

Rapid City Journal
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Storm Wrecks Bridges, Washes Out Rail Lines

(By Special Correspondent)

Hot Springs, June 18 – Hot Springs counted flood damage estimated at \$200,000 today following a torrential one-hour hail and rain storm last night, which quickly raised Fall River to flood stage, washed out nearly a score of bridges, inundated buildings and destroyed water, power and telephone lines.

The city was isolated from rail service today, with both the Chicago and Northwestern and the Burlington lines reporting bridges washed out and rails torn from their beds by the swirling waters.

About 600 feet of track, including approaches piling and fill at the Cheyenne River bridge on the Northwestern's main line to Omaha from Rapid City was washed out. R. L. Hall, Rapid City, agent of the line said service probably would not be restored in less than three to five days. The roads line between Hot Springs and Buffalo Gap was also out of commission.

Mayor C.R. Shann telegraphed Governor Leslie Jensen: asking the chief executive to try to secure federal financial aid from Washington for repair and clean up work in the city.

The mayor said seven bridges across Fall River within the city limits were washed out by the swollen stream. One of the structures was a large one in the southern section of the city on the road to cascade. Two other major spans, the Minnekahta avenue bridge and the new bridge to the Battle Mountain tourist park were weakened.

Volunteers from the National Guard unit here conducted an all night guard at weakened spans, closing them to traffic.

The city's sewage disposal plant was inundated by mud and water, threatening the entire municipality's sanitary system. Mayor Shann said a house had floated down stream to the disposal plant, coming to a rest atop the slush bed. A lamp on a table in the dwelling still stood on the table.

D. K. Dalager, manager of the Battle Mountain sanitarium here, wired to the veteran's administration at Washington for \$500 with which to hire extra help for clean-up work at the sanitarium.

He said the institution's boilers were flooded and coal bins swamped. Trees and gardens were wrecked by the heavy hail storm which proceeded the 2.17 inches of rain. The sanitarium's source of water, a spring at Coldbrook also was damaged.

Water rushing down from the hill on which the sanitarium is located crossed River Avenue –the city's principle street-and tore out 1,000 feet of retaining wall on Fall river. Traffic on River Avenue was blocked throughout the night.

E. R. Freeland, superintendent of Wind Cave National Park, near here, was asked to send a contingent of CCC enrollees to Hot Springs to aid in emergency repairs to streets and bridges.

At an emergency meeting of the city council during the forenoon, members said sufficient men to clear debris from the city would be employed as soon as assurance of funds was received from Governor Jensen.

Flood stories

Store basements in "Lower Town" were flooded by the water which poured down streets in that area. In "Old Town" on Minnekahta Avenue, the George Leach candy store and a café in

the Woods building were wrecked when water and mud undermined foundations and poured into the structures. Booths and counters were overturned and two feet of mud was deposited in the buildings.

Stores throughout the city remained open until late at night, doing a big business in candles and flashlights following interruption in electric service.

The main power plant of the Central Electric and Telephone company at Fall River falls on Fall river, six miles downstream from the city, was reported wrecked. The company immediately put into service a Diesel-powered plant in the city, but because of wire trouble and the burning out of a transmitter, the city was without electric service most of the night.

Almost half of the city was without telephone service today, poles and wires having crashed during the hail and rainstorm.

Several water mains of the Central Electric and Telephone company crossing Fall River were broken, it was reported.

Six telegraph poles on the Burlington station platform floated away and crashed though the Auto Laundry.

It was reported that about 15 head of racing horses and thoroughbred cattle at the Butler polo farm between Hot Springs and Buffalo Gap were killed by the hail. The farm is owned by F. O. Butler, president of the Buckler Paper company at Chicago.

Flood damage, exclusive of that to railroads amounted to approximately \$100,000. Mayor Shann said, Another \$100,000 damage, it was estimated, was suffered by the two railroads serving this city.

Greatest Damage

Greatest damage in Chicago and North Western property was at the Cheyenne river bridge, less than a mile west of Oral. About 600 feet of track, including approaches piling and fill at the bridge was washed out and it was expected service would be disrupted for from three to five days. Meanwhile according to information received in Rapid City by R. L. Hall, C. and N. W. agent, passengers on the Omaha line will be routed by way of Pierre and Norfolk, Nebr.

Damage estimated at several thousand dollars was suffered by the road on its branch between Buffalo Gap, with all bridges reported washed out. Long time residents said the storm in that area was as severe as the disastrous flood of 1922 that put the road out of commission for some time.