

Route 1, Box 193
Rapid City, SD 57701
September 10, 1972

We live west of Rapid City on Rimrock Highway about 10 miles west of Baker Park. We are on Black Hills Elec. Coop. power (RHA). We live in an area that normally is affected by KOTA's cut of power in the evening so radio reception during the evening, most evenings, is less than desirable. In other words, we very seldom listen to the radio in the evening as it is hard to listen to. The lightening and static the evening of June 9 made listening even more difficult, but by carrying the transistor close to the ear while preparing precautions to leave and having the table radio turned loud, we could be kept alert. We normally unplug all appliances in such a bad storm so our TV was unplugged. Our roof was leaking in many places, we were emptying pans of water, water was coming in the basement from the hill behind us, and we were preparing to evacuate should that become necessary, so with trying to listen to the radio it was a hectic night.

Our electric power went off about 10 p.m., our phone went out about the same time, so all we had was the transistor on which reception was minimal. For some reason we lost any reception around 11. Our bridge was long gone and we were complete isolated, on our own, and prepared to go up the hill behind the house. Evacuation never became necessary.

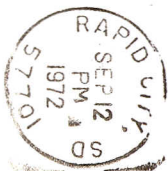
We dropped off to sleep briefly perhaps an hour or so just before daylight. At the first daylight, we awoke to disaster. Later when we began to receive radio reception, we became aware of the Rapid City disaster with the words, "If you find a body..." The radio was on constantly the next few days and spurred us into action to again prepare to evacuate ~~with~~ with false news of gas leaks above us.

Power was returned Saturday morning June 10. We were without phone for about 2 weeks. In the time before we got to town my brother in the National Guard kept us informed of the rest of the family and relayed our messages to them. TV gave us pictures of what was happening. Duane didn't have to go to work until Tuesday (Monday was his day off that week) so we were informed of the situation in town from the TV and radio.

One comment I would like to add. So many times a phone number would be given in the days following for us or some neighbor to call. Since our whole area had no phone and travel to town was difficult, it was frustrating to be home, knowing we had maybe seen some neighbor safe earlier in the day, and hear information to call a number and know there was absolutely nothing we could do about it at the time. You wondered if they had heard the message, had something happened to them since you had seen them (we did lose 1 neighbor). Communication with the outside world was almost impossible but ~~at~~ at least we knew something of what was going on even though we couldn't let anyone know what our situation was. There was a radio unit of some kind at our Volunteer Fire Department building for transmitting messages, but the channels were so crowded I don't think we could have gotten a message out had we needed to. Then we were there, a neighbor was trying to get a message out, but couldn't on the unit there. A man who I think was with REACT with a mobile unit in his car came along, took the family wanting to relay a message up on a nearby hill, and got their message out.

We feel fortunate to have had radio reception for as long as we did June 9 and to get it back as early as we did June 10. We were glad to have the information on the radio to get our typhoid shots at the fire department on Monday. It was a struggle to get out, and we had to make another trip up Monday evening to get the shots, but we got the information over the radio. I wonder what we would have done if we hadn't had our transistor with batteries that were good.

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