

FREAK WEATHER

They dig out the dead in the Mississippi Valley. Two-hundred-and-thirty-two were killed by tornadoes which swept through six States. This was once a High School, and this mass of rubble a church. In the holocaust, this young life survived. In California's High Sierras there are 28-foot drifts after the worst blizzards the state has known. Huge trucks are trapped and digging out is a colossal task. Houses are buried, and narrow paths have to be cut to get vital supplies. Towns are cut off and nearly all transport brought to a standstill.

At Soda Springs, fire breaks out in a house that's buried twenty-five feet under snow. Men clearing the road rush to fight the blaze, and the dramatic incident is filmed exclusively by a Pathe cameraman. A snow-plough throws tons of snow to smother the flames, but the fire goes on burning. It seems incredible that the house, covered by melting snow, should blaze so furiously.

Mrs. Mallery and her son watch their home destroyed by a fire which seems to defy the laws of nature.

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X The heaviest snows in California's history usher in spring in the High Sierra Mountains. In some places drifts pile up twenty-eight feet deep, and the job of digging out is a colossal one. Huge trucks are trapped by the snow, houses are completely buried, and narrow tunnels are carved to get vital supplies through. Towns are cut off and transportation of almost every kind is halted, as nature lets go a violent and unseasonable assault on Northern California.

X At Soda Springs, California, in the snowbound area, fire breaks out in a mountain home that's buried under twenty-five feet of snow. Highway workers rush to fight the blaze, filmed by Warner Pathe cameraman Frank Vail, who chanced to be passing. Snow shoveled on the flames doesn't discourage the devouring flames at all. A snowplow is brought up and throws tons of snow on the roof, but it goes right on burning. It's almost incredible that the house, completely covered by wet, melting snow, should blaze so furiously.

X Mrs. Mallery and her son, who lived in the house, see their home ruined by a fire that seems like a defiance of nature's laws. By night, in a snow cavern melted out by the flames, the house is utterly destroyed, in one of the strangest holocausts ever filmed.

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Over Nevada's prairies, hay is dropped from planes of the Military Air Transport Service, to save from starvation some two hundred thousand head of cattle trapped by the snow. It's called Operation Haylift. Fierce winds hurl the bales back in the plane sometimes--it's tough work in icy weather. But the Navy crew unloads ninety bales on each trip, flying most of the time at only one hundred feet above ground. Without the Haylift, cattle worth 10 million dollars might perish--so cattle and cattlemen are grateful.

In the Mississippi Valley, tornadoes race through six states, leaving a trail of death and destruction. In Judsonia, Arkansas, women stand in mute grief as bodies are dug from the debris. Houses are ripped apart by the whirling winds as if struck by bombs. The Judsonia High School is a scarred, empty shell after the winds have passed by. This mass of rubble was once a church, and this was someone's home.

At Bald Rock, Arkansas, in the heart of the twisters' course, at least one resident weathered the storms. But some two hundred and fifty are dead in six states, a thousand are injured, and a thousand homes are gone. Now it's over, and the survivors pick up the pieces.