

CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA, SATURDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 8, 1934

## Ship Like Furnace Following Fire, Says Survivor of Tragedy

### Most of Passengers Burned to Death While Asleep; No Warning Given, Says Woman Passenger

Following is the personal account of Senora Renee Mendez Capote, of the holocaust aboard the luxury liner, Morro Castle. She was one of the passengers to survive. Her father was the late General Dominigo Mendez Capote who directed the downfall of the Macado government, and later became first vice-president of Cuba.

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SPRING LAKE, N. J., Sept. 8.—I am sure most of the passengers were burned to death while they slept. There was no warning. I am alive only by luck, accident, or perhaps through some higher power that watched over me.

I was on my way to Europe on a mission for the Cuban bureau of general culture of which I am the director. But I am only going to make one more sea voyage—homeward. I am not going to Europe. This sea trip, this horrible experience, has fulfilled my desire to travel off land.

I was in deluxe cabin 15 on a deck. I was awakened about 3 a. m. by a strange noise. It was a crackle as though timber was splintering. Ordinarily it was not enough to awaken me. Some power was watching over me, yes? At any rate I went to the door, opened it. Flames leaped in. I slammed the door shut. Then I went to one of the windows overlooking the deck.

I decided to crawl through, though it was quite narrow. I had gotten half way through when I was convinced I

couldn't make it. I pulled back in. Then I saw a sailor on deck. He shouted: "Come on, lady. Climb through. Don't lose your nerve."

I took courage and managed to get through, though it was very narrow. I stood on deck about a quarter of an hour while the sailors were trying to put out that terrible fire. I saw no passengers whatsoever. It was very strange. They must have been burned to death as they slept—something that almost happened to me.

When our life boat came ashore, I had very little clothes—just a sort of a dress.

Some kind person gave me a coat. When I reached shore I found among the sailors the one who saved my life. If he hadn't encouraged me I'd never have gotten through that window. His name is Carl Pryor. I shall be eternally grateful.