

Jones A. Pervis
Sept. 21, 1935
by Farmer

Alligator Reef Lighthouse
September 21, 1935.

JONES A. PERVIS made the following responses under oath to questions propounded by H. W. Farmer, Investigator, on September 21, 1935 at Alligator Reef Lighthouse in the investigation entitled "Re Hurricane Florida."

1. Q. State your full name, occupation and address.

A. I sign my name Jones A. Pervis; Keeper, Alligator Reef Lighthouse; before the hurricane my address was Islamorada, Fla.; now, Cross City, Florida

2. Q. What is your age?

A. Forty-six.

3. Q. How long have you occupied your position here?

A. I have been in the service 11 years; at this station 7 years, Keeper 2 years and First Assistant 5 years.

4. Q. Were you present here during the hurricane September 2, 1935?

A. I was nowhere else.

5. Q. Had you been away from the station prior to that date?

A. Yes. I went to shore Saturday, August 31.

6. Q. How long did you stay there?

A. I went in for mail; was away about 4 hrs.

7. Q. What weather observations did you make as a part of your duties?

A. Only through the hurricane season and during the approaching of a hurricane we only keep a record of the weather, except a daily record we keep in a log book of the weather throughout the year.

*No barometer
during hurricane season
approaching hurricane*

8. Q. Do you make barometer readings?

A. No Sir. Just the weather and logging of the weather - either cloudy, rainy or squally.

9. Q. Do you have a barometer here?

A. Yes Sir, two of them - Tycoos Marine barometers compensated. One is registered to stand 36 to 40 feet above the water. I actually have it around 36 feet above. The other is the same make but registered for 100 feet above the sea level. I have it set approximately 130 feet above the water.

10. Q. Do you make any regular readings of those barometers?

A. During hurricane season and only record readings during approaching hurricanes.

11. Q. Do you report them to anyone?

A. We report them to the Lighthouse Department, Key West by mail and telephone.

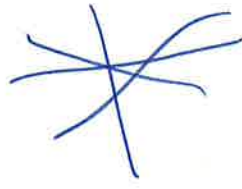
12. Q. May I see the record of your barometer readings from August 31st to Sept. 2nd inclusive?

A. Yes. (the records were shown).

13. Q. Please read your barometer readings for September 1st and September 2nd.

A. I do not have the readings for August 31st, and only one reading September 1st and that was at 10 AM. Reading - 29.85. On September 2nd at 10 AM was 29.80; at 12 noon it was 29.85; at 5 PM it was 29.20; at 6 PM it was 29.06; at 6:30 PM it was 27.84. The wind was North, Northeast, blowing strong. At 8 PM

A 10° fall in reading was made but as it showed no material change from the now reading it was not recorded. This however was the last reading telephoned in



29.06
27.84
1.12 in 36 minutes

it was 27.45; at 8:10 PM it was 27.35; at 9 PM it was 27.50; at 10 PM it was 28.04; at 10:30 PM it was 28.80; at 11 PM it was 29.93; at 11:40 PM it was 29.20; at 12 midnight it was 29.24; at 12:30AM morning of Sept. 3rd it was 29;30 at 1 AM it was 29.34; at 1:30 AM it was 29.38; at 2 AM it was 29.40; at 3 AM it was 29.46; at 4 AM it was 29.50; at 6 AM it was 29.55; at 9 AM it was 29.62; at 10 AM it was 29.64; at 11 AM it was 29.68; at 1 PM it was 29.70; at 9 PM it was 29.74 and the wind was from the south from 10 PM on the evening of Sept. 2nd until the last reading given.

14. Q. Did you estimate the height of the tidal wave that accompanied the hurricane?

A. No. During the lull that followed the first blow and which lasted about 20 minutes, we got out and estimated the ~~tidal~~ height of the waves to be 24 feet above mean highwater. We had no way of estimating the tide, and the height of the waves are estimated from where they struck on the lighthouse.

15. Q. Did you telephone in all of the barometer readings mentioned above?

A. No Sir. We telephoned all of them in to and including the 1 PM reading Sept. 2nd. If I remember, our last reading was telephoned in at 1 o'clock. We got orders to put up hurricane warnings at 1 o'clock, and I made no further effort to telephone barometer readings while trying to put them up. As I remember it, I gave no more readings after 1 o'clock. Telephone communication was cut off around 6:30 PM. If any readings were given between 1 o'clock and 6 o'clock, they were given by my second assistant J.O.Duncan now on vacation in Homestead, Florida.

16. Q. To whom did you telephone your barometer readings on Sept. 1st and 2nd?

A. To the Test Board in Key West up until 1 o'clock on Sept. 2nd and to the Chief Clerk of the Lighthouse Office, Key West at 1 o'clock.

17. Q. Is the Test Board at Key West to whom you telephoned under the Superintendent of Lighthouses?

A. I do not know. I ^{don't} think it is.

18. Q. ~~Do you~~ ^{Who} know under whose supervision it is?

A. The Weather Bureau at Key West or Miami can give you that information.

19. Q. Do you know to what individual you read your report of 1 o'clock, Monday Sept. 2nd over the telephone?

A. To the Chief Clerk - Lionel H. Plummer. I suppose he transmits that to the Weather Bureau and keeps it on record in the Lighthouse office.

20. Q. Were all of your readings September 1st and 2nd telephoned to Mr. Plummer?

A. No.

21. Q. Which of them were?

A. The readings at 1 o'clock Sept. 2nd were telephoned to the Lighthouse office only.

22. Q. To what individual were your other readings telephoned?

A. I could not say what individual - just the Test Board, Key West.

23. Q. And all of your readings were telephoned to the Test Board?

A. Yes.

24. Q. What use does the Test Board make of the barometer readings telephoned to them?

A. They transmit them to the Weather Bureau.

25. Q. Have you radio communication from the mainland?

A. No Sir. I did have but the storm put it out of commission at 6:30 PM Sept. 2nd.

26. Q. Up to that time had you received all weather reports from the Weather Bureau?

A. No Sir. I received only one weather report at 12 o'clock noon that day.

27. Q. Did you make any effort to ~~make~~ get all reports or advisories?

A. No. I only have a receiving set and we tuned in and got the weather report from Miami at 12 o'clock. I did get weather reports over the telephone from Key West on Sept. 1st and Sept. 2nd up to 1 o'clock Sept. 2nd. I don't remember getting any after 1 o'clock.

28. Q. Tell me how often you got them?

A. Every hour. I did not make any chart of it and kept them by memory. The hurricane of Sept. 2nd was reported 200 miles east of Havana, Cuba traveling south by west which would have put it between Cuba and Key West. Up until 1 PM that was the course it was traveling. It would blow at hurricane force either around the Florida Straits or Key West; gale force here. It is my opinion, based on reports I received, it must have changed its course as the ~~test~~ ^{report} ~~tags~~ at 1 PM showed it somewhere between Andros Island and Key West.

to be going J.A.P.
J.A.P.

29. Q. Did you make any readings of wind velocity?

A. I have no way of making records of wind velocity - only estimates.

30. Q. Did you estimate the velocity on September 2nd?

A. Yes. I estimated it not less than 150 miles per hour.

31. Q. Is there any further statement you wish to make?

A. I do not know whether there is anything I could state that would cover anything. I saw some of the buildings put up in these Veteran camps and they were not built securely enough for a hurricane. From their appearance, they were put there for temporary arrangements until they could do better.

32. Q. Did you telephone any barometer readings or other reports direct to the Weather Bureau at Miami, Key West or elsewhere?

A. No. All my reports were sent to the Test Board and to the Superintendent of Light-houses at Key West.

I, JONES A. PERVIS, DO SOLEMNLY AFFIRM THAT the statements made by me 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.

Subscribed and sworn to before me, H. W. Farmer, an investigator for the Veterans' Administration this 21st day of September, 1935.

Investigator.