

*by Johnstone, Davis, Worley
201.1.1935*

(At this juncture of the investigation, Captain B. E. Davis was called, whereupon Mr. Worley said to the prospective witness: "Hold up your hand and be sworn". Mr. Davis answered: "Wait a minute; what is all this about? I haven't been subpoenaed up here. We don't know what this is all about. I don't object to giving anything - - " -- whereupon Mr. Davis was interrupted by Mr. Worley, and was instructed to return to the waiting room, and that he would be served with a subpoena and recalled later). (Whereupon, Mr. Davis retired).

STATEMENT OF: R. C. PARKER.

R. C. PARKER was called as a witness, and being first duly sworn by the State's Attorney, testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY MR. WORLEY:

Q Your name?

A R. C. Parker.

Q Were you down on the Keys during the storm, Captain?

A No, sir; I got down on the Keys Tuesday night after the storm.

Q **You got down on the Keys Tuesday night after the storm?**

A Yes, sir.

Q What time did you get down there?

A I think it was about eight o'clock, Mr. Worley, but I didn't have my watch with me to know what time it was. We got down there with those first eight trucks, the caravan of eight trucks; we had more trucks than that, but this was the F. E. R. A. and P. W. A. trucks. The others were donated trucks.

Q And you had one outboard motor?

A We had two outboard motors on the first truck, and put her in the water, on a boat, and started immediately, at once, hauling people across Snake Creek. We had an additional outboard motor which we put on a boat commandeered, or loaned; however, we took it without permission from the Immigration Department. We went down to Upper Matecumbe Key and had a gentleman on there with a watch, and we landed there at 6:00 o'clock in the morning.

MR. JOHNSTONE: This is Lieutenant-Commander Parker?

A Yes, sir.

Q Suppose we let Captain Parker go ahead and tell us anything that might be of interest to us in this inquiry; you would know better than we could; I don't know what you know.

A Well, I think that my two boats were among the first two boats to land on Upper Matecumbe Key. I had two coast guardsmen with us; I left one of the boats I had with me in charge of a man by the name of Murphy, who immediately started hauling the survivors to the next key. They could walk up that key, and were ferried across from Snake Creek. Well, the two coast guardsmen and myself and a man by the name of Newman, we

*Reached
Snake Creek
about 8 pm*

went further down to the keys, where we found some men trying to fix up some local people that remained on the key, and - -

MR. JOHNSTONE: Commander, did you know anything about the circumstances leading up to the hurricane? That is, about the information that the people on the keys had about the hurricane?

A I only know what I have been told.

MR. APT. Where were you on Sunday and Monday?

A Sunday and Monday I was up here taking care of the Navy boats, in Miami.

MR. JOHNSTONE: In Miami?

A Yes, sir; in Miami.

MR. JOHNSTONE: Were you in touch with weather bureau reports?

A Only through the radio, and by my own weather glass.

MR. JOHNSTONE: All right; then, what was the information about the storm?

A The first information that I personally received in reference to the storm that it was going to hit with hurricane force was between 7:00 and 8:00 o'clock Monday night.

MR. JOHNSTONE: Monday night?

A Monday night. That was the first information I received over the radio.

MR. JOHNSTONE: Where did they think the storm was prior to that time? Where did they think it was going to hit?

A They thought it was somewhere out in the Gulf Stream, between Cuba and the southern tip of Florida; that is, according to my understanding of where they thought that it was. My weather glass went down enough so that I knew a storm was imminent on Sunday.

MR. JOHNSTONE: Whereabouts? Here?

A In Miami, Florida. It went down from 30.10 to 29.70 by 7:00 o'clock Monday morning. It was 30.10 Sunday morning and at 7:00 o'clock Monday morning it was 29.70. In consequence, I did the final work of securing the navy boats we had, up in the Belcher slip, on Monday, and on Monday at 7:00 o'clock, the weather glass had dropped to 29.65, which is plenty of storm warning to us. Of course, it was too late to help them on the Keys.

BY MR. SHELDON:

Q Did the barometer, Captain Parker, only drop then from Sunday morning, you say, when it read 29.70?

A 29.10 - - no, it was 30.10 Sunday morning, and then Monday morning it was 29.70, showing a drop of .40, or 4/10ths.

BY MR. JOHNSTONE:

Q You said a few minutes ago there was on Monday a reading of 29.65.

A Yes, sir.

Q What time was that?

A That was Monday night.

Q So it dropped five points?

A 5/100ths.

Q Between Monday morning and Monday night?

A Yes, sir; but that previous reading was indicating a bad storm, to anybody familiar with reading a glass.

Q That was in Miami?

A Yes, sir. I made inquiries to see if they had adequate weather glasses, just even cheap \$10.00 weather glasses which would have warned them of a good storm, but I couldn't find anyone that had a weather glass. Whether there was one or not, I don't know.

Q By weather glass you mean a barometer?

A Yes, sir.

Q There were barometers on the Keys.

A There may have been, but I was unable to find who had them.

Q Captain, did the camp personnel do everything they could to get the survivors out of there?

A The camp personnel?

Q Yes.

A I couldn't say about that. I know the F. E. R. A. and the W. P. A., and the other organizations that followed after the storm, worked awfully hard, and did all they could, but I don't know -- I wasn't there to know about the camp personnel. Now, I might tell you something of some benefit; however, it is hearsay and it is not acceptable.

MR. WORLEY: All right; it might give us a lead.

A It will give you a lead, Gentlemen. There is a

watchman on my Navy vessel by the name of Ed Holmer, who told

Train
engineer
abt 5
permission

MR. APT: That the engineer on the train had told him he had not received orders to leave to go down there to take them off, but took the responsibility on himself and went down there, after waiting until he got alarmed about the storm. He said the engineer told him that personally. Now, it is a good idea to get that engineer; he is living.

MR. APT: Do you know the name of the engineer?

A No; I don't, but Mr. Holmer does. He used to be an engineer himself on the F. E. C. (Florida East Coast Ry). That's what this engineer -- he claims this engineer told him.

MR. APT: Can you get that?

A I can go to Mr. Holmer in a short time.

MR. APT: And find out where we can get ahold of him?

A Yes. Shall I send him to you?

MR. JOHNSTONE: Yes, sir.

A I suppose it will be a good idea. I can tell you one other point. Mr. Johnson, who remained down at a point known as Islamorada where that train was wrecked, told me, I think in the presence of Mr. Aubrey Williams, that he was told the reason the train didn't pull out earlier was they didn't have definite knowledge as to who was going to pay for the train. Now, that again is hearsay.

MR. JOHNSTONE: Where did he say he got that?

A He said some of the train crew told him that.

MR. JOHNSTONE: All right, sir.

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NOTE: Last of Parker's testimony is
on front page of Dr. E. W. Ayers