

NORTH CAMDEN HIT BY A GREAT CYCLONE; HOMES WRECKED

*Hundreds of Houses Ruined by Violent Wind,
and Rain and Two Persons May Die.
Streets Strewn With Debris*

Two lives will probably be sacrificed, property valued at at least a hundred thousand dollars, was virtually destroyed and the northwest section of the city was laid in ruins when a storm of cyclonic intensity swept over Camden last night. It continued hardly fifteen minutes, but in that time more havoc was wrought than by any storm that has ever visited that section, even including the locally historic cyclone of 1885.

Those who will likely offer up their lives as a sacrifice to the tremendous force of wind include Miss Anna Cleary, a nurse in the Cooper Hospital, whose house is at 317 Vine street, and Miss Anna Gebrend, of 2359 Amber street, Philadelphia. Both were taken to the Cooper Hospital crushed.

WERE IN TROLLEY CAR

The two women were in a Crosstown trolley car. It was going up Fifth street, when, at Elm, it encountered the full force of the storm. It was the centre of a maelstrom of flying roofs, falling telegraph poles and trees and odds and ends of debris.

Miss Cleary and Miss Behrend were seated in a section of the car over which a tangled mass of debris fell, the great weight crushing in the top like so much paper. Both were pinned beneath a weight of hundreds of pounds

and notwithstanding the fierce wind and air, filled with every conceivable sort of material, the police worked until the women had been released. At the hospital it was found that they had been cut, bruised and cut all over their bodies and it seemed impossible that they could recover.

Many Houses Wrecked

Scores of houses were wrecked, many beyond all hope of repair, and the miracle was that there were no more fatalities. This is attributed to the fact that the force of the wind spent itself along the tops of the structures, otherwise hundreds would have been killed.

The great force of this wind was evidenced at the plant of the Orford Copper Company at Tenth and Elm streets. This concern has a structure about 50 by 100 feet. Five great boiler stacks graced the main building until the wind came. Then these stacks went over like so many tenpins, being blown hundreds of feet away. In addition the roof was doubled up and sent through the air until it landed in an adjoining vacant lot.

Got the Full Force

The full intensity of the wind was felt on Fourth street from Vine to Elm street. Beginning at the butchershop of former Councilman Edward Francis at the southeast corner Fourth and Vine and going on both sides of Fourth street the cyclonic blast took off every roof, filling the thoroughfare with a mass of debris a dozen feet high.

The homes of Mrs. Mills, 417; Albert Roberts, 423; Mrs. Mary Goldy, 425, and Charles Houser, 427 North Fourth street, were among those unroofed and wrecked. The home of Edward Trappe, 619 North Fourth street, was completely blown out, nothing standing but the party walls, everything being hurled into the street. The family escaped miraculously. Virtually the same was with respect to the home of Joseph Layton, 632 North Fourth street.

Wind Took a Leap

Four two-story dwellings stood on North Fifth street, between Vine and Elm, including those of August Weber, 715; Mrs. George Waldis, 717; John Presher, 719, and Mrs. Susie Aborn, 721. These were sheltered by higher buildings, but the storm seemed to bounce like a rubber ball, and it descended with such fury that the roofs and porches were thrown down with a tremendous crash, the volumes of rain descending and destroying the furniture.

On Elm street, from Second to Third, stood a row of tall trees. They were broken off like stems and hurled against the homes of Edward Preisendanz, 217 Elm street, and Harry Curtis, 215 Elm street, with such force that the structures were simply caved in as though made of clay. In the same locality the homes of Frank Nice and George Beckert were denuded of their roofs.

Left the Walls Standing

At 406 Vine street lived Mrs. A. M. Magrath in a cozy two-storied dwelling. When the wind had finished its work with that structure there was little aside from a brick wall remaining. Mrs. Magrath lost everything, not even having a bed to lie upon.

Policeman Thomas Reed had his home at 613 Vine street wrecked, and the same fate befell that of George Eckenhoff, southeast corner Sixth and Vine streets.

Others whose homes were unroofed

Continued on 2d Page, 1st Col.

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Continued From First Page

and, in some instances, damaged almost beyond repair, included the following:

Others in Wind's Path

Mrs. Lillian Rhoades, 620 North Sixth street.

S. M. Blair, 622 North Sixth street.

John Getty, 618 North Sixth street.

Mrs. Howard Ivins, 630 North Fourth street.

George Batchelor, 702 North Sixth street.

Raymond Wallen, 704 North Sixth street.

Charles Jordan, 708 North Sixth street.

Michael Burke, 710 North Sixth street.

Allen Naylor, 640 North Eighth street.

William Conerdi, Second and Elm streets.

Matthew J. Lemon, 635 North Fifth street.

Dr. H. F. Pahn, 612 North Second street.

William Askley, 646 Linwood street.

Thomas Wescott, 648 Linwood street.

Frank Kears, 950 Vine street.

Otto Shapiro, 648 Vine street.

Two Hundred Houses Hit

In addition to these there were scores of others more or less badly damaged. The police said that probably two hundred dwellings were involved, many of which will have to be torn down because they are absolutely unsafe to live in, and in most of these instances the torrents of rain simply flooded the interiors, ruining the household furniture.

It was about 7 o'clock when the storm made its appearance. The air was damp and humid until there was a sudden gust of cold, keen wind which preceded the cyclone. In South Camden the residents thought they were experiencing a mere spring thunder storm, although its intensity was marked. It was in the area bounded by the river and Fifth street and from Vine to Elm that the full force was felt. Those who had the temerity to observe the storm said it came with a rush and a roar, striking down in the centre of that district with a funnel-like movement. It was this which is declared to have twisted off roofs, trees and telegraph poles, flinging them in every direction and piling the streets high with the debris.

Storm Was Brief

In less than a quarter of an hour the storm had spent its fury, aside from some vivid flashes of lightning. It was then that the residents in the stricken district began peering cautiously from their homes. They were afraid to venture forth because everywhere they found a tangle of electric wires which hissed and spluttered death at every step. It was thought that when such damage had been wrought there must have been great loss of life. In consequence of this Chief of Police Gravenor and Fire Chief Elfreth massed most of their men in the damaged area. In the meantime all lights had been extinguished, the lighting plant having been closed to avert possible tragedies. Everything was in absolute darkness, and because of this the police and firemen had great difficulty in going over the district in search of possible victims. They were aided, however, by scores of volunteers, who looked high and low about the wreckage. Up to a late hour last night no bodies had been found, but the search will be continued today.

Thousands on the Scene

After the storm had subsided thousands of Camden residents visited the damaged area. It was necessary to rope it off, to prevent the venturesome ones from going into unnecessary danger. Many came from the southern section of the city and were greatly surprised over the havoc wrought. South Camden was hardly touched.

Among those who were not perturbed to notice, the cyclone was Scott Veazey, a barber, of Third and Elm streets. He said that his impression was that a train had struck a trolley car. He heard one great crash, looked out of his door, saw the air filled with debris and was glad to get in. Veazey's place is right in the midst of the area damaged, but he escaped unscathed.