

Scenes of Desolation Reported in Wake of Midsouthern Tornado

Reporter Finds Human Tragedies, Freaks of Luck

(Warren S. Topp Jr. in the capacity of special correspondent for the United Press, left his home at St. Louis, Mo., and went into the Tornado-torn areas of Missouri's bootheel. These are his observations.)

Caruthersville, Mo.—(U.P.)—A tornado-hewn path of devastation a mile and a half wide stretched through the cotton country in Missouri's bootheel Saturday night, from Cooter to Cottonwood Point.

Automobiles carrying rescue workers, survivors, and just plain curious drove through hubcap-deep mud left by a six-inch rain as the hunt for possible additional casualties went on.

15 Dead
At least 15 persons died in Pemiscot county, Mo., and one at Milligan Ridge, Ark., as a result of the storm that swept this border area from Blytheville, Ark., to Cottonwood Point, Mo. Property damage was estimated at more than \$1,000,000.

Injured totaled 47 at the Pemiscot Memorial hospital in Hayti, Mo., and a hospital at Blytheville.

Along an eight-mile stretch from Cooter east to Cottonwood Point, there wasn't a house left undamaged by last night's tornado. In the township of Cooter alone, 30 houses were destroyed and many others damaged.

Stories of personal tragedy and freak luck began to come in as the first rush of caring for the injured and counting the dead neared an end.

One of the dead was a 13-year-old girl, Virginia Mason, who was seriously ill of pneumonia when the tornado carried her home away. She lay in the rain for more than two hours before her father found her, unhurt. But she died in the Hayti hospital of exposure.

Truck in Tree
A big truck was left in a tree. An automobile with three persons riding in it was lifted off the road and put down in a field a mile away.

Its passengers were only shaken up.
Coy Lewis, a farmer living outside Steele, Mo., told how the tornado moved his house off its foundation and leveled the homes of his neighbors.

Lewis said that as the storm approached he and his wife were making preparations to take their three children outside to a truck, but the wind hit before they could get out of the house. It blew out the windows, shattering everything in the house. The house itself was blown about 25 feet in one direction, Lewis said, then blown back 10 or 15 feet in the other direction.

He said he guessed it was lucky the family didn't make it to the truck—he saw it turned completely around and moved about 25 feet.

(See Story on Page One)

SERVICE DISCONTINUED

Harrisburg, Ill.—(U.P.)—Police announced that no longer will they switch coins from auto windshield to parking meters for motorists. They gave two reasons — "skidrow" characters were getting to the coins first and some of the motorists skipped making the initial meter payment when they parked.

Tornado Victims Receive Little Advance Warning

Oklahoma City — (U.P.) — Tornado victims received little or no advance warning of the Friday devastation although an Air Force storm warning expert said "a major part of the tornado activity."

Lt. Col. E. J. Fawbush, chief of the Tinker Air Force Base Severe Storm Warning center here, said his 14-man crew issued confidential warnings to military bases in the ravaged area several hours before civilians had any word of possible disaster.

Prohibited By Law

"We are prohibited by law from releasing our forecasts to the public," Fawbush said. "Civilians must rely on the forecasts of the U. S. Weather bureau of the Department of Commerce."

Success of the Tinker storm warning center, which Monday begins its fifth year of operation, was a factor in the U. S. Weather bureau's decision five days ago to start issuing tornado forecasts of its own.

The National Weather bureau in Washington issued a special forecast at 1:15 p.m. EST Friday, calling for "a few isolated" tornadoes in southern Arkansas, northern Louisiana, extreme southeastern Oklahoma and the north half of eastern Texas. Seven tornado fatalities occurred in southern Arkansas, but other areas mentioned in this forecast escaped fatal storms.

Forecast Amended
Fawbush said the civilian forecast followed closely a forecast his staff made at 10:59 a.m.

Red Cross Director Sent to Tornado Area

San Francisco — (U.P.) — Red Cross director of the Red Cross disaster services for the Pacific area, Saturday was assigned the job of directing rehabilitation work among the homeless and needy as a result of tornadoes in the south and southwest.

Gordon departed for Red Cross Midwest headquarters at St. Louis, Mo., via TWA plane last night.

Sheldon Williams, assistant Pacific coast director and a veteran of 25 major disasters for the Red Cross, accompanied Gordon. Another 65 Red Cross specialists from other parts of the nation were to join Gordon at St. Louis.

Hawaii Alerted Against Possible Tidal Waves

Honolulu — (U.P.) — Small villages on the south coast of the island of Hawaii were alerted Saturday for a possible tidal wave after Dr. Gordon A. McDonald of the Hawaii Volcano Observatory reported a series of submarine earthquakes off shore.

However, coast geodetic survey seismologists in Honolulu said the quakes were not large enough to cause "any alarm about tides." They said the quakes were much smaller than those of the west coast of Hawaii last August which caused unappreciable waves.

McDonald said there had been more than a thousand underwater shocks since Sunday and they were continuing. None was felt ashore.

amended at 5:30 p.m. Friday—before the worst of the storm hit.

"We revised our forecast to include a major part of the tornado activity which actually occurred within a few hours," Fawbush said.

The civilian forecast, however, was not revised until 11 p.m. from Washington—after the tornadoes had raked through northeastern Arkansas and into Tennessee, Mississippi and Missouri.

(See Story Page One)

Survivors Tell Terrors of Storm In Arkansas Town

By GEORGE MILLER
U. P. Staff Correspondent

Searcy, Ark. — (U.P.) — Survivors told Saturday of the terror of seeing a house roll toward them, of dread at seeing a home gone with loved ones missing, ending, Mrs. Julia York's happy ending. Mrs. Julia York's ended tragically.

I met them both on my trip through the little town of Judsonia where the tornado struck hardest in northeast Arkansas. "I first noticed the storm when I went to sit in a chair by the window in our living room about 5:15 p.m. yesterday," Mrs. York said. "I looked out the window and the sky seemed to be right on top of the house."

House Shaking
"I looked out the window and across the street seemed to be shaking and then it jumped off its foundations and began to turn over," Mrs. York said.

"I looked out the window and saw that house rolling across the street toward us," added her daughter, Mrs. Cora Lee Barr. "I shoved mother to the floor and screamed for my husband to come to us. Then the house was gone and mother and I were lying in the front lawn."

Pinned Under House
Mrs. York said she "must have fainted," because she next heard her daughter screaming that her husband Luther "was pinned under the house and she couldn't get him out."

A young sailor rode with me to Judsonia to search for his wife and six-year-old daughter who were reported missing there. He was just back from Korea but there was so much confusion I didn't ask his name.

When we reached Judsonia we had to climb through fallen trees and over live electric wires through a driving rain to reach the spot where his house should have been.

Nothing But Stone
There was nothing but a cookstove. The floor and walls were all gone.

"Oh, my God, I should have stayed in Korea," the sailor moaned.

We turned away. About 200 yards from us a light shone through the window of an abandoned church. We walked to the door and a fellow stuck his head out. The sailor knew him.

"Have you seen my wife and girl?" he asked.

"Here they are," the man said. The woman and child rushed out. The reunion was joyous. For awhile they were all speechless. Finally the wife said:

"Oh, your clothes are all gone now!"

(See Story Page One)



EN ROUTE TO JAPAN, Caesar's Crown, 8-year-old mare, proudly nuzzles her 18-day old colt at San Francisco wharf before boarding ship. They are among 16 valuable horses, including colt sire, Vito Puro, outstanding Argentine stallion, bought by S. Shirai, owner of Japanese Racing Form, from Oakmead Farm. (International)

Searchers Find Two Cougar Hounds Dead

Darrington, Wash. — (U.P.) — Searchers gave up hope Saturday for the last of three cougar hounds which were stranded for 15 days atop a rocky ledge on Whitehorse mountain.

A 10-man rescue party finished their search Friday night when one of the dogs was found frozen to death on the ledge, a second was found dead at the foot of the cliff and the third was missing.

Stay All Night

Seven of the mountaineers stayed on the mountain all night because it was too risky to come down after dark.

Cleo Riddels, owner of the dogs, found the broken body of Old Tom, the dog that flushed 26 cougars this winter, 4000 feet up the snow-packed mountain and at the bottom of the 500 foot ledge.

A band of mountaineers from the University of Washington found the second canine, Laddie, curled up and frozen stiff on the ledge.

Vertical Climb

The climbers had to inch their way several hundred feet across the almost vertical face of the cliff to reach the animal.

The third dog, Queenie, was nowhere to be seen and Riddels feared he followed Old Tom's lead and hurled himself off the cliff.

Riddels, his eyes moist with grief, gently picked up Old Tom,

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Wind-Whipped Fire Ravages Half Of Alaska Coastal Fishing Town

Wrangell, Alaska — (U.P.) — Fire from an exploding hardware store furnace destroyed approximately one-half of this Alaska coastal fishing town Saturday and caused damage estimated at \$1,000,000. One person was injured slightly.

The blaze, whipped by 30-mile-per-hour winds, raced north and south over a four-block area and leveled 21 waterfront buildings. About 100 persons, including 40 from the town's only hotel, fled for their lives.

About 400 men, representing every able-bodied man in town, turned out to fight the fire,

which was reported virtually under control.

Lew M. Williams Jr., co-editor of the Wrangell Sentinel newspaper, said the damage would reach \$1,000,000. He said "better than half" of the town was leveled.

The Coast Guard ordered the cutters White Holly from Petersburg and Sweet Briar from Ketchikan to proceed full steam to Wrangell to help fight the fire. However, with the tide out early Saturday, it was impossible for ships to approach close enough to play water on the blazing town, Williams said.

"What made the fire so hard to fight," Williams said, "was the fact the burning buildings are on docks and the wind blew the flames underneath. The firemen couldn't get at the flames."

Destroyed were the three-story Wrangell hotel, a cold storage plant; the electrical supply firm where the fire started; the town's only barber shop, theater and bakery; one of three grocery stores, a lodge hall, a bar, two liquor stores, the Elks hall and bowling alleys and one of three women's apparel shops. A 10-unit apartment house and transfer garage also were leveled.

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