KENCER, La. (AP) - A recorder aboard an old Pan Am jetliner that crashed in the nation's second-worst air disaster was faulty and 58 seconds of tape-recorded cockpit conversation were lost, investigators say.

The first segment of tape, which was salvaged from the crash site in the plane's "black boxes," was analyzed by National Transportation Safety Board investigators after FBI technicians tried to improve its poor sound quality.

"It was absolutely no assistance," said NTSB vice-chairman Patricia Goldman. "We will have to try again."

She did not say what the conversation involved.

The Pan Am 727 jet crashed Friday afternoon in a thunderstorm shortly after takeoff on a New Orleans-to-Las Vegas flight, killing all 145 aboard the plane and eight people on the ground.

Tapes from the cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder are being analyzed in Washington. FBI sound technicians are trying to eliminate background noise and interference on the cockpit recorder.

Even after the processing is finished, Mrs. Goldman said, the voice transcript may not be complete.

"We will have a conversation from the cockpit voice recorder, but we cannot say it is going to be a word-for-word report," she said.

NTSB spokesman Brad Dunbar said problems with the tape resulted from a misalignment of its magnetic heads and background noise in the aircraft — including a loud whirring from the plane's windshield wiper motors.

Asked what effect the crash and subsequent fire had on the tapes, he said, "None whatsoever. It has to do with the age — it's an old recorder and it simply did not function very well."

Mrs. Goldman confirmed Monday the plane's wings were perpendicular to the ground just before it clipped treetops and plowed into the Morningside subdivision in the nation's second-worst air disaster.

"The gears were up, the flaps were at 15 degrees, and the left wing impacted the ground at a 90-degree angle," Mrs. Goldman said. "We have no confirmation about a particular height."

Also Monday night, she contradicted reports that:

- The plane's pilot and co-pilot ignored an advisory of potentially dangerous wind currents. "It is not a case of ignoring," she said. "In the first place we've got to verify that they heard it. We assume they did."
- Another airliner refused to take off at the time Flight 759 was going down. She said a USAir flight was behind the Pan Am plane, but "they did not ever refuse to take off," and changed to a different runway for takeoff after the crew saw smoke.

Mrs. Goldman said it might take six months before the board can issue its report.

Dr. Charles Odom, the Jefferson Parish coroner, completed the identification and began authorizing the release of more bodies Monday. He said 12 of the 153 victims had been positively identified by late Monday.

Odom said positive identification involved more than pairing names with bodies.

Under Louisiana law, he explained, other information and vital statistics are required before a coroner can legally certify death. This requirement was slowing procedures, especially in the cases of 54 passengers from 14 foreign countries.

(Continued on Page 5, Col. 1)

A crash victim, Lisa Baye, 6, was buried Monday. She had been playing at the home of Jennifer Schultz, 11, when the jet slammed into the neighborhood, killing both. Jennifer's mother and 7-year-old sister were critically burned.

Jennifer's body was released by authorities Sunday for private funeral services. Lisa died of burns Saturday at East Jefferson General Hospital.

"We have pain in our hearts right now," said Lisa's father, John Baye, at funeral services Monday.

The Louisiana National Guard continued bulldozing the remains of the dozen homes that were destroyed or heavily damaged by the airliner.

Lt. Johnny Henshaw said guardsmen by Monday were about 70 percent toward their goal of excavating the three square blocks of rubble.

Of the houses, only concrete foundations remained.

(Continued from Page 1)