

Twister Kills Three

The dawn of a perfect day over Southwest Nebraska and the Republican valley brought with it sights unbelievable--a devastated valley, reduced to ruins by flood waters, together with a territory extending for miles north and west of McCook--a tangled mass of wreckage and ruins. But the dawn, with a clear sky and bright sunshine, came as a benediction to scores of persons, who during the long hours of the dark night, had clung frantically to some obstruction in the water, or uncovered themselves from the wreckage of their home. As the waters recede, now rescue parties were formed to search the waters still filling the valley, while other volunteer workers started searching the wind swept divide for those made homeless during the night.

While the Republican was on its Rampage, taking its toll of human life, another of nature's terrors was taking its toll of dead and injured north and west of McCook.

A tornado struck that rich farming area near McCook about 4:30 p. m., Fri. afternoon, leaving in its wake three dead, at least nine injured, some seriously, and great damage to homes, farm buildings and crops.

Killed when their farm home was crushed about them were Mrs. Franz Zander and two of her children.

Zander was seriously hurt and in the hospital here. The Zander children killed were Franz, jr., and Gerhart.

In the hospital were Mrs. A. E. Rathe and two children, the farmwife with a broken leg and her children, the farm wife with a broken leg and her children with bruises, scratches and cuts, and Martin Polfus and his four children, all suffering from superficial injuries and shock. It was believed all would recover.

At the home of her son, Phil Moore, was Mrs. Johanna Moore, injured about the head when the home of her other son Mike, was crushed about her.

Extent of her injuries were unknown.

At the Ed Steinke home it was reported several were injured at the local Red Cross station but further information could not be obtained.

Twenty-five farm homes were reported to the local authorities, set up hastily to deal with the twincatastrophes, to have been in the path of the twister and damaged so heavily.

As near as could be determined, the twister cut a swath about four miles wide from north and west of Perry to a spot where the highway crosses the Willow creek. Extent of the damage north of the Willow could not be checked since phone wires were down and the raging stream could not be crossed.

Miraculous escapes were reported of almost every farm home checked. Mrs. Moore's home was crushed on top and around her and rescuers carried her from the wreckage.

Mrs. H. A. Leper and her daughter had another narrow escape. They ran to the basement just as the house was lifted, leaving only the foundation. The house was scattered for a quarter of a mile from its original site.

The Martin Polfus home was another in the direct path of the twister. Wreckage of that house was strewn along the road, several hundred yards north.

The Leper home, the Mike Moore house, the Polfus farm and the Ben Doyle farm were in the direct path of the twister and all were completely demolished.

Heavy damage to barns, loss of stock, great injury to homes were reported by all other farms in the vicinity but as far as could be learned, no one else was seriously injured. Until communications, entirely wrecked in that rural area, can be restored, a further check cannot be made soon.

Fred Hock's farm was heavily damaged. Hiram Koetter's house and other buildings were blown down. Sam Bruchett, Merrett Quick, Claude Spaulding were farmers, the wreckage of whose homes could be seen across the raging Willow but which could not be reached from this side.

Many other farmers reported damage to their farm homes and buildings. Among them were Fred Unger, Otto Poore, William Eifer; Henry Cashen, George A. Scott; Ralph von Riese; Mr. Stratton; Charles Short, Tom Real; Bill Kotter; Robert Kennedy; Ray Saxton.

Homer Vanghn's house and barns were mass of shambles. Art Kotter's house was damaged beyond repair. Every home in the tornado area is minus chimneys and many were risk-

Report Dale, Chas. Miller family Fred Swanson on roof of house lodged in trees. Mrs. Dinger rescued today near Perry. Nels Nielsen reported rescued.

As the crest of the flood reached McCook at 3:30 Friday afternoon, pushing the high water mark five or six feet above the record for all time, the sky took on a tinge of brownish-black which seemed to merge with the raging torrents of the flood.

From the east a strong wind was blowing clouds of dust which seemed to mingle with currents from the west in defiance with the laws of nature.

Within a few minutes reports were rife with cloud bursts to the west and tornadoes to the north.

Meanwhile, 39 brave men who risked their lives that McCook might have light and power and those other facilities that go with this important commodity, clung desperately to the roof of the power plant surrounded by the surging.

Desperate attempts were being made by the score or more onlookers from the opposite shore. Rafts were constructed and sent into the boiling turmoil, boats were brought to the shore, but none were equal to the task.

As darkness fell---the men with the exception of two---remained aboard the sinking power plant skeleton.

The huge water tank standing only a few feet north of the building leaned to a 25 or 30 degree angle while hundreds of anxious loved ones and friends on the shore watched it finally crumple and fall to a "miss" of the structure which served as the only retreat for the stranded workmen.

Instead of striking the structure in the center, it missed the building by several feet.

Through an improvised "trolley line" of rope and pulleys, John Hermon, laborer on the viaduct, was the first man to be pulled safely to shore.

Bob French, employe of the light company, was next. French was on one of the poles when it gave way to the current and he made a perfect dive into the murky waters. The crowd of spectators gasped as he struggled to ride the waves, and cheered when they found he had landed a few hundred feet below.

On a span of the highway bridge southeast of the city Pete Van Horn and a youth named Pate were marooned. They succeeded in making a fire of driftwood to warm themselves while waiting for the waters to recede.

ing fires by cooking their evening meals. Windows were out of every house in the area. Livestock, found after the blow in nearby fields, were killed or injured so severely that they were killed.