



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Safety Recommendation

209# 325C

Date: February 18, 1987

In reply refer to: M-87-7 and -8

Mr. William A. Beasman, Jr.
Chairman
Pride of Baltimore, Inc.
100 Light Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

On May 14, 1986, the U.S. sailing vessel PRIDE OF BALTIMORE capsized and sank in the Atlantic Ocean, about 250 nmi north of Puerto Rico while en route from St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands, to the Chesapeake Bay, Maryland. The vessel, a replica of a Baltimore clipper, was returning to Baltimore, Maryland, after an extended European good will tour promoting the port of Baltimore.

The PRIDE OF BALTIMORE left St. John about 1100 on May 11, 1986, and after clearing the harbor, set sails and proceeded out to sea. After experiencing some calm periods during the first night, the wind filled in during the nights of May 12 and 13 and by the morning of May 14, the wind had increased to about 25 to 28 knots. The sails were shortened accordingly and all hands, except for the cook, were on deck coiling lines, clearing away gear, and securing all but two of the sails.

Shortly after noon, a sudden gust of wind struck the PRIDE OF BALTIMORE heeling it to port until it was on its beam end with the masts and sails lying on the water. Crewmembers were thrown into the water and the cook managed to escape from below. Two inflatable liferafts deployed but did not remain inflated. One raft was damaged by the ship's rigging while the second raft deflated through the open topping-off valves. The PRIDE OF BALTIMORE, valued at \$1,080,000, flooded and sank in a matter of minutes.

After about 6 hours, the eight surviving crewmembers managed to inflate one of the six-man liferafts by mouth. After drifting for over 4 days, the survivors were rescued on May 19, 1986, by the crew of the M/V TORO, a Norwegian tanker, who notified the Coast Guard of the accident. 1/

As a goodwill ambassador, the PRIDE was well received in the many ports it visited. Because of its success, the mission was continually expanding and reaching out to more distant ports. The designer, builder, and the Pride of Baltimore, Inc., in their desire for an authentic 19th century sailing vessel, did not include additional safety features such as compartmentation using watertight bulkheads which would not have detracted from the vessel's overall appearance and substantially decreased the extent of downflooding. They did include modern safety features, an auxiliary engine and generator, radio equipment,

1/ For more detailed information read Marine Accident Report—"Capsizing and Sinking of the U.S. Fishing Vessel PRIDE OF BALTIMORE in the Atlantic Ocean, May 14, 1986" (NTSB/MAR-87/1).

and survival gear. If a similar project is contemplated in the future, the entire program, including the extent of the voyages by the vessel, should be reviewed before construction and current standards of safety incorporated in the design. The Safety Board believes that the use of current standards of design and safety would not necessarily compromise the aesthetic appearance of a historic vessel.

The Safety Board also believes that the failure of the operator to require and the master to initiate a daily radio communications schedule is a serious omission. This omission did not contribute to the deaths of the four crewmembers. However, it did prevent more timely notification of search and rescue forces that would have been mobilized after the vessel had failed to meet the appointed communications schedule. In addition, the extended exposure of the survivors to the environment in an overcrowded and malfunctioning liferaft would have been significantly reduced. In future operations, Pride of Baltimore, Inc., should maintain a communications schedule similar to those found in the U.S. Coast Guard's Voluntary Guidelines for Commercial Fishing Vessels, so that failure to meet an established schedule would indicate a potential emergency.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Pride of Baltimore, Inc.:

Comply with the current Coast Guard regulations for passenger sailing vessels in ocean service in any future design, construction, and operation of sailing vessels including historic sailing vessels. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-87-7)

Develop and adhere to a 24-hour routine communications schedule in any future operations, so that any failure to meet the schedule would be immediately apparent. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-87-8)

Also, as a result of its investigation, the Safety Board issued Safety Recommendations M-87-1 through -4 to the Coast Guard, M-87-5 to Zodiac of North America, Inc., M-87-6 to the Society of Professional Sailing Ship Masters, and M-87-9 and -10 to the National Weather Service.

The National Transportation Safety Board is an independent Federal agency with the statutory responsibility "... to promote transportation safety by conducting independent accident investigations and by formulating safety improvement recommendations" (Public Law 93-633). The Safety Board is vitally interested in any actions taken as a result of its safety recommendations and would appreciate a response from you regarding action taken or contemplated with respect to the recommendation in this letter. Please refer to Safety Recommendation M-87-7 and-8 in your reply.

BURNETT, Chairman, LAUBER and NALL, Members, concurred in these recommendations. GOLDMAN, Vice Chairman, did not participate.


By: Jim Burnett
Chairman