

Hysteria Sweeps Nation When Radio Reports Mythical War

Purely Fictional Account of Conquerors From Mars Is Taken Seriously at Widely Scattered Points With People Fleeing From Homes

By CHARLES E. HARNER

NEW YORK, Oct. 30.—(AP)—Hysteria among radio listeners throughout the nation and actual panicky evacuations from sections of the metropolitan area resulted from a too-realistic radio broadcast tonight describing a fictitious and devastating visitation of strange men from Mars. Excited and weeping persons all over the country swamped newspaper and police switchboards with the question:

"Is it true?"

It was purely a figment of H. G. Wells' imagination with some extra flourishes of radio dramatization by Orson Welles. It was broadcast by the Columbia broadcasting system.

But the anxiety was immeasurable.

Book Broadcast

The broadcast was an adaptation of Wells' "War of the World," in which meteors and gas from Mars menace the earth.

New York police were unable to contact the CBS studios by telephone, so swamped was its switchboard, and a radio car was sent there for information.

A woman ran into a church in Indianapolis screaming: "New York destroyed; it's the end of the world. You might as well go home to die. I just heard it on the radio." Services were dismissed immediately.

Five boys at Brevard (N.C.) college fainted and panic gripped the campus for a half hour with many students fighting for telephones to inform their parents to come and get them.

Panic Spreads

At Fayetteville, N.C., people with relatives in the section of New Jersey where the mythical visitation had its locale, went to a newspaper office in tears, seeking information.

A message from Providence, R.I., said:

"Weeping and hysterical women swamped the switchboard of the Providence Journal for details of the massacre and destruction at New York and officials of the electric company received scores of calls urging them to turn off all lights so that the city would be safe from the enemy."

Mass hysteria mounted so high in some cases that the people told police and newspapers they "saw" the invasion.

Woman "Sees" Fire

The Boston Globe told of one woman who "claimed she could 'see' (Continued on Page 10, Column 2)