

Charles W. Van Vechten
Sept. 16, 1935
by Farmer

Jackson Memorial Hospital
Miami, Florida
September 16, 1935.

Charles W. Van Vechten made the following responses under oath to questions propounded by H. W. Farmer, Investigator, in the investigation entitled "Re Hurricane Florida."

1. Q. Please state your full name, age and address.

A. Charles W. Van Vechten, 39 years, 303 ~~Major~~ ^{Minorca} ~~Major~~ Avenue, Coral Gables, Florida. *C. W. V.*

2. Q. Have you any near relatives?

A. My father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Frank D. Van Vechten, same address as mine.

3. Q. Have you a wife or children?

A. No Sir.

4. Q. Are you a Veteran?

A. Yes Sir.

5. Q. Do you have a claim with the Veterans' Administration?

A. I draw compensation of \$10 per month.

6. Q. What is your claim number?

A. It is C 108 - I just don't recall it.

7. Q. Were you a member of one of the Veterans Camps on the keys?

A. No. I wasn't a member. I was there during the hurricane on a visit.

8. Q. Have you ever been a member of these camps?

A. No.

9. Q. Tell me how you happened to be at the camp.

A. I went down there a week before Labor Day.

*Victory
Camp!*

A. George Harrison was in #1 Camp and was a friend of mine. I went to visit him. I stayed down there with him until the hurricane.

10 Q. Where did you stay while you were there?

A. At #1 Camp.

11. Q. Were you injured during the hurricane?

A. Yes Sir.

12. Q. Describe your injuries, fully please.

A. I received injuries to my head, ribs, right arm and right leg. Something hit my right arm above the elbow and travelled up to the shoulder, tearing the muscles. Two ribs were fractured on the left side and my right leg was considerably bruised and twisted. They took about four pieces of wood out of my head. There were no bones broken aside from the ribs.

13. Q. Do you know of any Veterans who lost their lives during the hurricane?

A. I knew Michael Fogarty at Camp #1 and saw him about 4 P.M. The wind was increasing at that time and he was in George Harrison's shack. I was in the shack and he walked in and then walked out - said Hello. I did not see him afterwards. I do not know any others on the list of the missing.

14. Q. Did Mr. Harrison come out?

A. Yes all the boys I knew at Camp 1 (except Fogarty) and had met personally came through. I advised them about the conditions of these storms and just what they were. At first they didn't pay any attention and laughed and said they would ride it out in the shacks but we happened to be in George Harrison's shack when a heavy gust of wind came along and moved the shack on its foundation. He looked at me and said "We had better leave here." I said "Let's hunt a hole and get in it and stay there because if you expose yourself you are liable to be hit by flying debris, etc."

*Vets
Vets
of storm*

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After the wind had increased considerably, all the boys I knew there paid some attention to what I had to say.

15. Q. Were you driving a car?

A. No Sir.

16. Q. You had no other means of getting out except that the Veterans were expecting to use?

A. No I had no other means of getting out because I understood the storm was not going to amount to much. That was the word spread through the camp.

17. Q. When did you first realize that there probably would be a hurricane?

A. I knew it - that there was going to be some wind - about 1:30 Monday afternoon because I could tell by the sky which was a lead color, regular hurricane color and the clouds were travelling quite fast.

18. Q. Do you know any Veterans who left camp before the hurricane - or any time during that week who were not there when the hurricane occurred?

A. No. The boys I was acquainted with and whom I had met after I arrived there were all saved and came out all right. They have all left the hospital. They were shipped out in the first batch that left there. I think that was largely due to the fact that these boys took into consideration the fact that I had been through storms before and they didn't stay in the shacks but got outside.

19. Q. You had no intention of getting out of the keys yourself except when the Veterans left?

A. No. Otherwise I tell you what I would have done. If I had known that the storm was going to be of such intensity, I would have walked out of the storm area as far as possible but, as I said, the rumor was that it wasn't going to be very bad. I believe that if the warning had been sufficient, the boys would have walked out of camp.

20. Q. Do you know of any other Veterans who were visiting in the camp at that time?

A. No Sir.

21. Q. Is there any other statement that you care to make.

A. I think a lot of credit is due to Capt. Hardacker who personally visited every shack down there and notified the boys to pack up their belongings and assemble in the mess hall because a train would be there about 4 o'clock. He went around and delivered that message himself. Of course he was thoroughly convinced that the train would be there. He stayed right with the boys and I think he deserves a lot of credit because he stayed right there.

I, Charles W. Van Vechten DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR that the statements made herein in response to questions propounded by H. W. Farmer, Investigator, have been read by me and they are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief, so help me GOD.

Charles W. Van Vechten

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO before me H. W. Farmer, an Investigator for the Veterans' Administration this 17 day of September, 1935.

H. W. Farmer
H. W. Farmer,
Investigator.