

# GREAT DISASTER AT GALVESTON

Deaths May Be Over 2,600—  
4,000 Houses Ruined.

## A HEAVY PROPERTY LOSS

Storm Forced High Waves Over  
the Island.

Water Six Feet Deep in the Streets—  
Many Smaller Towns Inland  
Wrecked—Relief Needed  
Urgently.

HOUSTON, Texas, Sept. 9.—The West Indian storm which reached the Gulf coast yesterday morning wrought awful havoc in Texas. Reports are conflicting, but it is known that an appalling disaster has befallen the City of Galveston, where, it is reported, two thousand or more lives have been blotted out and a tremendous property damage incurred. Meagre reports from Sabine Pass and Port Arthur also indicate a heavy loss of life, but these reports cannot be confirmed at this hour.

A dispatch from New Orleans states that a message was received this evening, fixing the loss of life at Galveston at 2,600. The message came by cable from Vera Cruz.

A dispatch from San Antonio, Tex., says: "The startling news has just flashed over the wires informing Gov. J. D. Sayers that a messenger, at great risk of his life, has reached Virginia Point from Galveston with the report that 2,500 are probably dead as a result of the fearful storm.

"An urgent appeal to all Texas for help was made. The messenger said that the grain elevators at the water front are wrecked and hundreds of buildings have collapsed or were carried out to sea. The greatest distress is said to prevail."

### CONDITIONS AT GALVESTON.

A report from an authentic source was received here this morning concerning the conditions at Galveston. The lower portion of the city was then all under water, and the waves were making rapid inroads toward the centre of the city through the sand banks which border the island proper. The citizens were all huddled together at the highest points in the centre of the town, and consternation and fear reigned almost to the point of madness.

The troops were called out, but even then it was with difficulty that the people could be made to control themselves. The railroad bridges have been washed away. It is feared that the city is washed away for the most part, and a large part of the population washed to death by wave and tide.

### FIRST DEFINITE NEWS.

The first news to reach this city from the stricken City of Galveston was received through James C. Timmins, who resides in Houston, and who is the general superintendent of the National Compress Company. He arrived in the city at 8 o'clock to-night from Galveston. He was one of the first to reach here with tidings of the great disaster which has befallen that city. After remaining through the hurricane of Saturday he departed from Galveston on a schooner and came across the bay to Morgan's Point, where he caught a train for Houston. The hurricane, Mr. Timmins said, was the worst ever known.

The estimates made by citizens of Galveston were that 4,000 houses, most of them residences, have been destroyed, and that at least 2,000 people have been drowned, killed, or are missing. Some business houses were also destroyed, but most of them stood, though badly damaged.

### CITY A COMPLETE WRECK.

The city, Mr. Timmins avers, is a complete wreck, so far as he could see from the water front and from the Tremont Hotel. Water was blown over the island by the hurricane, the wind blowing at the rate of eighty miles an hour straight from the Gulf and forcing the sea water before it in big waves. The gale was a steady one, the heart of it striking the city about 5 o'clock yesterday evening and continuing without intermission until midnight last night, when it abated somewhat, although it continued to blow all night.

### SAW A HOUSE DESTROYED.

Of his own knowledge Mr. Timmins knew of only one house succumbing with fatal results, though he heard of many residences being carried away with inmates. The house that he saw destroyed was Ritter's saloon and restaurant, at 2,109 Strand Street, a principal street of the city. This three-story building was blown down and nine men, prominent citizens, were killed.

Among the dead are:

Charles Kelher, Sr., a cotton buyer for an English firm.

Stanley C. Spencer, General Manager of the Elder-Demster Steamship Line.

Richard Lord, manager for McFadden's

Cotton Company, whose body is still in the ruins.

Secretary Bailey of the Wharf Company and several waiters and customers saved themselves by jumping from the upper story just before the crash came.

It was reported that the Orphan Asylum and both the hospitals were destroyed, and if this proves true the loss of life will be great, as these institutions were generally crowded, and as they were substantial buildings, the chances are that many had taken refuge in them.

### DEEP WATER IN THE STREETS.

The water extended across the island. Mr. Timmins said it was three feet deep in the rotunda of the Tremont Hotel, and was six feet deep in Market Street.

Along the water front the damage was very great. The roofs had been blown from all the elevators, and the sheds along the wharves were either wrecked or had lost their sides, and were of no protection to the contents.

Most of the small sailing craft were wrecked, and were either piled up on the wharves or floating bottomside up in the bay. There is a small steamship ashore three miles north of Pelican Island, but Mr. Timmins could not distinguish her name. She was flying a British flag. Another big vessel has been driven ashore at Virginia Point, and still another is aground at Texas City. At the south point of Houston Island an unknown ship lies in a helpless condition.

The lightship that marks Galveston Bar is hard and fast aground at Bolivar Point.

Mr. Timmins and the men with him on the schooner rescued two sailors from the middle bay who had been many hours in the water. These men were foreigners and he could gain no information from them.

A wreck of a vessel which looked like a large steam tug was observed just before the party landed.

### CARCASSES AFLOAT IN THE BAY.

In the bay the carcasses of nearly 200 horses and mules were seen, but no human body was visible. The scenes during the storm, Mr. Timmins said, could not be described. Women and children were crowded into the Tremont Hotel, where he was seeking shelter, and all night these unfortunates were bemoaning their losses of kindred and fortune. They were grouped about the stairways, and in the galleries and rooms of the hotel. What was occurring in other parts of the city he could only conjecture.

The City of Galveston, he says, is now entirely submerged and cut off from communication. The boats are gone, the railroads cannot be operated, and the water is so high people cannot walk out by way of the bridge across the bay, even should that bridge be standing.

### RELIEF NEEDED AT ONCE.

Provisions will be badly needed, as a great majority of the people lost all they had. The water works power house was wrecked and a water famine is threatened, as the cisterns were all ruined by the overflow of salt water. This Mr. Timmins regards as the most serious problem to be faced now. The city is in darkness, the electric light plant having been ruined.

There is no way of estimating the property damage at present. So far as he could see or hear, Mr. Timmins says the eastern portion of the city, which is the residence district, has been practically wiped out of existence. On the west end, which faces the Gulf on another portion of the island, much havoc was done. The beach has been swept clean, the bathhouses are destroyed, and many of the residences are total wrecks.

### RELIEF TRAIN RETURNS.

A relief train sent out to-night, the third, returned unsuccessful. It could not get closer than six miles of Virginia Point, where the prairie was covered with lumber, debris, pianos, trunks, and dead bodies.

Two hundred corpses were counted from the train.

A large steamer is stranded two miles this side of Virginia Point, as though thrown up by a tidal wave. Nothing could be seen of Galveston.

Two men were picked up who floated across to the mainland. They say they estimate the loss of life up to the time they left at 2,000.

Virginia Point is the Santa Fé station nearest Galveston inland, and the reports when the wires failed were to the effect that the hurricane was doing more damage than the high water, though the town was in the greatest danger of complete inundation, and the people were growing frenzied at the prospect before them. The Huntington wharf improvements and the Government barracks were reported to be the greatest sufferers. The soldiers at Fort San Jacinto were withdrawn into the centre of the city, according to the railroad official reports, and did valiant service in the way of relief and volunteer police work.

### RELIEF TRAIN FROM GALVESTON.

Among the passengers who arrived here on a relief train from Galveston is Benjamin W. Dew, an employe of the Southern Pacific. Dew had been at Virginia Point for several hours, and said that he saw one hundred to one hundred and fifty dead bodies floating out near the beach at that place.

Conductor Powers reported that twenty-five corpses had been recovered by the life-saving crew, many of them women; that the crew had reported that many bodies were floating and they were using every endeavor to get them all out of the water. The water swept across the island, and it

is presumed that most of these were Galveston people, though none of them have been identified.

### SOME NARROW ESCAPES.

One of the refugees who came in on the relief train and who had a sad experience was S. W. Clinton, an engineer at the fertilizing plant at the Galveston Stock Yards. Mr. Clinton's family consisted of his wife and six children. When his house was washed away he managed to get two of his little boys safely to a raft, and with them he drifted helplessly about.

His raft collided with wreckage of every description, and was split in two, and he was forced to witness the drowning of his sons, being unable to help them in any way. Br. Clinton says parts of the city are seething masses of water.

Mr. Jennings, a slater by trade, got to the mainland in about the same manner as Clinton. After losing his wife he set out, and by swimming and drifting around reached the mainland.

William Smith, a boy about eighteen years old, whose home is in West Texas, had a narrow escape. Young Smith was blown off the docks, and came ashore in the driftwood. Despite the difficulty he experienced in keeping afloat, he held out to the end, and reached the shore safe and sound.

A. England and his wife of Texas City, who were on the relief train, report that the whole of that town is blown away and a number of lives were lost. There were six women known to Mr. England who were drowned, and he is satisfied that many others lost their lives.