



MAP SHOWS PATH TAKEN BY HURRICANE AUDREY

EARLY AND DEADLY: A HURRICANE

The dangerous hurricane season was supposed to be a good two months away and the U.S. Weather Bureau, which every year draws up a long list of feminine names to identify them, had only recently settled on "Audrey" for the first one. Then suddenly there came Audrey, roaring out of the Gulf of Mexico last week with 105-mph winds into the low bayou areas of Texas and Louisiana.

It was a hideous surprise. A fishing vessel sank while trying to make port; an offshore oil derrick toppled along with its crew into the

roiling gulf; whole herds of cattle disappeared; and in Port Arthur, Texas the top floor of a sturdy nine-story building collapsed under the weight of rain water.

But it was at the tiny bayou fishing town of Cameron, La. that the storm did its worst. Here, while the residents were still assuming they had 12 hours in which to reach high ground safely, a tidal wave 10 feet high swept suddenly and viciously over the town. Trapped families huddled in attics or clung to rooftops, trees and rafts, trying to escape the swift rising

waters. Ham radio operators sent desperate calls for help and helicopters and rescue boats rushed to Cameron. Hurricane Audrey, as quickly as she had come, slacked off into a rain squall moving toward the Ohio Valley.

The bayou country counted 40,000 driven from their homes by the storm. Hundreds had been wounded. The property damage was almost incalculable—oil companies alone put their loss at \$10 million. Over 160 were known dead, mostly at little Cameron, and as the waters slowly receded, the toll would inevitably rise.



SLOWLY RECEDING WATERS THAT INUNDATED THE LOUISIANA COAST REVEAL ONE OF HURRICANE AUDREY'S HUMAN VICTIMS, FOUND IN FIELD NEAR CAMERON

HURRICANE AUDREY'S TERRIBLE AFTERMATH

A drowned and desolate land yields up its toll of 500 dead from the worst storm in Louisiana's history

The gently shimmering waters that withdrew placidly from the Louisiana lowlands all last week everywhere yielded up stark evidence of their former fury, and a stricken state confronted the aftermath of Hurricane Audrey (LIFE, July 8), the worst storm to strike the Louisiana coast in a century. The three hardest hit communities, Cameron, Creole and Grand Chenier, were virtually destroyed. Bloating bodies of dead cattle littered the landscape. Many people were found in the stagnating waters and deadly water

Helicopters picked up those the ships could not reach. Bulldozers and cranes cleared the littered roads for medical and Red Cross teams. But rescue proved perilous to the rescuers themselves. Traveling cross-country at 25 mph in a National Guard "duck," two guardsmen and LIFE Photographer Paul Schutzer were struck by a low-hanging wire. Schutzer, the most seriously injured, was carried to a hospital where a quick-thinking surgeon saved his life with but minutes to spare.



TIDAL WAVE'S IMPACT was so great that massive supply barge was driven ashore crushing storage tank.

WRECKED HOMES on Cameron's shore were smashed by wave. Town was almost totally leveled.