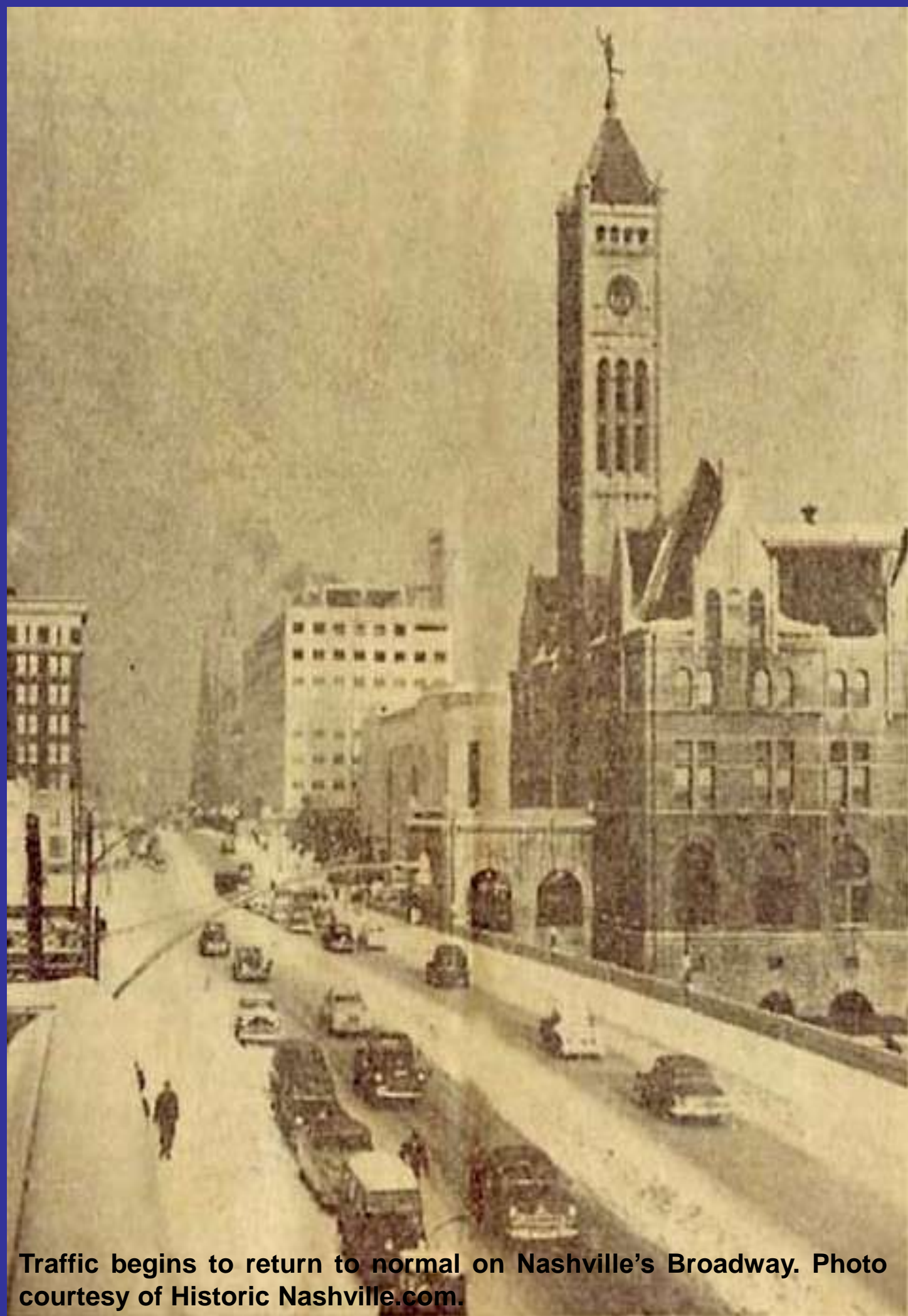


1951 ICE

On January 31, 1951, the costliest ice storm on record devastated an area of more than 100 miles wide from Louisiana to West Virginia. Twenty-five people lost their lives and approximately 500 more were injured in storm-related accidents. The U.S. Weather Bureau estimated the total storm damage to be 100 million dollars.

A strong, polar cold front moved slowly into the Southeast and left up to 2 inches of ice on trees and wires and up to two inches of sleet and snow on the ground. As the cold front pushed southward, it interacted with a tropical low developing in the Gulf of Mexico. On January 31, the Gulf low began to move northeastward spreading sleet, freezing rain, and snow to much of the southeast. As an upper level cold front interacted with the surface front, a line of strong thunderstorms developed from southwest Louisiana to central Mississippi and into northern Alabama. This unusual

combination of high wind and "ice glaze" caused an extensive amount of damage to trees and power lines. By February 1, up to three inches of dry snow had fallen on four to five inches of water-soaked sleet. It wasn't until temperatures began to fall that the sleet froze into a four inch thick, solid piece of ice. After continual daytime melting of the snow layer and nighttime re-freezing, a semitransparent layer of solid ice covered the ground for the next ten days.



Traffic begins to return to normal on Nashville's Broadway. Photo courtesy of Historic Nashville.com



Photo taken by Ralph Morrissey for the Nashville Tennessean.



Photo courtesy of Historic Nashville.com

"Never before in recorded history did winter hit this area with such devastating force to paralyze the everyday life of the community... Never before were so many faced with hardship and suffering in what was once the security of home,..." --H.B. Tetter, Nashville Tennessean

The "glaze storm" left approximately 100,000 people without power nationwide. Crews worked in frigid conditions to restore power and communication lines as quickly as possible. However, the freezing temperatures and the weight of the ice on the trees caused more lines to fall. Telephones, radios, furnaces and electric stove tops became useless. Those with new, electric-only homes were forced to take refuge with friends and family. Many had to resort to more primitive ways of cooking and heating.

"Then, boom, all of a sudden on Wednesday night, January 31, 1951, one ice blizzard put our magic fairyland of electricity out of business for over a week." --Willie Mine Midgett



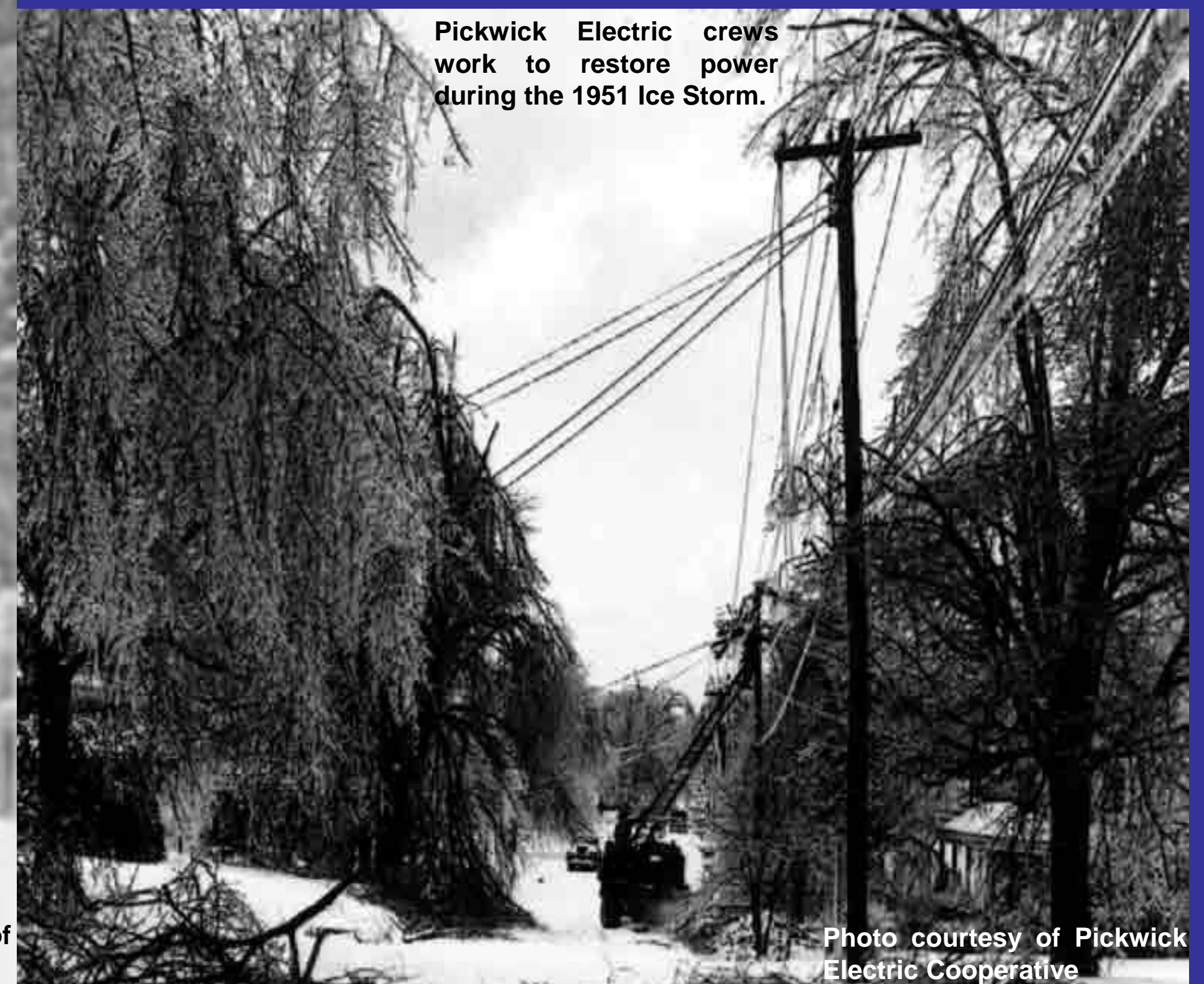
A building owned by the Petroleum Products Co collapses under the weight of ice and snow onto a truck. Courtesy of Historic Nashville.com



Perfect sledding terrain and a well-packed ice covering attracted scores of youngsters to Kendall Hill in East Nashville. Courtesy of Historic Nashville.com



Icicles cover a rock cliff during the 1951 Ice Storm. Photo courtesy of Willie Mine Midgett



Pickwick Electric crews work to restore power during the 1951 Ice Storm.

Photo courtesy of Pickwick Electric Cooperative

BLIZZARD