

• Frank Williams 9-13-98 (No. 1)

Q (Conversation)

A I did talk to Fred Orway. You know, Fred was quite a writer and most of his stuff is of historical nature. Mitch Sharp was the other one that I talked to.

Q I think Mitch and Fred collaborated on The Rocket Team. I don't know if you ever saw that.

A The biography in the mid-90s, I don't recall knowing of its existence.

Q (Conversation) What is your favorite story of this sort about Dr. von Braun?

A Well, I was thinking about our sailing trip to celebrate his 60th birthday. He and I a couple went on a bare boat sailing trip where we elected him to captain. None of us knew how to sail because Hans Mark and his wife were going to go with us, and at the 11th hour, Hans and his wife had to cancel out because of a reduction in force out at Ames. He was the center director out at Ames at that time. He was Secretary of the Air Force at one point in time. He's down in Texas -- I don't know where he is to tell you the truth. Anyway, we got another couple to go with us and went bare boat from -- well, we picked up the boat in Granda and sailed all the way up to St. Vincent and back. That was a ball. We spent a week and a half doing that.

Q (Conversation)

A It was a 41-foot ~~eleuth~~ sloop.

Q Did anyone have much sailing experience?

A No, we didn't, but we had a ball. That was a fun trip.

Q Any particular incident, specific incident, or remarks that stand out that bear repeating?

A Yes. I would have to -- I have a book of pictures and a day-by-day diary of what we did. I would like to get that out and look at that. About his philosophy, there are a lot of people weren't aware of how close Werner and I really were. His philosophy on life and some of his religious thinking and how he interrelated with people and the Congress -- the first time when Jim Fletcher came on board as the administrator after George Low and Tom Payne, we were taking a flight in the Gulfstream. They were taking drink orders in the back of the airplane. Werner was sitting -- this was out of Washington -- I was sitting (Inaudible) Fletcher was sitting across the aisle from us. They were kind of individual seats. We had just taken off and the stewardess came back (Inaudible). -- somehow something about religion came up. Werner said -- he kind of held up his glass -- and said to Fletcher said teasingly, "It's too bad about your religion, you can't have a drink, so you are drinking your milk." After which Fletcher turned and smiled and said, "Yes, and your religion only allows you to have one wife. Each of us has a

Note:
This is a preliminary interview (to a longer one later), but go ahead & transcribe the 2 or 3 stories he told here & his comments abt. V. Braun.

(taped) 9-13-98

Frank Williams "bare"

• sailing trip to celebrate V.B.'s 60th birthday - "Beer boat?"
Hans Mark & wife canceled - got another couple -
Granada to St. Vincent's & back - "had a ball"
1 1/2 wks. - no pro crew
41-ft. sloop
(will give me specifics later)

Frank "very close" to V.B.
re - philosophy - religious feeling, etc.

when Jas. Fletcher - V.B. in D.C. as admin -
Gulfstream flight out of Wash. - Fletcher, Frank & V.B. aboard -

• drink orders taken by steward
Fletcher: milk (tetotaler)
- teased -
V.B. said, "too bad abt. your religion - not allowing you to have a drink!"
Fletcher replied: "That's all right. Too bad your religion doesn't allow"
or: "It's a pity that"

You to have more than 1 wife."

Frank to give it more
thought - more stories -
& call me back in abt.
1 mo. - mid-Oct.

(he has trip to Gulf Shores, &
Series of house guests in
Slidell, etc., in meantime)

(TO BE CONT'D..!)