Santa Ana Register, 9-25-39

SEEK 24 LOST WHEN WAVES WRECK SHIP

OXNARD, Cal., Sept. 25.—(UP)—A coast guard cutter and a rescue party of about 30 men stood by today to attempt to find 24 persons who were left floudering about at sea when a 50-mile gale capsized the fishing excursion boat Spray.

At San Pedro the Coast Guard reported three cutters, the Spencer, Hermes and Ingham, were in the vicinity of Oxnard, a small city about 75 miles up the coast from Los Angeles. A Coast Guard officer said one of the boats would make the rescue expedition as soon as the sea quieted.

Find Wreckage

As dawn broke the rescue party, augmented by 15 county prisoners, still had been unable to start out in search of the missing party because of the wind-driven rain and mountain-like waves. During the night officers hunted an area

(Continued on Page 4, Column 4)

24 Feared Dead As Ship Breaks

(Continued From Page 1)

below Point Mugu but failed to locate any survivors or victims.

The wreckage of the Spray was found in Mugu lagoon. Officers said all that remained of the ship was the hull. There were no indications the hull held the bodies of any of the 24 missing people.

The sheriff's office began to dispair of finding any of the shipwrecked party as the storm continued, although not at such high velocity, several hours after the accident.

Two Washed Ashore

The gale reached a velocity of 65 miles an hour at times and still was raging as the rescue party waited opposite a jetty which had been turned into an island when the sea rushed through into an inland lagoon.

Two persons were reported to have been washed ashore late last night.

Two of the party, Genieve Force of Lynwood, Cal., and Abe Agnis of Los Angeles, swam ashore before high tide and walked five miles into Oxnard. There they were hospitalized for shock and exposure.

The survivors told Oxnard police that Capt. Earle Steckle, master of the Spray, attempted to tie up at Point Mugu but was unable to because the pier had been washed away. Steckle called ashore that he would attempt to put about and try an emergency landing.

Hit By Waves

Miss Force said that as the boat was turning it was struck broadside by three huge swells, the last of which swept across the deck and overturned the craft, said to be a 50-foot boat.

The rest of the party was cut off and apparently were caught in the rough sea as the tide rushed in.

Officers said it was possible the victims had swam to an island created when the high seas washed through to the lagoon. The lagoon opened into the sea at Point Mugu, leaving a long jetty which extended into the ocean. The storm swept the sea into the lagoon, officers said, and an island was formed.

The survivors said the last they saw of the missing people they were being tossed about on high combers.

Miss Force said she was on deck when the seas struck the boat. The others, she said, were in the pilot house. The pilot house was swept away and Captain Steckle called out for the passengers to find life preservers. Agnis managed to get a lifebelt and helped Miss Force swim about 75 yards to shore.

Passengers Disappear

"A huge wave swept the pilot house away," she said. "I saw many of the people in the ocean, clinging to debris and timber. I don't know what happened to them. They might have been able to get ashore. It all happened so quickly I couldn't tell."

The boat was returning from the Anacapa Islands, tiny surfaces about 12 miles from the mainland.

The accident occurred late yesterday but was not reported until last night when Agnis and Miss Force trudged wearily into the Oxnard police station, near collapse from battling the heavy seas and the long walk into town.

The Spray, badly battered by the high combers, was washed ashore.

Police issued a partial list of the missing passengers but were unable to compile a full report. Among the missing were these:

Mr. and Mrs. Curry of Los Angeles, two friends known only as Jimmy and Johnny and a sister of Mrs. Curry.

Gus Broadwell.

H. P. Smith of Hollywood.

S. Kramer of North Hollywood.

Gil Holman of Glendale.

Jack Holen of Burbank.

Dick Richardson of North Hollywood.

Nathan Lake of Los Angeles.

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Santa Ana Register

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1939

RAIN AIDS CITRUS; N

STORM SURVEY COVERS COUNTY

Citrus crops will be greatly benefited by the heavy week end rain, but some damage has been caused to walnuts and lima beans, it was stated today by Harold E. Wahlberg, Orange county farm advisor.

Although the heat wave of last week caused some softening of Valencia oranges, the situation is only temporary, he said. The cooler weather and the moisture are expected to return the oranges to normal condition. Groves which had ample moisture last week suffered very little, hes aid.

Problem of Drying

Walnut growers, who suffered damage last week when the extreme heat resulted in discoloration of nuts, were faced today with the problem of drying their walnuts before they become moulded. The walnut crop was about 20 per cent harvested when the extreme heat started. The result was that some of the husks had a tendency to stick to the shells, causing spots on the shells. Grades generally were lowered by the heat.

Growers with dehydrator facilities and who are able to get the nuts off the ground within a short time will not suffer much loss from the rains, it is believed. If the rains continue, the grower who is without dehydrator facilities and whose walnuts are still on the ground faces serious loss, it is stated.

Moulding Feared

Bean growers have had some damage because of the unexpected downpour but if the weather clears up, they will be able to continue harvesting without serious loss, according to farm experts. Harvesters are unable to work on the beans unless they are thoroughly dry. If the rainy weather continues, moulding will result and beans will split.

Most of the tomatoes were lost because of the extreme heat of last week.

Santa Ana Register, 9-25-39

Airport Hangar Wrecked By Storm

Part of the wreckage left by yesterday's storm that took a toll of lives and property is shown in the picture above, taken at Eddie Martin airport shortly after 2 p. m. As the sagging roof indicates, the entire south wall of the main hangar was blown out, while the three planes in the hangar were not damaged, the heavy Stinson plane owned by Troy Colboch supporting the roof and protecting the two smaller planes, a Travelair, owned by Tommy Fallin, of Anaheim and a Curtis Robin, owned by Irving Ablott, of Santa Ana. Airport owner Floyd Martin reported that little damage resulted from the falling roof and that the hangar could be easily repaired.

Santa Ana Register
9-26-39

ALL-TIME RAINFALL RECORDS SHATTERED

September rains Sunday and yesterday shattered a 63-year-old record when a downpour that averaged 4.585 inches of rain in the county flooded the area, according to figures made public today by Roy Browning, riparian expert at the Irvine company.

According to Browning, who checked the Irvine records since 1876, the first year they were kept, nothing has even come close to the record fall of this September.

Strike Average

Back in 1908, Browning's records show, a three-day rain in September brought 1.20 inches of rain, the previous high for the month. September in 1919 had .98 of an inch, he reported.

"According to the records," Browning said, "we are accustomed to get a little bad weather during the last of September or the first of October but we have had no such rain as the present one in the history of our records."

The average of 4.085 inches was arrived at by adding the rainfall from 18 widely scattered communities of the county and dividing by 18.

* * *

RAINFALL TABLE

City	24 Hrs.	St'm	S's'n	Last Year
Santa Ana	.37	2.72	2.87	...
Anaheim	.42	5.72	5.95	..
Fullerton	.32	5.97	6.24	...
Newport Beach	.20	3.00	3.14	Tr.
S. J. Capistrano	.59	3.66	3.91	..
Laguna Beach	.21	2.69	2.81	.05
Buena Park	.90	5.05	5.10	.03
Garden Grove	.33	4.78	4.84	.06
Brea	1.58	5.13	5.26	.03
Richfield	1.11	4.24	4.26	...
Placentia	1.33	5.15	5.47	.05
Orange	.57	3.58	3.68	.04
Campbell	.86	3.67	3.91	..
San Clemente	.15	3.52	3.66	.02
Huntington B'ch.	.04	3.39	3.47	.07
Irvine	.29	3.46	3.46	...
Santiago Dam	1.22	3.37	3.69	...
Silverado	1.43	4.51	5.35	...

Santa Ana Register, 9-25-39

HEROISM OF LIFE GUARDS PREVENTS HIGHER TOLL OF DEATH ALONG COAST

By GEORGE HART

A day and night of terrific battering from wind and wave left Orange county wearily counting its dead, injured and property losses today, while preparing for further onslaught of the raging elements.

The coast line, where one woman was drowned as a boat capsized in the entrance to Newport Harbor, faced the worst marine experience in its history and bore the brunt of yesterday's battle between man and nature. Only the stern resistance of alertly mobilized life-saving forces, aided by heroic volunteers, prevented a high toll of life.

One Dead, 7 Rescued

Mrs. Dorothy Sterling, 35, of 727 North Palm, Burbank, was the lone victim of the sea, drowning when the Jolly Tom, a 33-foot cruiser, capsized in the channel. Seven others aboard were rescued, five of them receiving injuries.

A second near-fatality occurred at 11 a. m. today when Clarence Prinslow, Edison lineman working atop a pole at Thirteenth street and Ocean Front, Newport Beach, was critically burned by a live wire. His recovery is problematical.

Prinslow, 35, of 408 California street, Huntington Beach, was assisted by Pete Cockerell, Edison company employe, and Ferne Underwood, telephone company worker, who were nearby and saw Prinslow's plight.

More Rain Looms

The storm's threat to life and property, mixing tragedy with brilliant rescue yesterday, had not abated today. With continued rain and gales forecast tonight and Tuesday, the immediate future was regarded fearfully. More especially since the coast line found itself deprived of a sturdy defense weapon in its hour of need. The county lifeguard patrol, expected to remain in service until September 30, was dismissed today by the county supervisors, for purposes of economy.

RAIN TABLE

City	Storm	Season	Last Year
Santa Ana	2.35	2.50	None
Anaheim	5.40	5.65	None
Fullerton	5.61	5.88	None
Newport Beach	2.80	2.94	Trace
San Juan Capistrano	3.09	3.34	None
Laguna Beach	2.48	2.60	.05
Buena Park	4.15	4.20	.03
Garden Grove	4.45	4.51	....
Brea	3.55	3.68	.03
Placentia	3.82	4.14	.05
Yorba Linda	2.70	2.97	....
Orange	3.34	3.58	None
Irvine	3.07	3.34	.02
San Clemente	3.37	3.51	.02
Huntington Beach	2.76	2.84	.07
Tustin	2.87	3.19	None
Silverado	3.08	3.92	None
Santiago Dam	2.15	2.59	None
Costa Mesa	2.63	3.02	.01
Richfield	3.13	3.15	None

Rains which reached torrential proportions in northern Orange county, had complicated the storm situation and caused heavy crop losses in some sections, particularly to bean growers. The entire bean crop of the San Juan Capistrano area, covering about 150 acres, faced loss as no threshing had been done there. Only a quick-drying sun will save it.

Heavy Rains

Numerous walnut trees were blown down in that area, also.

The precipitation reached 5.61 inches at Fullerton, where 4.85 inches fell between 6 p. m. yesterday and 7 a. m. today. Anaheim had 5.40 inches, Garden Grove 4.45. At Silverado there was 3.08 inches and creeks were beginning to rise. But at Santiago dam, which held 16,130 acre feet on September 20, there was no sign of rise. The dam holds 25,000 acre feet below the spillway. Rainfall at the dam was 2.15 inches.

Army engineers at Prado dam reported no effect from the rain, except to hamper progress, and the Santa Ana river was causing no immediate alarm. City Engineer J. L. McBride said Santa Ana boulevard's new bridge, now completed, except for the approaches, was beyond danger of damage and the city's rebuilt outfall line was not menaced, except by possibly dragging anchors of boats offshore.

In Santa Ana a dozen trees and as many Edison power lines were reported down, and the Southern California Telephone company reported 100 telephones out of commission at 9 a. m. in Santa Ana and vicinity. Inter-city circuits were open, it was said.

The wind blew out the entire south side of the main hangar at Martin's airport yesterday shortly after 2 p. m. but little damage resulted from the falling roof, which was held up mainly by Troy Colboch's Stinson plane, thus protecting two smaller planes, a Curtis Robin belonging to Irving Ablott, of Santa Ana, and a Travelair, belonging to Tommy Fallin, of Anaheim.

Santa Ana Register, 9-25-39

2 of 2

Pacific Renews Fury

While the interior of the county escaped serious harm water damage, though bulwarks were being placed in some sections, such as the telephone office at Buena Park, to keep out surface waters, it was a different story along the beaches, where the Pacific hurled itself with fury against the shore line.

Virtually every pier along the coast was damaged. Two-thirds of

(Continued on Page 4, Column 3)

One Dead In County Storm

(Continued From Page 1)

the San Clemente pier was swept away, the pier at Doheny Palisades also was damaged. The "T" at the end of Balboa pier was gone, half of Newport Beach pier was missing, and damage was inflicted upon the Huntington Beach and new Seal Beach piers.

Buildings Undermined

Waves were cutting a deep bank in the sand along West Newport. At El Morro beach, the cafe and several houses, as well as a portion of the road were washed away. Crystal Cove suffered loss of two houses and part of the road. Supervisor Willis Warner reported that the Sunset Beach waterfront was being pounded heavily, with danger to the buildings.

Two boats out of Newport harbor were reported missing, according to Dana Lamb, head of the lifeguard patrol. One was a small sailboat, last sighted with its mast broken. The other was a small fishing boat. Neither was identified.

Spectacular and Costly

The most spectacular and also the most costly boat wreck of the day was that of the Jolly Tom, a 33-foot cruiser that capsized at the harbor entrance, drowning Mrs. Sterling. This tragedy, however, brought one of the most remarkable rescue stories of the day when Ralph Dawson, Santa Ana junior college student, and John Lugo, of Newport Beach, went to the aid of the seven persons left struggling in the water. The rescuers used paddleboards where boats could not go, and saved all but the Burbank woman.

Still In Hospital

Tommy Davidson, 17, of Chatsworth, owner of the boat, and Gerald Sterling, 16, son of the woman who drowned, still are at St. Joseph hospital today, being treated for their injuries. Jack Singlaub, 17, and his sister, Anita Singlaub, 16, of 14,636 Sutton street, Van Nuys, were taken to the hospital but were discharged last night. I. R. Sterling, husband of the victim, suffered minor injuries. Two other girls in the party, Etta Mae Ordelmundt and Mary Ellen Sison, were unhurt.

The sinking of the 140-foot yacht, Paragon, owned by William Batholomae jr., millionaire Alaska mining man and Newport oil man, was another incident of the day, the palatial vessel, returning from Catalina with 16 aboard ran foul of a tremendous wave and had its side torn away. It sank in 20 feet of water. All were rescued.

Mishap At Landing

Charles Pulley, 21, 2420 Elden, Costa Mesa, is in St. Joseph hospital today as the result of an accident at 5 p.m., yesterday at the South Coast yacht landing.

Another thrilling rescue took place off Boat canyon, Laguna Beach, where three men were picked up after a struggle with the sea, after one of them, Douglas Perrin, Laguna water taxi owner, had rescued an unidentified youth stranded on a life raft.

Skiff Capsizes

Perrin brought the youth near enough to shore so that the lad could swim safely in. Then Perrin took his skiff back beyond the breakers, where it capsized as he was trying to make an adjacent cove. Day Tawney, lifeguard, and Bob Smith swam out to him. The three men got the skiff on the life raft and emptied it, then tried to make shore.

But the county life-guard patrol, with its truck stationed on a nearby headland, turned on its loud speaker and warned them off the beach. A radio call then was sent to boats within reach. A fishing boat, the Owl, picked it up and came to the scene, taking the three men aboard and landing them at Newport Beach.

Rescued by Cockerell

Another boat capsized at Abalone beach and drifted to Crystal cove, its occupants clinging to it. There they were rescued by the county patrol boat.

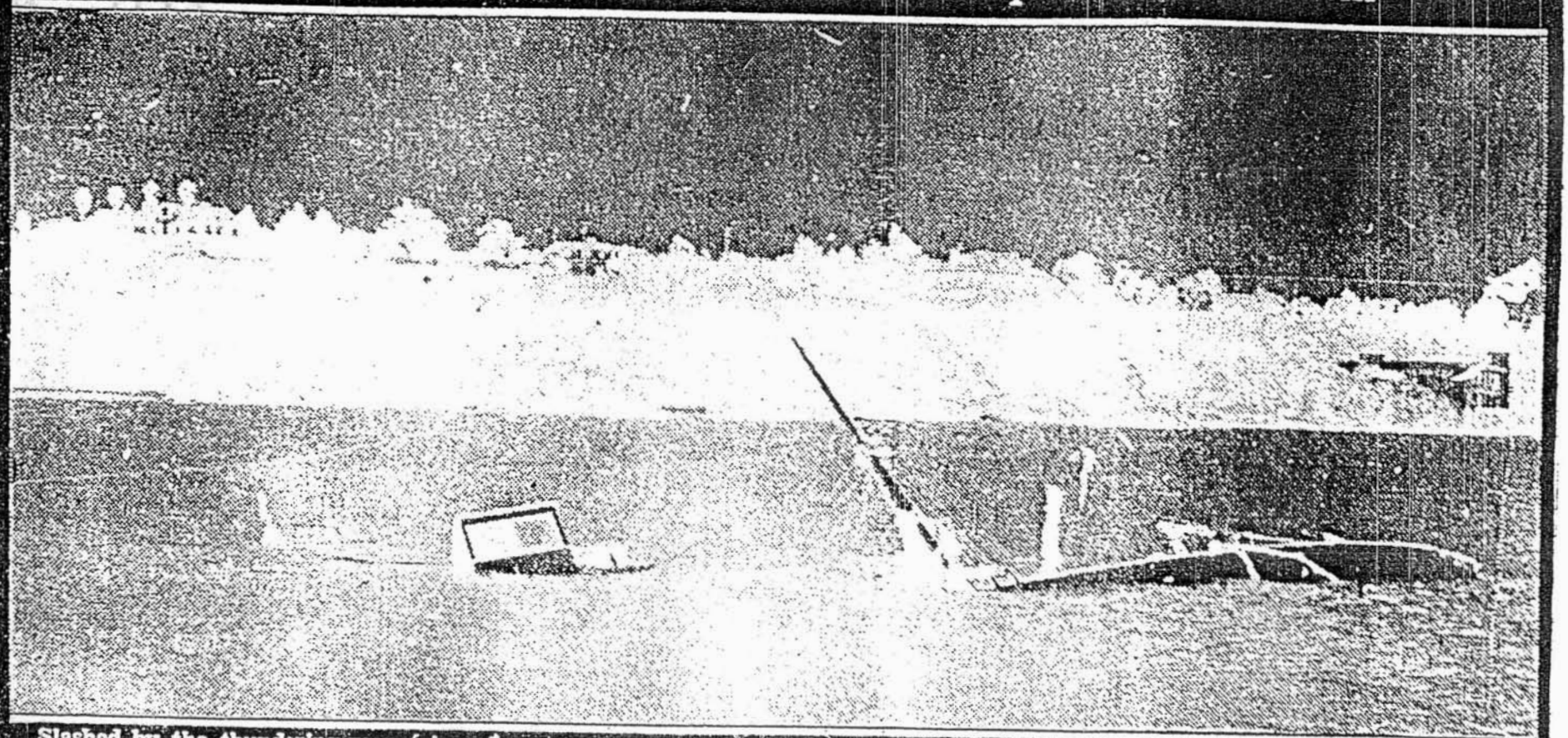
Inquest Awaited

The body of Mrs. Sterling, recovered some time after the Jolly Tom capsized, is at the Dixon-Grauel mortuary in Costa Mesa, awaiting an inquest by Coroner Earl M. Abbey.

Another incident of the storm was the disappearance last night of the elderly couple that had attracted attention during last week's heat wave by sitting stranded beside the road near Garden Grove for three days. They were seen there yesterday afternoon, but last night they were gone.

Santa Ana Register, 9-25-39

Raging Seas Claim Palatial Yacht In Newport Harbor Storm



Slashed by the thundering mountains of sea water that poured over its sides, the ill-fated Paragon, owned by William H. Bartholomae, Jr., millionaire Alaska mining and Southern California oil man, is pictured above. The 140-foot palatial yacht was driven aground by a gigantic wave at the point of the jetty at Newport Harbor when it was en route from Santa Catalina Island.

The 16 passengers aboard the yacht, including Owner Bartholomae, reportedly were saved from drowning and were unhurt. The ship left Catalina at 3 p. m. yesterday and was grounded at 7:20 p. m., it was reported. At the time of the picture above, the craft was lying in 10 feet of water after having been wheeled to comparative safety.

Santa Ana Register, 9-25-90

Eye Witness Tells Of Rescues At Beach City

An eye-witness report, vividly describing the rescue of passengers from a 30-foot boat which capsized in the entrance to Newport Harbor during heavy seas yesterday, was given today by S. A. Wood, of Santa Ana, who was among the hundreds of watchers lining the jetties as the thrilling rescue took place.

Wood's description was contained in a letter written to his son, Newell E. Wood, attending college at Missoula, Mont.

"The tide was low, quite low, but there were heavy swells," Wood wrote. "I heard someone say there was report of a hurricane at sea. After picking shells, I started up the coast toward the harbor.

Recalls Warnings

"The wind suddenly began to blow. I looked out upon the ocean and saw white caps far out. I knew what it meant, and was sorry for people who had disobeyed the warnings given in the papers, as to stormy weather and especially high tides.

"When I got around the last point of rock I saw most of the beach people standing on the jetty wall, a heavy piece of cement work. I was still half a mile from them. I hastened up there to see what the attraction was, and saw they were watching the boats, which were having a hard time getting into the harbor, owing to the mighty breakers.

"I saw that some of the old, experienced men would pause awhile before they made the effort, and this was done to study the time between swells, so they could keep between them at the most dangerous point.

"I saw many boats pass safely. Finally a small boat turned over. It was not long before a patrol boat came and with seeming difficulty picked up the occupants who had been thrown into the water.

"The patrol boat had gone about 140 yards when a larger boat also capsized. I think there were about 1000 people on each side or wall of the harbor, and we all yelled and motioned to the boatmen to return. The patrol boat was stopped for a moment, but did not turn; it continued up the bay.

"The waves now were running about 30 feet high. The capsized splashes over a wall of stone about 30 feet high. The capsiezd boat turned over and over, many times; we thought it might get out against the rocky sides, but it kept its course up the center of the channel. Some of the

(Continued on Page 4, Column 1)

Witness Tells Of Beach Rescue

(Continued From Page 1)

struggling people climbed upon the boat for safety, at first, but found it worse than a bucking broncho to ride, so they kept off.

"Now, we saw that a number of boats passed by the wreck but would not dare to attempt to turn round because of the breakers. Finally, a rather nice boat came along and attempted to make a right-hand turn, and was threatened by a large wave and gave it up; but swung to the left and made circle after circle, until it had gathered up all that remained afloat.

"Women on the wall at my side wept as they beheld the scene. Surely that man who risked his life and his boat to gather up those unfortunate ones was deeply praised by the onlookers, for it looked almost impossible for him to do it in such a high sea. An old sea captain who used to be at the Bay Shore camp when I had my boat there, said: 'That fellow surely knows how to handle his boat.'

This all happened in low tide. I took a boy friend down there this evening to show him the breakers at high tide. They were surely terrible. I heard that one boat which left the harbor this (Sunday) morning has not been found. I will send you the report of the local paper. I buy the Santa Ana Register evenings.

"I remember that you told me in 1931 that California was always 'perfect or unusual.' Well, that is the way it is this year—extra cold, then extra hot, then extra wet, just now."

Santa Ana Register, 9-25-39

Hero Of Newport Rescue Tells Of Battle To Save Victims Of Wreck

In the unadorned language of a schoolboy, Ralph Dawson, 19-year-old hero of the thrilling rescue of five persons from a raging sea near the Newport Harbor jetty, told today how he and John Lugo, 19, paddled on their surfboards through 20-foot swells and helped the victims remain afloat for nearly an hour.

Those who owe their lives to the two young surfers are Thomas Davidson, 17; Richard Sterling, 40; Gerald Sterling, 16; Mary Ellen Sisson; Etta Mae Ordelmundt, and Jack and Anita Singlaud, all of Burbank or Van Nuys.

Dawson is a sophomore at Santa Ana junior college, and the son of Mrs. J. B. Stephenson jr. of Descanso. Lugo, formerly a student of Fullerton junior college, is now employed at Santa Monica by the Douglas Aircraft corporation.

Expert "Surfers"

"Lugo and I had just returned from San Onofre where we 'surf' quite often," explained Dawson. "We were close to the cement jetty. The boat, a 33-foot cruiser named Jolly Tom, was about 500 yards away and between the two jetties.

"We did not see the Jolly Tom capsize. The first thing I knew of it was when people on shore began to scream that the boat had turned over. I looked and saw several persons struggling in the water. The giant waves were picking them up 20 feet and dropping them back in the water, and we realized they were in distress.

Dive Under Swells

"Johnny and I figured we might reach them on our surfboards. We knew it would be impossible for a boat to put out from shore and get there. We paddled out, holding our boards with both hands and diving through when the big swells hit us. It took us approximately ten minutes. There were five of them—a man, two boys about 18 and two girls a little older.

"One of the party had on a life preserver. The others were clinging to wreckage. All were badly cut and bruised. Johnny first went to the rescue of one of the girls who was hysterical and seemed to be in the worst condition. He tried to make the jetty rocks about 50 yards away but couldn't so he paddled back to the east jetty with her. This required about twenty minutes.

Finds Life Belts

"I dived into the wreckage of the Jolly Tom and pulled out the other life belts. These I distributed to the people in the water. Someone told me that the oldest woman in the party had sunk. I tried to find her. I dived all around but couldn't see anything. Diving was extremely difficult because of the treacherous swells.

"We got the victims bunched and off from the boat which was breaking up. Eventually the cabin cruiser Blue Water, which had been out and was attempting to get back into the harbor, came along and we paddled the people over to it. After they were safely aboard, Lugo and I paddled our surfboards back to shore. We were tired but not injured in any way.

Santa Ana Register 7-25-39

100 FEARED LOST AT SEA

(UP)—Fears that at least 48 persons lost their lives in storm disasters on the Pacific ocean were expressed today as U. S. navy and Coast Guard vessels sought to rescue some of the 100 or more persons aboard boats at sea.

The loss of life came swiftly during last night and today as thousands of persons sought ocean pleasures after nine days of 100-plus temperatures in Southern California. The weekend vacationers, who were aboard fishing and pleasure craft, were caught totally unprepared for 60-mile-per-hour gales which swept the Pacific coast off Mexico.

Los Angeles Flooded

The storm, which followed the heat wave which took from 60 to 80 lives, sent 5.35 inches of rain crashing down on Los Angeles in less than 24 hours. This was the greatest precipitation for September in the weather bureau's history.

Lowlands were flooded. Telephone and electric lines were down in many areas and schools were closed because of flooded streets.

Boat Destroyed

Twenty-four persons were believed to have drowned when the fishing boat Spray was ripped to pieces and capsized off Point Mugu in Ventura county. A man and a woman, who were on the deck, were swept clear and swam to shore. They walked five miles to Oxnard to report the disaster.

The area between Oxnard and the waterfront was a morass of mud and flood waters and deputy sheriffs had to wear hip boots to enter the area in search for bodies of the Spray's victims. The body of a woman, about 35, and identified only as "Johnnie," was found near the scene of the disaster.

Fishing Boat Missing

Fifteen residents of Ventura were feared to have perished aboard the fishing boat Lur, unreported for two days.

Six persons were known to have drowned at the beaches during the storm.

All the lowland areas from the mountains to the sea were under from two to four feet of water.

Thousands of persons were marooned in their homes.

Three persons were believed to have drowned when the yacht Nina O, owned by Abraham Taylor of Pomona, crashed into the breakwater at Cabrillo Beach.

(Continued on Page 4, Column 2)

100 May Die In Sea Storm

(Continued From Page 1)

Taylor and Mrs. E. T. Harrington were rescued. Those believed to have drowned are E. T. Harrington; his son, John Harrington, 11, and Marion Tanner, of Compton.

At Signal Hill, north of Long Beach, the Hamilton Bowl, large storm basin, overflowed its banks and flooded houses and stores. Homes along the shore from Malibu to Huntington Beach were damaged heavily by pounding seas and the high wind.

Stores Flooded

The Santa Fe mainline tracks near Needles were washed out.

Department stores and other buildings in the heart of Los Angeles were flooded as the run-off waters overflowed streets and curbs.

In Long Beach plateglass windows were smashed by the fierce winds.

All schools in Long Beach were closed.

The Coast Guard and navy destroyers rescued the fishing boat Dispatch with 25 aboard. The Coast Guard Cutter Spence rescued the yacht Gloria Dalton with Col. William Neblett, former law partner of William Gibbs McAdoo, aboard.

Crops Damaged

Other fishing boats rescued were the Indiana and the Falcon.

The fishing barge Minnie A. Caine was washed ashore at Santa Monica and capsized.

All aboard were rescued.

Harold J. Ryan, Los Angeles county agricultural commissioner, said a hasty survey showed the storm did considerable damage to dry weather crops, including walnuts, dry beans and alfalfa.

H. E. Hedger, Los Angeles county flood control engineer, reported all washes, debris basins and other control works had functioned well and carried off the water with a minimum of damage.

The rain was too heavy for the regular channels to handle all the run-off, but early surveys indicated no more than ordinary damage reported in the flooded districts.

The Los Angeles river, usually a dry channel at this time of the year, became a raging torrent and forced suspension of all flood channel work under direction of army engineers.

the weather

Southern California— Rain tonight and Tuesday; cooler west portion tonight; southerly gales off coast today decreasing and shifting to westerly Tuesday.

Santa Ana Register 9-26-39

Storm Death Toll Mounts

LOS ANGELES, Sept. 26. — (UP)—The calming seas off Southern California were searched today for the bodies of approximately 40 men, women and children who put out in small boats for relief from a heat wave Sunday and were caught by a sudden storm.

The death toll was feared to have reached as high as 44. But the shoreline was littered with wrecks of vessels whose passengers had not been accounted for.

Three Found

Only three bodies had been found. Two were pulled from Los Angeles harbor and a third floated ashore at Point Mugu where the excursion fishing boat Spray capsized with a loss of 24 lives.

Eleven boats were known to have been wrecked in the violent and unexpected 60 mile gale which whipped up from a Mexican hurricane, and 23 others were

(Continued on Page 4, Column 6)

Death Toll Of Storm Mounts

(Continued From Page 1)

still reported missing. The waves, which those aboard the boats said looked "like three-story buildings," were subsiding today and the search for the bodies was expected to be more successful.

Navy Helps Search

The navy assigned four destroyers and some patrol boats to help the coast guard pick up bodies and hunt for still missing craft.

The beach at Point Mugu, 50 miles north of Los Angeles, was blocked off to the public and crews of county prisoners were tearing apart debris and wreckage in search of bodies from the Spray. The 48 foot motorboat, coming back from a day of sport fishing, tried to put in at the point Sunday night, but found the pier had been washed away by the terrific combers. The skipper could be heard shouting above the surf that he was putting back to sea to ride out the storm. Then a 30-foot wave caught the vessel broadside and spun her over. Most of the 26 persons aboard were in the pilot house, which was splintered and broken off, spewing them into the boiling surf. Only a man and a woman managed to swim ashore.

Unable to Aid

"It was ghastly," said Miss Genevieve Force, 23, the woman. "The wave crashed down upon us. Most of the people were in the pilot house, and it was just lifted away. The boat rolled and tossed. All those people who had been laughing and joking to keep each other's spirits up were dumped into the water. I don't know what happened to them."

Harry Rapf, movie magnate, was aboard another fishing boat which barely escaped the same fate.

"We saw the Spray capsize before our eyes," he said. "We saw the poor people tossed into the sea, and we were powerless to help them."

Thirty life preservers were washed up along the shore. Half a mile down the coast the wooden hull of the Spray was beached, minus the pilot house.

Victims Missing

One body had been recovered, that of Mrs. Charlotte King, about 45, of Los Angeles.

The ketch, Conchita, was found dismasted and waterlogged. Believed drowned were her owner, David Brown of Alhambra, Calif., his mother, sister, brother-in-law, and three children.

The motorboat Nina O capsized off Point Firmin and her owner, E. G. Harrington, his 11 year old son John, and Marian Tanner were feared drowned. Two others were rescued.

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Plan Rebuilding Of Storm-Wrecked Piers

Beach cities of Orange county today embarked on a program of reconstruction as the experts forecast clearing weather for the Southland.

One noted authority, Dr. Irving Krick, of the California Institute of Technology, forecast another heat wave for California.

However, the forecast from the United States weather station in Los Angeles today is as follows: Fair tonight and Wednesday; warmer in interior Wednesday; gentle northwest wind off coast.

Fullerton leads in the county in amount of rain for the storm, having received a total of 5.97 inches, with .32 of that amount received yesterday and last night. Brea received 1.58 inches for the past 24 hours and Placentia nearly as much, 1.33. Huntington Beach had just .04 for the 24 hours, while Santa Ana had .37 for the past 24 hours, with 2.72 for the storm and 2.87 for the season.

Several new pier projects are projected for county coast cities, it was revealed today. The Huntington Beach, of which 300 feet was destroyed in the storm which raged over the weekend, will be rebuilt in the very near future, the pier being fully insured, it was revealed by City Engineer Harry Overmyer. Damage is placed at around $50,000.

More than 100 residents of San Clemente last night at a public meeting voted to instruct the members of the city council to call a bond election as soon as legally possible in a move to raise $50,000 to repair and extend the pier following its partial destruction in the storm last Sunday.

The city engineer was instructed to draw plans for a pier 1500 feet long. The present pier is 1200 feet. More than 700 feet of the old pier was washed away in the storm including the boat house and concession stands.

It was pointed out at the meeting that the bonded indebtedness of San Clemente at present is $96,000. The city's limit on bonds is $750,000.

Two men who were aboard the fishing barge owned by the Owl Boat company, anchored off San Clemente and who were unable to come ashore during the storm came in this morning. They are Joseph Hilibarne and Paul Chaney. They declared the barge weathered the storm.

Newport Beach is expected to have one brand new pier, and possibly two, as a result of the storm. Plans had already been

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Plan To Rebuild Wrecked Piers

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drawn for a new pier at Balboa under orders of the city council, it was stated by City Engineer R. L. Patterson. Approximately 100 feet of the present pier went out. The structure was built in 1921. No definite plans have been made for the Newport structure, of which 400 feet was destroyed. No definite plans have been formulated on the Newport pier.

Does Good Job

The storm did a job which the Laguna Beach city council has been unable to get private contractors to do, remove the old pier. A few piling remain but these are bent and they say may disappear any time. Laguna Beach employes placed sandbags on the beach in front of the Laguna hotel yesterday to prevent damage to the patio of the hostelry because of action by the high waves, the work being in charge of City Engineer J. R. Lester Boyle.

Very little damage was done to the Seal Beach pier, principal loss being a boat landing. Telephone lines were out of order yesterday and today because of the storm. One track of the Pacific Electric along the Anaheim bay peninsula was mashed out. School, which ran all through the hot spell, was closed yesterday when only a few pupils appeared for the 9 o'clock roll call.

As a result of damage to the beach at Sunset Beach, where a number of homes were destroyed by the waves a meeting will be held in the beach community tomorrow night for discussion of plans for creation of a state erosion board. A number of Orange county officials and engineers of coast cities have been invited to attend. The meeting has been called by L. A. Patch.

Treat Injured

Condition of Clarence Pinslow, Huntington Beach, who was critically burned by a live wire at Newport Beach yesterday morning, was reported improved at St. Joseph hospital today. Tommy Davidson, 15, who was among those on board the Jolly Tom when the craft capsized in the Newport harbor channel Sunday, was able to leave the hospital today. Gerald Sterling, whose mother, Mrs. Dorothy Sterling, 35, of Burbank, was drowned, suffered a fractured pelvis, examination has revealed.

Salvaging of the Paragon, 140-foot yacht belonging to William Bartholomae jr., which sank in 20 feet of water in the bay, was scheduled to start today. The Jolly Tom is now being repaired.

A report that the county patrol boat had ignored a call for help when the Jolly Tom capsized was denied today by Harbormaster Thomas Bouchey. The patrol boat was on a rescue call to Laguna Beach at the time, he said. Speedboat No. 1 owned by the city of Newport Beach was in the channel at the time, but the boat's radio apparatus was out of commission and the boat left the scene to send out a call for aid. Only one man was on board the speedboat at the time and because of the huge waves the operator saw the necessity for aid by a larger boat, it was pointed out.

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Dr. and Mrs. Kenneth Coulson, of Santa Ana, who went to Catalina island Saturday in their sailboat, are expected to return home late today or tomorrow. During the storm their boat broke from mooring, but was brought back later.

"Unusual" Weather

Dr. Krick, noted weather authority, today explained the "unusual" conditions which have existed in the Southland.

"California's hot spell," said Dr. Krick, "was due to the presence of a low pressure off the Lower California coast. This caused east winds, which dragged down the mountain slopes excessively hot air and blistered the Southland for more than a week.

"The low pressure area, a tropical hurricane area, quite normal at this time of the year, crept northward. As the center approached Southern California the wind along the east boundary of the area shifted to the south.

"As each cubic mile of wind rose up the south slopes of the mountains, the air expanded to more than a cubic mile.

"Expansion cools any gas, including air, and as the moist air expanded the water condensed and rain came."

Except for the cooling effect of the great moistened area, a new heat wave is due, he said.

One reason for the violence of the rain storm, Dr. Krick explained, was that two forces caused the warm moist air to rise to cooler heights and discharge its moisture.

"The wind remained from the south along the coast, while air currents a little farther inland were deflected seaward by the mountains. In the area south of Santa Barbara these two wind currents were meeting, converging in such a way that there was only one place for the air to go—that was up. So, in addition to the mountain slopes, we had convergence of winds to raise the air mass."