop off from the designated course and to choose a course which did not involve as much pounding as that previously encountered. Finally, on 21 December 1942, when the Subject Vessel was some distance off Cape Hatteras, she lost the balance of the convoy completely, and so proceeded on to the Delaware Capes independently, arriving on 22 December 1942.

Dissemination: (Continued....over)

Routing Officer 4ND, ONI, File, DIO, 1OND

CONFIDENTIAL

E 77380 78, EG. For command

SUBJECT: S.S. CITY OF HOUSTON (American), Boarding Report on

(Continued.....)

The First Officer, HANSEN, Frank, a source considered reliable, informed the boarding officer that, for some time past, it had been the practice of several of the unlicensed members of the crew to pawn certificates of identity, lifeboat certificates and certificates of service in foreign ports. He further stated that, after these individuals had spent the "draw" of one-half of their pay, they would approach bartenders and offer to pawn said papers for sums ranging between \$5.00 and \$10.00. Then, just before the vessel was ready to sail, these individuals would inform the officers of the vessel and request them to redeem the certificates. He was of the opinion that such practices were extremely dangerous in that such papers might be employed by Axis agents in securing admission into the United States. One bar with which he had dealings on several occasions was, he stated, the International Bar in Pastelillo, Cuba. Subsequent inquiry indicated that, on the instant voyage, but one seaman was guilty of the above practice. He, one Henry J. PAPE, Z-85517 D-1, age 44, 5' 7", born in New York City, an A.B., pawned his certificates with the bartender of the International Bar in Pastelillo. The matter was reported to the Shipping Commissioner in Philadelphia and to the Bureau of Marine Inspection. However, in view of the early prospective sailing of the Subject Vessel, the Master, THOMAS, William R., declined to press charges against PAPE. He did state, however, that he would keep a close watch on his present crew, and that he would report and press charges against any member of his crew who erred in this respect.

Subsequent inquiry has indicated that the local office of the Bureau of Marine Inspection of the Coast Guard is willing to take action against seamen who are guilty of the practice described above. Local officials state that, upon presentation of evidence of such practices, they will suspend such persons' certificates under authority of revised statute 4450 (46 U.S.C.A. 239). They called the boarding officer's attention to Section 36.1-15 of the "General Rules and Regulations of the Bureau of Marine Inspection & Navigation" pertaining to tank vessels, which provides: "If the holder of any license granted to a Master, Mate, Engineer or Pilot, voluntarily parts with it or places it beyond his personal control by pledging or depositing it with any other person for any purpose, he may be proceeded against in accordance with the provisions of revised Statute 4450, as amended, looking to a suspension or revocation of his license."

Local officials stated that, although the above regulation deals in terms only with licensed personnel, nevertheless they had received instructions that similar practices by unlicensed personnel were to be dealt with in the same manner. In addition to the above, they called the attention of the boarding officer to the provisions of Title 46 U.S.C.A., Section 710 (a) which provides, inter alia: "Any person who (1) shall receive or have in his possession any certificate, license, issued to vessels or officers or seamen by the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation or by any officer of the U.S. authorized by law to represent such Bureau, to which he is not lawfully entitled, with intent unlawfully to use the same;.....or (8) shall in any manner transfer, or cause

(Continued.....Pg. 3)

(Continued.....) SUBJECT: S.S.

CONFIDENTIAL

Marine Ins  
law to repr  
unlawfully

SUBJECT: S.S. CITY OF HOUSTON (American), Boarding Report on

(Continued.....)

-----

to be so transferred, or negotiate such transfer of, any blank form of such certificate, license, or document, or any such altered, changed, forged, counterfeit, or stolen certificate, license, or document, or any such certificate, license, or document to which the party transferring or receiving the same is not lawfully entitled;....." These provisions, setting forth a maximum fine of \$5000.00 and a maximum period of imprisonment of five (5) years, were said to be subject to a construction which would enable Federal Authorities to prosecute both the seaman and/or the pledgee, providing that such persons were subject to Federal jurisdiction.

*clg* The above material is included in this report so that a check may be made in Washington, D.C., with officials of the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation relative to the above. If Federal Authorities agree with the policy enunciated above, it is suggested that such information be disseminated to all naval districts. It is contemplated that, were disciplinary action be taken against such offenders and the results publicized, these objectionable practices might be discouraged.

The Subject Vessel employs oil as fuel, has a total normal bunker capacity of 3482 barrels, and burns 134 barrels per day operating at her maximum sustained speed of 8 knots.

It is contemplated that, after she has discharged her cargo, the Subject Vessel will load a general cargo destined for Cuba, and that she will depart from Philadelphia on 31 December 1942.

*W.P. Wear*  
W. P. WEAR  
Lieut., USNR

CONFIDENTIAL