

San Francisco, 26, California

Captain of the Port
401 U.S. Custom House
6615

13 August, 1946

To: Commander Twelfth Coast Guard District

Subj: SS MERICOS H. WHITTIER; discharge of oil into coastal navigable waters of the United States.

1. At 1420, 4 August, 1946, Coast Guard Control Center notified this office that subject vessel owned by Tidewater Associated Oil Company had an oil spill at Associated Oil Dock at Avon. J. E. Brooks, Y.L.C., USCG proceeded immediately to investigate.

2. On the scene W. H. Ashby, Chief Mate stated that while pumping off Ventura Crude Oil to the refinery it was noted that considerable oil was coming from below the water line along the ships side. The pumps were stopped; it was found that a small log had stuck in the sea suction valve which was believed closed. He estimated that about 4 barrels had been pumped overboard. He was to flush a line out with salt water and when he opened the deep suction valve oil poured out into the water.

3. There was a generous coating of oil on subject waters in the vicinity. A sample was taken and is available as evidence. James Rudkins, Fish and Game Warden and W. R. Campbell, Dock Wharfinger are also witnesses.

R. E. MORELL Acting
E. L. NORME

San Francisco, California

CAPTAIN OF THE PORT
624 Appraisers Bldg.

File: 6615

4 March, 1946 6

To: DCGO, 12ND

Subj: SS MERCIOS H. WHITTIER: Pollution of the Navigable Waters
of San Francisco Bay

1. At approximately 1230, 24 February, 1946, the Coast Guard Control Center notified the COTP office that Mr. Charles Gaffney, dockmaster of Associated Oil Dock, Avon, California, reported that the tanker SS MERCIOS H. WHITTIER had an oil spill.
2. COTP oil pollution inspector was sent to interview the chief mate of the tanker, and W. H. Ashby, the chief mate aboard the WHITTIER admitted that the vessel had pumped approximately 18 barrels of Ventura Crude Oil into the waters of Suisun Bay. C. L. Howell, pumpman in charge at the time of the spill, on questioning admitted that he understood he was to flush a line out with salt water and when he opened the deep suction valve oil poured out into the water.
3. A satisfactory clean up of the spill was made.

R. L. HORNE
Acting