

HURRICANE SOUVENIR - 1938

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Here Is the Beverly Yacht Club Before the Storm



Be Sure to Save This Story of the Hurricane of Sept. 21

STORIES of the hurricane that swept Southeastern Massachusetts, taking a staggering toll of lives and property, will be handed down through the coming generations. It was the worst storm in the history of New England, striking without warning and wiping out entire communities.

Up to the present time 77 identified bodies of hurricane dead have been recovered along the coast between Westport and Woods Hole, and 40 still are missing. Damage through this same area is estimated at \$13,000,000.

No words can describe the horror of that afternoon and evening of Wednesday, Sept. 21, 1938, when the world seemed to be coming to an end. Nature vented her fury upon man and beast, and when wind and waves subsided, the very topography of the coast of Southeastern Massachusetts had been changed.

Residents in this area awoke on the morning of that disastrous day to behold a clear sky and a bright sun. Little did they realize that before night would fall, death and ruin would run rampant through this New England sector. There was a crispness in the September air, as people turned to their daily tasks.

DURING the morning a light breeze became noticeable, and waters of Buzzards Bay became slightly choppy. This was nothing unusual. Early in the afternoon the wind velocity increased, and about 1:30 p. m. there was a strong southeast wind blowing in from the sea. Still there seemed little cause to worry.

As the afternoon wore on the wind increased, the sky blackened and rain beat down. Records in the engineering department office here show that the average speed of the wind was 60 miles an hour, at the peak of the storm, at 4:50 p. m. But the wind came in gusts and reached much greater velocity at times.

TWIGS and leaves broke from trees and littered streets. Store windows crashed under the pressure of the storm, and the wind roared stronger and stronger.

Waters along the coast were, by this time, churned to a froth, and boats rocked crazily, tugging at their moorings. Pushed by the wind, the tide rose to an all-time high of 11.53 feet above mean high water in New Bedford. This tidal wave engulfed the whole waterfront area.

About 3:30 p. m., long before the hurricane had reached its full force, residents of Summer resorts in Westport, Dartmouth, Fairhaven,

Mattapoisett, Marion, Wareham, Falmouth and throughout Cape Cod and the Islands, began to abandon their homes for the safety of higher ground. Many remained too long, fighting to save their homes and belongings, and met death.

Survivors of the hurricane tell basically the same story of what to them seems a horrible nightmare. They relate how the wind increased and the water rose higher until they had to wade waist high through swirling water to higher ground.

THEY tell of the roaring of the wind, the cracking of timber as their homes gave way, the relentless power of the waves that swept buildings about like match boxes. Survivors at Horseneck Beach in Westport say that the waves were 20 feet high.

All West Beach residents were saved because they found refuge in the high sand dunes eastward, but East Beach people were trapped between the sea and the East Branch of the Westport River, which became all one body of water. Fifteen have been found dead in Westport, nearly all of them at East Beach.

Most of the men whose bodies were recovered had boots on, indicating that they had remained to fight the onrushing waters, believing every moment that the waters had reached their peak.

Scores of boats anchored at Padanaram Harbor broke their moorings and either went ashore or were wrecked on the causeway of Padanaram Rridge.

New Bedford's shoreline was the scene of great damage to homes and industrial property. Fairhaven Bridge was damaged, Coggeshall Street Bridge was put out of commission and the bridge at the foot of Wood Street was wrecked. Ilix Bridge in South Westport was swept away and the Westport Point Bridge was damaged.

BOATYARDS along the Fairhaven waterfront suffered great damage. Fort Phoenix bathing pavilion was destroyed and there was damage all along the Fairhaven shore. Harbor View was completely wiped out, and Scouticut Neck cottages were wrecked.

About 300 trees fell in New Bedford alone during the storm. Most of these were old elms. Electric wires were down in many places. To

(Continued on Page 3)

And After . . . in the Lower Right Hand Corner



Wind, Tidal Wave Spread Destruction in New Bedford Area

(Continued from Page 2)

add to the awfulness of the storm, the whole section was plunged into darkness as the power failed.

Pedestrians hurried along pitch-dark streets, braving flying glass, falling chimneys, and general debris carried by the hurricane. Flashlights and candles were at a premium through that terrible evening. The wind began to subside after 8 p. m.

National Guardsmen were called out in New Bedford, surrounding towns and throughout the Cape and Islands to help rescue work and aid in all possible ways. They remained on duty for days, directing traffic, preventing looting of wrecked homes, and searching bodies of the dead.

Members of the Volunteers of America, American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars provided shelter, food and clothing for the homeless and hungry long before the storm had subsided. Municipal relief stations were set up in the Y.M.C.A. building and at the ends of the city, and meals were being handed out before 9 that awful night. Later the Red Cross began relief work and has since been giving rehabilitation aid.

DAWN rose the next day upon scenes of devastation that never will be forgotten. Waterfronts were littered with wreckage and boats were high and dry in streets and yards far from the waterfront or high on bridges.

Only one building remained standing on the harbor shore along East Rodney French Boulevard. Among the structures wrecked in that locality were Wood's Boatyard, the Acushnet Park bathing pavilion, and Dan's Pavilion. Amusement devices at Acushnet Park were damaged badly, and the pier at Fort Rodman bore evidence of the fury of the hurricane. Over in West Rodney French Boulevard, the Municipal Bathing pavilions suffered much damage. The bathing float was swept about a quarter of a mile and left high and dry at the foot of David Street.

Industrial plants along the waterfront here were flooded and damaged extensively. Tracks at the railroad station were under water, and the sea in some places rose as high as First Street.

NEARBY Summer resorts were a dreary sight. Where scores of cottages had lined the shores, nothing remained but the foundations protruding from the sand. In some places, such as East Beach, Horse-

neck, even the foundations disappeared. "Unbelievable," was the comment of those who visited these places the morning after.

So complete was the demolition of cottages in most places that owners had difficulty finding the wreckage of their homes. Large pavilions and stores at the Summer resorts met the same fate. Built only a few feet above sea level, these structures were engulfed by the surging waters and torn to pieces.

At Westport Harbor where were located many pretentious Summer homes, the property loss was great. A row of about 30 cottages was swept up on the Acoaxet golf course, a mass of wreckage. The top floor of a two-story house near the Charlton mansion was ripped off and deposited some distance away from the rest of the building.

WILBUR'S POINT at the end of Scouticut Neck in Fairhaven became an island, the sea washing over the neck of land. Many lives were lost in Fairhaven and Mattapoisett. Fort Phoenix in Fairhaven was devastated, the pier disappearing, and the beacon plunging to earth.

Marion, Wareham, Falmouth and towns throughout the Cape also were ravaged by the hurricane. Death and destruction remained in the wake of the storm. Row upon row of bodies lay in the morgues as anxious relatives and friends came to identify missing loved ones.

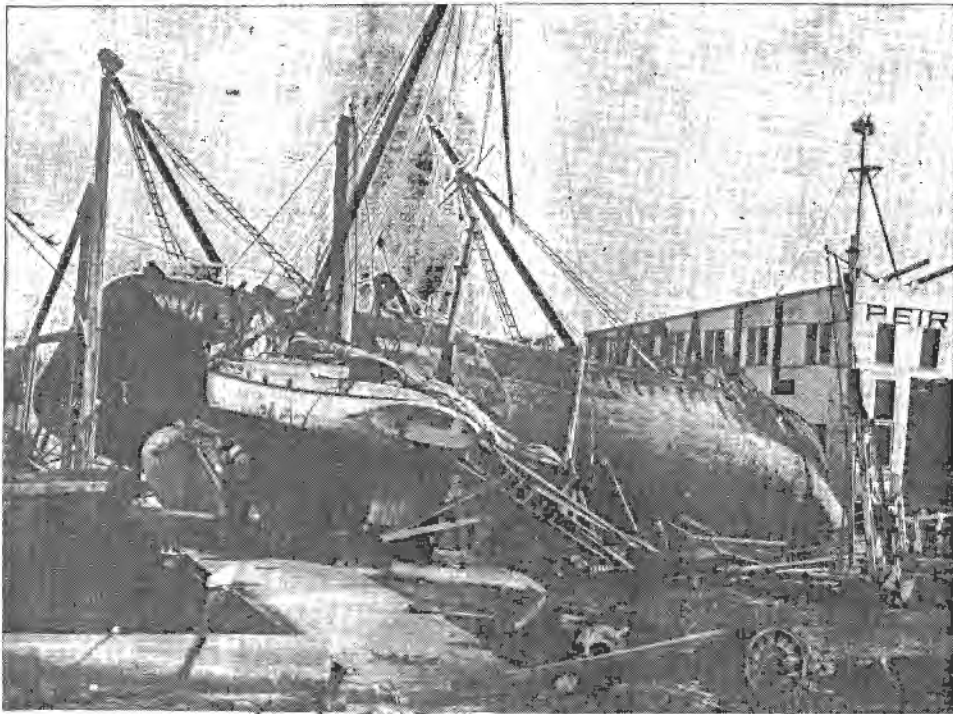
Meanwhile, the search for the hurricane dead went on. Every day the death toll has increased with the finding of additional victims. Some are discovered in wreckage of the Summer homes where they had spent so many happy hours and which they were loath to leave with the advent of Autumn.

FRESHLY covered graves in cemeteries throughout this section mark the places where the storm victims lay. Beside many a grave will be dug another soon, for numerous were the husbands and wives and families separated in death.

Whether the nearby Summer resorts will be rebuilt as completely as they were is problematical. Certainly, it will take years and years for the reconstruction of those hundreds of homes and business establishments.

Despite the downheartedness that followed the hurricane disaster, New Bedford and towns nearby and throughout the Cape and Islands have set themselves with traditional courage to the task of rehabilitation. Without doubt these communities will triumph over nature's destructive work.

A Hurricane 'Victim' Blocks Boatyard Ways Here

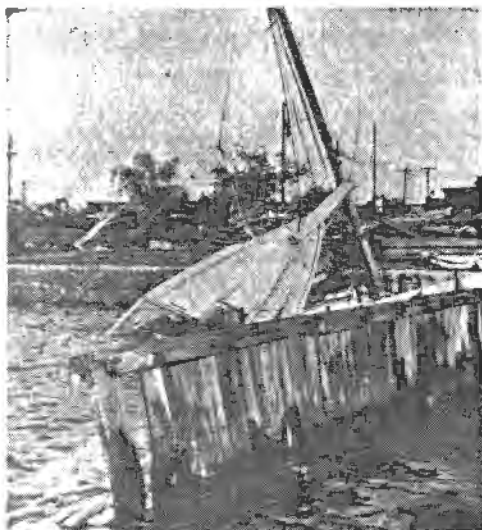
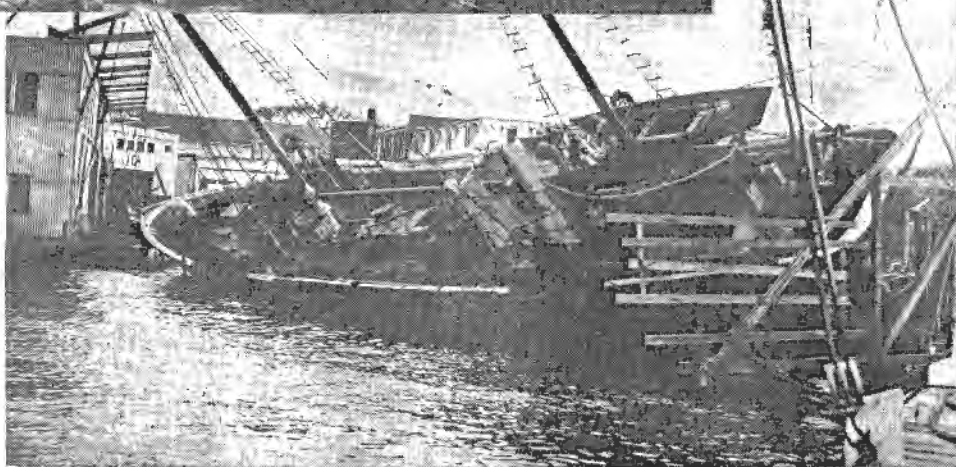


Left and below—The 100-foot dragger Leretha was one of the victims of hurricane. These pictures show the vessel from the starboard side (above) and the port side. The Leretha was hurled broadside to the waterfront across the tracks of the ways at a Fairhaven boat yard.

Captain Richard Sparrow, 152 Campbell Street, skipper of the vessel said after the storm that he was not sure of the amount of damage but that he did know the craft had a hole stove in the port side.



Looking south on East Rodney French Boulevard before the waves destroyed Wood's boat yard in the background.



A smashed vessel in front of the former site of the New Bedford Yacht Club Station.

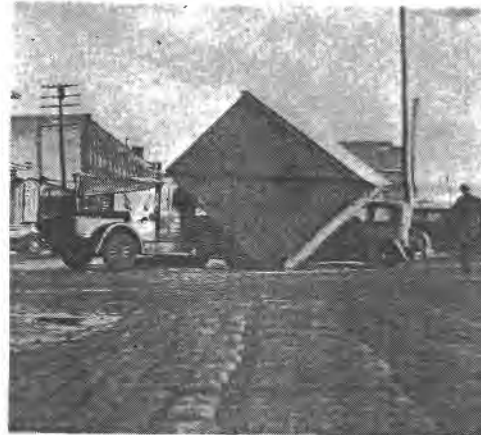
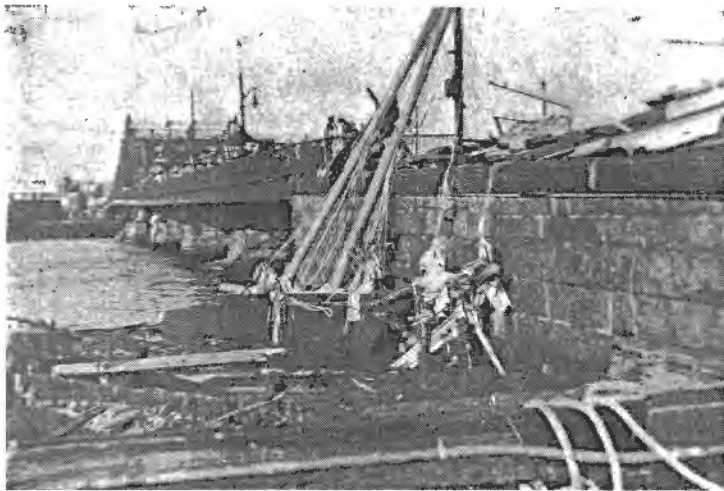


Residents view the wreckage on Cove Street after the water receded.

Huge Lighter as It Parked in Coggeshall Street

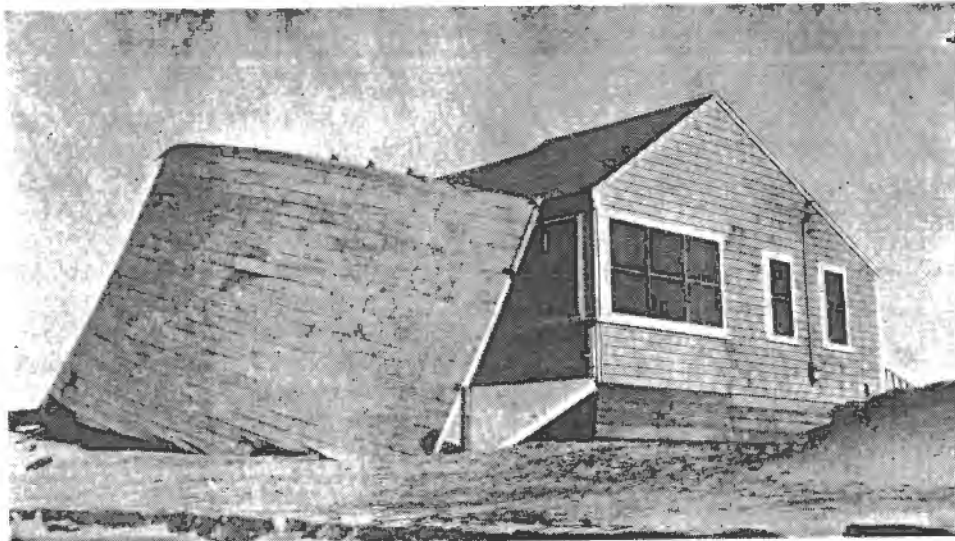
With water still in the street, the picture at the right shows how Coggeshall Street looked as the storm waned. The view is taken looking toward the bridge where, in the background, can be seen the huge lighter that climbed up on the street and remained there for several days after the storm.

Men, knee-deep in water, are trying to clear sewer passages. A boat and automobile both are "parked" in the thoroughfare.

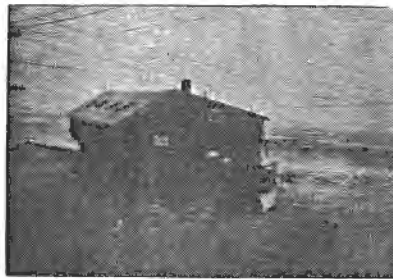


At the left the Lizzie has smashed against the Fairhaven bridge, near the former site of the Yacht Club. Above is a tool shed that found a landing spot at the entrance to Homer's Wharf.

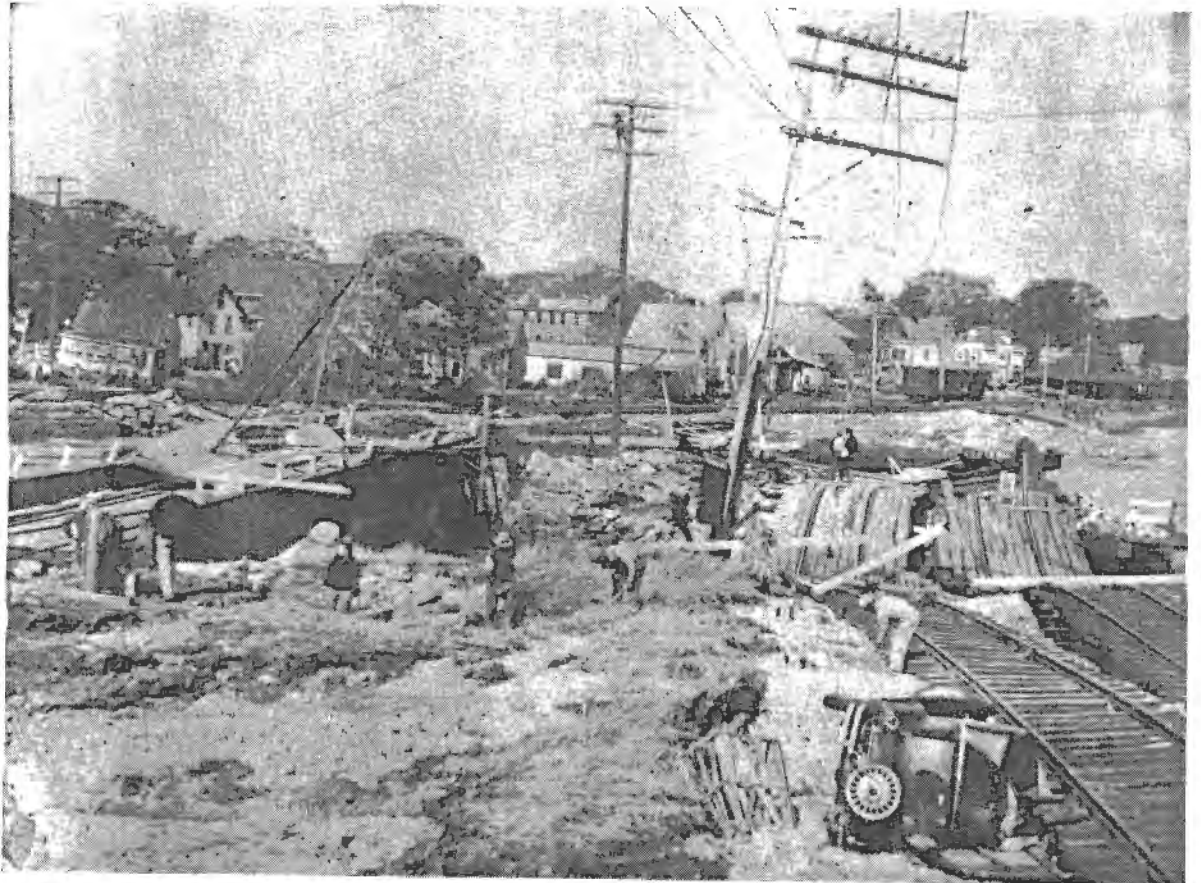
The home of Benjamin F. Russell at Nantucket looked like this after the storm had completed its devastation. The dance pavilion porch in front was ripped off and slapped against the fore part of the house. The house itself, through a freak of the storm, was undamaged except for a broken window pane.



Photographer Catches Last of Beetle's Boathouse



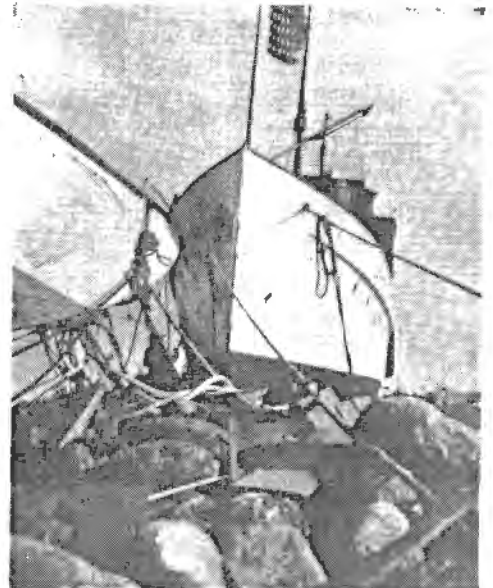
Standing on the second floor of a house a few yards away, an amateur photographer obtained these remarkable pictures of Carl Beetle's boat house surrendering to the surf. The boathouse once stood on East Rodney French Boulevard.



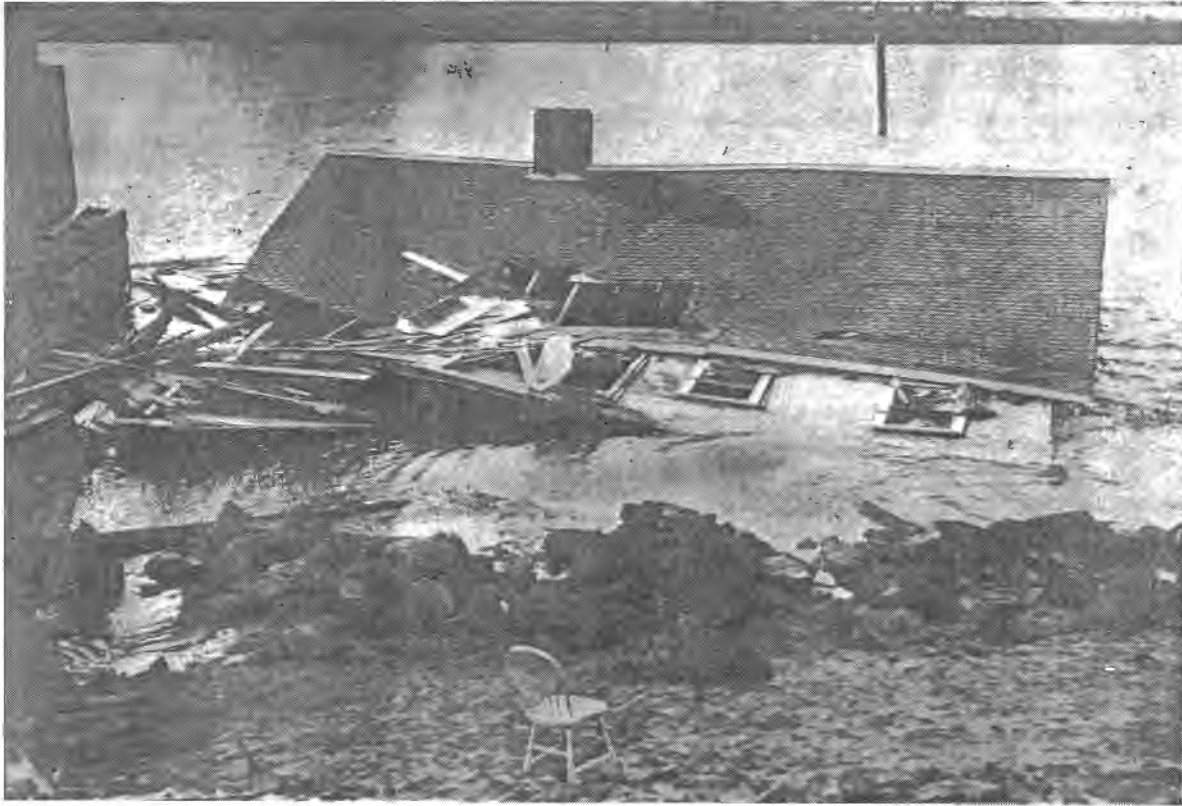
Upper — Bridges, autos, utility poles and boats made a mass of jumbled debris at Wareham. This picture was taken the day following the hurricane and for several days later this area was not open to traffic.

Left—The *Escape* failed to escape the storm and piled up against the rocks along the Padanaram Bridge.

Right—This is a closeup view of the boats that were stranded in Marine Park, upright among piles of rocks.



Water Tumbles a Home into the Cape Cod Canal

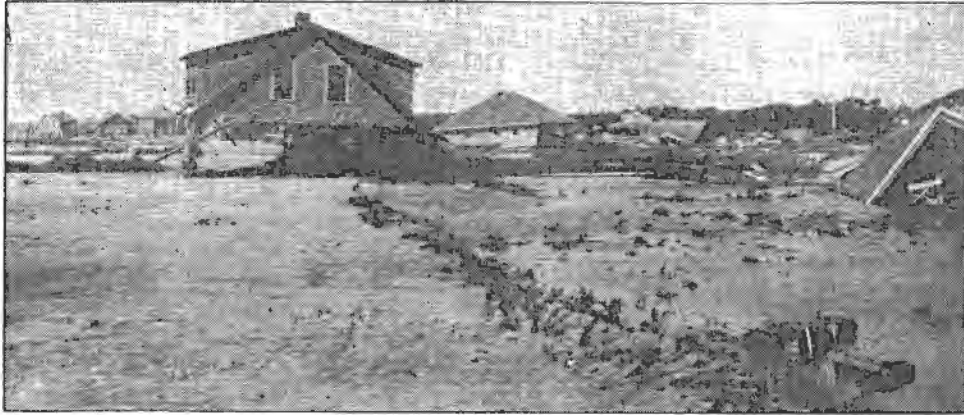


This home crumbled and slithered into the Cape Cod Canal during the hurricane and tidal wave, causing the death of five persons. The bodies of the victims were removed from the hole that can be seen in the roof. The wreckage crashed against the abutment of the Bourne Bridge shown at left.



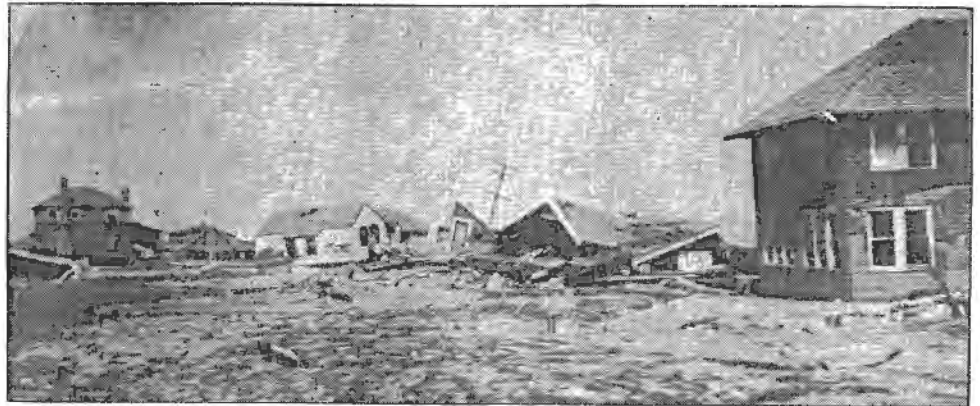
This air view shows what remains of a shore line near Fairhaven.

Horseneck Beach Desolate Scene After Hurricane

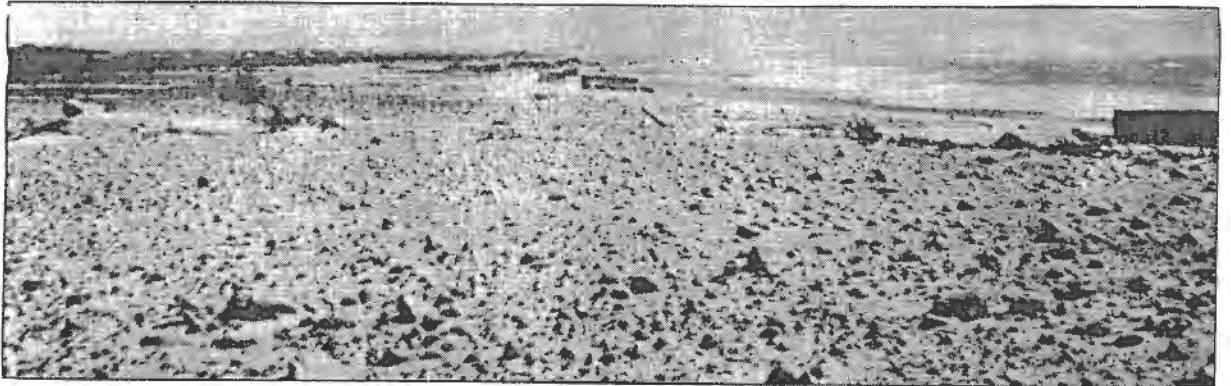


Left in the middle of what once was a road, this house stands as majestically as it can in its damaged condition. The front first floor section has been torn away entirely. The picture at the left was taken at West Beach, Horseneck, where the hurricane and tidal wave did a huge amount of damage.

Another West Beach scene at Horseneck is shown at the right. These crumbled, dejected-looking residences are all that were left of a once-smart Summer colony. Only one house held to its foundation.

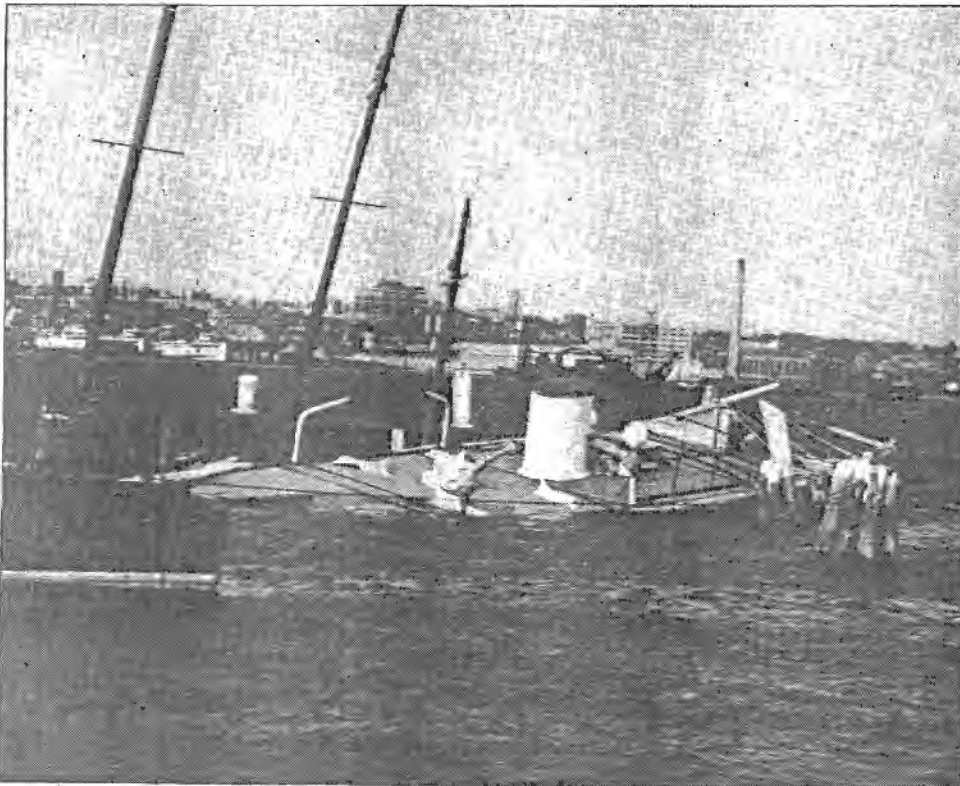
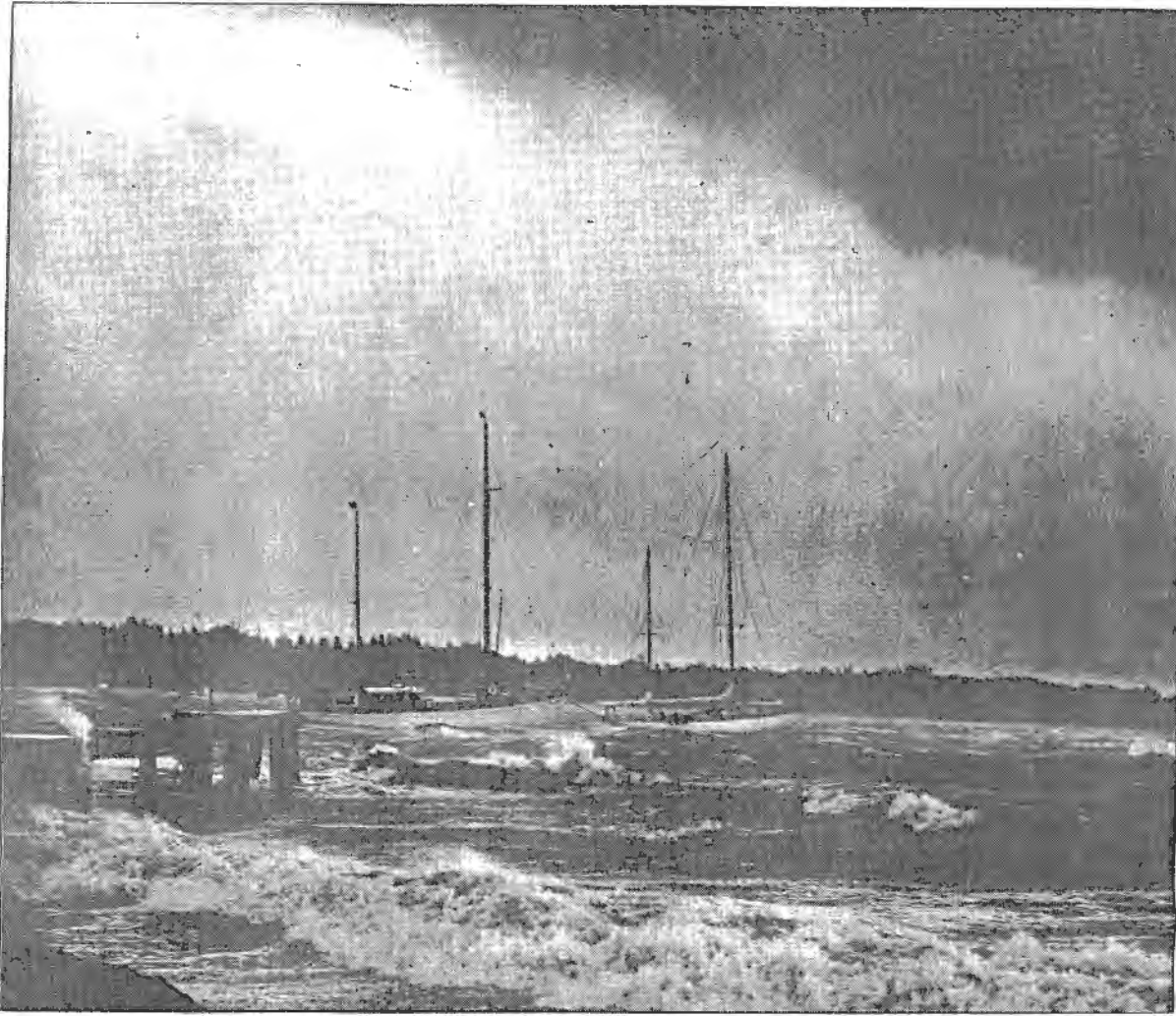


The lower photo tells a story in itself. This strip of drab-looking sand and rock once was the site of several homes at East Beach, Horseneck.



Above is another photo illustrating the battering influence of the tidal wave that struck West Beach. At the left is one of the scores of National Guardsmen who hurried to the scenes to protect lives and property from looters.

Photographer Catches Storm Roaring In From Sea



When the first indication of the terrific storm of Sept. 21 was seen in New Bedford, A. F. Packard, Standard-Times photographer, went to nearby beaches and harbors to get "surf" pictures.

Although not realizing how severe the storm would become, Packard caught this picture at Padanaram Harbor, looking east into the boiling sky.

Notice how the clouds are forming and how the surf is rolling in, tossing the vessels. At the lower left of the photo can be seen a wave smashing over the wooden pier.

Within a few minutes after the picture was made, the hurricane hit the Southeastern coast of Massachusetts at full blast.

At the left are shown the masts of the schooner *Caroline*, owned by Warren Burbridge and Joseph Cuddehoy's steamer, *Innisfail*, both battered off *Peirce* and *Kilburn*'s.

Trees Are Uprooted as Storm Rips Through City

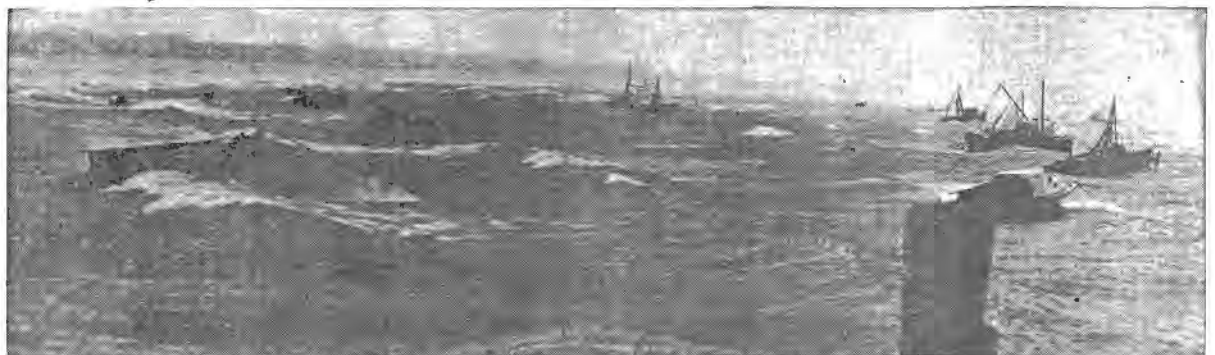
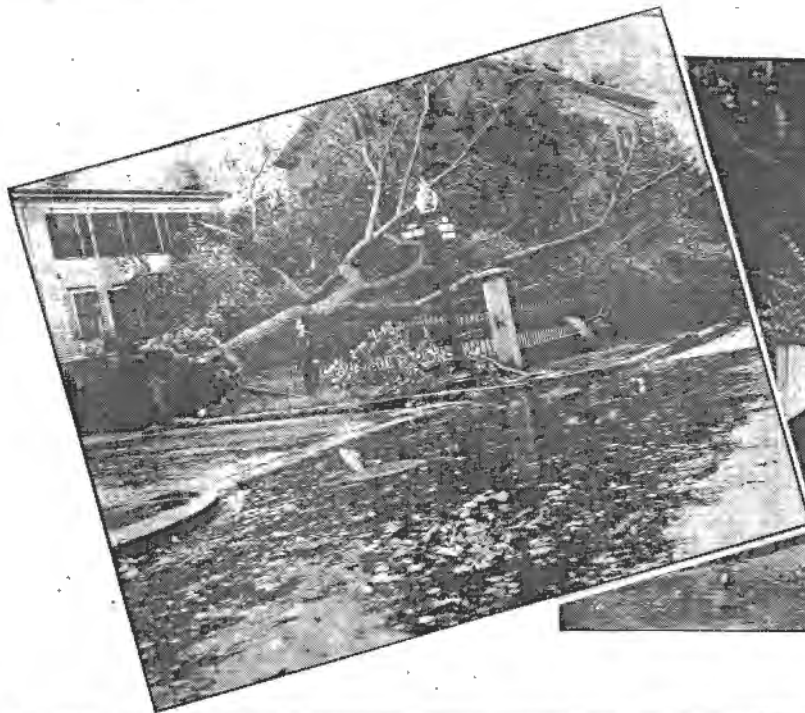


Trees were uprooted throughout the Greater New Bedford and Cape area during the hurricane.

The upper left photo shows the result of the wind on a tree at Provincetown.

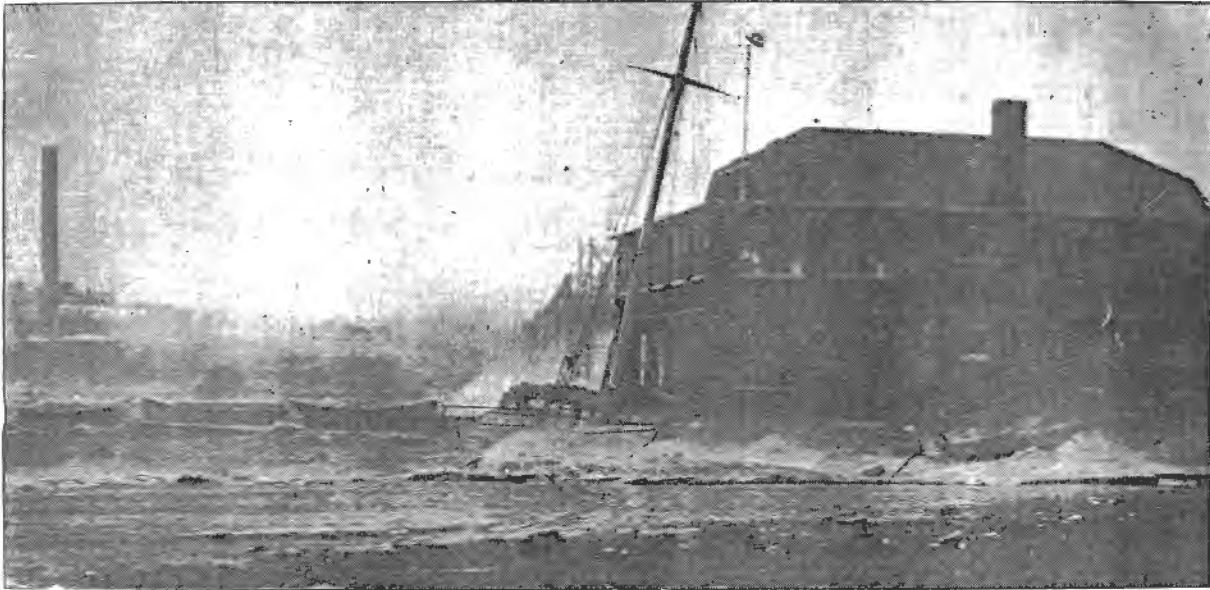
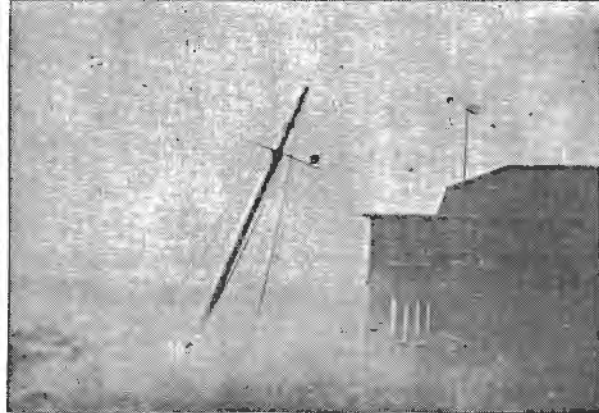
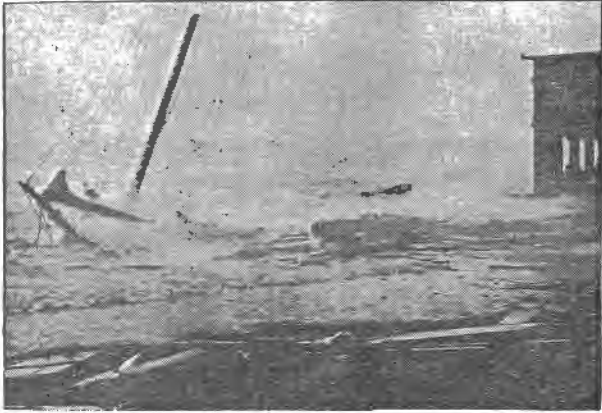
At the upper right is a photo of a tree that smashed against a home in Court Street west of Cottage Street.

The two photos below are two other scenes of tree wreckage in New Bedford. The one at the left shows a police officer on guard at two huge fallen trees at Madison and Sixth Streets. The tree at the right smashed through a board fence and brought some of the pavement with it.



This picture was taken at Provincetown and showed what the storm looked like there.

Just Before New Bedford Yacht Club Collapsed



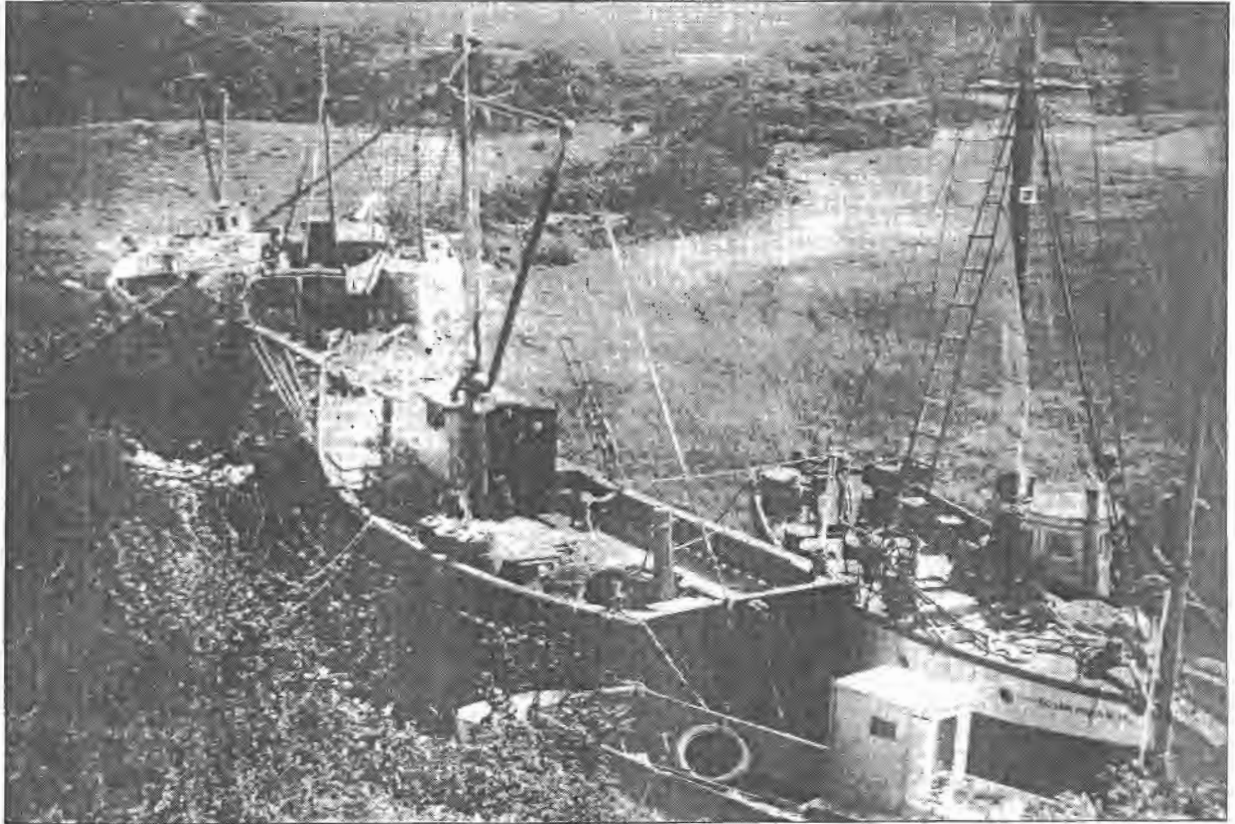
Here are three pictures of the waves and wind battering the New Bedford Yacht Club station at Marine Park. Each of them shows a different stage of the storm before the building finally was washed away.

Right—An amateur photographer caught these men struggling with a boat in the waves off East Rodney French Boulevard during the darkest moments of the storm. The men are silhouetted against the sea.

Lower—A mild stream became a torrent and took this road bridge with it at North Falmouth



Masses of Wreckage Greet Falmouth Residents

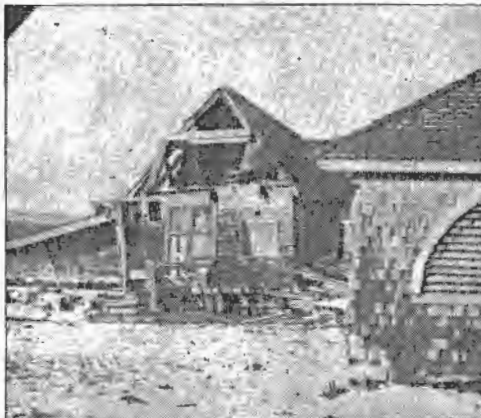


Upper—Swept by the hurricane from their mooring places, these boats ended their voyage in the fields along Menemsha Creek at Martha's Vineyard.



Center—Wreckage from destroyed homes just piled up in front of others that withstood the hurricane at New Silver Beach, North Palmouth. Residents returning to their homes the next morning saw sights like this.

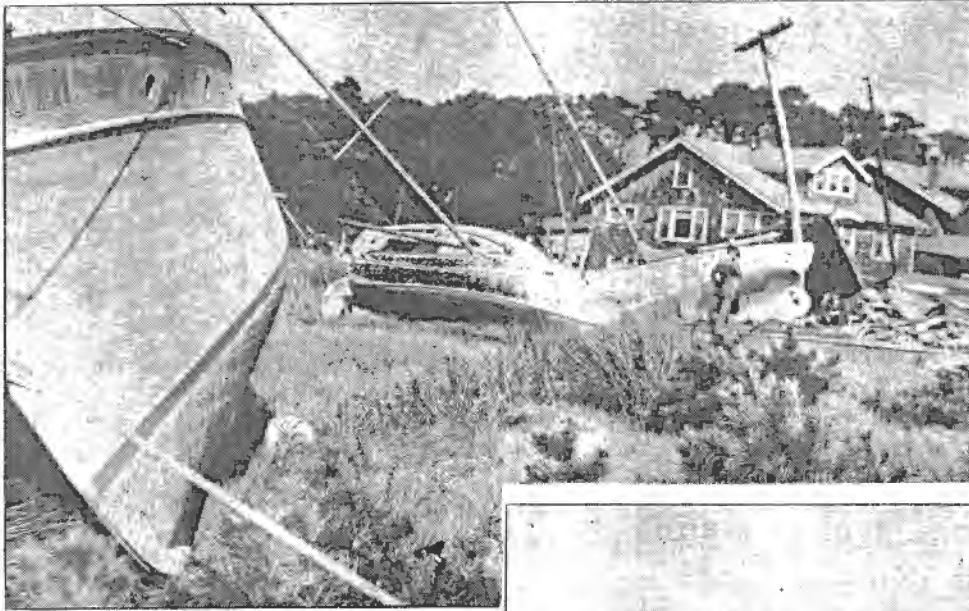
Lower—The lower section of the harbor front at Falmouth took a severe beating from the storm. This view was a common one on Thursday, Sept. 22, as residents hoped to find the remains of the homes in which they had spent the Summer.



Once the meeting place for Falmouth bathers, the municipal beach house now is badly battered.



Boats Find New Homes as Storm Hits Cape Cod



These photos were taken on Cape Cod soon after the storm.

There, as in New Bedford, boats were hurled for hundreds of yards to lawns and in front of houses. The picture at the left shows four boats that found new resting places under the pressure of wind and water.

The lower photo shows the wreckage of smashed boats and cottages that lined New Silver Beach, North Falmouth, on Sept. 22.

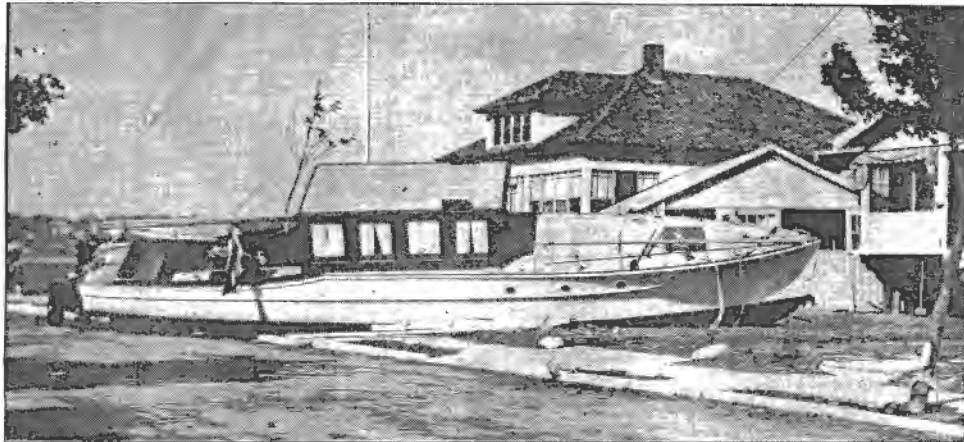
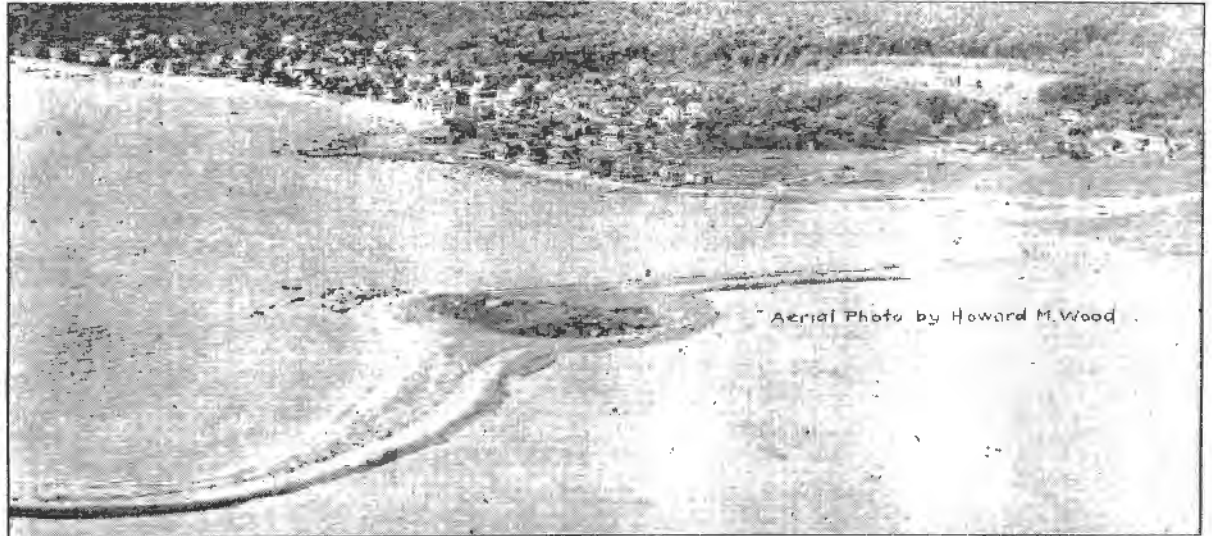


The highway at Onset resembled a boatyard, with the masts of the vessels almost hiding the houses in the background.



A father and his two sons gaze on what once was their home. The morning after the blow it resembled a doll house that had been picked up and jumbled by human hands.

Look at This Photo, Then That on Page One



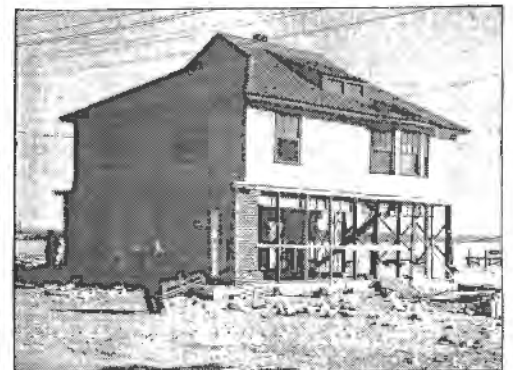
The aerial view above shows Crescent Beach, Matapoisett, in calm and peaceful days before the Sept. 21 hurricane. The hurricane and tidal wave pushed most of these houses along the shore line far back and to the right. It was in these waterfront homes that several persons were trapped and their bodies not found until several days later.

In contrast to this picture is the front page of this Hurricane Souvenir edition. That picture, too, is of Crescent Beach and shows the mass of wreckage that now occupies the area where the homes stood.

This trim craft shown above was lifted and pushed 100 feet from its customary water berth to a lawn in Fairhaven. Also the two-car garage that is seen behind the fore part of the boat was a wanderer.

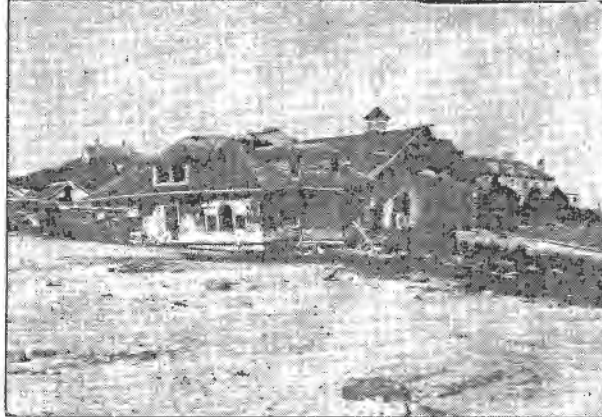
The picture at the right shows what water can do to a brick building. It rushed through the brick walls but left two sides standing. The scene is at Walnut and Front Streets.

Damage to the Fort Phoenix bathing pavilion is shown in the lower photo



This is the only house that was left standing on the water side of East Rodney French Boulevard, in the South End of the city.

Westport and Horseneck Beaches Hard Hit by Gale



These two scenes show the wreckage of homes at Westport Harbor.



Hix Bridge was wiped out completely by the rushing waters. This picture, taken the day following the storm, shows nothing remaining except the bridge site.

A bridge first was built at this point by William Hicks in 1735. For many years Mr. Hicks had the privilege of collecting the tolls. These tolls were doubled in 1743 to pay for repairs. In 1871 the town of Westport purchased the bridge which was on the old mail stage coach route between New Bedford and Adamsville, R. I. In later years much travel between this city and South Dartmouth and Newport used the Hix Bridge route.



Houses jumbled like this at Horseneck's West Beach. The piles in the foreground once supported a residence.

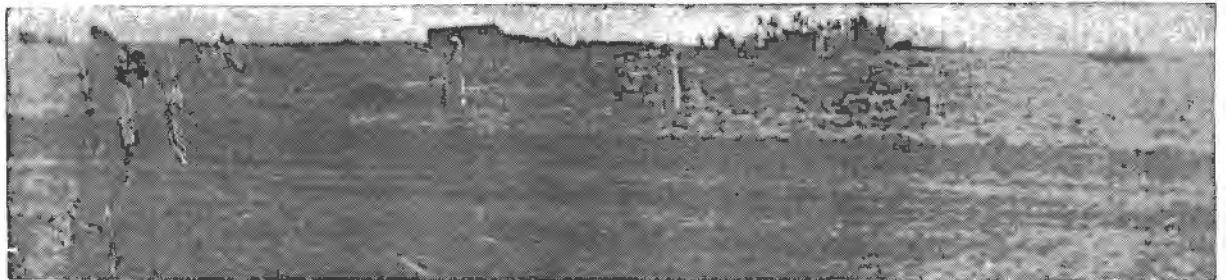


This large Summer home collapsed under the strain of high waters and wind. One entire section was undermined and the remainder is askew. This is another Westport Harbor scene.



More damaged homes along the beach at Westport Harbor.

Scenes in New Bedford as Hurricane Struck Area



The above pictures show the contrast in East Beach at Horseneck. The cottage of Harry Bloomingdale is in the foreground. The one next to his is that of Lester Trafford and the third is that of James St. Clair.

The lower photo was taken by Mr. Bloomingdale after the storm. The two posts that marked the entrance to his grounds are all that remain.



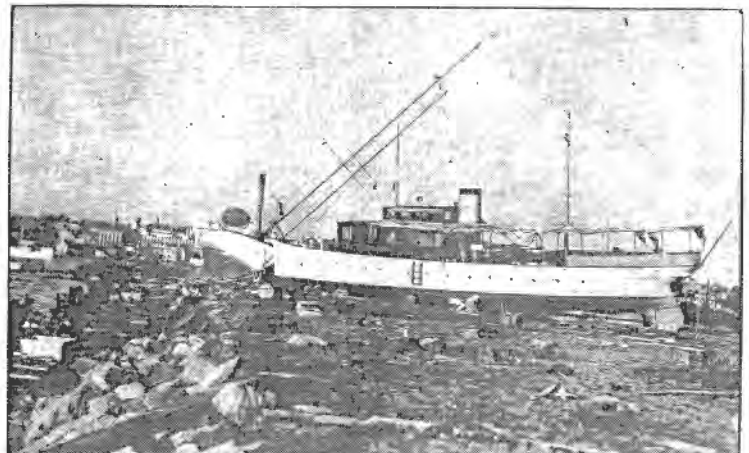
The New York, New Haven Railroad yard was under water at the height of the storm.



These photos were taken in the South End of the city during the hurricane.

The upper one shows a power boat being battered to pieces against the rocks where Dan's Pavilion stood. The building is a section of the pavilion which later was destroyed.

The lower picture shows a building being smashed at Cove Road and Rockdale Avenue. Notice how the huge wave is piling up along the house and the traffic sign.



The yacht, Neelia, and this two-masted schooner ended up in Marine Park.