

Sep. 29, 1959

Gracie Batters Coast Of Georgia, Carolina

Hundreds Flee Path Of Storm

CHARLESTON, S. C. (AP) — Hurricane Gracie battered the South Carolina-Georgia coast line Monday night with advance gale lines of smashing waves and high tides accompanied by heavy squalls.

The leading edge of the violent storm made itself felt from Daytona Beach, Fla., to Wilmington, N. C. but a 100-mile area from Savannah, Ga. to Charleston appeared the first likely target in the forenoon for the ponderous storms' landward movement. The center of the storm was expected over land at noon.

Hundreds Flee Path

Hundreds of coastal residents fled in the path of the storm, whose howling center winds of at least 125 miles per hour were expected to whip up tides and waves of dangerous proportions. The Weather Bureau called it "an extremely dangerous hurricane."

The Weather Bureau warned continuously for all island residents and those in low level areas to evacuate "if loss of life is to be avoided and destruction of property kept to a minimum." People were advised to evacuate before escape routes were inundated.

Even as Gracie's advance elements blanketed the coast, the Weather Bureau reported a second storm, Hurricane Hannah, was 550 miles southeast of Bermuda.

"All safety precautions should be rushed to completion immediately," the Weather Bureau warned in its 11:00 p. m. Gracie advisory, "storm tides and high seas will flood coastal land from Wilmington to Brunswick, Ga., particularly from Myrtle Beach to Savannah with heights of 8 to 11 feet or more over levels normally reached by tides for this date. All persons within reach of these tides should evacuate immediately before escape is cut off by rising water."

The Weather Bureau warned that Gracie's storm tides and high seas would flood coastal lands in the area to heights of 8 to 11 feet or more above normal levels. Smashing waves 20 feet high were forecast.

The first signs of the storm came with intermittent rains and there was a noticeable increase in winds from the hurricane located at 5 p.m. about 230 miles southeast of Charleston, moving west-northwest and northwest at

(Continued On Page 14 Col. 3)

Hard hit were South Carolina lowland farming areas and a deluge of water threatened floods on a dozen rivers and flash floods on countless streams.

At least three persons died as a result of the storm. Edward Neehan of Warren, Ohio, was killed when his car was upended by violent winds at Beaufort, S.C. Buster Harmon of Lexington was killed when his car skidded into a tree felled by the storm and John Alvin Dennis, 40, of Sumter died there when his car skidded on the wet pavement of U.S. 53 and crashed.

Guards Called Out

National Guardsmen were pressed into service at battered cities and communities where damage likely will run into the millions. The guardsmen sought to prevent looting and to assist in cleanup operations.

A spokesman for the South Carolina Electric & Gas Co. estimated damage to electrical facilities at half a million dollars.

The storm neared the Columbia area about 7 p.m. moving about 12 m.p.h. Rain gusts at the Congaree Air Force Base near Columbia were 69 m.p.h. It began to break up then, forming a squall line in central South Carolina.

One consolation was that most of the Carolinas multimillion-dollar tobacco crop has been harvested. But other prime crops in the storm path — including cotton — were expected to be devastated by 10 to 15 inches of rain and the

(Continued on Page 2, Col. 4)

fter Coastal Smash

Sept 30, 1959



Charleston Hard Hit By Storm

By ROBERT MCHUGH

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP)—Hurricane Gracie smashed into the coast here Tuesday, then wallowed inland for 120 miles before disintegrating into a squall line.

The howling storm with peak winds of 140 miles per hour unleashed her full fury on the historic city of Charleston shortly before noon, then started her devastating inland movement.

Rain, winds and flooding were felt along the coast from Savannah, Ga., north to Myrtle Beach, S.C. Then the ponderous storm started its lumbering movement inland, cutting a swath 100 miles wide. She dumped torrents of water as she smashed inland over Walterboro, Orangeburg and Columbia.

Becomes Squall Line

The Weather Bureau said her force subsided as she moved inland, finally disintegrating into a squall line with gale force winds of 40 to 50 miles per hour and gusts to 60 m.p.h.

The storm was expected to continue on a northeasterly course, taking it across North Carolina and into Virginia. The Weather Bureau said it will be hard to follow from now on.

GRACIE UNROOFS HOUSE — Wesley Seigler stands in front of his neighbor's house in Walterboro, S. C. after Hurricane Gracie tore the roof off and set it down in the front yard. The center of the hurricane passed through this little town. The house belongs to Bennie and Cassy Fisk. (AP Wirephoto)

Gracie Subsides After Smash

(Continued from Page One)

still-strong winds.

To Diminish

"The intensity of this storm will diminish slowly. However, winds of near 75 m.p.h. in squalls will continue over a small area near the center for several hours," the bureau said.

Hurricane emergency warnings remained displayed from Savannah to Wilmington with gale warnings displayed from Brunswick to and including Cape May, N.J., and on Chesapeake Bay.

Communications were out to many communities and failed to others as the storm advanced.

The big wind tore down power lines, uprooted trees and unroofed buildings. Towering waves swept away or broke up beach and harbor installations. High tides, nine feet above normal here and expected to reach 11 feet elsewhere, flooded vast areas and isolated many communities.

Metal signs blew down at Charleston, then were hurled along the streets by the wind, a lethal threat to the few who ventured out at the height of the blow.

Schools Close

Schools closed along the coast and were turned into shelters for thousands of permanent residents who were warned off exposed beaches by the Weather Bureau through Red Cross and Civil Defense personnel, National Guardsmen and local officials. Inland schools dismissed early as the storm approached.

Many business houses and industrial plants closed their doors for the day.

With the summer season over along this coastal vacationland there was no horde of visitors to evacuate as there was last July 7 when Hurricane Cindy made a relatively feeble pass in this vicinity.

The torrential rains poured down over the eastern and central Carolinas and the Charlotte, N.C., Weather Bureau issued a warning bulletin to residents along most of the rivers and streams that serious flooding was probable. The bureau forecast rains up to 10 and 15 inches.

Gracie Moves Inland, Loses Some of Its Punc

Heavy Rain Is Forecast For State

50-mph Gusts Are Expected

By Warren Strother

Hurricane Gracie is expected to bring torrential rains into Virginia early today—anywhere from five to more than a dozen inches. Winds with gusts up to 50 miles an hour also are predicted.

The United States Weather Bureau station at Byrd Field warned, "It is reasonable to believe as much as five inches" of rain may be swept into the state by the hurricane.

The Miami weather station warned last night, however, that "heavy rains with amounts ranging upward to 10 to 15 inches will occur over the eastern two-thirds of the Carolinas and the Virginias."

"Considerable flooding will result with flash floods in some localities," the Miami advisory warned.

In its forman forecast, the Byrd Field station said central Virginia could expect rains at times becoming moderate to heavy late last night and today.

"Reasonable precautions should be taken" against both the expected heavy rains and winds reaching speeds of 30 to 40 miles per hour early today, the Richmond weather station warned. Gusts up to 50 miles per hour are expected.

In a tentative time schedule worked out by the weather station, moderate to heavy rains were due in the Richmond area late last night. But later the station noted the forward movement of the hurricane had slowed, and showed signs of weakening. The arrival of se-



Large Arrow Indicates Where Gracie Hit Coast
Small Arrows Indicate Path Through Inland Areas

"Uneasy Winds"

The station spokesman said some "uneasy winds" should reach southern and central Virginia about midnight.

Hurricane Gracie itself was expected to lose its hurricane status by the time it reached Virginia. "It will be a tropical storm type activity" a weather station spokesman said.

The tentative schedule would place the storm—with the hurricane force winds considerably diminished by its passage over the Carolinas—in central Virginia about noon today. It would reach southside Virginia a little earlier.

"It's still too early to say

Continued on Page 3, Col. 1

Charleston Is Hit By 140-mph Winds

From AP Dispatches

Hurricane Gracie struck a smashing blow at the South Carolina coast yesterday, then started a wallowing, devastating inland movement.

With peak winds of 140 miles per hour, the violent storm unleashed her full fury on historic Charleston. Rain, winds and flooding were felt along the coast from Savannah, Ga., north to Myrtle Beach, S. C.

The rains and winds, which caused havoc along the coast, subsided some as the hurricane cut a 100-mile swath over South Carolina lowland farming areas.

The deluge of water threatened floods on a dozen rivers and flash floods on countless streams.

National Guardsmen were pressed into service at battered cities and communities where damage likely will run into the millions. The guardsmen sought to prevent looting and to assist in cleanup operations.

The only storm death reported was that of a man whose automobile was upended by violent winds at Beaufort, S. C.

Gracie's swirling winds dumped torrents of water as she smashed inland over Walterboro, Orangeburg and Columbia, the South Carolina capitol. The storm was expected to pass over Charlotte, N. C., then across North Carolina in a northwesterly direction into Virginia.

Crops May Be Devastated

One consolation was that most of the Carolinas multi-million-dollar tobacco crop has been harvested. But other prime crops in the storm path — including cotton — were expected to be devastated by 10 to 15 inches of rain and the still-fierce winds.

On Page 15 Read:

Resident of Nagoya, Japan, tells of death, destruction caused by Typhoon Vera.

The Weather Bureau in early evening placed the storm near Columbia, S. C., moving north-northwest to north at about 12 mph. Rain gusts at the Congaree Air Force Base near Columbia were 69 mph.

"The intensity of this storm will diminish slowly, however, winds of near 75 mph in squalls will continue over a small area near the center for several hours," the Weather Bureau said.

Hurricane emergency warnings remained displayed from Savannah to Wilmington, N. C. with gale warnings displayed from Brunswick, Ga. to and including Cape May, N. J., and on the Chesapeake bay.

Weather Bureau officials said that areas north of the Carolinas could expect heavy rains, but no hurricane force winds. The storm, diminishing as its roars over land, is not expected to build up again as it moves northward.

Communications were out to many communities.

The wind tore down power

FEW WIND GUSTS

Oct. 1,

1959

Gracie Brings Valley Area Heaviest Rains Since '54

The heaviest rainfall since October 1954 drenched the Shenandoah Valley area Wednesday as Hurricane Gracie moved northward with many hours of down-pour and wind gusts up to 43 miles an hour.

With rain gauges measuring up

to six inches in Rockingham all small streams filled rapidly, some overflowed side roads and converted lowlands into ponds.

The Shepandeah river, which had been as low as any one recalled had risen three feet at Elkton at six o'clock and was

believed to have crested. North and Dry rivers, at Bridgewater, had raised little at nine o'clock last night.

North Fork Raises

The North Fork of the Shenandoah at Cootes Store raised four feet by seven o'clock last night and was still rising.

The Dale Enterprise Weather Station measured 4.07 inches up to seven o'clock last night from the Tuesday sunset reading. This was the most rain recorded there since Oct. 15, 1954 when Hurricane Hazel roared through the Valley. On that date, Madison College registered 5.15 inches. The Madison reading at 3:30 Wednesday afternoon was 3.66.

The Elkton area, which was the driest in Rockingham, received its heaviest rain since June 2. Lowell Koontz, at Naked Creek, four miles north of Elkton measured 3.66 inches at 9:30 last night. He also reported wind gusts up to 43 miles an hour. A barn roof of the Morris farm was partially blown off.

Young Koontz said that Naked Creek, which was dry, raised eight feet before it subsided last night. A number of residents had been prepared to move because of the high waters. Koontz said rainfall in the Blue Ridge must have been much heavier than in the lowlands.

Weather Bureau: Advised

With the rainfall exceeding four inches, two of the county's weather observers, Mrs. E. L. Grove, at Dale Enterprise, and Miss Odessa Nair, at Cootes Store, telephoned the flood control section of the Weather Bureau at Washington, according to standing instructions. Miss Nair also reporting the four-foot rise in the North Fork.

Here are some of the other rain reports received by the Daily
(Continued on Page 4 Col. 3)

Oct 1, 1959

Gracie Brings Valley Area

(Continued from Page One)

News-Record:

County Line, eight miles north of Timberville, six inches; Timberville 4.50; Cedar Run, four miles west of Broadway 4.60; North Mountain, near Sparkling Springs 4.97; Edom 4.50; Sharon, near Park View 5.18.

Rawley Springs 3.63; Lilly 4.50; Garber's Church 3.60; east side of Chestnut Ridge 3.70.

In Soutehrn Area

Three Springs (city power plant

on Shenandoah) 4.75 with one inch falling between 6:00 and 9:30 p. m.); Goods Mill 5:00; T. I. Bowman, south of Goods Mill 6:00; Port Republic 5.25.

The downpour left only memories of the September drought which was one of the most severe in recent years. In some areas, little or no rain had been recorded during the past month. Dale Enterprise had measured the most for the month, .82 inch and that amount was the top for the Valley from Staunton to Winchester.

All streams were at their lowest stages when the rains came but the smaller creeks took little time to rise and overflow roads. Big Run, which drains numerous Blue Ridge hollows, went on its usual rampage and again threatened the Big Run bridge. In this area, also, the rain apparently was heavier in the mountain than in the lowland.

Water Over Highways

Water flowed over Route 11 in many places between Staunton and New Market. Traffic was brought

Heaviest Rains Since '54

to a standstill temporarily in the usual low places which were water covered. Shenandoah county reported the streams receding last night.

In Harirsonburg, Black's Run overflowed the North Main Street submerged bridge for several hours and traffic was detoured via Washington St. There were many places where water covered crossings. Numerous basements were reported partially flooded.

Water backed against the east

side of the Farm Bureau building in Grace street early last night but little entered the basement. Some water seeped into the Harrisonburg High School cafeteria but no damage was done.

Hurricane Rains

The hurricane rain was the heaviest at Dale Enterprise since June 2 when 2.77 inches fell.

Hurricane rain records at Dale Enterprise in recent years are:

Flossie, Sept. 27, 1956, 1.54 inches;

Connie, Sept. 11, 12, 13, 1955,

3.30 inches (5.20 at Madison College);

Diane, Aug. 17-18, 1955, 2.90.

Hazel, Oct. 15, 1954, 4.70 inches (5.15 inches at Madison).

Gracie-Born Twister Kills 10 In Albemarle

Oct. 1, 1959

Number Of People Are Also Hurt

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (AP) —Tropical storm Gracie, dying surely but stubbornly, spawned a tornado on her rain-drenched sweep northward near here Wednesday and claimed 10 more lives.

Police said an undetermined number of people also were injured in the twister born of the ex-hurricane at the quiet community of Ivy, five miles west of here in the rolling Virginia countryside.

The 10 known dead lifted Gracie's toll of human life to 21 since she first hit the U.S. mainland in South Carolina Tuesday.

Seven deaths had been attributed to the storm in South Carolina, two in Florida, one each in Georgia and North Carolina.

Heavy Property Damage

In her wake Gracie left, too, a heavy toll in property damage. As she slowly disintegrated, moving into northern West Virginia Wednesday night, torrential rains brought flash floods, threatened more and closed highways.

The tornado struck about 4:30 p.m., about two hours after a much milder twister had roared past the hamlet. It dipped down from a rain squall caused by Gracie, knocking over trees, blowing down a barn, toppling utility poles, leaving the area without power and telephone facilities.

Complicating rescue efforts was the fact that U.S. 250, leading from Charlottesville to Ivy, was flooded and almost impassable at several spots. Ambulances were pulled by hand through the water.

All those who died at Ivy were in a farm duplex which was torn into bits by the twister. They included two baby girls aged 10 and 18 months; a girl of 12; five women aged 20, 30, 31, 40 and 56; a 10-year-old boy and a 20-year-old man. Only one man was injured.

Gracie-Born Twister

(Continued from Page One)

was Mrs. Raymond Bruce, 56, nursing home employe.

Bodies Scattered

Rescuers said bodies of the victims were scattered over an area of 400 yards on the side of a small mountain near the duplex. Fallen oak trees covered the leveled structure of the house. The largest recognizable piece of furniture was a refrigerator, badly twisted.

A neighbor said he saw a child "just disappear right up into the air."

Several barns and packing houses near the duplex were demolished. The roof was blown off another house 100 yards away. Fifty yards further on, another home was untouched.

13 People In Duplex

Police said 13 people were reported to have been in the duplex at the time the storm struck but only one was known to have survived — a 5-year-old girl who was seriously injured. The other two were unaccounted for but rescue workers could not find any additional bodies as they labored to lift fallen trees and enormous debris from the wrecked house in heavy rain and intense darkness.

Several In Area

The Ivy tornadoes were among several reported during the afternoon and early evening in the same general area. At least seven people were injured in these twisters, none believed seriously.

In its latest advisory the Washington Weather Bureau placed the center of Gracie's remnants over northern West Virginia. It was still bringing heavy rain but winds had died down to about 15 to 20 m.p.h. It was moving north at about 15 m.p.h.

tal in Charlottesville.

The known injured included: Mr. and Mrs. George Andrews of New Brunswick, N. J., whose car was blown off U.S. 29 south of Charlottesville. Mrs. Andrews was treated and released. Andrews was held for further treatment.

Robert Morris of Dyke, Greene County, who suffered head injuries when a shed collapsed on his farm. David Thourston of Rt. 2, Charlottesville, injured by a falling tree.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Womble, no address listed, whose car was wrecked on U.S. 250 west of Charlottesville during the height of the blow.

State Police early Wednesday night directed all persons to stay off Rt. 250 west and Rt. 29 south of Charlottesville to clear the way for rescue workers sent into the Ivy area. They said rising creeks and the threat of a culvert collapse made Rt. 250 unsafe and that there was much damage in the Ivy and Farmington sections. High voltage wires were reported down.

Many secondary roads in the Southwest were blocked by high water and washouts. Some bridges were washed away. Houses, particularly summer cabins, on the banks of the Roanoke and Little Rivers in Montgomery, Floyd and Roanoke Counties were flooded.

The State Highway Department said the only primary highway blocked was Rt. 119 in the town of Salem, near Roanoke. An inter-section of the road was under water from the Roanoke River.

All access roads leading to the little town of Lafayette, 15 to 20 miles west of Roanoke, were reported blocked.

The Weather Bureau said there would be continued heavy rainfall over western Pennsylvania, western Maryland, western Virginia and the central and eastern portions of western New York State.

Four persons were injured in automobile accidents that occurred during the freak windstorms, a fifth person was injured in the collapse of a shed and a sixth was hurt by a falling tree.

The first tornado-like winds hit Ivy in mid-afternoon, dipping down from a rain squall spawned by Gracie and cutting a northward path 100 yards wide. It blew down a barn, uprooted large trees, ripped chimneys and shingles from houses and felled utility poles as it skipped over the hilly countryside.

Power and telephone service were knocked out and had not been restored early Wednesday night.

A second twister-type disturbance occurred in late afternoon south of Ivy and police, hampered by lack of communication facilities, said it was reported several houses collapsed. It was not known whether anyone was injured.

Witnesses said the first small twister came from a black, funnel-shaped cloud and lasted about three minutes.

Another twister was reported at 7 p. m. at the village of Cunningham in Fluvanna County, about three miles west of Palmyra. State Police said a church was demolished but no one was injured.

The winds in Greene County blew down a State Highway Department shed at Standardsville. One person was injured. As in the Ivy storm, trees were blown over and torrential rain fell.

All the injured were taken to the University of Virginia Hospi-

Gracie's highest winds apparently were no stronger than 48 m. p. h. in gusts, but it was her heavy rainfall that did most damage.

The biggest rain reported was 8.65 inches in the Shawsville-Elliston area near Roanoke, measured since Tuesday when Gracie was approaching from the Carolinas.

A 15-mile stretch of the Blue Ridge Parkway north of Roanoke was closed temporarily because of two earth slides which blocked part of the scenic mountain-top route, which runs south from Virginia into North Carolina.

Montgomery County measured nearly 7 inches of rain.

No human casualties were reported from the hard-hit Southwest but there were several narrow escapes from rising water.

In Montgomery County near the Floyd County line, a farmer out to inspect a haystack was trapped by the rapidly rising waters of the Little River and wasn't rescued for an hour. Near Elliston an elderly woman was saved by neighbors from her home, flooded by the Roanoke River.