

# As Much As 15 Inches Measured

## Traffic Slowed, County Schools Closed Today

Harrisonburg and areas to the east and south were blanketed Sunday by a snowfall that ranged up 15 inches to become the heaviest to fall in 22 years.

The west and north had lighter snow and did not experience the traffic difficulties and other hardships which accompanied a near-record snow.

There will be no public schools in Rockingham and Augusta counties today because it was impossible for the hard working snow-plow crews to open the side roads. With the steady fall of snow for more than six hours, the highway forces were kept busy on the major highways.

Harrisonburg schools will open at ten o'clock, one hour later than usual. Simms High and Elementary School, which has many Rockingham boys and girls in the classes will be closed.

### Big Traffic Snarls

Sgt. H. C. Birkhead, of the State Police, reported some of the worst traffic snarls in the Harrisonburg area that he had ever seen. These were straightened out in the afternoon by strenuous efforts of snowplows, wreckers, truck drivers and just plain motorists who were caught in the middle, so to speak, when a truck-trailer or automobile slid sideways in the soft snow to block traffic.

Birkhead said the worst snarl was between the North River bridge, on the southern limits of Mt. Crawford, and the Pike Menonite Church. There were several hundreds cars tied up as tractor-trailers jackknived to block the highway.

Similar conditions prevailed on Liskey Hill, at Smithland, north of Harrisonburg, where some automobiles were tied up as much as three hours, and near the intersection of Route 11 and the Broadway road, also north of Harrisonburg.

"These were the worst snarls that I have seen during my service in this area," said Sgt. Birkhead. "Of course, the snow was falling so fast that the drivers did not realize they had little control of their vehicles when the attempted to slow down or stop."

### Blue Ridge Slick

The State Highway office here measured 14 inches of snow early last night. The staff reported that the Shenandoah Mountain highway (Route 33 west) was in "oet-ter shape" than the route through Swift Run Gap, in the Blue Ridge. There were slicks on the Swift Run crossing, which received much more snow than did the western section of the county.

Sgt. Birkhead said that one factor which contributed to the safer movement of automobile and truck travel was that the drivers had chains, which were requirements for going any where a few weeks ago. The last advice given last night to drivers was to proceed cautiously and use chains.



# Heaviest Snow In 22 Years 1958

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report that an additional inch had fallen. She added that the snow may be the heaviest since 15 inches was measured there on Feb. 7, 1935. On that occasion, newspaper clippings recorded snow depths up to 26 inches in Bergton and in places in National Park.

## March Blizzard

Twelve inches of snow were recorded in Feb. 1947 and ten inches in March 1941. Some of the heaviest snows in recent decades have fallen in March. Few will forget the March blizzard of March 1932 when all highways were blocked and communications lines were down for days. A heavy wind then drifted the snow to record heights.

Raus M. Hanson, director of the Madison College weather station, measured 12½ inches at sunset Sunday. He believes this was one of the heaviest snows he has measured since he came to Madison in 1929.

Ninety Washington area Boy Scouts were caught in the unexpected snow in the Shenandoah National Park yesterday but all were rescued late in the day by Park Rangers Fred Vest and N. H. Davidson and Fire Aide Floyd. They were sent on to Washington by bus. While the snow was not as deep in the park as it was in the Valley area, some automobiles of leaders had to be left near the Hoover Camp on the Rapidan. Park Rangers expect to bring out the cars today unless there is more snow.

## Caught Unawares

Sunday's snow caught most persons unawares after springlike weather had prevailed for some days. Churchgoers were surprised to find their cars covered with snow and the countryside white when the services were concluded. The it seemed that the longer it snowed the heavier became the downfall. It was not long before unplowed streets and roads were almost impassable. At times the snow fell so heavily that visibility was extremely limited.

Using the sunset measurement of 12 inches at Dale Enterprise, the total snowfall this year is 26 inches. In addition there was a five inch fall on Dec. 5. The snowfall in 1948 — the heaviest in recent years — measured 31 inches, December through March.

Augusta County had 10 inches. The Culpeper and Charlottesville areas had 10. Warrenton reported a snow fall of 6 to 8 inches and Louisa, northwest of Richmond, had a Sunday night report of 5 inches. And in most of these areas snow continued to fall late Sunday.

The State Highway Department, caught off guard like most everyone else, rushed out its crews and plows for another big digging out effort.

Chains were recommended for travel on all primary and secondary roads in areas hard hit by the late - winter blast. There were no reports Sunday night of any highways being blocked.

Even the weather bureau at Richmond's Byrd Field cocked a surprised eye at the skies. Observers said the low pressure storm areas had been expected to bring rain. But near - freezing temperatures upset the forecast.

In the Richmond area snow did not begin falling until after noon. And then temperatures which hovered near or above the freezing mark prevented any major accumulation.

But in the western counties sub - freezing temperatures brought a different picture. At one point snow was reported falling at the rate of an inch and one - half an hour in Augusta County.

Snow fall measurements tapered off sharply to the south and southeast of the main snowfall region. Lynchburg had one - inch measurement and in Tidewater precipitation measured less than half an inch — mostly in rain.

Transportation was curtailed. Air travel at Byrd Field continued but the Roanoke and Lynchburg airports were closed during the afternoon as snow blanketed runways and visibility dropped.

Roanoke reported Greyhound bus service down U.S. 11 to the city was running up to two hours late.

Public schools announcing Monday closings due to the transportation problem were Albemarle, Augusta, Culpeper, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Orange, Bath and Rockingham Counties.

Officials in other counties and cities in the hard - hit regions were considering Sunday night whether to hold classes Monday.





**SLIDING DOWN** — The 14-inches of snow which fell Sunday starts sliding down a chute-the-chute at a Waterman Street home Monday. It gives the appearance, however, of a giant worm or sea serpent climbing up the sliding board. (News-Record Photo)



# Heaviest Snow In 22

March 13, 1958



NIGHT SNOW SCENE ON HIGH STREET



FAMILIAR SIGHT HERE YESTERDAY

