

See Serial 929

929

Hanna Pickering

March 17, 1949

GUY HOTTEL, SAC  
WASHINGTON FIELD

THOMAS J. BARRY, SA

JAHAM  
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Refer New York teletype dated January 28, 1949, Serial 952, in which New York advised that CHAMBERS had stated that HAROLD WARE organized a small apparatus in the agriculture field and that WEBSTER CLAY POWELL had been a kind of personal deputy of WARE'S.

WEBSTER CLAY POWELL was interviewed by Agent D. C. CONNORS and the writer in the WFO on February 25, 1949. MR. POWELL said his present position is that of a Foreign Service Officer in the State Department and he has just returned from three and one-half years duty in Australia.

POWELL stated that he had been acquainted with ALGER HISS but had had no close contact with him and could not recall where he had met HISS or who had introduced them. He said he thinks he possibly first met HISS in the agriculture field, he, POWELL, having been Director of Research in the "Farm Research, Inc.," from about 1933 to 1938. POWELL said this was not a government organization but was a private group that was formed to assist the farmer by obtaining helpful information and making it available to the farmers. He said he believes the real founder of "Farm Research, Inc." was HAROLD WARE. He said it was financed by contributions from interested people and farm organizations. He said that he is acquainted with the fact that this organization has been cited by the House Committee on Un-American Activities as a Communist front, but he could give no reason for this action other than the fact that HAROLD WARE had been connected with it and HAROLD WARE has been accused by many people of being a Communist.

Further, with regard to ALGER HISS, POWELL said he believed he may have seen HISS a few times socially since their first meeting, and once or twice on the street, but he had never attended any kind of meetings with HISS. He said that he never observed anything during his contacts with ALGER HISS that would lead him to believe that HISS was a Communist or was in any way involved in a conspiracy to obtain government documents. MR. POWELL stated he never heard of WHITTAKER CHAMBERS and he failed to identify 1931 and 1936 photographs of CHAMBERS and a 1936 photograph of CHAMBERS' wife.

He had also been acquainted with DONALD HISS but he could not recall the circumstances of their meeting and that he believes he probably had seen DONALD HISS about the same number of times that he

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had seen ALGER, and he had no reason to doubt DONALD'S loyalty to the United States.

With regard to HAROLD WARE, POWELL advised he had first met him in 1927 on an experimental farm in Russia which POWELL said was financed by the Quakers. He said he had first come to Russia on a trip financed by the "Open Road" Tourist Agency in New York. WARE was already over there at the time of his arrival, POWELL stated, and after his return to the United States POWELL resumed his acquaintance with him and after POWELL organized Farm Research, Inc., he asked POWELL to take a position there. He said he always considered WARE to be a personal friend of his, but that WARE was the type of individual who no one ever could get too close to, so he now believes in light of the later developments that WARE must have been leading a double life. He said that before WARE'S death he never knew that WARE was a Communist. He said he just thought WARE was a rabid New Dealer. He admitted meeting ELLA REEVE (Mother BLOOR) and knew that she was HAROLD WARE'S mother. He said he had been in her home near Philadelphia on one or two occasions, but in spite of that he didn't know she was a Communist until some time after HAROLD WARE'S death in 1935. He thought she was just a radical labor leader and nothing more.

In connection with WARE'S death in 1935, POWELL said that he and his wife were in a car in front of WARE'S car and POWELL'S car was side-swiped by a truck which then smashed into WARE'S car.

They were all on their way to visit a friend, HANNA PICKERING, in New York State when the accident happened.

POWELL said that he had first met HENRY HILL COLLINS on the trip to Russia in 1927. He said COLLINS had gone along with the group whose trip had been financed by the "Open Road." He continued his acquaintance with COLLINS later in Washington and had been in COLLINS' apartment at cocktail parties many times, but had never attended any sort of meetings there. He said that at the present time he could not recall the names of any of the people who were present at parties in COLLINS' apartment. He said he never suspected COLLINS of being a Communist or in any way connected with a conspiracy to obtain government documents. In this connection POWELL made the comment in answer to a direct question that of all his friends and acquaintances while in Washington, he never knew any of them to be Communist Party members. He said that some of them might have been sympathetic to some parts of the doctrine. He himself, POWELL stated, had some of the same aims as the Communists did, but not all of the Communist aims and his were alike. He advised that his wife had operated a school for children called "Greenacres" near Silver Spring, Maryland. He did recall that they had had a benefit or benefits at the school to aid the Spanish Loyalists' cause. He said he had been sympathetic himself with the Loyalists' cause in Spain, and he also was acquainted with the fact that the Communists