

# HUNDREDS DIE IN FIRE AND FLOOD IN KANSAS

## HOUSES SURROUNDED BY DELUGE AT TOPEKA TAKE FIRE AND POSSIBLY 400 PEOPLE PERISH BY FLAMES OR WATER

### LAND HID IN WILDERNESS OF WATERS

General View of the Cataclysm in Iowa, Nebraska and Missouri—No Immediate Relief in Sight—Lives Lost and Property Annihilated.

#### FLOOD SITUATION SUMMARIZED.

Kansas—North Topeka, 7,000; near Emporia, 500; Salina and vicinity, 800; Lawrence, 500; Kansas City, Armourdale and Argentine, 10,000. Missouri—Harlem and Sheffield, 700. Iowa—Des Moines, 6,000; Ottumwa, 200. Nebraska—Lincoln, 200; Beatrice, 200.

Financial Losses— Kansas—North Topeka, \$1,000,000; Lawrence, \$100,000; Concordia, \$100,000; Abilene and vicinity, \$300,000; Salina and vicinity, \$150,000; Solomon, Chapman, Detroit and Woodbine and intervening country, \$400,000. Iowa—Des Moines, \$500,000.

Lives are reported lost at the following points: Topeka, eight; Des Moines, four; Kansas City, one; Oklahoma City, one.

KANSAS CITY, Mo., May 30.—Unprecedented floods are raging in Central and Eastern Kansas. Northwest Missouri, Eastern Nebraska and Southwestern Iowa, the result of ten days of almost continuous rainfall.

The general situation is considered most grave, with no immediate relief in sight. Many lives have been lost and it is estimated that 25,000 persons have been driven from their homes. Many homes were washed away and the property loss will probably reach millions of dollars.

The greatest damage has been between Kansas City and Ellsworth, Kan., 200 miles west. The chief sufferer is North Topeka, which has been separated from the main part of the city and has become an island. At Kansas City, Kan., and in the suburban towns of Armourdale and Argentine, and at Harlem and Sheffield, Mo., near Kansas City, Mo., an aggregate of 10,000 persons have been forced to leave their homes and 8,000 employees of the numerous packing houses and railroad shops in the bottoms are out of employment.

**Sudden Rise at Night.** The already flooded condition of Central and Eastern Kansas, which has been in the grasp of the flood for two days, became acute last night by a sudden rise in all streams, which are swollen by heavy rains. The rivers along which the main damage was done are the Kansas, which at many places from its source at Kansas City to Manhattan, Kan., a distance of 110 miles, has spread out over miles of land on either side of its original bed; the Smoky Hill river, south from Manhattan, a distance of another 100 miles, touching Junction City, Abilene, Salina and Ellsworth, flooding all these towns and the intervening country; the Blue river north from Manhattan; the Missouri river, north and east of Kansas City, and the Des Moines river at Des Moines.

Railway traffic in Kansas is practically at a standstill, dozens of big bridges having been washed out between Kansas City and Ellsworth and many miles of track being under water.

**Every Road Affected.** Every Western road entering Kansas City is affected. The Rock Island and Union Pacific between Kansas City and Colorado are laid out completely and all Santa Fe trains from the West have been annulled at a point west of Florence. A short distance out of Kansas City the Santa Fe is running trains over the Frisco tracks. The Burlington and Missouri Pacific are moving their trains by wide detours. The Rock Island has four trains stalled at McFarland, one at Wichita and one at Hutchinson, and in fact the trains are held up at all division points. On the Union Pacific the most serious damage was done west of Salina, where a number of washouts occurred. Train service between Kansas City and Topeka has practically been abandoned. One train from Topeka over the Santa Fe reached here today, after making a detour of 230 miles to cover the sixty miles between the two cities.

All the rivers in this part of the country, the Missouri, Kansas, Smoky Hill, Blue and smaller streams are rising tonight, the Kansas and the Missouri at a rapid rate and it is apparent that the destructive floods of 1881 will be exceeded. Additional rains are predicted and a further rise in the Missouri will result in serious damage between Kansas City and St. Louis.

#### KANSAS CITY DESOLATION.

Packing Houses and Factories at Armourdale in One Great Lake.

KANSAS CITY, May 30.—Armourdale presents a strange picture of desolation. Almost a metropolitan city, and ordinarily one of the busiest portions of the Greater Kansas City, the central business section, where are located the packing houses, vast manufacturing and factory districts, is one great lake. Standing on Kansas avenue, Armourdale's principal street, directly in front of Cudahy's packing plant and only a stone's throw from Swift's plant, as far as the eye can see, the city is submerged. Swift's plant is surrounded by water and can be reached only by boats.

The loss of which the people of the flooded district will have to contend from this time will be purely a property loss. A large relief corps is aiding the police in protecting life, and it is not probable that any further loss of life will be reported in any of the flooded districts in this city. All persons are duly warned of danger, and the hospitality of the people who live on high ground is affording shelter for the homeless ones. Most of the homeless people in Armourdale and the packing house and factory districts are poor employees of these concerns. In the greatest suffering will result because of enforced idleness.

The bridges across the Kansas river here are in great danger, and large forces of men are guarding them. Traffic has been suspended between Armourdale and this city, and all the switch yards in Armourdale are under several feet of water. The railroad men are trying to save their bridges by weighting them down with heavy trains of loaded cars. The raging waters are on a level with all of the bridges, and above them, in some instances.

At Argentine the conditions which prevail are similar to those of Armourdale. More than 2,500 people are homeless, and the town is isolated from this city.

The Missouri river tonight is twenty-six feet and one inch above low water mark, or nearly three feet higher than last night. Weather Observer Connor predicts that the Missouri will, during the next few days, exceed all previous high water marks.

At 10 o'clock the Kansas river was rising at the rate of four inches an hour. Swift's packing house has already sustained a loss estimated at \$1,000,000.

The damage to Cudahy's and Schwarzchild & Sulzberger's will be nearly \$500,000, about equally divided between the two plants.

It is estimated that the loss in Armourdale to date will exceed \$5,000,000.

#### NEBRASKA'S INUNDATION.

Heavy Stock and Crop Losses, Beatrice Suffering the Most.

LINCOLN, Neb., May 30.—South-eastern Nebraska is experiencing the worst floods of which there is any record. The situation last night, which was serious, was further aggravated by a heavy down-pour of rain most of the night, and tonight rain is again falling. Thus far there have been no reports of losses of life, and none is expected; but much stock has been drowned, growing fields of grain inundated and totally ruined, and some houses carried away. Railroads are heavy sufferers in the blocking of traf-

fic and washing out of bridges and roadbeds.

The town of Beatrice is the worst sufferer, and there the situation is alarming. The Blue river, a stream ordinarily but little over a hundred feet wide, spreads out from one to three miles. Tonight the Burlington and Union Pacific depots at that place are surrounded with water and abandoned. The electric light plant and water works station are shut down and water is flowing across Court street, in the business section. Hundreds of families have abandoned their homes, and water is up to the second stories in a number of houses. Conditions are nearly as bad at Crete and Wilber. At Nebraska City roadbeds are washed out and not a bridge is moving.

In Lincoln Salt creek has made a new high record in the low-lying section, but the rise has been gradual, and occupants have been able to move out and take their stock with them. Eighty Russian families are tonight housed in the court house and hundreds of others are scattered over the city. Some of the foreigners refuse to abandon their homes, taking their cows and pigs into their houses with them. The rise of water was so steady, however, that they were cut off and rescued in boats. Policemen and volunteers throughout the day have been doing rescue work. The business section is in no danger, but the losses will fall heavily on the poor classes.

BEATRICE, Neb., May 30.—It is almost impossible to accurately describe the fearful condition of the country in this section and in this city. Tonight the weather turned cold, adding to the distress of the hundreds who are homeless.

There is three feet of water in the Burlington depot and land around it was abandoned. Several residences were swept from their foundations and carried down stream with their contents.

Both city river bridges are under water and there is danger of their going out. On the approach to the Rock Island bridge, a block of men is trying to stop the break with bags of sand. During the last hour the engines operated at the water-works were almost completely submerged. The rural mail routes have all been abandoned. It is still raining and the city is off from the outside except by wire.

#### HUTCHINSON UNDER WATER.

Buildings Are Washed Into Street and Burned.

HUTCHINSON, Kan., May 30.—Hutchinson is under water tonight. A five-foot rise in Cow creek, west of here tonight broke the levee above town, letting a flood of water through the streets. Soon the Western Union office was surrounded, many store basements were flooded and hundreds of residences were surrounded. Every available vehicle is being used to move the women and children from the flooded district. The city is flooded, the main street three feet deep, and merchants are removing their stocks. Two buildings washed into the street, caught fire and burned in sight of thousands.

Thousands of acres of land in the valley west of here are flooded. In Hutchinson the only means of transportation in some parts of the city. More rain is expected.

The town of Medora, in Reno county, is under water and the people spent last night in the Rock Island depot. Miles of track on the Rock Island roads have been washed out. East-bound Rock Island trains are stalled here.

#### Helping Helpless Passengers.

LINDSBORG, Kan., May 30.—It has been raining here for fourteen hours and the whole country is flooded. At Fremont the flood reached the Lutheran cemetery and the river was three miles wide. Rescuing parties were busy all day. A rescuing party started from here to succor passengers on abandoned Missouri Pacific No. 8. The passengers have been in the train at Bridgeport since Thursday noon and are running out of provisions.

#### Wall of Water Advancing.

HUTCHINSON, Kan., May 30.—Cow creek, five miles northwest of here, has risen suddenly to a higher level than ever before. The flood will reach Hutchinson tonight, and the town doubtless will be flooded worse than last year, when half the residence portion was under water. A wall of water eighteen inches high is coming this way, and the crops in the valley have been destroyed. The Arkansas river has risen two feet today, and is coming up rapidly.

The town of Medora, in Reno county, is under water, and the people spent last night in the Rock Island depot. Miles of track on the Rock Island roads have been washed out. Wagon bridges are gone, and thousands of acres of wheat and alfalfa are ruined. It is still raining. East-bound Rock Island trains are stalled here.

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#### MAYOR SMITH MAKES PROCLAMATION

To the People of St. Paul: Fire and flood have brought to Topeka, Kan., the worst disaster in its history, and the country stands aghast at the loss of life and destruction of property these two elements have brought to this fair city. Calls for help are being sent up and St. Paul should not be tardy in response. I therefore recommend that the city of St. Paul be taken at once by our citizens towards aiding in the relief of the destitute and stricken people of Kansas. Any organized movement that will have for its end the collection and forwarding of supplies and money will be accorded all the aid and co-operation of the municipality of St. Paul can give.

R. A. SMITH, Mayor.

#### DAY'S NEWS SUMMARIZED

Weather for St. Paul and vicinity: Fair and warmer today and tomorrow.

#### DOMESTIC

South Topeka, Kan., is being destroyed by flood and fire, with heavy loss of life. Inundations in Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska and Missouri entail loss of life and property damages of many millions.

Thirty-six whites are indicted in Alabama for holding negroes in servitude. Government is found to be paying fancy prices for postoffice rentals.

Davenport (Iowa), young woman commits suicide and nephew of Gov. Van Sant is arrested, but released.

Unveiling of monument to late Senator C. K. Davis in Arlington cemetery, Washington, is conspicuous feature of Memorial day observances.

#### FOREIGN

It is said to be deliberate plan of Chamberlain and British Tories to ruin American industries.

German industrial league addresses "kicking" circular to exporters of United States.

Russian foreign minister is charged with having deliberately sought about Kishenev massacre in Jewish manner.

#### LOCAL

St. Paul pays honor to the veterans of the Civil and Spanish-American wars. Graves in the cemeteries appropriately decorated.

Notable displays made by the pupils in the St. Paul Art school.

Albert Brodberg is victim of strange poisoning case, but will recover.

Receipts for taxes for the first half of the year amount to over \$1,000,000.

United States Gas company of Philadelphia after control of the St. Paul Gas company.

#### MINNEAPOLIS

Comptroller Rogers is blamed by Ald. Powers with having defeated sale of city's bonds.

June carnival will begin Monday.

Col. Wood to take charge of West hotel Monday.

Episcopal convention for state to open Wednesday.

#### SPORTING

St. Paul team wins morning and afternoon games from Louisville. Scores: St. Paul, 8; Louisville, 2.

Crusader, flying Dutchman and Aloha win opening races of White Bear Yacht club.

Yale wins intercollegiate championship cup from Harvard by half a point.

Minnesota Cricket club defeats Minneapolis by score 108 to 78.

Many changes are made in the management of the Northern Pacific's Chicago office.

#### WHERE TO GO CYCLING TODAY

The chilly spell of last night will be followed by warmer weather today according to prediction, and as it will be fair, there will be no danger of getting wet.

Lake Phalen—White Bear path is fair. Como—excellent.

Fort Snelling path or Seventh street is fair. Cleveland avenue path is poor.

Summit avenue path is excellent. Grotto street is fair.

Lexington avenue path is passable. West Central avenue path is very good. University avenue path is fine to Merriam Park, rough in places past the Midway.

South St. Paul path is fair. Indian Mounds path is fair.

Shelling-Minnehaha path is good. Minnehaha-Lake Calhoun path is excellent.

Lake street path is in fine condition. Lake Minnetonka path is fair, rough in many places.

Shakopee path is fair.

Row, Brighton-Lake Johanna path is fair.

Mendota road is in fair condition.

### DUAL HORROR OF FLAME AND FLOOD

TOPEKA, Kan., May 31 (2 a. m.)—Rain has been falling for two hours and this has had a tendency to check the fires in the dwellings.

No reliable estimate of the lives lost in North Topeka can be made, for the reason that the flooded districts cannot be traversed. It is at least 200 and may be larger than this. The extent of the damage is hard to get at. People were cooped up in their houses and could not escape from the fire or flood.

If there is no further rise in the river it is possible for a large number of the beleaguered people yet to be rescued. Boats have been telegraphed for and a trainload will arrive in a few hours from Ottumwa and others from Emporia. It will be impossible before daylight to make a reliable report about the extent of the damage.

Almost superhuman efforts have been made to rescue those remaining, but the task has been too great for the facilities at hand. The current runs like a mill race down the principal streets. Even an expert oarsman can make no headway against it. West of Kansas avenue the rescue of imprisoned people is probable. East of Kansas avenue it is an impossibility. A boat cannot be driven against the current.

All day yesterday the rescuers worked and people were landed by the hundreds, but it is a conservative estimate to say that there are a thousand people in the town who have not been rescued. There can be as yet no estimate of the number of lives offered as a sacrifice to the flood. The receding of the waters alone will reveal the worst, and even that will not show the maximum count, for the waters often bury their dead beyond human resurrection. With few exceptions the names of those who succumbed are missing.

#### VICTIMS PERISH LIKE RATS IN A TRAP

It is known only that babies were torn from the arms of their mothers to die in the waters, and that men and women perished like rats in a trap.

The property loss is beyond computation. No foot of realty, no habitation and little of the personal property of the north side of the river is wholly exempt from loss. The railroads have suffered severely, the county and city may reckon their combined losses in the thousands of dollars and corporate and private interests have all been heavily involved.

The Jonathan Thomas lumber plant and the Central Sash and Door company's lumber yard, immense institutions, were wiped out by fire, and from it the flames extended north and east. It is certain that some houses in the residence district east of the avenue were burned. The Gabriel lumber yards were in the clutch of the flames all night and are a wreck. Many private residences were scorched.

TOPEKA, Kan., May 30, Midnight—Reporters who have just arrived from the river say that the water is yet rising. An unconfirmed report from Wamego and Manhattan, west of Topeka, say that another rise is coming down the Republican and Blue rivers. If this is true, the situation here will be greatly intensified.

Fire Chief Wilmarth says that the fire on the east side of Kansas avenue in North Topeka is rapidly taking the remaining buildings. The fire is going toward the wind, and this will serve to check its progress, but there is so much burning wreckage floating about that the destruction of the remaining houses is regarded as certain.

People on the roofs of houses are yet heard calling frantically for help. It is said that two boats loaded with people were swamped and that a dozen or more persons were drowned.

Shorey, another suburb of Topeka, located northwest of the city, near the reform school, is now inundated. The

### Hundreds of People Are Burned to Death or Perish in the Deep, Swift Waters That Bury North Topeka—New Precedent in the History of Calamity.

#### NORTH TOPEKA'S AWFUL SUMMARY.

Two hundred people certainly burned to death or drowned, and the number may reach 400.

Women and men commit suicide, despairing of rescue.

Every foot of the town under water, which, eight feet deep, flows like a mill-race and in which no boat can live.

People in trees and on house-tops eighteen hours. One by one they drop into the water and drown.

Property loss incalculable.

Jackson school house shelters 100 people. They entered the building before the water became so high, and now they cannot escape. The building is on slightly raised ground, and if no further rise takes place the prisoners may be rescued. They are now standing on benches, the water covering the floor several feet deep. The Harris elevator also shelters fifty people.

The water is now so high that it is rapidly spreading out over the country north of Topeka. In the darkness and rushing water no bodies can be recovered and the dead will not be counted until the flood abates. All energies are concentrated on rescue and relief.

#### DETAILED NARRATIVE OF THE CALAMITY

TOPEKA, Kan., May 30.—People who did not leave North Topeka last night when they had a chance are now in the greatest danger of losing their lives. As far as can be estimated at this time over 500 people are beyond reach of rescue. The Kansas river is rising at the rate of three inches an hour. Thirty are known to be dead and the list will be larger. Hundreds are missing.

People are drowning and others are burning to death. If any portion of North Topeka escapes destruction by the flood it seems tonight as though fire would finish the work. The large lumber yard of Jonathan Thomas caught fire this afternoon and whole blocks of houses are burned. Burning houses are floating through the streets and setting fire to others.

It is reported that the Union Pacific depot and hotel has been burned. There is no possible way of quenching the flames. The loss of life will be appalling. The property loss will be \$3,000,000 or more. Nobody can tell just what has been destroyed. The water extends around Shorey and other suburbs.

Every foot of North Topeka, inhabited by 10,000 people, is under water. The current is so swift that no boat can live in it. Seven thousand people have escaped to the South side and are being cared for as well as possible. The remaining large number have not yet been accounted for. They have been forced to the top floor or the roofs and are waiting for the water to subside or carry them down stream. They are safe only so long as the buildings remain standing.

#### REVOLVERS FIRED AS SIGNALS FOR AID

Below town scores of men are in the tree tops, yelling for help. Thousands of revolver shots and screams have been heard on the North side—signals for aid. Women and children in the west part of North Topeka, where the water is probably deeper than at any other point in the immediate part of the city, are standing on the highest points in reach and yet in water to their necks. It is reported by men who have seen that hundreds there are suffering and sick.

The current is so strong that oars are useless, and early in the afternoon a gang was being organized to row in as far as possible and then to swim the rest of the distance. Several boats

and wagons have been overturned, and women have been seen struggling in the water. The river reached the Rock Island depot on First street this morning.

The water on Crane street is eight feet deep, and the current is like a mill race. Perhaps 100 people have been dumped into the water at that point. The river is twenty-five feet above low water mark and is still rising. The weather is cold, and the people who have not been rescued are suffering intensely. Unless they have help soon it is feared many will die of exposure.

In the B street colored Baptist church on the North side, more than 100 victims of the flood are gathered. The water flooded the building, and the people are standing on news in order to keep their heads above water. The work of rescuing and caring for the flood survivors is being carried forward. Contributions are being rushed into the relief committee. Citizens are opening their homes to survivors, and every indication is that the city will be able to take care of those who have left their homes.

Every public building in the city is sheltering scores of homeless people.

#### BURNING HOUSES, AFLOAT, FIRING OTHERS

Burning houses are floating about, setting fire to others. The lower story of the burning buildings contain ten feet of water. The current is so strong that no boat can approach any of the buildings. People are gathered on the tops of houses and will meet death either by fire or drowning. The cries for help can be heard a mile away.

The whole city is wildly excited because no aid can be extended. The river at North Topeka is five miles wide. No possible estimate of the financial loss is obtainable, but it will reach into the millions.

North Topeka was the manufacturing district of the city. Three large flour mills, three woolen mills and other manufacturing enterprises are entirely destroyed.

The water supply of the whole city has been cut off. The water from the river extends nearly a mile on the south side. The Rock Island depot has been abandoned, and more than 500 people on this side of the river are homeless, but no loss of life has resulted in South Topeka.

The Kansas avenue bridge is the only one across the river for miles and the approaches are flooded by thirty feet of water. A pontoon bridge is being erected in an effort to reach the sufferers.

Seven thousand or more people are on this side of the river, sheltered in the public buildings. Topeka is now able to take care of all the unfortunate. The work of caring for the refugees is being pushed with the utmost rapidity.

From the state house dome eighty fires can be counted in different parts of North Topeka. The whole central portion of the city had been burned out at 10 o'clock tonight, and it is safe to say that by morning no house in the main part of North Topeka will be left standing. When it is stated that North Topeka has 10,000 inhabitants

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