

Texas Farm Land, Recently Dry, Now Looks Like Series of Marshes

Editor's Note: Three United Press staffmen, riding a chartered plane Friday to cover the series of property-damaging tornadoes that raked west Texas, were forced to land and take refuge in a storm cellar when a squall line headed their way. Here is their story.

By KYLE THOMPSON
United Press Correspondent
Dallas, Tex. — Millions of square miles of Texas farm and ranch lands where three months ago were parched by the worst drought in history today are much like a series of marshes and swamplands.

A rash of thunderstorms, tornadoes and downpours which began lashing the state late in February has dumped more rain in many areas than fell in the past four or five years.

Vast areas of the state from the Texas panhandle south and east 500 and 600 miles are a soggy, rain-saturated mass of pools, creeks and rivers.

Like Continuous Line
Tons of water in streams built up by heavy downpours on top of downpours have flooded almost every stream in the state. The area from the Texas plains

east to the Louisiana border looks from the air like a continuous line of muddy pools, swift streams and swamped farm and ranch lands.

Muddy, irregular fingers of water jut out from numerous rivers and creeks. Lowlands are covered by more muddy waters. Cultivated fields have been washed out where numerous small, crooked streams have sought lower elevations.

The rains in many cases have been even more disastrous to farmers than the long years of drought.

For weeks, in the middle of the spring planting season, just farmers have been unable to get into fields to plant crops. Others who planted seeds saw them washed out by torrents of water.

To add to this, a siege of tornadoes has smashed the countryside with destructive, black fingers, leaving many dead, hundreds injured and millions of dollars in damage.

Over 500 Tornadoes
The weather bureau says more than 500 of the deadly twisters have been counted in the country since the "tornado season" opened early this year.

The tornado is the most feared weather element in the southwest. It strikes suddenly, often without warning, and will often wriggle along the ground in erratic paths for several hours.

Many of the twisters will swirl almost harmless across open country, but occasionally one will strike a heavily populated area like the April 2 tornado in Dallas, when 10 persons were killed, and 200 injured.

Storm-wracked west Texas farmers consider a storm cellar as "standard equipment."

Three United Press staff members, myself, staffer Jim Erwin and newspaperman R. D. Mims, chasing tornadoes over west Texas Friday were forced to land our chartered plane on a farm road near Turkey, Tex., and take refuge in a cellar with the Irl Twilla family.

Our pilot saw a squall line ahead of us. There was a terrific roar overhead. We made an emergency landing on a farm-market road.

Twilla said he usually waits out the storm inside his house, but Friday when twisters by the dozen were lashing the area he decided it would be safer in the storm cellar.

"I haven't seen anything like this weather in years and years," Twilla said.

"I just don't know whether farmers are going to have a crop this year or not. The past several weeks it has been too wet to get out and plant, and if you were fortunate enough to get some seed in the ground they mostly were washed up in the next day or so."

Portland Student Dies in Elevator
Portland — Pete Watson, a 17-year-old David Douglas High school student was killed Friday in an unusual accident in a freight elevator in Jackson Towers here.

Police said the boy was helping move some equipment from Bruno's photographic studios in the building when he was trapped between a big steel frame. Officers said he apparently strangled before help arrived.

The coroner's office listed cause of the death as a neck-injury.

Couple Continues To Share House After Divorce

Eaton Bray, England — Robert and Violet Knight have their divorce but live on in the house where love has died.

Both are blind. "When you are blind you can't just say 'I am going away,'" 42-year-old Knight said.

"We sleep in separate rooms," he explained. "I suppose I'm just a lodger."

His 32-year-old former wife, with whom he travels to a workshop for the blind every day, said "I will not leave Bob to manage by himself."

Knight's mother-in-law lives with them as well, and "looks after" their 11-year-old son Clifford.

Graham Preaches On N.Y. Streets

New York — Evangelist Billy Graham preached on the garish, neon-lighted city streets of New York Friday night to thousands of persons turned away from his Madison Square Garden crusade.

Standing on a table on the sidewalk just a short distance from "Strippers Row" and the bright lights of Broadway, the 38-year-old North Carolina minister spoke to the vast overflow audience for more than 10 minutes.

"As you are standing here you can be saved tonight! You don't have to be in the Garden—in a church—to find God," Graham said.

With a bible tucked under his arm, told more than 2,000 persons jamming the streets around the Garden.

More than 50 sidewalk listeners made "decision for Christ" after his brief sermon on the city's streets.

Inside the famous sports arena Graham addressed his largest audience since he began his crusade here 10 days ago. A total of 21,200 persons jammed the Garden which has a seating capacity for 18,500.

After Graham's sermon, another 847 persons came forward to make "decisions for Christ." These brought the crusade's 10-day total up to 6,676.

Corvallis Boy, 10, Dies in Rescue Try

Corvallis — Firemen Saturday recovered the body of a 10-year-old boy who drowned here after he jumped into the Marys river to save his companion who had fallen into the stream. The other boy was able to scramble to safety when an eddy carried him against a dam.

Police said David Iverson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Orlin Iverson, drowned when he jumped into the river to help Douglas Lutz, 11, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Lutz.

The two boys were fishing from the old Corvallis Lumber mill dam about 200 feet up the Marys river from its confluence with the Willamette river. The Lutz boy said he was able to grab onto the dam and pull himself to safety. He said he saw David go under the water and then come up and be swept downstream by the swift current that pours through the opening in the center of the dam.

The accident occurred about 6:45 a.m.



CONTEST WINNERS — Jerold W. Swanson, of 798 Garfield street, Medford, right, is congratulated by Alma Dalton, manager of Morse Sewing Center, upon winning a crossword puzzle contest that appeared in the Medford Mail Tribune recently. His prize is a Morse "600" sewing machine. In another contest in Parent's magazine, Mrs. John R. Behnke, 1346 N.E. Evans street, Grants Pass, above, was national winner. She was awarded first place for an article she wrote on why she would like to own a Morse sewing machine. Her prize was the Morse Photomatic machine, shown above.

Gile Fired From Vehicle Division

Salem — Robert G. Gile, former state representative, has been fired as supervisor of the registration division of the state Department of Motor Vehicles.

He said Saturday he was given no reason for the action. Gile said he was called into the "front office" of James F. Johnson, director of the department, and asked to resign. He said no reason was given. He refused to resign without an explanation, he said and was fired effective at the close of the day's work.

Gile was replaced by John C. Kerrick, manager of the driver's license division for 17 years. Kerrick's place was filled by Edward M. Syring, Kerrick's assistant for eight years.

Gile headed the motor vehicle division when it was under the secretary of state's office. He was named to that post in 1951 after serving five terms as state representative from Douglas county.

Skyraider Pilot Killed at Sand Point

Seattle — A Navy AD Skyraider crashed while attempting to land at the Sand Point Naval Air station here Saturday, killing the only man aboard.

Navy officials said the pilot was coming in for a practice landing when the plane bounced twice. The plane, an attack bomber, did not burn.

The victim was identified as 1st Lt. Michael A. Berger, 26, Seattle.

The crash was the third in the Seattle area within a 28 hour period and the second at Sand Point.

Friday three men died when their Grumman Sentinel crashed on takeoff at the Naval station. And one man lost his life when his parachute failed to open after he had bailed out of his crippled F-102 jet fighter over south Tacoma, 35 miles south of here.

28 Deaths Blamed On Mexico Heat Wave

Monterrey, Mexico — Schools and most stores closed Saturday in the face of a heat wave that has killed 28 children in four days.

Heat strokes have sent 300 other persons to hospitals and polio has struck 40 persons in the worst outbreak ever reported here.

Temperatures have ranged above 100 degrees for a week, following a drought that has dried up water sources in northern Mexico. The city is under strict water rationing and doctors said the children killed by the heat were virtually "dehydrated."

NEWLYWEDS SEPARATED
Emmetsburg, Iowa — Newlyweds Robert Thomas, 27, today began a prolonged separation from his 15-year-old bride. Thomas was sentenced to five years in the state penitentiary for breaking and entering.

Methodist Group Opposes H-Bomb

New York — A poll of Methodist ministers conducted by the Fellowship of Methodist Pacifists showed Saturday that those responding oppose — by 1,676 to 337 — the use of hydrogen bomb warfare even "if our government saw no other way to stop Communism."

The questionnaire was mailed to 16,000 ministers, of whom 2,894 replied.

The responders opposed, by 1,528, as opposed to 572, said they did not believe our possession of the H-bomb would keep Russia from attacking.

Asked if they believed the U.S. should prepare for war as the best way to insure peace, 1,564 said no, and 575 said yes.

On disarmament, 1,045 said the U.S. should disarm only if other powers agree to do so; 405 said the U.S. should set an example by disarming first; 855 would encourage a revolt against war by calling on people everywhere to lay down their arms.

Although only 337 would "risk destruction of civilization" with hydrogen warfare if it seemed the only way to stop Communism, about twice as many felt some circumstances would justify the dropping of a hydrogen bomb on a foreign city.

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