

The tornado vented its greatest fury along the river front. The levee for miles up and down was devastated and laid waste. Great steamers were torn from their moorings at the first blast and blown down the river for miles. Of all the craft that lined the river for miles but one remains to tell the story of the disaster. It hung steadily to its moorings throughout. When the tornado struck the river the light of day vanished in a moment and those at work on the levee could barely discern the forms of the steamers as one after another pitched and tossed and finally with a crash were blown out into the dark waters and disappeared. The scene was one of wild uncertainty and chaos. No one knew whither to seek safety from the fury of the storm.

After the tornado had passed it left a scene of desolation where ten minutes before steamers had rocked quietly at their docks, some just arrived and discharging their passengers; others preparing for departure.

Trucks and baggage had been tossed hither and thither most of it into the river. Plows and agricultural implements had been distributed up and down the levee as far as could be seen and the whole appearance was that of waste and wreck.

The steamer J. J. Odell, of the Illinois river packet line, was blown out from its wharf at the front of Morgan street, crashed into the section pier of the Eads bridge and sank. Her boilers blew up before she disappeared. She had a crew of twelve and three women passengers besides her captain, George Townsend, an old river man who has his home in St. Louis. Three of her crew, Jack Morrissey, Pat Milan and a man named Moore reached land safely. The two former jumped before the explosion and caught drift wood. Moore was blown overboard by the explosion and was out about the head, but managed to swim ashore. Three others of the crew clung to the pier and made their way up to the bridge proper.

There is no way of estimating the number of lives that were lost on the river craft that happened to be near when the cyclone came. Hundreds of barges were moored all along the river bank. In some instances as many as ten and twelve persons were on board when the anchorage gave way under the terrible strain. Men were blown into the water, the barges overturned and the destruction of life will be large. Several boats were jerked from their moorings and carried far down the river. The tug Belle of Baton Rouge, which was anchored up the river, was carried far down the river, rolling over and finally struck the craft of the Wiggins Ferry company at the front of Chouteau Avenue, where it sank.

St. Louis, May 28.—When the sun rose on St. Louis and vicinity this morning it shone upon a scene of terrible ruin and disaster. Wind, rain and fire had combined in a mission of destruction. Two hundred lives are lost in the city and many more in East St. Louis, while thousands were injured, many so severely that they cannot recover. The damage and destruction to property will aggregate many millions. The terrible tornado that caused this destruction struck the city in the afternoon at 5:15 and East

St. Louis felt the effects of the greatest damage.

Hours of sultriness, puffs of wind coming by turns from all points of the compass, the flying hither and thither of light, mist-like formations across the dull, dark-colored masses—these were characteristics of the afternoon which brought to St. Louis the most disastrous storm in the city's history. For hours the torrents shifted, the wind blew hot and cold and a storm center developed. The fury of the elements was born within the city's limits. On the west a thunder storm developed. Early mutterings indicated nothing more alarming than a downpour with the ordinary electrical accompaniments. This rain cloud came up slowly at first from the west, beyond Forest Park. As the black cloud mounted higher above the horizon, its arc embraced more territory to the north and south. A strong wind from the east began to blow right in the face of the storm. It was the lower current. Suddenly the wind stopped blowing from the east and there swept from the northwest a terrific gale which made the best built structures tremble with the hurricane, for that was at first the form the storm took, when it broke over the western part of the city; then came the deluge. From a few minutes before 5 o'clock until 5:30, this hurricane blew from the northwest; then there came a lull. The currents shifted. In the southwest there came into existence a storm cloud with essential features of a tornado, funnel shape. This second storm burst upon the city from the southwest. It came in on South Lafayette park, struck the city hospital and from there tore its way through the city to the river by a northeasterly course. It wrought a havoc that will leave traces in that part of the city which lies east of Seventh street and north of Cerre street to Eads bridge. Boats were torn from their moorings and capsized or went adrift.

Shortly after six o'clock with the sun more than an hour above the western horizon there settled upon the city clouds so dense that the daylight quickly gave place to the darkness of midnight. That was a precursor of the tornado from the southwest. The hurricane from the northwest gave the western portion of the city a severe shaking up. The tornado from the southwest, which is responsible for the loss of life and destruction along the levee district and East St. Louis, followed the hurricane by about half an hour. Health Commissioner Strakloff, about two hours after the tornado had passed, sent word that the deaths would reach 200 and that no fewer than 1,000 persons had sustained serious injuries.

By midnight the reporters had visited all the stricken portions of the city and the suburbs. The list of dead discovered fell far below the first estimates, but it was long enough to be appalling. Crushed beneath falling walls, hurled against sides of buildings, struck by flying timbers, cut by shattered glass, shocked by a network of wires, humanity suffered in ways innumerable and the names of all injured will never be known.

Of the destruction of property there can be no satisfactory estimate. The loss in extent and in character is beyond conception. In the flashing

lightning last night the city hospital looked like a ruin. The new surgical ward was partially demolished. Portions of three other buildings were unroofed and the walls were cracked. In the darkness the physicians began the removal of the patients to the temporary quarters. There were 45 sick people in the hospital. When the storm came some gathered strength in their fright and ran shrieking from the place, finding shelter on the outside. Thirteen were injured in one ward.

The convention hall and four courts were in the path of the cloud as it passed from Filly hospital toward the river. The convention hall lost part of the roof. Ten days' work and an expenditure of \$5,000 will make the hall good again.

In the district between Sixth street and the river north from Chouteau avenue the tornado tore a path, every building sustaining damage. Smoke stacks and chimneys toppled over, walls were leveled, and thousands of windows smashed and miles of telegraph and telephone wires left a net work on the ground. Through this district the streets are impassable. They are covered in places with debris ten feet deep. Along the levee front the hawsers snapped and the boats were sent adrift, some to go down, others to go ashore on the eastern bank. The loss of life which might have taken place at this point was averted by the hour at which the tornado came. A little later excursion steamers would have been going out.

The death dealing cloud crossed the river at such angle as to strike and wreck the upper works at the east end of the Eads bridge and to sweep part of East St. Louis. Perhaps the most impressive evidence of the storm cloud's force is seen in the wrench of the eastern end of the Eads bridge. There the Tornado dealt with stone and masonry. It tore off and tumbled down tons upon tons of masonry. Beginning with the big eastern pier and extending to a foot of incline the cloud cut off the upper part of the structure as if it had been a flimsy trestle instead of a structure of world-famed masonry. Fire added much to the loss account. The alarm system was paralyzed and the approaches were blocked.

The fire added at least \$500,000 to the losses of the storm.

Such a night of horror in St. Louis was never known before. The hurricane came when the business men of the city had begun to send the workers to their homes. The service on almost all the street railways was suddenly suspended. When night came soon after the premature darkening brought by the tornado, no electric lamps blazed up. Many thousands of men and women toiled homewards through the drenching rain.

In St. Louis the destroyer seemed to have a course that lay chiefly between the railroad track and Lafayette avenue, though it swept the entire city, cutting a wide swath wherever it did any damage. The complete suspension of telephone communication and street car traffic multiplied the inconveniences and obstacles that beset the police department and added to the general discomfort. There were a few means of summoning the ambulances for the removal of the dead or