

Edney B. Parker
Sept. 23, 1935
by Farmer

Village Barn,
Dixie Highway
South of Miami, Fla.
September 23, 1935

1. D. PARKER made the following responses under oath to questions propounded by H. W. Palmer, Investigator, in the investigation entitled "Re Hurricane Florida."

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

A. E. B. Parker; my age is 49; I was Director of Sanitation of the Veterans' Camps up to the time of the hurricane; present address Kendall, Florida; before the hurricane, Islamorada, Fla.

2. Q. How long were you Director of Sanitation of the Veterans' Camps?

A. I was Director of Sanitation since February 9, 1935.

3. Q. In that position did you visit all camps daily?

A. Every day.

4. Q. Did you see or become acquainted with any of the Veterans?

A. I know lots of them, but I cannot remember their names.

5. Q. Were you acquainted with all of the officials of the Camp?

A. Yes Sir. Everyone of them.

6. Q. Were you in camp September 1st and 2nd 1935?

A. Yes Sir. I visited all three camps Sunday. I visited Camp 5 and 1 Monday - never got to Camp 3.

7. Q. Did you on either of those days offer any advice to the officials as to the danger of a hurricane?

*Does not
say hurricane
coming*

A. Well, I told Mr. Cutler we were going to have a hurricane. He asked me when and I told him I didn't know, but that there was one close by according to the actions of my barometer. As to whether we would have it, I didn't know.

Q. . . At what time was that?

A. . . About 9 o'clock Monday; at 12 o'clock I told Mr. Cutler I knew the hurricane was coming towards us, but I didn't know how far away and when we would get it.

Q. . . Was Mr. Cutler seeking your advice or were you giving it voluntarily?

A. He asked me about the weather. I said there was a storm. At 3 o'clock it was the last time I talked to the officials. Mr. Sheldon asked me "Captain, what do you think about it" and I said "I think we are going to have a hurricane." He said that according to the report on the radio that the hurricane was in the southwest of us. I said "I bet very close I got that. The hurricane was in the southeast of us somewhere" because the wind was in the northeast and if you face the wind at right angles, you get the storm.

*Tells Sheldon
at 3 pm that
hurricane coming*

*"I bet very
close"*

10. Q. Did Mr. Sheldon seek your advice or did you offer him any advice about evacuation of the Veterans of anything of the danger of the hurricane prior to 2 o'clock Monday?

A. No Sir.

11. Q. Did you talk with him at all prior to 2 o'clock Monday?

A. I never saw him at all. They said he was off somewhere. I talked to Mr. Sheldon about 2 o'clock.

12. Q. Do you know whether or not when you talked to him at 2 o'clock that he requested a train be sent to carry the Veterans off the Keys?

A. He said "I told the West Coast to get the men out of there" at 2 o'clock. He told me at 3 o'clock, if I remember right, that the train was late. Bill Hardacker, Superintendent Camp 1, also said the train was coming in about 3 o'clock.

13. Q. Did you hear or see any preparation on the part of officials looking towards the removal of the Veterans on Sunday or Monday?

A. No, I never saw any Sunday. I heard Mr. Cutler talking to the West Coast and the War Relocation Authority both between 9 and 10 o'clock Monday morning and he told the West Coast to have a train standing ready to take the men out. He said about \$10,000 about money because he said it will be paid for, and you can call Washington, and he said something about Mr. Ghent would see him. Then he asked the other man about the storm. The other man said "We would have gale forces south of Key Largo."

14. Q. How could you hear what the weather man said?

A. That is what he gave out over the radio.

15. Q. As there any indication in your opinion that the railroad officials were quibbling about the payment of the train?

A. I wouldn't say they held back on the train on anything. I never heard what the man said to Mr. Cutler, but Mr. Cutler said

Cutler talks to
FEC Monday
about \$?

the train would be paid for, Mr. Ghent would see him and told him something about Ashington.

16. Q. That was between 10 and 11 o'clock on Monday morning was it?

A. Yes. As to what time they ordered the train, I don't know.

17. Q. Did you get any information that the railroad officials had agreed to accept his order to have the train standing ready?

A. Yes. He turned around and told another gentleman in the office that the train would be all ready, and from his conversation he was totally depending on the other man.

18. Q. Where were you during the hurricane?

A. I was about 300 feet south of the board-
quarters. I left my home at 4:30 that afternoon and moved the family to a little house that was owned by my brother-in-law. I moved there because the trees were all around the house and I felt safer.

19. Q. How many members of your family were in the house during the hurricane?

A. Ten children, two son-in-laws, wife and self.

20. Q. Did they come through safely?

A. Yes.

21. Q. Had you experienced any other hurricanes?

A. Yes.

22. Q. How did this one compare with the others?

A. Worst one by far.

Car to
bro. in-law's
house 4 p.m.

22. Q. Did you make readings on your barometer of the hurricane?

A. Until 10 o'clock that night.

23. Q. What was your last reading?

A. 29.50.

*His barometer
26.50 at
10 p.m.*

24. Q. What time was that?

A. At 10 o'clock. I stepped across the pool; the pump went all to pieces and the barometer went with it. At that time we floating and went over the top of a tree that measured over 12 feet. The water was, I say, 15 feet.

25. Q. At what time did the hurricane begin?

A. We had hurricane forces at 7 o'clock that night.

27. Q. When did the tidal wave occur?

A. At 7:55 P.M. and it rose 12 feet in 15 minutes. I am sure it was not over 15 minutes.

28. Q. Did the wind blow continuously from 7 until after the tidal wave came in?

A. It blew continuously from 7 until 10:30. The tide started leaving us not later than 10:30. The water started to go down and I could feel the cold water going down from my body.

29. Q. Was the information which you had of the approaching hurricane sufficient to have caused you, had you been in position to do so, to evacuate the Veterans from the keys before the hurricane.

A. No Sir. It would not. My barometer didn't show any near danger until one hour before the hurricane and it fell so fast I really couldn't tell how fast it did go.

*Didn't
think dangerous
at first*

30. A. Did you identify any of the dead victims after the hurricane?

A. Yes, I saw lots I know, but had already been identified. Later, I identified one that Bob Norwood brought in and he asked me to look at him and it was Smith. He called him "Squitty" from Ft. Camp.

31. Q. What was the means of identification?

A. His hair was white and wavy. He had good teeth. He was about 6' 2" tall, weighed about 175 pounds and I knew him personally.

32. Q. Were there any papers or personal articles on him that would further identify him?

A. No. He just had on a pair of shorts.

I want to tell you the truth. I think the railroad officials, the weather man, the camp officials and all the natives were fooled and fooled bad. I don't think they knew what was going to happen. We never dreamed anything was going to happen such as that. I will say one thing, Mr. Cutler was very much concerned to see that those men got out of there. Mr. Cutler did his best I believe. I do not know whether he had any authority or not to arrange for their evacuation.

33. Q. When you talked to Mr. Sheldon at 2 and 3 o'clock, did he seem as much concerned as Mr. Cutler?

A. When I talked to him at 2 and 3 o'clock, he was very much concerned.

Everybody
fooled

Cutler
concerned

Sheldon
concerned
at 2 pm, 3 pm

Q1. Q. Did you see many of the Veterans just preceding the storm when you were on the way back to your place?

A. I saw a bunch of them in #1 and venture to say 1/2 of 15, but I didn't see them in 1/3.

Q2. Q. Did they seem to be apprehensive about the hurricane?

A. With the exception of three or four men - they didn't seem to be concerned about the storm. I know that Dr. Ward-ner notified Dr. Main and Dr. Alexander about 4 PM to be in readiness that the train was coming to take them out.

Q3. Q. What was the weather condition on Monday morning?

A. What we call squally. We would have showers of rain and it would blow about 30; maybe some of it was 40 miles an hour. The barometer did not fall in the forenoon - only evening. After dinner the wind came, but we look for them to lose in the afternoon.

Barometer usually falls in afternoon?

Q4. Q. How was given the statement covering this subject to anyone else?

A. No Sir. I did give a statement to Mr. Morley, but all he asked me was who did I blame. I told him, if anybody, it was the weatherman.

Q5. Q. Has anyone cautioned you about telling about all you know of the events occurring during or before the hurricane?

A. No Sir.

39. Q. Having in mind that we want you to give us the benefit of any information you have and that you can speak without any fear that would re-act against you in any way, is there any further statement you would like to make.

A. I don't know a thing to save my life. As I said before it was absolutely unexpected. I have been on Matecumbe for 30 years and I have never seen anything like it.

I, E. B. Parker, 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.

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO before me
and Investigator for the Veterans' Administration
on this day of September, 1935.
