

City's Greatest Disaster Resulted From 1913 Flood

Raging Waters Covered A Third of Logansport

Inception of the great flood of 1913 began on Good Friday, March 21, when a continuous wind storm roared in from the west. This was followed on Easter Sunday, March 23, by a heavy rain, which continued for three days and extended throughout the west central states.

By Tuesday morning, the Wabash river was out of its banks, spilling over Biddle's island and the lower portion of the town between the rivers as far as Third street. For two days the water continued to rise until the entire business district was inundated as far east as Pearl street.

The water measured 12 feet deep at the corner of Park avenue and Helm street, as well as at the Washington school on North Cicott street. It was 10 feet deep on West Broadway at Wilkinson street, near Newby's greenhouse, seven feet deep at Second and Market streets and worse still where St. Joseph and St. Luke Lutheran churches are located. The heart of Logansport's business district was gasping under four feet of water.

In sections of the downtown area and westside residential districts, the water became so dangerously swift that even large rescue boats sent by Great Lakes Naval Training station and Culver Military Academy encountered difficulty in crossing.

Practically one-third of the city was under water, which forced 1,200 families to leave their homes. Twelve houses were entirely swept away and scores more moved from their foundations or the latter undermined.

Damage in Millions

It was estimated that the loss in personal property amounted to \$120,000 alone plus \$60,000 to the houses. Losses to the downtown merchants were figured at \$3,000,000 and damaged streets and bridges added \$200,000 to the already staggering total, to say nothing about the appalling destruction to the railroads and other industries.

One life, that of Luther Maxwell, was lost as a direct result of the flood and many believe that sev-

eral deaths immediately afterwards were attributed to untimely exposure and unsanitary healthy conditions during the high waters. Thousands of irreplaceable records including birth and death records were destroyed.

Heroic rescue work, which limited the casualty list to one, was hampered by a blinding snow storm, throwing four inches of snow onto the raging waters. The mercury completed the round of hardships by plunging below the freezing mark.

The scenes in the business district resembled those of Venice or Amsterdam, where passengers are taken from the railroad station to the hotels in gondolas and people ride a boat from their doorstep to church or their place of business.

The Wabash Railroad company managed to save their bridge, but the north and south crossings together with the interurban bridge on the north branch were swept away. The Cicott street and Lewisburg bridges, the last of the old covered structures in Cass county, were destroyed.

Water was up to the three bridges across Eel river, while the Market and Third street spans could not be crossed because the approaches on both ends were flooded. Only bridge available for travel for the four days at the height of the flood was Sixth street.

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LOGANSPORT FLOOD, 1913

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