



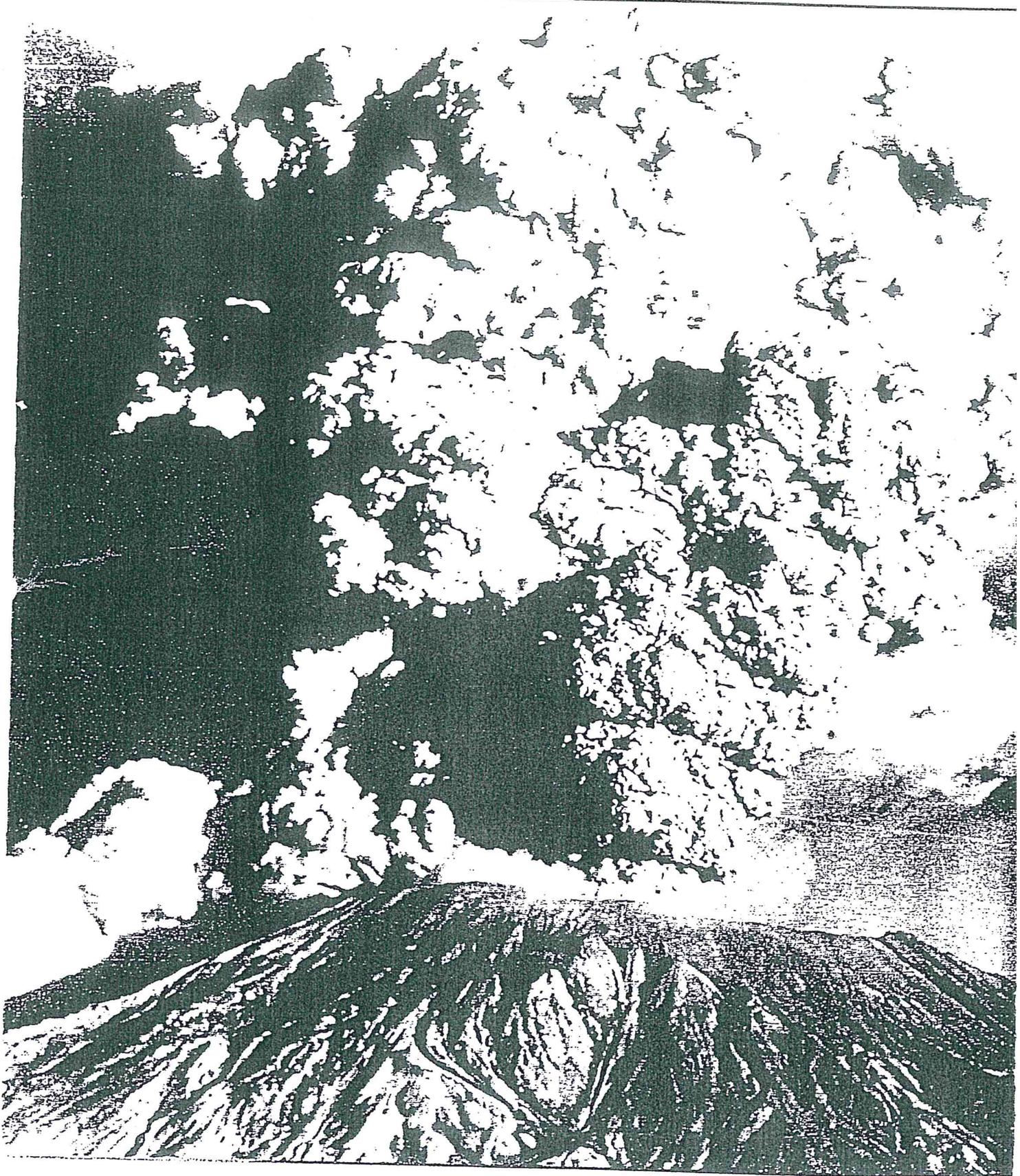
A Mountain Erupts

David Johnston, a **volcano** expert, stared into his **binoculars**. There it was! He could see the lump on the side of the mountain. It was getting bigger. Any moment now it would **erupt**.

"Vancouver, Vancouver, this is it!" He radioed to scientists 50 miles away.

It was exactly 8:31 A.M. on May 18, 1980. Seconds later, Mount St. Helens exploded.

Johnston had wanted to get a good look at Mount St. Helens. So he climbed to a spot five miles away from the mountain. It wasn't far enough. He was never heard from again.



A Waiting Game

The experts knew that Mount St. Helens near Vancouver, Washington, would blow up. The only question was when. A small eruption took place on March 27, 1980. For the next eight weeks, the volcano steamed and rumbled. People everywhere followed the reports day by day.

The people who lived in the area were warned of the danger. They were told to leave while they still could. Many people, however, did not want to leave. George Pickett, a **logger**, lived with his family on nearby Toutle River. He and 200 other loggers were supposed to cut trees near the mountain on Monday, May 19.

Luckily, Pickett was at home Sunday morning. He heard a noise. At first, he thought someone was rolling barrels down the road. "There was a roar, like a jet plane approaching, and a lot of snapping and popping. Those were the trees. We got out fast."

Two campers on the Toutle River were not so lucky. They woke up to a rumbling sound. They ran to their car. But the river flooded the road and kept them from leaving. They climbed on top of the car just as a mud slide crashed toward them. The mud pushed the car into the river. The pair fell into the hot, muddy water. Logs almost crushed them. They were carried about a mile down the river. Finally, a family of campers saved them.

I Want to Live

The power of a volcano is hard to imagine. This one had 500 times the force of a bomb. The blast blew 1,200 feet off the top of the mountain. It shot ash twelve miles into the sky. The volcano also



caused giant mud slides. These mud slides destroyed everything in their path.

David Crockett, a **photographer** for a TV station, happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. He was on a dirt road at the bottom of Mount St. Helens. All of a sudden, he heard the blast. He looked up. He saw a huge wall of hot mud. It was rushing straight toward him.

Luckily, the river of mud split in two. It shot past him on both sides of the road. Ash filled the air and made it hard for him to breathe. All he could do was

to keep walking down the road. He recorded what was happening.

“I am walking toward the only light I can see. I can hear the mountain rumble. At this very moment I have to say I believe I am dead. The ash burns my eyes! It’s very, very hard to breathe and very dark. If I could only breathe air. I will try the radio. Mayday! Mayday! Ash is coming down on me heavily. I want to live!”

Crockett made it out alive. A helicopter saved him. But by that time, he had spent ten long hours wondering if he would die.

A Wasteland

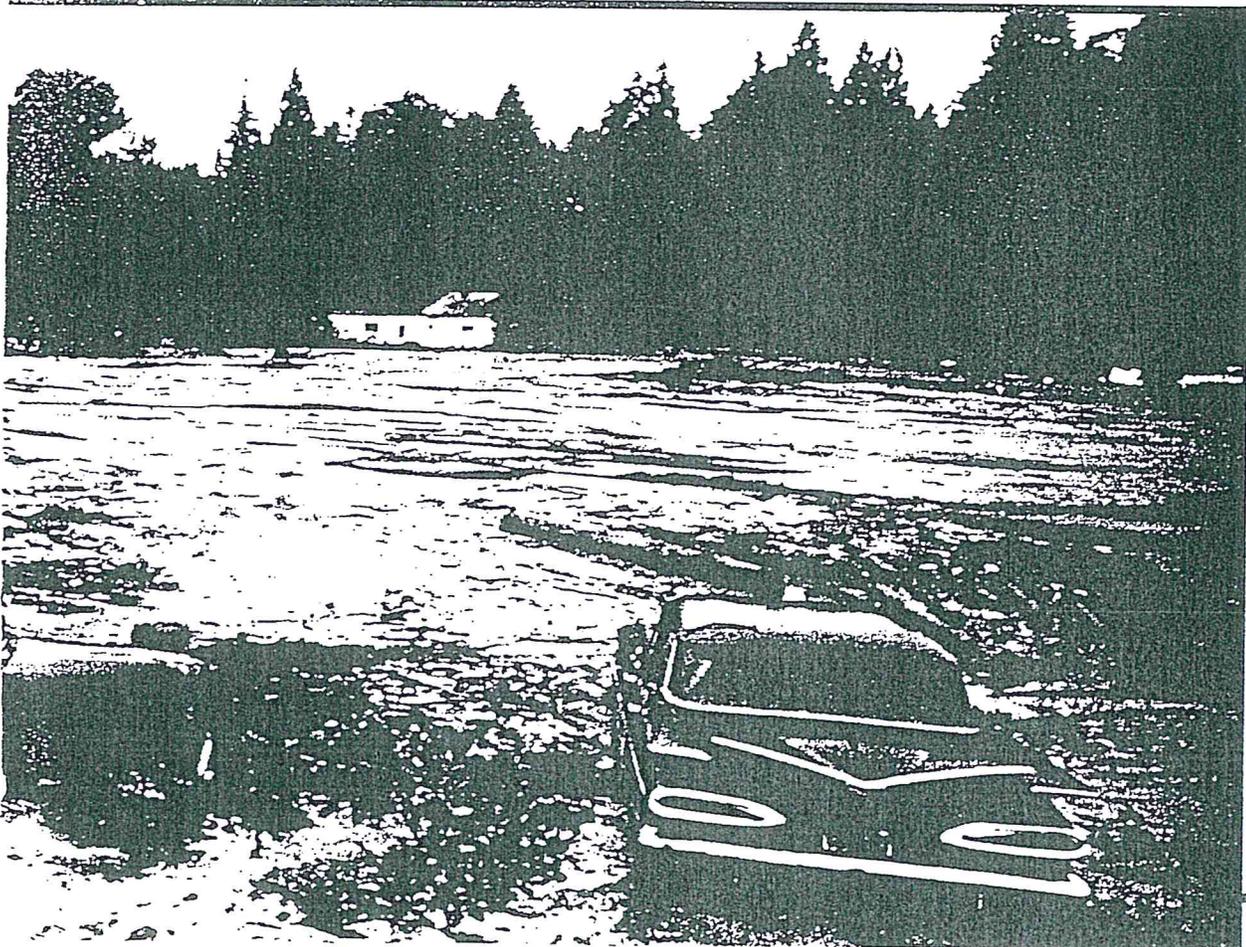
The volcano killed 60 people. The mud slides wiped out 123 homes. They also destroyed bridges, roads, and wildlife. Over 150 square miles of trees



were flattened. Lumber companies lost about \$500 million. In nearby lakes and streams, fish died by the millions. The eruption turned the whole area into a **wasteland**. President Jimmy Carter viewed the damage. He said, "The moon looks like a golf course compared to what's up there."

The volcanic ash caused other problems. People 100 miles away could barely breathe. They had to wear **masks** over their mouths. Some towns had several inches of ash on the streets. One writer wrote, "Spokane looked like an ashtray."

But it could have been much worse. Some volcanos have caused much more damage. Luckily, not many people lived near Mount St. Helens. And this volcano was only **average** in size. Still, Mount St. Helens was large enough to remind us of how **powerful** nature is.



Do You Remember?

■ Read each sentence below. Write T if the sentence is true. Write F if the sentence is false.

- _____ 1. No one expected Mt. St. Helens to blow up.
- _____ 2. George Pickett and his family escaped from the volcano.
- _____ 3. Ash was shot twelve miles into the sky.
- _____ 4. David Crockett died in a boiling sea of mud.
- _____ 5. Ash filled the air and made it hard to breathe.
- _____ 6. The volcano caused huge mud slides.
- _____ 7. This was the first time damage had been caused by a volcano.
- _____ 8. People 100 miles away could feel the effects of the volcano.

Express Yourself

■ Pretend you are David Crockett. You have just been rescued after spending ten hours trapped near the volcano. Describe to your family what happened and how you feel.

Exploring Words

- Use the clues to complete the puzzle. Choose from the words in the box.



Across

2. a person who takes pictures
6. glasses used to see things far away
7. an exploding mountain
9. a cover used to protect the face
10. a person who cuts down trees

Down

1. to explode
3. aircraft without wings
4. strong
5. an empty or destroyed place
8. medium size

