



Map of the Texas & Pacific Railway and Connections in 1903



David Rumsey Map Collection

Primary
Source
Adventures:
Galveston
1900:
Storm of the
Century



1891 Map of North Galveston, Texas

NORTH GALVESTON

LOTS,
BLOCKS,
ACRES.
FRUIT
FARMS.
**MANUFACTURING
SITES.**
PURCHASERS AT
FIRST PRICES
SURE TO MAKE MONEY
TERMS EASY.

MONEY.
EXPERIENCE
AND
ENTERPRISE
WILL MAKE
THIS BEAUTIFUL
LOCATION
INTO
A THRIVING CITY
WITHIN
A MARVELOUSLY
SHORT TIME.
Railroad and Steamboat
Communication
Guaranteed.

THE MAINLAND CITY ON GALVESTON BAY.

David Rumsey Map Collection

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Century



From Clarence Ousley's,
Galveston In Nineteen Hundred

This excerpt discusses storm forecasting.

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GALVESTON IN NINETEEN HUNDRED

The public was warned, over telephone and verbally, that the wind would go by the east to the south and that the worst was yet to come. People were advised to seek secure places for the night. As a result thousands of people who lived near the beach or in small houses moved their families into the center of the city and were thus saved.

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THE HURRICANE

I reached home and found the water around my residence waist-deep. I at once went to work assisting people, who were not securely located, into my residence, until forty or fifty persons were housed therein. About 6:30 P. M. Mr. J. L. Cline, who had left Mr. Blagden at the office to look after the instruments, reached my residence, where he found the water neck-deep. He informed me that the barometer had fallen below 29.00 inches; that no further messages could be gotten off on account of all wires being down, and that he had advised everyone he could see to go to the center of the city; also, that he thought we had better make an attempt in that direction. At this time, however, the roofs of houses and timbers were flying through the streets as though they were paper, and it appeared suicidal to attempt a journey through the flying timbers. Many people were killed by flying timbers about this time while endeavoring to escape from the town.

From Clarence Ousley's,
*Galveston In Nineteen
Hundred*

Cline's account of
the hurricane's arrival.



SHOWING TERRIBLE DEVASTATION ON AVENUE J, BETWEEN TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH STREETS

From Paul Lester's,
*The Great
Galveston Disaster*

Primary
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Adventures:
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1900:
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Century



By
8 P. M. a number of houses had drifted up and lodged to the east and southeast of my residence, and these with the force of the waves acted as a battering ram against which it was impossible for any building to stand for any length of time, and at 8:30 P. M. my residence went down with about fifty persons who had sought it for safety, and all but eighteen were hurled into eternity. Among the lost was my wife, who never rose above the water after the wreck of the building. I was nearly drowned and became unconscious, but recovered, though being crushed by timbers and found myself clinging to my youngest child, who had gone down with myself and wife. Mr. J. L. Cline joined me five minutes later with my other two children, and with them and a woman and child we picked up from the raging waters, we drifted for three hours, landing three hundred yards from where we started. There were two hours that we did not see a house nor any person, and from the swell we inferred that we were drifting to sea, which, in view of the northeast wind then blowing, was more than probable.

* * *

While we were drifting we had to protect ourselves from the flying timbers by holding planks between us and the wind, and with this protection we were frequently knocked great distances. Many persons were killed on top of the drifting debris by flying timbers after they had escaped from their wrecked homes. In order to keep on the top of the floating masses of wrecked buildings one had to be constantly on the lookout and continually climbing from drift to drift. Hundreds of people had similar experiences.

From Clarence Ousley's,
*Galveston In
Nineteen Hundred*

Cline's account about
surviving the storm.



GREAT MASS OF DEBRIS ON THE WEST END—GALVESTON

Nearly all the west end people were lost. Those who sought safety in large houses had but the grim consolation of dying in company, for the whole of that portion of the city was destroyed. The work of rescue began as soon as the storm abated. But the crowd of survivors on the street Sunday morning was pitifully small. They seemed to me scarce 10,000. Clad in next to nothing, bathing suits and the like, the sun brought them only the sight of dead relatives and friends—some starvation.

“There was no food and no water. For two days I tasted no water and food was scarce indeed. The city, as soon as soldiers could be gotten, was put under the strictest martial law, under protest of Mayor Jones and Chief of Police Ketchum.

From Paul Lester's,
*The Great
Galveston Disaster*

This excerpt discusses
the storm's aftermath.



From Clarence Ousley's,
Galveston In Nineteen Hundred

THE HURRICANE

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There is not a house in Galveston that escaped injury, and there are houses totally wrecked in all parts of the city. All goods and supplies not over eight feet above floor were badly injured, and much was totally lost. The damage to buildings, personal, and other property in Galveston County is estimated at about thirty million dollars. The insurance inspector of Galveston states that there were 2,636 residences located prior to the hurricane in the area of total destruction, and he estimates one thousand houses totally destroyed in other portions of the city, making a total of 3,636 houses totally destroyed. The value of these buildings alone is estimated at five million five hundred thousand.

This excerpt discusses
the hurricane's cost.



From Paul Lester's,
The Great Galveston Disaster

HARROWING DETAILS OF THE DISASTER.

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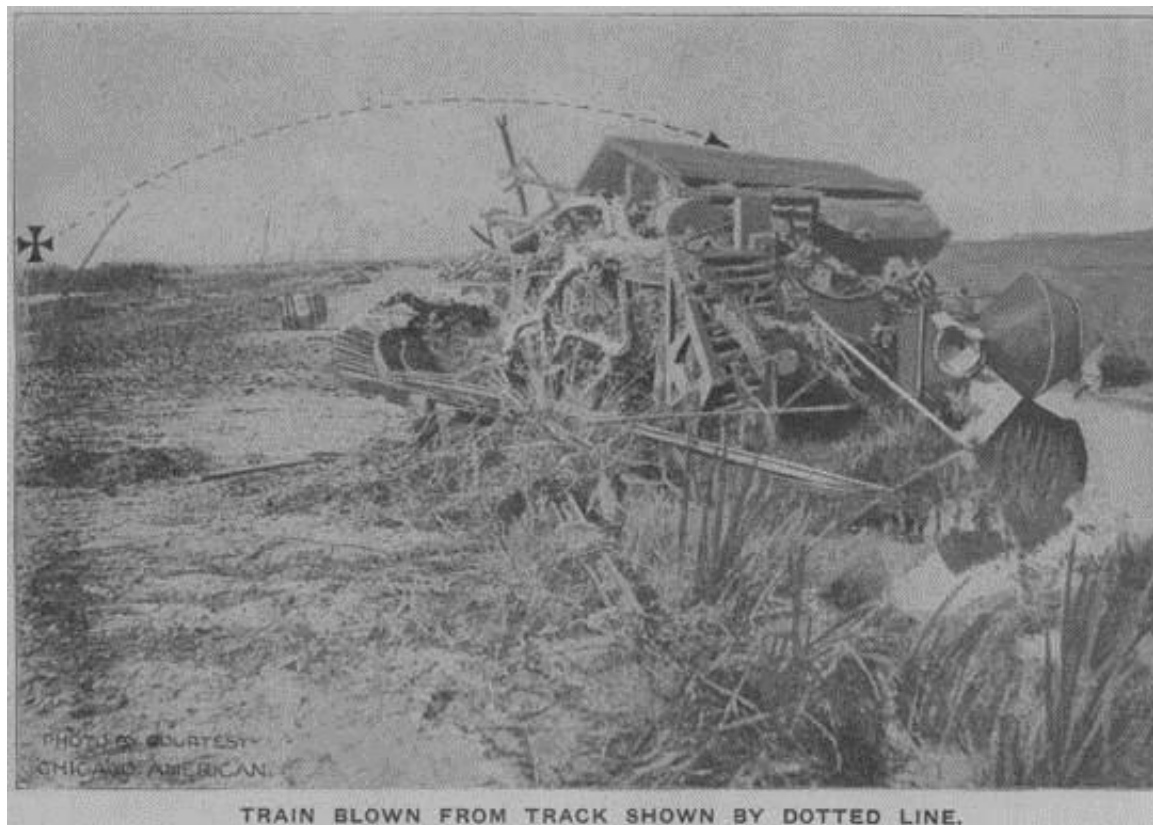
“Heroic measures were adopted by the citizens in charge of the work of policing and rehabilitating the city. It was determined to fire the ruins and purify the city by flame. This must be done. Hundreds of bodies will be cremated in the pyres. Fire is the best disinfectant that the city has at its command. People from the vicinity of Galveston report to-night that heavy clouds of smoke have shrouded the city all the afternoon. It is evident that the ordeal by fire has begun. This adds a fresh menace to the city's safety. The fire department is unable to cope with the flames, should they spread to the undamaged sections of the city.

“It was the weakest members of the community that suffered the greatest in the dark hours of Saturday night, when the seas leaped upon the city. Two-thirds of the corpses that are seen are those of women and children.

The efforts to dispose of the bodies.



From Paul Lester's,
The Great Galveston Disaster



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From Paul Lester's,
The Great Galveston Disaster

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GOVERNOR REPORTS TWELVE THOUSAND DEAD.

The destruction of the Catholic Orphans' Home and the loss of seventy-five lives with it was told by one of three boys who came through a terrible experience by dint of good Providence and nothing else. It is a fact that three boys came into the city

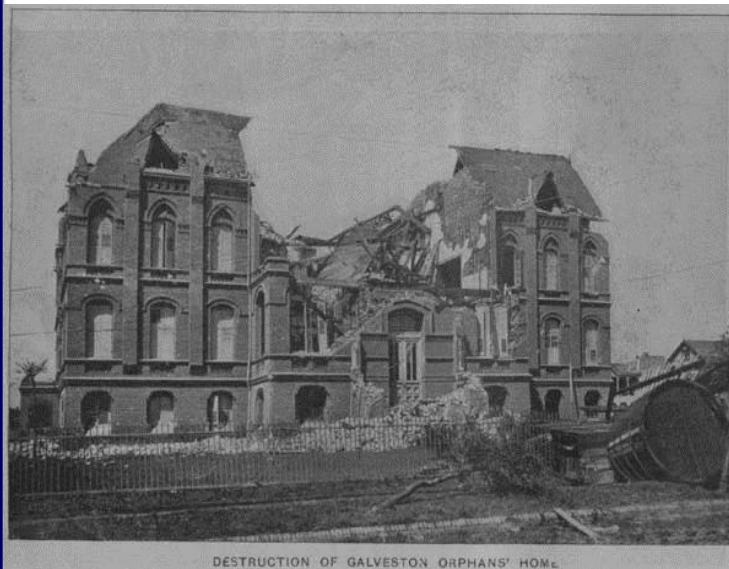


GOVERNOR REPORTS TWELVE THOUSAND DEAD.

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from there who had passed through a terrible experience. With these three and one reported on the bay shore but four out of a total of seventy-eight people lived to tell the tale.

According to the story all the children were gathered with the Sisters and the two workmen in the chapel on the ground floor in the west wing of the building. The storm was raging terribly outside and they all engaged in prayer. The east wing finally went down and they were driven from the chapel to the floor above, the water coming in and threatening to drown them. Some clambered out on the roof of the part remaining, but not all. Finally along about 8 o'clock—they are not positive as to the time by an hour—the remainder of the building went and the roof went into the water.



DESTRUCTION OF GALVESTON ORPHANS' HOME.

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From Paul Lester's,
The Great Galveston Disaster



GENERAL VIEW ALONG THE GALVESTON BEACH AFTER THE FLOOD

Primary
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From Paul Lester's,
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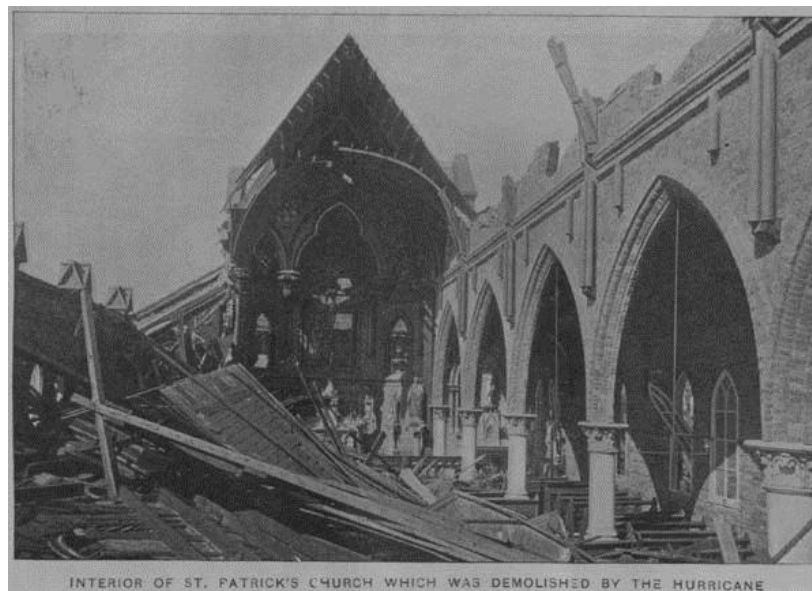
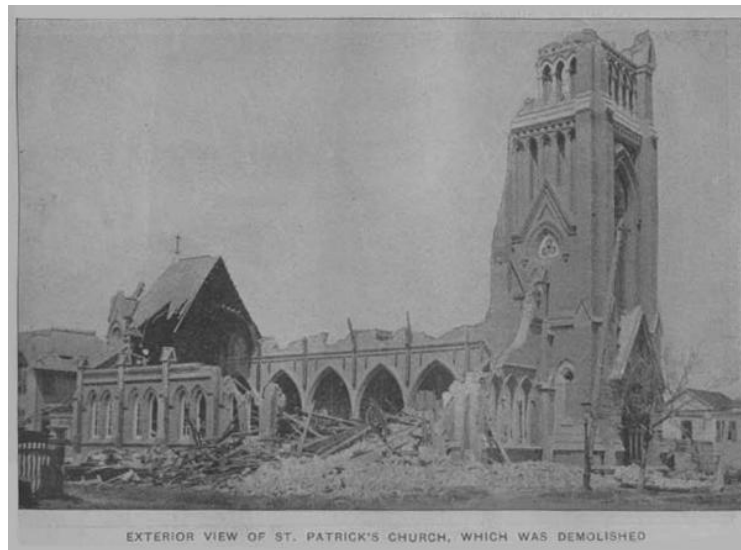


LOOKING SOUTH ON AVENUE I, SHOWING CHURCH OF SACRED HEART,
COMPLETELY DESTROYED



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WONDERFUL COURAGE OF SURVIVORS.

St. Mary's Infirmary was the refuge where over a thousand of lives were saved from a cruel death, which the terrible storm seemed so anxious to administer, and if it had not almost ceased to be at a premium on account of so many displays of that most noble virtue, the heroism displayed at and around that institution that afternoon and night would be something remarkable. Men worked with five boats all of that afternoon, never tiring in their heroic efforts in bringing women and children from their frail dwellings to this haven of safety, and when these poor frightened people arrived they were still heroically dealt with by the Sisters of Charity.

ONSLAUGHTS OF THE STORM.

Of all those who took refuge there only two lost their lives, and those were in an outbuilding where some fifty-two had taken refuge. While the main building, where most of the people were, shook and trembled under the awful onslaughts made on it by the wind and water, and although the water kept coming up into that building until it stood three and a half feet deep on the lower floor, the building stood the shock bravely and not a life was lost in it.

Only those who were there and heard the terrible noises that the wind and water made in their mission of destruction, and only those who felt the building tremble and saw the houses around the place torn down and washed away, can realize the fearfulness of that evening and night. But during it all the Sisters were there, forgetting their own personal danger in quieting the fears of those who had come to them for refuge. It was indeed a hardened man that did not there that night ask his Creator for protection.

From Paul Lester's,
*The Great
Galveston Disaster*

This excerpt discusses
a refuge from the storm.



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AVENUE A IN "EAST END" OF GALVESTON—COLORADO AND SANTA FE RAILROAD TRACKS IN FOREGROUND.



WRECK OF FORT CROCKET

From Paul Lester's,
The Great Galveston Disaster



RUINS AT TWENTY FIRST STREET AND AVENUE O'S



WRECKAGE OF CARS OF GRAIN—GALVESTON

Primary Source Adventures: Galveston 1900: Storm of the Century



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Century



Galveston Sea Wall constructed in 1902



Memorial marker for 1900 storm

Images from the Portal to Texas History Collection "Photographing Texas"