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TERRIBLE STORY OF AUSTIN CATASTROPHE

DETAILS OF GREAT DISASTER ARE ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE—HORRIBLE TALES OF SUFFERING AND DEATH ARE BEING RECOUNTED.

SURVIVORS TELL OF MIRACULOUS ESCAPES

One Man Is Caught by Raging Waters in Mad Sweep Down the Valley, but Seizes Whirling Trees and Is Eventually Rescued—Girl Caught by Heavy Stone, Begg Men to Release Her, and Finally an Axe Is Used in the Amputation—Scenes Make Strong Men's Blood Run Cold, and Erstwhile Brave Men Turn Faint and Sick at the Horrible Sight.

Austin, Pa., Oct. 1.—The curtain of night, which was rung down on the Austin flood scarcely before its victims had all been claimed and its surviving spectators fully realized how great a tragedy the elements of water and fire had enacted, had lifted by dawn today, revealing a ghastly scene of death and devastation.

Austin itself, yesterday a busy mill town of 3,200 persons, is only a ghost of a town today.

Torn to pieces by water and eaten by fire, the wet and charred remnants of its buildings, believed to hold the bodies of many persons, were strewn along the valley edge, piled in rows in the main streets of the business section swept in scattered masses far down the ravine.

Town Blotted Out.
Hundreds of spectators, many of whom barely escaped being victims of the disaster, looked down from the steep hillsides above Austin and Costello through a veil of fog this morning at the wreckage of some 100 houses, a score of business blocks, three churches, and several large lumber mills, and three miles further down the river, at Costello, the ruins of more than 50 buildings.

The flood did not spend its force until it raced more than 10 miles from the reservoir, Wharton, still further on, suffered somewhat, but it is practically intact. The loss of life at Costello where the residents had more warning, is believed to be but three or four.

The property loss in the valley is estimated at upwards of \$8,000,000. In Austin, out of the hundreds directly enveloped in the deluge, hardly a dozen survive. The furious floods left loose when the Bayless pulp and paper company's dam crumbled yesterday afternoon, picked up a huge battery of heavy timbers in the mill yards at the foot of the dam and with these thousands of planks and logs rained its path with terrible havoc. At the hospital today there were but six injured who had poured into the devastated town. The medical supplies remained unused in the cars rushed here by the railroads.

The state constabulary arrived this afternoon and took charge of the situation. Immediately orders were issued to the railroads to bring no more sight seers, and signs were placed on the chief roadways permitting none to pass but workmen. Hundreds of automobiles and carriages were turned back.

Searching parties with engine headlights, automobile lamps, pine torches and improvised lanterns of every sort, poked their way into every pile of wreckage that was accessible last night, seeking any who might be alive. Scarcely a living person was found.

Surrounded by death, men who at first had shuddered at the touch of a dead body, sat about indifferently searching mangled forms for papers of identification ere they had been long at work.

One corpse among so many did not seem ghastly; but the sensation was appalling.

The immediate scene of the obliteration of Austin covers an area three-eighths of a mile wide and one and three-quarter miles long. This comprised the business section and the valley residence portion.

Nearly a mile above stood the mam-

moth concrete dam of the Bayless Paper and Pulp company, 600 feet long, 52 feet high and 30 feet thick at the bottom, tapering to a thickness of three feet at the top.

Back of this dam yesterday lay a reservoir of water a mile and a half long and an average of 35 feet deep. Directly in front of the dam stood the plant of the Bayless company, with four main buildings.

Stacked high nearby were 700,000 cords of 50 inch wood and slabs, and also a portion of the company's immense stock totalling in the Austin valley, 15,000,000 feet of hard wood and 25,000,000 of hemlock. This was a five year supply, practically the largest cut of the season. It was valued at \$2,000,000.

A mill stream, Freeman Run, flowed through the town in Sinnemahoning creek, leading to the Susquehanna river. The town proper was a smart little place of comfortable frame houses and more substantial business buildings along the main street, which ran from side to side across the ravine.

The principal buildings included the brick structure occupied jointly by the Austin bank and the postoffice, the department store of A. R. Buck, the Goodyear hotel and the Commercial house, and numerous stores.

Vanished in a Twinkling.
Five minutes after the dam burst, this stage had been swept of its setting. Along the foothills were thrown shattered houses. At either end of Main street, brick buildings acted as buffers as the 25 foot wall of water rushed downward with its mass of debris.

The wrecking of the dam was as complete as it was sudden. Two immense sections from top to bottom, 150 feet wide, were thrown out bodily like the immense gates of a canal lock. The outward swing was more than 50 feet and on either side the remaining structure began gradually to crumble away. Repairs last spring had consisted of a patch of cement 14 feet square. One of the severed sections yesterday began at the patch.

The cause of the break is a matter which the district attorney of the county will investigate. The Bayless dam was examined by experts more than a year ago and recommendations were made looking to its safety. The district attorney has secured the names of experts who submitted the report and will summon them to testify at an inquest to begin this week. Relief work has not been systematically organized tonight, but it is hoped that by morning the chaotic condition will have been somewhat relieved.

Supplies in Carloads.
The first relief train arrived over the Pennsylvania railroad, shortly after 11 o'clock this morning, with four carloads of food and medical supplies from the state arsenal at Harrisburg.

At Sunbury, Penn., 21 men of troop C, of the state constabulary, were taken aboard and a delay of an hour was caused by the loading of the troop horses.

It was shown that there is need of a strong hand to guard the town. Pillagers had been at work last night following the rumor that the vaults of the Austin bank and the safes of

several stores had been wrecked. The rumor was not true.

The firemen and volunteers did effective work in keeping off would-be plunderers. In several cases the guardians had hand-to-hand conflicts with marauders.

The survivors of the flood had not recovered from the horror of the situation, and for hours none but strangers visited the ruins. As the day progressed some of the survivors met and visited the site of the ruined town.

Girl Was Quick Witted.
Credit for the quick spreading of the alarm was given to Lena Blackey, a telephone operator. Upon receipt of a message from the Cliff House that the dam had broken, she pushed the alarm button connecting with the fire department and engineer's office of the Goodyear Lumber mill below the town.

The engineer tied his whistle down, and the fire bell in town was sounded continuously. She then rushed to the street screaming the warning cry: "The dam has broken." The operator flew for her life toward the steep hillside at the north end of Main street and turning toward the valley, she saw the great wall of water descending upon the town.

"From where I stood, she said today, 'the wall of water seemed 50 feet high. Above it rose a great cloud of spray, houses were turning, spinning and bumping as they fell to pieces or were swept out of my sight. The noise was appalling.'

Did Not Heed Danger.
"When I fled there were some behind me, many of them children. They did not seem to appreciate their danger."

"Some turned into stores as if to make a purchase. While I was looking down upon them, helpless to give further warning, the cloud of mist that seemed to precede the flood, hid them from view and a moment later the green water buried the houses from my sight."

Chief of Police Baker took an informal census today and from his list calculated that at least 300 were unaccounted for. Park Smiebert, chairman of the citizens' committee and Burgess Michael Murrin pointed out that this reckoning is necessarily inaccurate because many of those who escaped the flood are wandering in town trying to house themselves and those dependent upon them. Burgess Murrin said that in his opinion not more than 150 lives were lost.

"It is possible that this figure will cover the loss," he said, "and it is possible that there will be no more than 100 dead."

Mr. Burgess and Rev. P. W. O'Brien, who had been pastor of St. Augustine Roman Catholic church at Austin for many years and who are familiar with business conditions, estimate the property damage at about \$6,000,000. The Bayless company, which owned the dam, was damaged \$1,500,000 according to Father O'Brien; the Goodyear Lumber company \$1,000,000; the Buffalo and Susquehanna railway \$500,000 and the 300 houses destroyed with their contents, \$1,000,000; more.

It is thought that when the wreckage is cleared away, it will be found that a large number of the dead are children.

Thought It Was a Joke.
Boyd Lockhard, a young business man of Austin, had a narrow escape. He said that when he heard the alarm he thought it was some one playing a practical joke, and he went into the street to watch the actions of the populace. He looked in the direction of the dam and saw the on coming flood was but three blocks away.

"It looked like a wall of wood 25 feet high," he said. "At first glance I did not see the water at all because the wood at the pulp mill was carried before, becoming a sort of butting ram that tore away the buildings of the town."

"I ran toward the hill and by the greatest effort got above the level of the water which was surging within 10 feet of me."

Throngs came to the town today from all points in the valley below Austin, to ascertain the extent of the damage and to find friends or relatives.

J. C. Borchard, who lived within half a mile of Costello, said that when the crest of the flood swept past his house there were no signs of human being or their houses in the debris. "The people of Costello," he said, "received ample warning from Austin that the dam had broken and al-

though 40 or 50 houses were demolished, only three fatalities occurred."

Many Women Caught.
The annihilation of Austin came on a beautiful autumn afternoon. The fine weather had attracted many of the younger element to a ball game in a nearby town and thus they escaped. Women were in the streets for their Saturday shopping and these and the merchants who were selling their goods were caught by the terrible flood.

Small crowds also were amusing themselves at moving picture theatres which were swept away by the water. Women rocking the babies at home and others preparing their Sunday dinners were hurled into eternity before they could realize their danger.

The greatest loss of life by fire occurred at a sharp turn of the valley below Main street, where the debris was caught and compressed with terrific power before the current.

The wreckage of the business part of the town was carried to that point and from upset stoves and lamps it caught fire. It is believed that scores of persons were hurled from 10 to 20 feet under the wreckage there, and the task of recovering them will be difficult.

Rescuers Work in Storm.
In a drizzling rain which changed to a bending storm, hundreds of volunteers carried on the work of rescue, while many, hysterical, viewed the muddy corpses, anxious to know if any of them were their loved ones. Fires still were burning although they had been under control several hours.

The Buffalo and Susquehanna railroad found a way into Austin today by connecting with the Keating-Summit spur, a branch track that followed the hill. By this route they landed several fire companies from nearby towns. Not a manufacturing industry is left standing and not a business place intact. A few cheap wooden houses located on the hillside is all that remains of the residence portion.

Chief of Police Daifall Baker of Austin, with the assistance of a number of constables from nearby towns, maintained some sort of order during the night until the arrival of a company of 50 of the state constabulary this morning.

Lines were established and only workers allowed to pass. There was little pillaging. One man with three watches was locked up in a freight car.

A primary election was in progress in the town hall when the flood broke. A hatless man dashed by yelling something about the dam bursting and the election inspectors and voters dashed out and took to the hills. Some of them escaped but many were whirled into the debris which formed just below Main street. The jam at this point was at least 75 feet high and three or four blocks long. In this mass the bodies of the majority of the victims are believed tonight to lie, mangled and burned.

Five hundred and more men were at work in the ruins today. Heavy logging ropes were tied about the bigger pieces of wreckage, and with two or three hundred men tugging, the ruins were forced apart, often to fall again into the tangle and make the work all the more difficult.

The dam of debris formed at Austin saved the western part of Costello. It stayed the onrush of the current long enough for the alarm to spread down the valley. The eastern side of the village, however, was destroyed entirely, rendering about 400 people homeless. It is believed that only three lives were lost.

State Senator Is Leader.

The work of cleaning up the debris is under the direction of State Senator A. T. Baldwin, who lost his father, mother, wife and children and his home in the flood and was himself hurt in escaping.

Governor Dix telephoned from Albany this morning that the state of New York was prepared to send anything the sufferers might need as soon as Pennsylvania would signify what would be acceptable.

DIXON FALLS TO DEATH—COPY OF HELLENA IN TEARS.

Youngful Aviator Crashes to the Ground When Gust Catches Machine at Spokane.

Spokane, Oct. 2.—Aviator Cromwell Dixon, who flew across the Rocky mountains last Saturday, fell from a height of 100 feet at the Interstate fair grounds here today and received injuries which caused his death.

Caught by an adverse current of air his machine turned on its side and plunged into a rocky ravine. While falling he luckily attempted to right his aeroplane and shouted to the spectators: "Here I go, here I go." He was picked up unconscious and rushed to the city emergency hospital, where it was found that his skull was fractured, his right leg broken and his collar bone shattered, so that a portion of it protruded through the flesh. He died at 3:50 o'clock p. m.

Invited for as a resident of the flood stricken town, or a commissioned flood worker. Guards were placed at the door of an old wooden building that stood outside the path of the flood, where they were fed, and saw that the rule was enforced.

Three loaves of bread, two cans of tomatoes and a two pound can of beef were issued as a day's rations to the head of each surviving household.

Two morgues were established during the afternoon. One is in the high school building and is for the reception of all bodies taken from the east side of the valley. The other is in the Odd Fellows building for the bodies taken from the wreckage on the west side of the town.

Following the arrival of a special train with state health officials, a meeting of the officers, surgeons, physicians and nurses was held, at which an executive organization was formed. A relief and supply committee was formed.

A census of the living and dead is being made. As many of the survivors are foreigners, it is hard work, but it is hoped to complete the census by tomorrow.

Case Is Very Pathetic.
One of the most pathetic in the list of tragedies is the case of James Leeman, who was asleep at his home and did not hear the alarm. When the water swelled up his home he was tossed out upon a pile of floating debris and eventually floated to a landing a mile and a half below the village. Wounded and bruised, he returned only to find that his wife and four children had perished. Leeman went violently insane.

Estimates of the loss of life in the flood diminished today when an army of rescuers worked into the wreckage. In the opinion of many on the ground, the number of deaths will not reach 150, while the less hopeful place the list at 350.

Will Not Be Rebuilt.
Property loss will exceed \$6,000,000 and it is the general opinion that the town never will be rebuilt. Two of the large plants will not be reconstructed and a majority of the business men of the place have been ruined financially.

Only 16 bodies had been recovered at a late hour tonight. Chief of Police Baker, however, believes that fully 300 are dead or missing.

The 500 men who had toiled all day in a heavy rain abandoned their task with the coming of darkness. They had worked without food seeking to remove the bodies of the dead but less than a score had been found. A battalion of state police then surrounded the town and persons without a pass were permitted to enter.

Reports from Costello and points further down grew more encouraging as the day advanced. Outside of the three dead at Costello, no fatalities had been reported.

Medical Help Adequate.

The survivors will not suffer from hunger or lack of medical aid, as the supplies of medical assistance seem ample. T. H. Becknell, national director of the Red Cross, arrived here today, bringing with him \$10,000 in cash for the immediate aid of the flood victims. Of the eight in the hospitals, none is hurt fatally.

The homeless have been provided with shelter. On the outskirts of Austin are a number of houses that were vacated by workers in the Goodyear mill when that plant was dismantled. Three houses have been filled with the homeless. The residents of Keating

BOY AVIATOR FLIES OVER ROCKY MOUNTAIN DIVIDE

CROMWELL DIXON SUCCESSFULLY NEGOTIATES AERIAL PASSAGE FROM HELENA TO BLOSSBERG, SETTING NEW RECORD.

GIVEN OVATION ON RETURN FROM TRIP

Big Crowd at the Fair Grounds Watch Birdman as He Attains Great Altitude and Then Starts for Blossberg—Alights From His Machine and Sends Message at Little Station—Great Crowds Cheer Themselves Hoarse as Governor Norris Proclaims Dixon the Greatest Aviator in the World—Many Anxious Moments While Awaiting His Return.

(From Sunday's Daily.)
Cromwell Dixon, a boy in years, but one of the most daring aviators in the world, yesterday achieved the distinction of being the first man to fly over the main range of the Rocky mountains. Dixon made a flight from the fair grounds to Blossberg, landed at Blossberg and sent a message and then flew back to the fair grounds, where he was given the greatest ovation ever accorded anyone at the fair grounds.

In his flight over the backbone of the continent, Dixon covered 35 miles and attained an altitude of a little over 7,000 feet.

Dixon carried a letter from Governor Norris to the people of Blossberg, congratulating them on the fact that their town was chosen to have a part in a feat that marks an epoch in the history of aviation.

Weather Conditions Not Best.
Weather conditions were not ideal when Dixon made his daring flight, a stiff breeze blowing from the west. The aviator, however, decided that despite the breeze he could make the trip and a great cheer went up as he started on his journey.

Dixon, who has been flying in ordinary clothes, dressed especially for the trip across the mountains, wearing a regular aviation jacket and an aviator's heavy woolen cap.

The machine was wheeled up the track, just beyond the bleachers, and the start was made from almost directly in front of the grand stand.

It was just 2 o'clock when the machine left the ground. Dixon circled the track once and then started off toward the north to gain altitude. Within less than 15 minutes he had reached an altitude of over 3,000 feet from the fair grounds, or over 7,000 feet above sea level, and he turned the machine due west, flying directly toward a smoke which was curling up from the top of the mountain, where a party of Blossberg men had kindled a monster fire in order that the smoke might enable the aviator to maintain his direction.

Dixon was soon out of sight, and anxious moments were those in which the thousands of spectators in the grandstand and on the bleachers awaited word of Dixon's arrival at Blossberg.

Blossberg is without telephonic service, and the news of the success of the journey came over the Northern Pacific's operating wires. The first reports, although they came from the same office, were conflicting. One was that Dixon had merely circled the town, and the other was that he had landed and would start back on the return trip in ten minutes. Until it was definitely ascertained that he had landed, much apprehension was felt and the thousands anxiously scanned the horizon in an attempt to catch the first glimpse of the machine as it came back over the mountain.

C. E. Beckus' automobile had left the city at 12:30 o'clock, carrying Mr. Beckus, one of Dixon's mechanics and an independent reporter, together with gasoline and a kit of tools. A hasty run was made to Blossberg and there the party awaited the coming of the aviator.

At 2:31, the representative of the Independent at Blossberg, sighted the oncoming flier, and immediately word was sent to the waiting thousands at the fair grounds that the peerless aviator had crossed the pass safely and would alight.

At 2:34 Dixon made a graceful dip and alighted on a steep hillside in the little station of Blossberg, on the Northern Pacific, thus completing one of the most notable flights the world has ever known.

Replying to the first congratulations Dixon said: "Boys, I know I could do it. Tell the folks in Helena I am here safely, and will start back in a few minutes, and will see them before 4 o'clock."

Sends Message to New York.
Jerome Panzetti, general manager of the Curtiss Exhibition company, N. Y., "I have crossed continental divide safely, 3:34. Will start back in ten minutes." Cromwell Dixon.

delivering the letter from Governor Norris to the citizens of Blossberg, Dixon climbed into the little rickety buggy and was driven back to where the machine was resting after the long flight.

After looking the machine over, he declared it to be in perfect condition, and after testing the engine and adjusting the carburetor, declared he was ready to return.

The plane was turned facing the valley, and with the wind at his back, Dixon's last words before starting on the return trip were, "Well, boys, I'll see you in Helena in a few minutes."

With this he gave the signal for the mechanic to start the engine and with a roar and a swish of the big propeller, the graceful little "humming bird" started on the last stage of the wonderful journey.

Found Staff Breeze.
Dixon had to fight a 30 mile wind on the return trip, and contrary currents and cross eddies compelled him to battle for 20 minutes before he was able to rise out of the basin and above the main range of the Rockies.

At 3:16 the man-built bird left the ground, and at 3:37, 21 minutes after, he swept over the crest of the mountain at an altitude of approximately 500 feet and in a few minutes was a mere speck in the distance. The car, with the mechanics and helpers, press representatives and pilot, left immediately after, but were, of course, beaten to Helena by the aeroplane.

Crowd Grows Anxious.
Minutes seemed hours to the big crowd in the grand stand, while they continued to watch for the aviator and when he was finally sighted a mighty cheer went up. Gradually the little speck, which had come over the mountain assumed larger proportions and soon the outline of the machine was plainly discernible.

As Dixon reached the fair grounds he showed no evidence of being tired as a result of his trip, for instead of landing at once he circled close to the grandstand and flew around the track twice, finally landing in the infield.

As Dixon's machine alighted, Louis W. Hill, President Penwell, Secretary Shoemaker and Scott rushed over to meet the aviator. Mr. Hill being the first to congratulate him. As Dixon walked down the track the bleachers cheered loudly, while cameras were clicking vigorously, and at the judges' stand a moving picture machine was turned upon the young aviator.

A greater ovation than ever before given anyone at the fair grounds was accorded Dixon when he mounted the platform. There Governor Norris publicly congratulated Dixon and declared that he was without a peer in the realm of the air. Dixon, as usual, blushed furiously, but the cries of the crowd for a speech went unanswered.

Dixon's Statement.
"I was confident that I would make it," said Aviator Dixon on his return from his flight, "as sure as it was possible for anyone attempting such a stupendous feat can be. The credit goes as much with the machine and motor as with myself, for it was impossible for a machine to be in more perfect condition."

"The air currents were the only serious thing with which I had to contend. At times, I would strike a descending current and fall for 25 or 50 feet, and then the machine would get through the puff and begin to rise immediately. One puff in particular, was the worst I have ever encountered. It almost turned the machine over. The only way I got through was to turn my planes almost straight down and by falling for nearly a hundred feet gain velocity to carry me out of the danger zone."

Cross Currents Had.
"The wind was a great help on the outbound trip, but on the return was a handicap which was difficult to overcome. At the summit, the velocity of the wind was in the neighborhood of 30 miles an hour, and the cross currents and eddies which came over the crest were the most puzzling and dangerous of my whole trip. One who has never been up in a machine has no

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