

# City Escapes Storm Ruin; South Lomita Streets Draining Off

## Clearing Skies Indicate Southland's Deluge Is at End; Two Hurt Here

Blue skies and bright sunshine here this morning belied weather forecasters predictions of more but lighter rains to come. Meanwhile, surrounding communities were emerging from the destruction of the worst rainstorm in a quarter century—a five-day downpour, that claimed close to 30 lives and caused property damage estimated in the millions.

Torrance, even at the peak of the torrential deluge yesterday, went about its affairs almost without inconvenience and completely escaping the havoc wrought elsewhere in the Southland. Only a few homes in the southern part of the city were surrounded by

high water, although the city was almost isolated by road and rail from other parts of the county.

A number of local workers who reside outside of Torrance were unable to get thru the flooded highways and lost time yesterday. Others who managed to make their way here were delayed as much as two and three hours in coming short distances. But local residents had no difficulty whatever in going back and forth from their homes to their places of employment.

### Mall Carrier Hurt

Only two casualties were reported in this area. A collision of trucks at Eshelman and Lomita boulevard yesterday morning gravely injured Peter Peters, 35, Lomita rural route mail carrier. His assistant, Jay Gasser, 22, suffered minor injuries. Peters is at Torrance Memorial hospital in a critical condition from a skull fracture, internal injuries and fractured leg. He is unconscious most of the time.

The south end of Lomita was submerged but streets were reported becoming passable today while residents attempted to clean off most of the mud and silt that covered their yards and walks. The flood turned 238th street into a river that effectively blocked traffic yesterday and streets on the west side of the community ran curb deep. Many cars were stalled but most motorists did not attempt to get thru the worst spots. This morning 238th street was passable. The water was rapidly going down.

### Mail Service Blocked

Several families in Lomita were forced to evacuate their flooded homes and a number of houses had water four to six inches deep in them.

No trains have arrived here for more than 24 hours although this afternoon Pacific Electric officials were hopeful today that the line to Los Angeles could be opened thru Gardena where the water ran too high yesterday to permit traffic with safety. The Southern Pacific line was washed out the other side of Harbor City and the little mail to arrive here was being brought in by trucks.

The Redondo P. E. line was reopened this morning for mail and express, the route going to Moneta, where postal and express workers took off the local mail and brought it here by trucks.

Mail and transportation service felt the brunt of the slashing rains that descended in cloudburst proportions here Tuesday night and yesterday. No mail other than local mail was received and today on account of disrupted traffic and Postmaster Earl Conner went to San Pedro yesterday to try to make a hookup for deliveries by truck from that city and Los Angeles.

### C. I. O. Offers Aid

"One hundred men are ready to furnish any kind of flood relief necessary in any place," President Carl Steele of the C. I. O. local steelworkers' lodge announced today following a meeting of the union members last night when the plan of offering aid was discussed.

## INDUSTRY MAKING SALT PRODUCTS BUYS SITE HERE

Thru the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce, Torrance gained another industrial plant this week which has possibilities of early development into a major concern. This is the American Magnesite company, manufacturers of such products as bath, Epsom and industrial salts.

L. J. Gilmeister, secretary of the chamber, interested the company, headed by C. E. Holmes, president of Los Angeles, in locating in this city and J. C. Smith of the Torrance Investment company negotiated the transaction which sold the firm the former Fritz Manufacturing plant on 213th off Border avenue for approximately \$7,500.

The magnesite company will

### Career Ends



JOE CRAIL.

One of Los Angeles' most outstanding political figures and a former Congressman, Joe Crail died yesterday of a sudden second heart attack. He served two terms in Congress and for the last six years engaged in private law practice. His twin brother, Charles, is presiding justice of the Second District Court of Appeals. He is also survived by his widow and two daughters. The funeral will be held Saturday.

## More Deeper Sand Wells On Production

Described in the National Oil Derrick trade publication as the oil industry, as the "second most active spot in California, only led by Wilmington-Long Beach Harbor District," the South Torrance field, continued to create intense interest among oilmen this week despite the torrential rains that made the area a morass.

The Derrick reported that the "large number of abandoned holes in the area makes it relatively inexpensive to deepen to good high gravity production."

This week Union Oil's No. 1 was said to be the best well to date, cutting less than two percent. The production on this deepened hole has not been reported but it is said to be one of the largest in the field. The most disappointing report of the week came from Neal Anderson's No. 4 and No. 2, No. 4, at Sepulveda and Narbonne, was taken off production after pumping dry. The No. 2 hole, which came in about 208 barrels of 27.2 gravity, cutting four percent, turned out wet.

Woolner Big Producer At 233d and Eshelman Harry Fisher and associates have completed their No. 1 project, pumping 175 barrels of 27 gravity, cutting 1.0 percent, along with 60,000 cubic feet of gas from 5,150 feet. This company is reported to have a nine-acre lease and is now starting two new wells.

Torrance Oil's No. 1 is said to be good for 185 barrels of 27.4 gravity, cutting one percent. The M. & M. project is "doing nicely," according to available information, having been cleaned

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# TORRANCE HERALD

## Deininger Quits Council; Rippy Out Municipal Campaign Enlists Two More

With two more candidates flinging their hats in the proverbial political ring this week—making the number of April 12 election contenders four to date—the municipal campaign gathered momentum. Other prospective office seekers for the two city council berths, city clerk and city treasurer's offices have until 12 noon Saturday, March 12, to declare their intentions by filing nomination papers. This week's entrants in the elective race were:

## Kelsey Files Marsteller in For Council Council Race

A resident here since 1925, Lindsay B. ("Slim") Kelsey joined the caravan of candidates here this week when he filed a nomination petition for city councilman. Kelsey, a native of Kansas, came to California in 1922. He engaged in general insurance business here until 1934 and then was with the Schultz and Peckham Ford agency for three years. He is now employed by the Automatic Printing company.

Kelsey, who has never held a public office before, said this week: "Having lived in Torrance some 13 years and being a taxpayer, I believe I know how the average man looks at city government. I want to bring to our municipal administration a mind open to the problems of the day without bias and without obligation to anyone. I am running my own campaign and basing my candidacy on a desire to do the right thing by Torrance and its present and future citizens."

"We have come a long way from the small town of 1925 to the industrial center of today. I have learned some lessons in these years which make me believe I can serve the people in keeping tax rates down to bed-rock and promoting even greater civic harmony in all municipal departments," he declared.

## Building Total \$32,400 in Feb.

Altho new construction here last month was nearly three times greater than February, 1937, the building permit total for the second month took an abrupt nose-dive from the record set in January when Torrance was second on the list of Southern California cities with its \$1,811,950.

Last month's building total was \$32,400 as compared to \$11,845 for the same month in 1937. The total for the year to date now stands at \$1,844,350. The first two months of 1937 saw \$52,875 worth of construction here.

The February building records show four new homes erected, \$5,200; two garages and repairs, \$3,800; two private garages, \$400; a repair and alteration to an office building, \$1,000, and five wooden oil derricks erected at a cost of \$25,000. The latest rigs to be thrown up in the booming South Torrance field were for Roy K. Wilson at 2349 227th and Pescio Oil company at 2401 230th street.

## Lomita Mail Man Gravely Hurt In Crash

Enroute back from San Pedro where they had gone to try to establish an emergency mail route hookup, Postmaster Earl Conner and his assistant, Louis Deininger, aided in extricating Peter Peters, Lomita rural route carrier, from the wreckage of his truck on Lomita boulevard early yesterday afternoon.

Badly injured, Peters was rushed to Torrance Memorial hospital in Stone and Myers' ambulance where he is in a critical condition as result of grave head injuries and a broken leg in addition to possible internal injuries.

"I offer the people of Torrance my experience in municipal affairs," declared Carl E. Marsteller in announcing his candidacy this week for city councilman. A native of Pennsylvania, Marsteller once held the distinction of being the youngest mayor in the U. S., when he directed the civic affairs for four years in that office at Wheatland, Pa., at the age of 21. For two years he was chairman of the city council there and followed this with a full-term in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives.

At the capitol in Harrisburg he was elected floor leader for rural district representatives from the northwestern part of the state. He also was one of the organizers of the volunteer fire department in his native city. The council candidate started his career as a reporter for the Sharon News-Telegraph, becoming a newspaperman at 14. He served during the war and came to California in 1928.

That year he was chief of the cost division at the Columbia Steel plant, a position he held until 1935 when he entered the same work for the National Supply company. He is a taxpayer and has a 14-year-old son in school here.

"I have no criticism to make

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## Falls 15 Feet But Is Unhurt

A 15-foot fall from the top of a box car to the ground usually is accompanied by serious injuries to the faller.

Not so when the accidental tumbler is rotund Jack Miller of the M. & M. Transfer and Storage company.

Late for the start of the Kiwanis club meeting Monday night, he explained that he had just taken such a dive at the Pacific Electric siding after slipping off the wet top of a freight car.

He reported, however, that he didn't even suffer a scratch and was apparently none the worse for his abrupt descent.

## Ask Bids On Bungalows for WALTERIA SCHOOL

Bids on two new bungalows for the Walteria elementary school campus will be opened next Thursday, March 10, at the downtown offices of the Los Angeles board of education. It was learned this week. Contractors have also been invited to bid on altering one large bungalow already in use there.

The Walteria school has outgrown its present facilities and additional room has long been needed to care for overcrowding of the students enrolled.

## Haslam Supervises Fresno Golf Meet

Kenneth Haslam, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Haslam of 2290 El Dorado, is one of Fresno State College's two outstanding golfers to serve as student supervisor in the extensive intramural athletic program now in progress under Coach Stanley E. Borleske. Tournaments in all sports are being conducted and medals will be awarded the winners.

## McCALL NAMED CITY ATTORNEY TO CLEAR UP ELIGIBILITY QUESTION

## No Precedent to Base Case, Rippy Holds

When asked by The Herald for his version of the municipal shake-up, former City Attorney Rippy said:

"The state law does not provide that city officials who are either employees, directors or stockholders in banks are ineligible to hold office. It does, however, prohibit any contract with a firm in which any city official is directly or indirectly financially interested and makes it ground for removal from office if any official shall willfully violate the same, such as by voting upon a transaction in which the official is financially interested."

"There are no precedents in this or any other state that hold that the law in question even applies to banks, and if it does so apply it will probably make it impossible for any city to do business with any bank within its boundaries, especially if the banks are chain banks. The only bank case cited by O'Melveny, Tuller and Myers held that the law involved therein did not apply to banks. All precedents in California or other states apply to ordinary commercial transactions, wherein some city official undertook to do business with himself as an individual or employee of some firm with which he is connected."

"I have no vote on the city council, and never at any time undertook to influence or direct this city council in any of its activities. The funds of the city have been deposited in both banks of the city as a matter of course, and no question concerning this procedure arose until recently."

"At a recent meeting of the members of the city council, I learned for the first time that the city council desired my resignation as city attorney based upon the opinion of O'Melveny, Tuller and Myers to which I have referred. Since I had no vote or actual interest in the matter, and the question involving the validity of the procedure mentioned had not been referred to me until recently, I felt that there must be some other reason for desiring my resignation, and I, therefore, thought that the responsibility for vacating the office should be left with the council."

"I guess I am not a very good politician, but I do want the members of the city council to know that I hold no bitterness toward them and I wish no successor. Mr. McCall, all success in his new duties."

## Snows Victims of Home Looter

Another home, that of the J. C. Snows at 1522 Beech street, was broken into and stripped of clothing and traveling bags whose purchase value was more than \$500 this week by apparently the same burglar who ransacked the William Rojo, Jr., residence at 2268 Sonoma avenue, last week.

Police believe that the marauder, who topped his thefts in the Snow home by nonchalantly eating food from the refrigerator as he went about his collecting, was as well acquainted with the lay-out of the Snow house as he apparently was of the Rojo residence. The way in which the robber entered the Beech street home Monday between 6 and 11:45 p. m., was the same as the manner in which homes in the Hollywood Riviera district were broken into.

Just before moving to New Orleans, the new city attorney was assistant campaign manager of Henry L. Whitfield, who was elected governor of that state. He was admitted to the bar in New Orleans, and practiced there until the spring of

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## Differing Opinions Emptied 2 Seats



MAYOR WM. H. TOLSON ... technically cost him two aides

## Served for Year And One Day



ROBERT L. DEININGER ... won't be in April race

## New Attorney to City From 'Deep South'

John E. McCall, the new city attorney, was born on a farm in Wayne County, Mississippi, Oct. 16, 1890. After attending elementary and high schools there in the country, he entered the State Normal College at Hattiesburg, Mississippi, in 1913. He attended there until 1917 when the war interrupted his studies and he joined the army in New Orleans, serving overseas for approximately two years.

After the war, he entered the University of Mississippi where he received his L.L.B. degree in 1921, and was admitted to the bar. He remained another year at this university, doing post-graduate work. He is a member of the Alpha Phi Epsilon fraternity, the American Legion, and other clubs and organizations. He was elected to the state executive committee of the American Legion; was commander of Post 30 at Oxford, Miss., for two years, and has since been active in the state and national Legion affairs.

Aided Governor McCall practiced law in Oxford until 1924, when he moved to New Orleans, where he had become interested in one Constantine Lescazes who is now Mrs. McCall and the mother of their two children, Edward, 12, and Patsy, six.

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## Quirk of Law Forced Action Mayor States

In a statement outlining the city council's attitude in respect to the replacement of the city attorney and the resignation of Councilman Deininger, Mayor William H. Tolson said:

"The entire matter is one of fine legal interpretations of the state law and in no sense does it involve any actual wrong doing by anyone concerned. Nor has the fact that City Attorney Rippy and Councilman Deininger were officers of the Torrance National Bank at the time that city funds were deposited there, been detrimental to the city's best interests as all public funds have been fully protected by bonds as required by law."

"It is merely a case of differing opinions on the interpretation of the law as interpreted by two lawyers, as so often happens. In order to be absolutely safe and relieve ourselves of any possible criticism no matter how trivial, the council felt it advisable to remove any city official who may be an official of the bank or any other concern with whom the city does business. Councilman Deininger concurs in this opinion and has voluntarily offered to resign his post on the council."

"I believe every member of the council joins me in expressing sincere regret in losing the services of both Councilman Deininger and City Attorney Rippy. We have all enjoyed working with them and they have both given valuable advice and assistance in solving municipal problems."

## Gunman Works On Schedule

Periodic holdups of the Torrance Laundry and Dry Cleaning company's "call office" at Santa Barbara and Denker avenues in Los Angeles are getting monotonous.

The third stickup—by the same gunman at the same time—occurred this week. A small amount of cash was taken. According to William Rojo, owner-manager of the laundry, the robber evidently operates on a schedule: He has held up the branch office on the same day of the week at the same hour of the day for three weeks.

"Next week we'll be ready to give him a warm reception if he comes," Rojo said.

### TO REFORM TAXES

A Los Angeles tax reform group, terming the present ad valorem and personal property tax "grossly inequitable," has offered articles of incorporation for filing.

## SECOND COURT APPEARANCE IN 48 HOURS PROVES COSTLY

A "return engagement" is indicative of popular favor for a stage, screen or radio star. "Returning a call" is a social nicety, a courtesy to one's former host.

But a "return appearance" in a police court is a signal for the judge to impose a stiffer sentence on the double offender.

This was learned Monday morning by Alex. A. Roller, 29-year-old steel worker residing at Green court on Arlington avenue. He had been arrested Friday night for being drunk in an auto and for disturbing the peace. Saturday he was fined \$5 for the first offense, \$25 for the second and both fines were

Determined to live up to the letter as well as the spirit of the state law governing eligibility of municipal officials, the city council last Friday afternoon released

Charles T. Rippy as city attorney and named John E. McCall, Los Angeles attorney and resident of Torrance, as the new appointee to the position paying \$175 per month.

For the same reason, Councilman Robert J. Deininger, who was not present at the Friday session, has since tendered his resignation which will no doubt be accepted when the council meets next Tuesday evening.

The unexpected action was precipitated by the receipt a few days earlier of an opinion by James L. Beebe, of the Los Angeles law firm of O'Melveny, Tuller and Myers, regarding the validity of contracts between the city and banks in which a public official is an employee, director or stockholder in the bank.

### Rippy Changes Mind

When Deininger, who is cashier of the Torrance National Bank, was appointed a member of the city council Feb. 25, 1937, to fill out former Mayor W. H. Stanger's unexpired term, Rippy, as city attorney, held that Deininger was eligible for the appointment.

However, claims were being circulated that this appointment was contrary to state law, and before Deininger decided to become a candidate for re-election it was deemed advisable to secure an expert opinion on this matter. In this opinion given regarding Councilman Deininger, Municipal Law-Expert Beebe contended that any contract negotiated between the city and the bank, any of whose officers were city officials, would not be binding. In order not to jeopardize the city's relationship with the bank, Councilman Deininger immediately offered to resign, a year and one day from the date of his appointment.

As Rippy is vice-president and a stockholder of the Torrance National Bank, members of the city council felt that he, too, should resign. At first, Rippy agreed to tender his resignation at the Friday meeting. But after thinking it over, he changed his mind and offered to dispose of his stock in the bank and resign as a bank official.

This overtone on the part of the city attorney apparently was not acceptable to the council and, on motion by Councilman Powell, seconded by Councilman Hitchcock, the office of city attorney was declared vacant by unanimous action of the four council members present.

Rippy left the council meeting at this point in the proceedings and the council, again by unanimous action, appointed John E. McCall as the new city attorney.

Councilman Deininger was in Los Angeles on business and was not present at the Friday

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