

Small Worlds Around Us
By Lynn W. Watkins
Register & Tribune Syndicate, 1963

No Increase in Cyclones But More Damage Today
It would have to be a pretty selective cyclone today that missed damaging some city, town, or building. It would have to be purposely steered in order to completely miss some man-made object. Fifty years ago a very different situation prevailed; towns, subdivisions, and other buildings were nonexistent, or farther apart. In between, and surrounding them, were forests and clumps of trees.

There are so many more people now that some folks would get in the way no matter where a cyclone struck. All of which agrees with what the man said when he observed, "there is more damage done today by storms than there was a few years ago." And probably that man, as well as many of the rest of us, thinks there are more storms. There is of course, more damage done, but hardly any more storms. And as time goes on there will be an increase in damage rather than a decline for there are more things in the way.

The less is greater today, and mostly it is our fault. We cut down the forests; we made it easy for the winds to sweep across the land. The woodlands that held back the winds, or broke them up into small puffs, are gone, and the winds and the flood waters are unimpeded.

Natural forces, over which we exercise very little control, are still present in spite of wild promises by wishful thinkers that the day is just around the corner when we will control the wind and d waver. That time is still a long way off.

In this highly technical time which is the present, the human race proudly measures its accomplishments in terms of the miraculous; we might pause to note that the worst storm in a century buffeted the eastern coast of the U. S. so severely that new maps had to be made of the area. The same storm, against the rock-bound coasts of New England, did very little damage. But man-made structures went sloshing away with the pounding waters and all this happened in the year 1962.

The terrific damage was accomplished by the agencies of wind and wave in just four days. And during that time of the howling winds and scouring waves the "weather-control-boys" were conspicuously silent. Like all the rest of humanity they had to just sit and wait, watching buildings and shore line disappear beneath the waves.

Pounding waves against the rock bound coasts wasted their fury; the storm only fussed and fumed. The same measure of protection, to a somewhat lesser degree, but still considerable, would be cushions of trees, forests and woodlots against the rampaging winds of cyclones.

It has been pretty well established how winds are slowed by groups of trees, or by forests and woodlands. Winds of 50 mph when striking a woodland loses its punch, drops to almost a gentle breeze by the time it penetrates a forest even a short distance. The wind may make a shambles of part of the woods, but, at the far side, very little damage is done. In actual tests, with measuring instruments, a 50 mph wind was found to drop to about 15 mph.

We did a great deal more than clear the land when we destroy the forests. For one thing, we canceled out our natural insurance against cyclone damage. The days of damage from wind and wave will have to be tolerated for a very long time to come, whether we like it or not.

Truck Hits Bank After Brakes Fail

Truck driver, Herbert Woodrow Henderson, 48, of 327 West Second st., Medford, escaped injury when his truck lost its brakes Sunday on the north slope of the Siskiyou mountains.

Henderson drove the truck into the bank to stop it, state police said.

Patricia L. Lewman, 21, of 803 I st., Grants Pass, was reported in good condition today in the Rogue Valley hospital following a one-car accident on Interstate 5 freeway near Blackwell hill. She is being treated for cuts and bruises.

The Lewman car swerved to avoid a small animal running across the highway when the car went out of control and rolled over on its top, state police said. Two passengers in the car were not injured.



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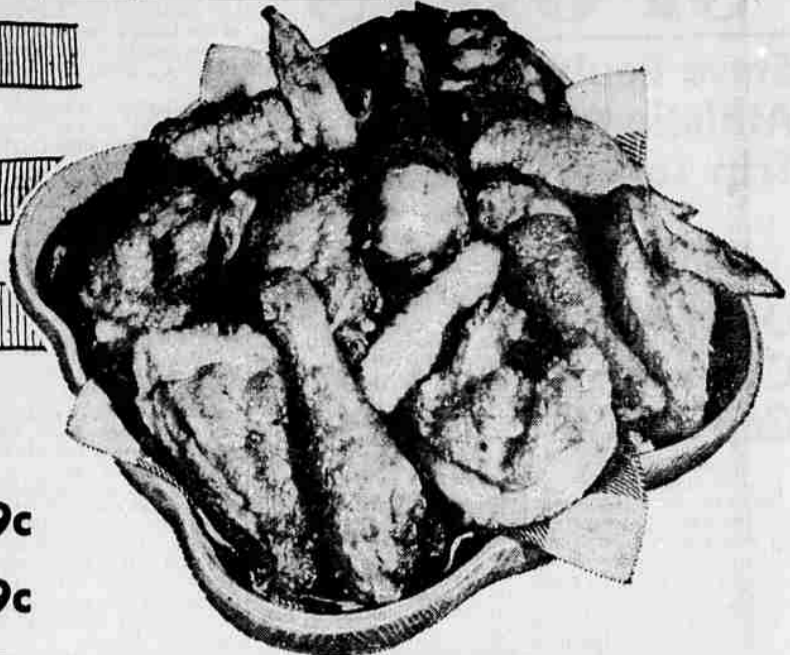
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