

3½ - INCH RAIN BLOCKS SEWERS, FLOODS STREETS

25 Homes in South St. Louis Area Are Damaged by a Small Tornado.

A torrential rain that measured almost three and one-half inches in three hours flooded streets and sewers and tied up traffic during the afternoon rush hour yesterday. In one small area at south St. Louis, a small tornado damaged 25 homes.

Although the Weather Bureau at Lambert-St. Louis field reported only 22 of an inch of rain from morning until midnight, the rain gauge at St. Louis University showed a fall of three and one-half inches from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., with all but a trace of that recorded by rain gauges.

The high winds, described by some witnesses as a small tornado, struck a subdivision between the River des Peres and the city limits between Grand boulevard and Morgan-levoy road. Extensive damage was done to two homes, and 23 others sustained minor damage to roofs, gutters and windows. No one was hurt.

Various low-lying intersections in the city were blocked by water when overlanded sewers backed up. One of these was at Linden boulevard and Vandeventer, avenue and another at Market street and the Forest Park boulevard cut-off.

Fared to Swim From Auto. At the latter intersection, Tom M. Spierling, assistant to Executive Director William Q. Kehr of the Metropolitan Sewer District, was fared to swim from his stalled auto.

At another flooded intersection, at Cora and Lexington avenues, Patrolman Thomas Moore waded through water above his knees to rescue a small boy who appeared to be in danger of being swept into a sewer opening. It was not far from the place where two youths were drawn into a flooded sewer and drowned several years ago.

Several washouts on Ladue road between McKnight road and Gay avenue in Ladue caused the closing of the thoroughfare. Until it is reopened, expected to be in time for the evening rush hour, traffic is being diverted over McKnight to Delmar boulevard or Clayton road.

The Weather Bureau, which had forecast only showers or thundershowers for yesterday, said skies would be cloudy today, with a low tonight of 50 to 55 degrees.

Spierling said the Sewer District had received about 100 calls up to midnight concerning flooded sewers and basements, most of them concentrated in the Chaina Creek district of South St. Louis and South St. Louis county. There was one cave-in at Dolor street and Gladstone avenue and smaller one in the Affton area.

Extent of the damage to the sewer system will not be known for a day or two, Spierling said, but he said no such damage as that following heavy rains in June 1957 was anticipated.

Flooding in Affton Area. In St. Louis county most extensive flooding was in the Affton area, due primarily to clogging or overflowing of natural embankments which carry off much of the surface runoff in the area, he said. East side streets were flooded but no extensive damage was reported.

Although the Weather Bureau at first discounted reports of a tornado in the south St. Louis area, it later said that a twister had struck. Its representatives talked with persons in that area and surveyed the damage.

Patrolman Gerald Fitzgibbon, whose one-story home at 3008 Crosby drive was damaged extensively, was nearing

Continued on Page 3, Col. 2.

Heavy Rain

Continued From Page One.

his garage when he heard violent winds approaching, he said.

"I ran into the garage, shut the door and crawled under my automobile," FitzGibbon related. "As I did this, I heard glass splintering and debris falling."

A section of the roof over the living room was blown off in the storm, the ceiling of the bedroom was buckled and many windows were broken. Water in the living room was two inches deep.

Winds Lift Auto.

The automobile of Charles W. Barthel, 3904 Crosby, was lifted and moved off a driveway by the strong winds, Barthel said. His home was not damaged.

Arthur Graham and a son David, 2½ years old, attempted to reach the basement of their home, 3901 Crosby, but were forced to seek shelter beside a refrigerator in the kitchen. A portion of the roof was blown away.

Other homes on Crosby and on Clymer and Dectur drives also were damaged, many of them by wind-blown debris.

Electrical service was interrupted in this area for varying periods and some interruptions of service occurred in north St. Louis and north St. Louis county.

High water from the heavy rain caused a general slowdown of public transportation, a spokesman for Public Service Co. reported.

Traffic eastbound in Washington avenue downtown was backed up to Eleventh street from Eads bridge because an underpass on the Illinois side of the bridge became flooded.

Streetcars on the Jefferson, Grand and Olive lines were also delayed by high waters. Streetcars had to be towed out of deep water at Jefferson avenue and Miami street, Olive and Whittier streets, Grand and Kossuth avenues, Fourth street and Olive and Vandeventer avenue and Olive.

Busses were put into service at those intersections to transport stranded passengers.

A minor explosion which caused an estimated \$150 damage in the basement of the police garage, 3819 Laclede avenue, was believed to have been caused by backed-up sewers. Attendants said small amounts of gasoline, being transferred from a tank in the front to one in the rear, may have leaked into the sewer, when the sewer backed up, the fumes from the gasoline entered the basement and were ignited.

SENTENCED TO 3 YEARS