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Statement of MR. ALBERT C. KEITH,

of 1081 Los Angeles Ave. N.E., Atlanta, Ga., who first being duly sworn by Mr. D. W. Kennamer, Central Office Investigator, made the following responses to questions propounded by Miss Pierce, in the case under investigation, relative to Florida Storm, Sept. 2, 1935:

BY MISS PIERCE: Q Mr. Abt has told you what we wanted this morning: we would like to have your home address.

A My home address is 1081 Los Angeles Ave., N.E., Atlanta, Georgia.

Q You are a veteran? A Yes ma'am.

Q How old are you? A I will be 38 years of age December 11th this coming year.

Q You have relatives in Atlanta? A Yes.

Q Who are they? A My mother, Mrs. W. M. Keith, and my sister, Mrs. S. R. Durham.

Q You were employed at the veterans' camp?

A I was editor of The Key Veteran News; that was my capacity there.

Q You were at camp during the hurricane?

A No, ma'am, I was at Homestead getting out the paper. Every Friday I go to Homestead and put the paper out.

Q Then there were no injuries?

A No injuries as I know of, only mental, perhaps a little bit.

Q To your knowledge, did any one prohibit or discourage the veterans from leaving the camp before the storm?

A Not being there I couldn't answer the question. All that

I can say, I saw the train at Homestead when they got there, going down to the keys.

Q What time was that? A I would imagine that was around 11 o'clock in the morning; I suppose it was on Sunday, or Monday, I am not positive; I am kind of hazy in my recollection just what date it was. I know it was around 11 in the morning but whether it was Sunday or Monday I don't know. But anyhow I asked the man who was in charge of the train, about going down; he said it wouldn't be necessary, they would have to bring all the veterans and perhaps a lot of civilians back; so he told me, If you see any of the boys here in town, corral them up and we will stop here and pick you up.

Q How long did the train lie over at Homestead?

A I would imagine it laid there about 35 minutes, something like that.

Q Mr. Keith, did you go back to identify any of the dead?

A No ma'am; I worked in the hospital at Homestead on two nights and two days; I received about five hours' sleep; at the First Baptist Church, where they evacuated the men to Miami.

Q Mr. Keith, you are requested to tell anything additional about the storm, that you have not already told. In making the statement, the record is open for you to say anything you wish to say, and you are specifically requested to state any additional facts you can.

A In one issue of the paper there was an understanding that

in case a storm should come about, that the men would be evacuated; would be taken care of.

Q Who made that statement?

A That was made through an article; I wasn't present, but it was in one of the copies of the Key Veterans News, which you can secure from the Leader Enterprise, Homestead, Florida. It was in the files of the paper. There was an understanding also we would get civilian clothing, and our measurements were taken, but we never did receive them. All that I know as far as evacuation is concerned, about a week before the storm I was reading about the storm itself; and talking to Mr. Johnson, I used to take the barometer readings and temperature, which they kept a log; I went down with the first ten veterans last fall; and I saw one of the weather charts in Mr. Sheldon's office, and there was this low humidity; he said that was a bad sign. That was about five days before the storm occurred; and he said Well, about the hurricane, I have never been in a hurricane, only what I have heard people say; I wouldn't want to be in one. On Friday we were paid; I received my check, and always on Friday I go to Homestead and work Friday night and bring the paper back. So I was supposed to go to Miami and play baseball with the club also, but such a storm and all, bad weather, I didn't go; I remained at Homestead. So as far as any particular individual being responsible, that I do not know, because I wasn't there and I didn't see what went on and I don't know. But all I know, that they were supposed to

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get the men. I don't know what condition they were in or anything, but I do know this, that we were about four or five months there at #1, we built the camp, we never even had bathing facilities; I do know the sanitary conditions of the camp were almost beyond-- well I couldn't understand; there were flies, you go in to eat there would be flies, you would have to fan them out of your face and food; finally they eliminated that by putting in kind of a system that cleaned the camp up. And a lot of time we didn't see but one person that ever represented any religious organization, that was Father McDonald from Homestead. We didn't even have as much as a book or a movie - moving pictures; so when they started to give them the dollar a day they would get trucks and take you to Tavernier to a picture show. And we were supposed to have had a recreation hall at #1, but never did get it. They were starting it before we left. And the men, as far as I could see, in my view of the whole thing, it was practically the men were left just to do any old way, that was all; there was no rules or regulations when we first went there, and there never was. No one knew anything; when we was building the road I asked some of the men in charge and they couldn't tell me anything. I saw stuff in the roads, - sheets, pillowcases, blankets, beds. There was a tool house, when we turned in the tools, not even locked up; if you wanted an ace or pick or saw, just walk in and get it, when we first went there. After making some change they finally got a few rules, but there

was never any known regulations. And they would discharge the men and send them to Washington, and the same men would come back again; I have known men went to Washington two or three times, the government would pay their way and they would hobo back to Washington and they would send them back again. I guess some of these men had their fare paid two or three times by the United States government.

BY MR. KENWAMER: Can you name any one?

A I know one man by the name of Rooney -- Rooney Garner, that I know that Garner went there to Washington and he was gone about fifteen days and he came back again. And certain ones were put in charge; quite a few of them, I couldn't name them all, they went to Washington and came back, and they used to say Well you get on the road, no one give you any final discharge or say anything, just get in the road. So the only thing that I can see, as far as the sociology part of the camp is concerned, was the matter of fact that the people who hit camp at first, we never had any rules or regulations, and it just got off on the wrong foot, somehow or other. But we had a strike down there; they told us in Washington we were the same as the CC's, and so they wanted to work six days a week two shifts; so the men said Well we are supposed to work the same as the CC. And they all struck, and they ran the first sergeant out, and said there hadn't been any accounting of the canteen; they went before Mr. Duncan, who was in charge of the camps, I was on the committee: they had an accounting

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of the canteen and each man got a 4.15 check after five or six months. I was in charge of the infirmary there for four or five months, starting off, when we built the camp. I think if we had had more recreation there it would have been better for the men; but they didn't get it; I don't know whether the money was about through, or what, but that was one thing I noticed that was lacking.

MISS PIERCE: Is there anything else you would like to say?

A That's all I have to say.

MR. KENNAMER: Were all the men quartered in wooden barracks? A At Camp #1 we were first quartered in tents; we were at Keystone Heights, and we went out and cut poles; and they first sent down 50 men:

Q I am speaking about the time of the storm.

A Four men into a shack.

Q They were all in wooden buildings?

A We slept in those wooden shacks. I don't know at the time of the storm whether they were all in there or not; I couldn't answer that because I wasn't there.