

Two Differ On Houston Police Files

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By Tom Curtis

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HOUSTON, April 4 — Former Houston Mayor Louie Welch testified in federal court here today that while in office he regularly received copies of confidential reports prepared by his police departments Criminal Intelligence Division (CID).

He said he personally shredded "boxes full" of them at the end of his 10 years as mayor in 1973 because "I didn't need them." He turned additional subpoenaed files that "I haven't had time to pudge" over to the court today.

Fred Hofheinz, who became mayor in January, 1974, had testified earlier that of CID files he had examined "I only saw one reference to anything that could be considered a criminal matter. He said the value of the files was "absolutely zero" and that he considered them "contrary to the civil liberties of the citizens of Houston.

Welch and Hofheinz were among six witnesses at a hearing before U.S. District Court Judge John V. Singleton that is part of a \$55 million class action lawsuit brought by the American Civil Liberties Union and two individuals against former and present city and police officials.

The suit charges that police

illegally spied on and wiretapped numerous prominent citizens during Welch's administration. It alleges that files were kept on everything from their "Political and social associations to their sexual habits and inclinations." The CID files are now in court custody.

Welch, now president of the Houston Chamber of Commerce and a former head of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, said he received "raw information" reports from the CID. "I never saw one that was not related to criminal activity," he said.

Welch said one report recounted a meeting of opponents to a proposed site for a new garbage dump at which someone threatened to put sugar in the gas tank of city earthmoving equipment to immobilize the machines.

He said the names of "priests, labor leaders, politicians, would be politicians, expoliticians dogooders, and ladies in tennis shoes" turned up in the reports on the garbage dump controversy.

"The better known people were the easiest to get in the files because they were known or would say who they were," Welch said. "I can't see any damage done to them, because when I was there (mayor), those records were confidential."