
History Of West Indianapolis

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IN DEDICATION TO ALL WHO DIED IN THE 1913 FLOOD
GOD BLESS THEM ALL

CONFIDENCE AND OPTIMISM

The location is Oliver Avenue and the surrounding community of West Indianapolis. The time is Saturday evening, March 22, 1913. The next day is not only to be a day off from a mandatory "ten hour day," "six days a week" job, but it is going to be Easter Sunday. Radio and television are not present, and even telephones are relatively rare.

Communication of news and major events is done primarily by newspapers. The newspaper editions are almost all published and distributed in the afternoon and the evenings. This makes most of the news coverage about events "twenty-four in the past." The news of the previous day's events is read at a comparatively late hour on the following day. News traveled at a much slower pace in 1913. Today, we are accustomed to CNN and other news agencies informing us of events as they are taking place anywhere in the world.

In 1913, people had to rise so early in the morning to prepare for the long work day that they rarely had time to read a morning edition of the newspaper. Few newspapers were available in the mornings. In 1913, reading a newspaper while on the job was never done. Most of the evening newspapers were read late in the day before bedtime. This "lack of time" should be noted as quotations are made from the newspapers from that era.

At this time, in 1913, West Indianapolis was in the midst of a long term real estate boom. Houses had been going up as fast as hands could build them. Many of the homes were two-story doubles built primarily for large family dwellings. Most of the houses were rentals.

A variety of businesses serviced the needs of the rapidly growing community. They were primarily located along or near the street car lines on Oliver Avenue, Morris Street, Howard Street, and on numerous side streets. These businesses supplied virtually all human needs, and the community provided for itself.

The people living in West Indianapolis in 1913 were the labor pool for the manufacturing, transportation, and service industries in the area. This area was expanding rapidly. Jobs were plentiful. Pay days were regular. Most residents were enjoying a lifestyle they would never have anticipated while growing up on the isolated farms just before the turn of the century.

The general prosperity in West Indianapolis created the opportunity to buy and enjoy such luxuries as furniture, clothing, jewelry, and other amenities. Electricity, gas and coal were used for heating. The quality and variety of food available were far superior to what most of the adults had been accustomed to when they were children. Easy access to quality dental and medical care added much to their lives. The schools were excellent. Reliable street car transportation was at virtually every door step, or a short stroll away. Restaurants, lodges, cultural events, movie houses and a number of places catering to entertainment were all nearby.

All of these things contributed to a general feeling of well-being and comfort for the residents in West Indianapolis on the Saturday evening prior to Easter Sunday in 1913.

On this particular evening before Easter in 1913, the weather report was an object of considerable interest. The annual Easter Parade was a very important event in the lives of the people during this period. The knowledge of the type of weather they might expect exercised a powerful influence on how they would plan and prepare for the holiday. March had been cold, wet, and generally gloomy. Rains had thoroughly soaked the ground throughout the state. Streams were nearly full to capacity from carrying the runoff. Sunshine had broken through the clouds early Saturday and the temperature had risen. Cautious optimism began to develop. Maybe, a pleasant Easter might be in the prospect. All that was needed was a confirmation from the weatherman.

WEATHER PREDICTIONS

The very important weather report for Easter was centered in a box on the front page of the Indianapolis News on Saturday evening, March 22, 1913. A banner in the box read,

"JUST A DEAR, THAT'S WHAT THE WEATHERMAN IS"

A sub headline said,

"PRETTY SUNSHINY DAY FOR EASTER HATS."

The weather prediction for Easter, March 23, 1913, went on to say "Fair and warmer is the weatherman's prediction for Easter. Without hesitation, the local weather bureau today sent out a prophecy that will be welcomed by all of the women in Indianapolis and vicinity who had prepared for Easter display. Fears that the weather would interfere with the annual parade of new garments were partly dispelled when today dawned bright and clear. Temperatures climbed with the sun. A banner sunshine is expected to follow. Easter will be a pretty day, smiling sunshiny sky, and with temperatures that will be pleasant enough to warrant leaving wraps at home." The page one commentary continued, "If he has his way about it, no wraps will be needed for the morning church services, but he is positive it will warm up sufficiently in the afternoon to make walking delightful without outer wraps." Had you been living in the Valley that Saturday in 1913, after reading the paper you would have gone to bed snug and sure Easter Sunday was going to be beautiful. It was confirmed in the paper in black and white.

A WET EASTER BUNNY

No Sunday edition of the Indianapolis News was published as was the usual custom. Page one of the next issue of the Indianapolis News on Monday, March 24, 1913, read, "There was almost a continuous downpour from early Sunday until after 7:00 a.m. today. At times, the rain fell in sheets. The fall was general throughout the state and the White River and Wabash River began rising early. At some points the danger point was passed Sunday afternoon. Reports to the weather bureau today anticipated they are still rising."

Not only had it rained all day on Easter Sunday, 1913, it was still raining when the men went to work Monday morning. High winds had accompanied storms and it was bitter cold. Tornadoes had struck Terre Haute about 9:30 p.m. on Easter evening. "200 PERSONS HURT: 300 HOMES WRECKED" was the banner headline on page one of the evening edition of the Indianapolis News on Monday, March 24, 1913. An explanation of what happened to the bright, sunshiny, warm Easter prediction was also contained in a box on the page of the same issue. The explanation stated, "The sudden shifting of a storm center late Saturday was responsible for the conditions in Indianapolis. When the observation was made Saturday, the low pressure was over Nevada, and there were no prospects that it would move inside of thirty-six hours, but a sudden shifting of the wind Saturday afternoon sent the storm on its eastbound journey at a rapid and almost unprecedented rate, according to the weather observer."

The distance from Las Vegas, Nevada to Indianapolis is eighteen hundred miles. Less than eighteen hours elapsed from late afternoon Saturday until the storm struck in Indianapolis on early Sunday morning. That would indicate the rate of the storm's approach would have been approximately ninety-five miles per hour. That was very hard to believe.

The local weatherman's statements and predictions left the people in West Indianapolis complacent about the kind of danger which was closing in on them in 1913. Another banner heading on the front page of the Indianapolis News Monday, March 24, 1913, read, "EAGLE CREEK HIGH; FAMILIES IN FEAR" A sub-banner read, "RESCUE WORK DONE IN BOAT." The article then described the plight of a family named Crunk who lived on the bank of Eagle Creek near the intersection of Belmont and Kentucky Avenue. "When they awakened today and looked out the windows of their one-story house, George Crunk, his daughter, Rose, George Jr., and Henry saw water all around them in a swirling yellow flood. Crunk ran to get a little better view, and his bare feet splashed in the water on the floor of the shack. An hour later, the family was taken out, the water was rising toward the mattresses on their beds. Eagle Creek was on a rampage." As the story went, Crunk's shouts for help attracted attention from the Oakley Clubhouse, where Chris Zimmerman, the former saloon keeper lived. The Oakley Club was also threatened. Zimmerman and an employee manned a punt and went to Crunk's assistance. Someone called the police and an emergency auto with a boat in tow was sent to the place. Zimmerman's little boat, however, had been sufficient and the family was taken to high land about 3:00 p.m. The Crunks had been saved by a punt.

On Monday evening, March 24, the residents in the Valley of West Indianapolis who had put in a hard ten-hour day of labor, were greeted with the news that White River was flooding some of the lowlands in the southeastern part of the city. The river had been rising two inches an hour all morning, with indications it would reach the danger mark if the rise continued. That was the only warning the residents in the Valley of West Indianapolis had regarding the eminent danger they were facing. Slightly less than two inches of rain had been recorded in Indianapolis on Easter Sunday, 1913, but nearly five times that much had fallen across the northern half of the state. Streams were pushed to their limits carrying the overflow.

OH, WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES

Eagle Creek flooded often, so the newspaper reports of flooding in that area was not particularly alarming in 1913. Valley residents also knew the White River had been high often in the past. As recently as 1904, the water in the White River had risen to about the same 17.5 foot level the weather prediction commented on in the Monday, March 24, evening editions of the newspaper. No public recommendation to evacuate the Valley area had been made. Most of the residents in the community relied on their past experiences to guide them. In the past, the Valley area had survived high water in the river. The Valley residents knew that even if they attempted to evacuate their family, acting on the side of caution, there was really no place to go. There were no preparations or plans for an emergency facility. If you were a Valley resident, you couldn't impose on someone you knew or worked with living on the safer area of the Hill community of West Indianapolis. The men in the Valley had to work every day to support their families, so evacuation in the middle of the night without anywhere to go didn't make any sense. The Valley residents may have been apprehensive, but for what seemed to be several valid reasons, they weren't alarmed enough to leave the snug warmth, and apparent safety of their homes. So, they went to bed on Monday night, March 24, 1913, to get a little rest for Tuesday's labors.

The night passed quickly and when Tuesday morning came, the streetcars were running. The levees and abutments for the bridges spanning White River had done their job keeping the water out. Flooding was taking place, but that was elsewhere in Indianapolis. The news would tell the flooding events in the evening newspaper which would be read at home after supper. The Valley, in West Indianapolis, was still holding out. That was the primary concern of the people who lived there. The morning edition of the Indianapolis Star on Tuesday March 25, 1913 read; "Police Tour Discloses Threatening Condition, but No immediate Danger. DANGER NOT IMMINENT. Notwithstanding the rapid rise in the river it was the opinion of an inspection party sent out from police headquarters early this morning that the danger of an inundation from White River is not imminent. The inspection was made along both banks of the river from Morris Street north to Michigan Street - the territory of the greatest apparent danger - and the officers said they found nothing to indicate..... " Not one word warned the people of the Valley area of West Indianapolis to leave the area.

A second article in the same edition discussed the 1904 flood and the strongest terms commented only that, "Hundreds of acres of city streets and private property were under water for hours. Houses were flooded and cellars filled with water..... Pogues Run and Pleasant Run went out of their banks. Many families were compelled to abandon their homes." That's as close as the people in West Indianapolis came to having a warning.

FATES KIND HAND

On Friday March 28, 1913 a short article in the Indianapolis Star read; "An unidentified boy was drowned while attempting to guide a canoe through the West Washington Street elevation. The water was coursing through the lowered street twenty feet deep at the rate of fifty miles an hour, according to report. When the lad shot into the aperture his boat struck a post and was

overturned. His body was hurled over and over as it was swept along by the current, and finally disappeared entirely."

In 1913 the first breaktrough of the river on the west side was north of Washington Street. The water ripped west down Washington Street, and shot through the underpass at Harding Street. The old river bed still existed, and the water began to follow it. As the water followed this path it had to cross two sets of elevated railroad tracks north of Oliver Avenue. The raised railroad embankments acted like levees, and helped to break some of the waters destructive power before it tore holes through parts of the roadbed.

After the water broke through the railroad embankments it flowed south down the high banks of the east side of Belmont Street. The surging mass finally reached Rhodius Park where the old sledding hill on the south side of the Park forced it to turn east, toward the Valley. Still another portion of the waters force was then absorbed as it spread out over the low land north of Rhodius Park. One last barrier had to be crossed before the water could sweep into the Valley of West Indianapolis. The elevation of the roadbed for the tracks of the Belt Railroad running north and south along Harding Street acted as one final levee to break the waters force. The water finally began to pour across the top of the Belt Railroad roadbed and into the streets of the Valley. Most of the people in the Valley hadn't had time to read the Tuesday evening edition of the Indianapolis News on March 25, 1913. The floods first waters began spilling down the streets of the Valley just about the time in the evening when the working people would have had any time to read the paper. Instead of reading they were running for their lives.

If anyone who is reading this account had a mother living in the Valley at that time they can count their blessings. Fates kind hand had broken the primary force of the rivers first surge into the valley, and the residents were given a chance to escape. Had that water hit with it's full force huge numbers of people in the Valley would have been killed outright. If our mothers had been killed by that first wall of water we would not have been born. Many of us are alive today because of the elevated railroad beds north of Oliver Avenue and east of Harding Street. You might make a little trip to look at the primary reason you are alive today, and give a little thanks that we were treated so kindly.

That first wall of water flowing down Oliver Avenue, quickly reached the back side of the levee just west of Oliver Avenue bridge. The water began to pile up behind the levee. The men working on the levee, as well as many onlookers were caught completely by surprise by the water coming in from behind them. About one hundred of these individual raced across the Oliver Avenue bridge to the east side of the river as fast as they could move. By this time the water was flowing down streets leading from Oliver Avenue to Morris Street.

MARSHAL MARTIN MAKES A RUN FOR IT

Page eight of the Wednesday edition of the Indianapolis News on March 26, 1913 told the tale. "FLEE FROM FOUR FOOT TIDE" , "RESIDENTS PURSUED BY WATER WALL DOWN AVENUE" The article continues, "A wall of water about four feet high swept down Oliver Avenue last evening about 6:30 P.M. Residents scurried into their homes, or ran down the avenue to safety over the Oliver Avenue bridge. Among those who beat the water in

the race and succeeded in getting to the bridge was Thomas E. Martin, Deputy United States Marshal. Martin, who lives at 509 Marion Ave., had gone out to see whether his sister needed assistance in moving her effects when he saw a wall of water coming at him from Oliver Avenue. The individuals who had turned and ran into their homes quickly found the advantages a two story house could offer, a high place to flee from the water. Those individuals living in single story cottages found themselves facing critical danger if the water level increased.

DEATHS HAND DESCENDS

My mothers family lived in the 1100 block of River Avenue in 1913 in a single story cottage. My Mother was the youngest of eight children and as the water began flowing down River Avenue her father hoisted her to his shoulders and began leading his family out of the house to safety. Before he had walked the length of the porch on the side of the house the water had reached the upper level of the steps leading up to the porch. In the darkness of early evening my grandfather, Philander Gray, led his family through the cold swirling water toward Morris Street which was less than a block away. As the group reached Morris Street the current of the water turned west flowing toward Harding Street. With their children in tow he and his wife followed it. When they reached the Belt Railroad tracks on Morris Street which was one block away the water was flowing across the tracks and had covered the area in front of the Fire Engine House on the corner of Morris and Harding Streets. They managed to cover that last barrier of water which was less than a city block in length, and cold, wet, and frightened they stepped dripping out of the water. They were greeted almost immediately by families and individuals from the Hill area of West Indianapolis who had responded quickly. All of the refugees fleeing from the Valley were escorted to shelter to get them out of the elements. These events happened in a brief span of 15 to 20 minutes and everyone was still bewildered.

My Mothers family was taken to shelter in the Church on the corner of Blaine Ave. and Morris Street. Others were taken to Assumption School, private homes, lodge halls, and school #46 on the corner of Howard and Reisner Streets.

With his family safe my grandfather returned to the foot of the flood waters and waded up Morris Street against the current of the flood. He went back across the Belt Railroad tracks and returned to his home. He had left his eldest son behind to move the family's furniture to a higher spot in the house hoping to protect it from flood waters. They spent approximately two hours moving more furniture. Those two hours proved to be the vital difference between living and dying. The father and son left the house at about 10:00 P.M. and waded toward Morris Street. They were caught in a sudden surge of water when the levee broke near the Morris Street Bridge. My grandfather and his son were swept away in a ten to fifteen foot current, but managed to grab hold of the switching tower which was on the N.E. side of the Belt Railroad tracks. They pulled themselves up out of the swift current of the icy water and stayed in or on the tower in their wet and cold clothes for an unknown length of time. They were alive, at least for awhile.

SCREAMS IN THE NIGHT

Page fourteen of the March 26, 1913 edition of the Indianapolis News describes what may have the most tragic death scene of the entire 1913 flood. "I.C. Huddleston, one of a rescue party working in the west Morris Street area, saw the bodies of a man, a woman, and two children in the first house east of the Belt Railroad. The four had evidently been caught in a small house and forced against the ceiling by the high water." They must have assumed that the first wave of the flood was all that was going to happen. They had ample opportunity to abandon their house for safety a few hundred feet away. The people in that house were so close to safety, and had no way of knowing as much as ten or fifteen more feet of water was going to come their way. They must have felt safe until the very end when water suddenly began pouring in through the doors and windows with such force that escape was impossible.

That house was precisely across the street from the switching tower where my grandfather and his son had found safety from the swirling waters. It is possible they heard the screams of those people and felt they just had to try to get across those last few hundred feet of water to safety at Harding Street. At some point they slipped back into the water. They managed to cross the Belt Railroad tracks together. It was less than a city block to safety. A minute or two later the oldest son, in dripping clothes waded out of the darkness and was greeted by rescuers as he emerged from the water at Harding and Morris Street. His father, my grandfather, had slipped beneath the waters unseen in those last few feet. The son and the family thought he was still alive and had been taken to other shelter by rescuers. Only days later did they find out he had died in those last few feet. The family of eight children was left destitute because of a futile attempt to save household furniture.

THE CLOTHES PROP RESCUE

A much more pleasant story was told on page seven of the same edition, March 26, 1913. It read, "A young hero is Doris Hoppe, eighteen years old living at 801 River Avenue. Young Hoppe had worked all night at rescuing flood sufferers. He had a small skiff and used a clothes prop as an oar. About midnight, he shifted his boat from house to house in the flooded district and finally pulled up for a peep through the transom of a cottage on River Avenue. In the glare of the street light, he saw a woman who was on the opposite side of the room standing on a piano. She was knee deep in water. Hoppe pushed the pole through the transom and the woman took hold. Instead of going forward, the woman pulled back. Young Hoppe was jerked through the transom, but he managed to keep his toes in the boat and recovered his balance. He then pulled the woman through the transom into his boat and delivered her to the ambulance waiting at the Oliver Avenue Bridge."

THE LITTLE OLD WOMAN WHO LIVED IN A SHOE

Page fourteen of the Indianapolis News, March 26, 1913, relates "Thirteen Children From One House: Mrs. Jesse Zehr, Mrs. Louise Scaif and thirteen children were taken from a house at

1062 McCarty Street by men in boats this morning. The house was on higher ground than the other houses in the area so people sought refuge in it during the night."

RESCUING THE RESCUERS

Rescuers only had four feet of water to contend with in the beginning of the 1913 flood. The water in White River, on the river side of the levees, was fifteen or twenty feet deeper than the water which had collected on the back side of the levees. The pressure was finally too much and the levee broke on the north side of the Morris Street Bridge at about 10:00 p.m. A huge wave of water poured through the break and created dangerous currents which overturned many of the boats of rescuers. Then the rescuers had to be rescued.

After the levee broke, the water level rose to a depth of ten or fifteen feet in a very short period. The people who had remained in their homes after the first flooding were trapped. They were forced into the upper floors, attics, or out onto the roofs of their home. The water flowing down Morris Street was such a raging torrent the rescue boats from the area of Blaine Avenue and Morris Street could not begin to penetrate the current for some time. The levee had also broken south of the Morris Street Bridge on the west side of the river. The Valley was being pounded with water.

Inexperienced boatmen overturned their craft repeatedly in the swift current at Drover Street. Precious time was needed to rescue the boatmen who clung to telephone poles and porch verandahs. Three rescuers told a harrowing story of a sleepless night of terror, within hearing distance of cries for help and revolver shots fired as distress signals. EDITOR'S NOTE: These are quotes from page fourteen of the Indianapolis News, Wednesday evening, March 26, 1913.

Joel Baker, an Indiana University student, was on his way to Indianapolis and was marooned on the Hill in West Indianapolis. He was working with the rescue party on Blaine Avenue. He said that at that place, nineteen rowboats and one motorboat were being used in the rescue work. The bodies of two babies and three men had been taken out. The boats were able to take out about three persons at a time, he reported. (Ibid page one)

THE YOUNG AND THE OLD

Stanley Faulkner, a young volunteer who manned a lifeboat in the water-stricken district around Oliver Avenue, told of seeing the form of a little baby pass by the boat while he was bearing an elderly man to safety. Faulkner said, "I had got the man who was ill and had to be carried to the lifeboat on a cot from his home on Division Street. I was returning to Oliver Avenue. As we passed Warren Avenue, I was having trouble keeping the boat in the street because of the many eddying currents. I saw the body of the child carried by a swift current pass by my side of the boat within two yards of my hands. I tried to reach it, but it was swiftly carried beyond my reach by the stream into the darkness. The child still had its clothes on and appeared to be about one year old." (Page fourteen of the Indianapolis News, March 26, 1913)

FROM BAD TO WORSE

The people actually had from 6:30 p.m. that evening in 1913 until around 10:00 p.m. to make their way to safety through the first engulfing flood waters. A three and one half grace period had also given people on both sides of the river the opportunity to round up boats and begin rescues. Then the two breaks in the levee near the Morris Street Bridge let in much higher and more dangerous water. The water pouring in from these breaks started the worst and most dangerous stage of the 1913 flood. It was this surge that raised the level of the flood waters to between ten and fifteen feet, which trapped people inside of their single-story houses and cut off any routes to escape except by boat. Those individuals who hadn't fled to safety before the big break in the levee were the people who suffered most from the 1913 flood.

BOATS

Boats had to be found and crews recruited to man them with exceptional speed. All of this had to be done in the middle of the night. Confusion abounded and officially organized activities for assistance simply weren't present, or were minimal for quite some time. The ordinary people, or maybe not so ordinary people, living in West Indianapolis had to rise to the occasion. They did so in splendid fashion. Skilled carpenters on the Hill district organized themselves and began building boats and making homemade oars, immediately. Boat crews were formed, places for shelter were opened, care for those suffering from exposure was provided. (Page fourteen of the Indianapolis News, Wednesday, March 26, 1913) All of this was done quickly and effectively.

After being alerted about the situation in the Valley, the Superintendent of Police Hyland ordered trucks sent to every place he knew which owned boats. Around one hundred and fifty boats were requisitioned by the police and taken to the flood front on West Washington Street, Oliver Avenue, and Morris Street. About thirty canoes were supplied by a sporting goods company. The graceful little craft did excellent work in skillful hands. Knowing how to maneuver in currents and wind was a challenge for men not accustomed to handling canoes in rough waters. Many of these boats were overturned and carried away by currents. There were a dozen instances in which these boats overturned and were carried away near the Oliver Avenue Bridge while the flood was at it's worst.

Page one of the Indianapolis News, Wednesday, March 26, 1913, shows one of the boats and the people being rescued. The title over the picture read, "Mother and Children Safe." The line below the picture read, "Scene of Rescue Work Near Oliver Avenue Bridge in West Indianapolis." Mrs. Jessie Zehr and children were rescued from 1062 McCarty Street by patrolman Atkinson, in the stern of the boat, and an assistant who said he was "too busy" to give his name. The picture was taken as they approached the Morris Street Bridge in West Indianapolis. The picture shows the woman clutching a bundled child and several other children surrounding her in the center of the boat. Mr. Atkinson is wearing a top hat, and his assistant a flat hat. They are in the vicinity of School #48 which is immersed in water. The boat is loaded so heavily that the water is just inches out of the water. Mrs. Zehr was one of the women mentioned in the rescue involving thirteen children. At least, three or four of the children are in this boat.

Another picture, was titled, "Men Who Earned Honors by Their Work in Rescuing Victims of Flood Last Week." The men were William R. Harryman, Sergeant Harry Franklin, Harry Bly, Jack Lang and Larry Dorrence. The story line below the pictures said "Harry Franklin, Sergeant of Police, and William R. Harryman, Clerk in Superior Court Room One, were among the first rescuers reaching the west side when the water was at its highest. The men courted death when they left the landings on the flood front. People worked tirelessly on the "Hill" in West Indianapolis and made a host of friends by their unselfish efforts on behalf of refugees. Refugees were carried from roofs and second floors. Harry Bly, who handled either a rowboat or canoe with facility, was one of the few men on whom leaders could always depend to save them during the trying days of the flood. Bly always returned with a boat load when he went out on the water. Once, in an attempt to rescue a man clinging to a telegraph pole, Bly was thrown in the water. He was rescued and taken to a warm office where he changed his clothing and went back to work."

Larry Dorrence and Jack Lang were two young men of the sort one read about in fiction. Dorrence was in the railroad yards waiting for a train to take him to Owensboro, Kentucky, his home, when the flood threatened to sweep away the railroad yards. He delayed the departure to work forty-eight hours without food or sleep, rowing a boat and rescuing people from the water. As a result of his work, Dorrence was ill and delirious on Saturday. Father Weber put him to bed in the schoolhouse where scores of the hungry and suffering refugees had found a haven. Lang nursed him back to strength. Jack Lang had been busy since the first danger of the flood. He was called "papa" by a waif who came out of the flood. She was another of a score of the sick who were attended by Lang and brought safely through the most desperate experience of their lives. (Page Four, Indianapolis News, Wednesday, April 2, 1913)

Frank Hulse, in another rowboat, had been the man who had rescued C.K. Doney and Harry Bly after they had been clinging to a telegraph pole for fifteen minutes. The current had been so swift, it was almost impossible to keep a boat from overturning. Hulse rescued the two men, and then got his boat back to the waters of Oliver Avenue. His boat was swept three blocks before he got it under control again. "Hulse was probably the most expert boatman among the rescuers." (Page Fourteen, Indianapolis News, March 26, 1913)

It had taken the efforts of the very best boatman to save the life of Harry Bly whom himself had saved so many. Sadly, some of the boatmen weren't as fortunate as Bly. "George Smith, a volunteer boatman, thrown into the water last night by the capsizing of a rescue boat, died at the hospital later. He worked heroically and carried scores from the district. He was found by another rescue boat clinging to the branches of a tree near Oliver Avenue and Holly Street." He died of exposure while in the hospital (Page Eight, Indianapolis News, March 27, 1913)

SILENCE FINALLY CAME TO THE WATERS

At 1:30 a.m., of the first night of the flood snow fell. Practically all of the rescuers were forced to stop work because of the extreme danger from overexposure and their inability to see in the snow. Water currents had become so strong they were threatening the lives of the men in the boats. Many persons remained in the flooded district directly west of the bridge. Most of the persons were on the roofs of their homes or in the upper stories according to the rescuers. "Cries

of distress were heard from all sides during the early hours of the night, but as the night wore on, the cries became fewer and feebler, and at 3:00 a.m., there was stillness in the flooded district.” (Ibid) Not every aspect of the rescues was so extremely serious in tone.

MAN'S BEST FRIEND

“The rescue of a valuable bird dog belonging to Wade H. Martin by William E. Reily showed that a dumb animal does not crave a watery grave. Reily in a canoe going over the flooded district near the Oliver Avenue Bridge, heard the dog whining and yelping. The dog was finally found in a large shed almost covered with water. Reily chopped a hole in the roof and found the dog floating on a huge box. After the dog had been rescued, it would not leave Reily's side. Again, and again, the dog jumped up on Reily pawing him fondly. The owner of the dog places its value at more than \$100.00 and was overjoyed to find the dog had been saved.” (Page Nine, Indianapolis News, March 27, 1913) (Editor's note: The owner of that dog was Jean and Jack Martins' father.)

“Another valuable animal was saved late in the afternoon on the second day of the flood when a race horse owned by Ben Sanders was brought to the Oliver Avenue landing. Sanders owned a number of fine horses, and had started for dry land with three of them. Two got away, one being the horse which was rescued. Men in a canoe found the horse standing in water on the porch of a house surrounded by water. The horse had climbed up on the porch and was trying to get in the house. The animal was pawing at the door when found.” (Page Nine, Indianapolis News, March 27, 1913) A second story concerning horses did not end as well as the one above. “William Geyer of 1310 Nordyke Avenue, was drowned about 9:30, Wednesday night, near his home. He undertook to swim two horses out of the flood, but he and the horses were caught in the swift current and all disappeared. His body has not been recovered.”

(Page Eight, Indianapolis News, March 27, 1913)

MAN CANNOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE

The boatmen in the 1913 flood experienced many unexpected responses to their attempts at rescues. Some examples are in the following quotations from the Indianapolis News. “Now and then a beady-eyed man thrust his face to a window at the second story of a business block and asked the passing boats, not for bread, but for whisky, as his stock had run low.” (Page Eight, Indianapolis News, March 27, 1913)

“William Irgang, 130 E. McCarty Street, fell out of his canoe. He was brought to the dog pound where he was taken care of. He reported that an elderly man was playing a violin in a house half submerged in water and he refused to be taken out.” (Page Nine, Indianapolis News, March 27, 1913) Another boatman reported that several persons were in a house playing a piano and that they refused to be moved. (Page Nine, Indianapolis News, March 27, 1913) After darkness had settled one boatman saw a light in the second story of a house. The canoe came alongside a second story window and the boatman knocked. No reply was heard and the window was broken in. This aroused one of the two men who were in the house and one of them roundly cursed the boatman. Neither man would come out. One boatman told of passing a two-story house submerged above the tops of the lower windows, and hearing a player piano and the sound

of children singing. He stopped and tried to reach a point where he could attract attention. He said someone looked out of the windows and shouted a refusal when he offered the assistance of his boat." (Page Eight, Indianapolis, News, March 27, 1913)

"Several boatmen, who paddled to the Oliver Avenue landing just before midnight, told of a man who stepped from the second story and sang shrilly: WHEN I GET YOU HOME TONIGHT" (Ibid)

"It was evident many of the boatmen said that there was plenty to drink in some localities in the flooded districts, and many men who refused to leave were more or less under the influence of liquor. Some of these refused to leave in the spirit of bravado. Many of these, it is believed, found reason to repent during the cold hours of the night." (Page Eight, Indianapolis News, March 27, 1913)

The volunteer boatmen did amazing work, "A rescue party traversed all of Silver and Nordyke Avenues in a boat and reported that everybody was out of the houses in both streets, and that they failed to find any dead. Two women and one child were taken from the roof of a house in the 1200 block, Morris Street, in the night by a rescuing party. They were suffering terribly from the cold and exposure and one woman, whose name was not disclosed, was unconscious. The other woman fainted after being taken from the roof. All were removed to the Stockyards Hotel, where both women were revived, but they were reported as being in critical condition." (Ibid)

REFUGEES IN STOCKYARDS HOTEL

"More three hundred flood refugees were housed in the Stockyard Hotel, and a supply boat went to the Indianapolis Abattoir for provisions. This boat was filled and hurried back to the hotel. Three women, six men and three children were found to be in Wolf's Hall on the corner of Morris Street and Nordyke Avenue. In the morning a relief boat was sent over from the Oliver Avenue Bridge to ascertain their needs and to take provisions to them." (Ibid)

"The body of a woman, face downward, floated down White River at 8:00 Wednesday morning and passed under Morris Street Bridge. It was seen by soldiers and others at the bridge." (Page Eight, Indianapolis News, March 27, 1913)

During Tuesday night, March 25, 1913, virtually all rescue efforts were conducted by individuals operating on their own. City officials were mainly occupied with helping the refugees from the flood and finding places of refuge and resources. By dawn the next day, city officials had managed to get themselves organized to conduct the rescue operations. The Indianapolis News read, "HUNDREDS CRYING FOR HELP. When organized rescue work was begun today in flooded cold West Indianapolis, more than five hundred people, who had braved the night in second and third stories, were crying for help. A storm of snow and sleet increased suffering from cold, hunger and fatigue, and indicated that the final death list would be much larger than has been estimated." (Page Eight, Indianapolis News, March 27, 1913) One

individual, previously mentioned, did not want bread, but the people of West Indianapolis who were cut off from outside resources needed bread very badly.

THE STAFF OF LIFE

"One thousand loaves of bread and other supplies were sent into the flooded section of West Indianapolis by Lieutenant Charles Barmfuhrer, of the police, who was in charge of the Oliver Avenue Bridge. His instructions to boatmen were to remove only those who were ill from exposure and women and children. Men who had refused persistently the day before to leave the flood were to be left to the last day." Barmfuhrer obviously was a working cop and not playing political games or he never would have made such a clear-cut and strait-laced order which freed the boatmen from that portion of the decision making process."
(Page Eight, Indianapolis News, March 27, 1913)

Another banner over a paragraph in the Indianapolis News read, "Yeast for a Baker." The article continues, "William Harryman, Clerk for Judge Orbison's room of Superior Court, brought word that persons west of the flooded district, near Belmont Avenue, were without bread, but a baker out there said he would bake all the bread needed if he could get the yeast. A large quantity of yeast was sent to the Oliver Avenue landing, then taken to the baker by boat." (Ibid) The baker then prepared a large amount of bread. It was distributed to anyone who needed it, including the hundreds of refugees being housed in the Hill area of West Indianapolis, in both public and private areas.

THE BOATMAN

Many of the boatmen, whom were attempting rescues, suffered a worse fate than those they attempted to rescue. "Art Smith, Harry Drew, and Paul Ritchie tried to row a boat through the swift current of the flood yesterday to relieve the men in the Nordyke Marmon Plant, but their boat was capsized and they were thrown into the water. They swam a block to a house, and today they were rescued." (Page Nine, Indianapolis News, March 27, 1913) Those men spent one terrible, wet, cold night waiting for a rescue and could have died of exposure. Clarence Burns was not as fortunate. "The body of a man recovered by the police from a pool in the lowlands west of Harding Street and south of Washington Street was positively identified in the city morgue last night as Clarence Burns, twenty-eight years old. He drowned while trying to rescue two men who had sought refuge on the crossbar of a telephone pole. Carl Rogers, 1106 North Germania Avenue, was in the boat with Burns."

"Burns and Rogers started in a canoe late Tuesday, and had rescued several women and children when their attention was attracted to the men hanging on the pole. The swift current upset the canoe and Rogers and Burns were thrown into the water. Rogers saved himself by grabbing a raft. Burns was seen to sink, and persons who had seen the two men in the canoe told the police their names were Rogers and Childers. James Felton, 534 Miley Avenue, stepfather of the young man, identified the body. He said Burns was of a roving disposition, and had returned home about two weeks ago. Rogers had partly identified the body as the man who was with him when the canoe capsized, but was unable to tell who his companion had been."
(Indianapolis News, Wednesday, April 2, 1913) It is amazing how these men had joined together

to conduct perilous rescues and had not even taken the time to introduce themselves to each other. They simply hurried about their business, and didn't bother about such minor details as introductions.

BIKER AND BARRISTER - INDY 400

“Experience and nerve gained in handling a fast flying motorcycle in the country's race tracks and knowledge of a power boat stood the people of the Westside in good stead last week. Billy Teuber, a former Indiana motorcycle racer, and Cass Conway, Indianapolis lawyer and power boat owner, took over four hundred people away from their inundated dwellings Tuesday night and Wednesday. Teuber was in Indianapolis attending the motorcycle section of the auto show when Conway offered to man the power boat supplied by G.H. Westling and Teuber joined him. They were in the boat practically twenty hours, most of the time without a raincoat. Their feet were in the water in the bottom of the boat all of the time, neither of them having boots. It was fortunate for the stricken district that the power boat was available, as not many rowboats were available, nor was it possible to use them in some of the rougher water.” (Indianapolis News, April 2, 1913) Over and over, the so-called “ordinary citizens” acted quickly, were decisive, self-sacrificing, and concerned to help their fellow man.

THE FLOOD REVEALS THE SLIME

The same cannot be said for the State's Governor. He equivocated, was indecisive, showed a deep indifference for the well-being of those in peril, was self-serving, and thwarted the attempts of others to aid and assist the very citizens he was sworn to protect. *As a politician, he was a blood brother to the same variety which exists so commonly in our present society. He cloaked his behavior in the same terms and methods used yet in 1997. Eighty-four years has passed, but this type of public figure is just as prevalent and successful in being elected now as they were in 1913. I think this is partly due to the fact they speak a different language than the rest of us, more nebulous in nature, and are always cautious to present themselves in the best light possible no matter how far off the course of normal human behavior their activities might be. They surround themselves in caution and perceive possible threats to themselves which normal citizens fail to even understand. They practice a skulk kind of survival which is uncanny. In this sense, Governor Ralston was more typical than deferent from other politicians. Some examples follow.*

“Governor Ralston and the Quartermaster General of the National Guard made a trip along the east bank of the river across from the flood district.” (Page Fourteen, Indianapolis News, March 26, 1913) The article continues, “The Governor inspected all of the bridges over the river.” This means the governor looked at the bridges and ascertained they were still present. “At the Morris Street Bridge, John J. Walsh, State Factory Inspector, met the Governor. Mr. Walsh told the Governor, that the Morris Street Bridge is out of plumb.” (Page Fourteen, Indianapolis News, March 26, 1913) **Emphasis: Translated this meant the rushing water had pushed the Morris Street Bridge sideways, and it was in danger of being swept into the river at any minute.**

While carpenters were building a half dozen rescue boats in the middle of the night on the Hill in West Indianapolis, and men were out rescuing flood victims and being capsized and killed, the Governor issued this proclamation, "A statewide appeal for aid for the flood stricken districts both in Indianapolis and the cities over the state, may be issued by Governor Ralston. The Governor was hesitating whether to have the supplies sent to a central station in this city, or have them sent to the flood districts where they were needed. (Page One, Indianapolis News, March 26, 1913)

The people in West Indianapolis had leaped into action to aid flood victims within an hour the night of the flood. The Governor, however, was still struggling more than a day and a half later about the issue of possibly losing control over the distribution of the relief supplies the flood victims needed so desperately. He was worried that some glitch might spring up concerning the method of distribution and then criticism might fall on him. He followed the safest course. He equivocated. You decide where the real leadership was in the life and death struggle of the 1913 flood. The outstanding people of West Indianapolis who answered the call to duty quickly, and with amazing good sense were the true leaders.

Having peered on the flood district and victims from the east side of the river on Wednesday, the Governor returned to his office and apparently pondered his next action. His next act came shortly. Numerous sources from surrounding states were aware of the hardships being suffered by the flood victims and were aware they would be in need of assistance. They eagerly offered all forms and varieties of assistance. The governor's next act was to reject all of these offers out-of-hand. (Page Eight, Indianapolis News, April 3, 1913)

Mayor Shank had been truly remarkable in assembling every resource in Indianapolis as quickly and effectively as possible to assist the people in the flood districts. With all that was being done, it was obvious to the City Council, the Chamber of Commerce, the business community, the churches, and other agencies that the city resources were strained beyond their capacity trying to meet immediate needs of the flood victims. These agencies were also aware that the city lacked the resources which would be needed to bring the stricken communities back to a healthy productive state. After the flood discussions to this effect were made in both the City Council and Chamber of Commerce meetings as was told in the Indianapolis News during the first week of April 1913. You have to ask what was going through the Governor's mind when he so quickly and totally rejected all outside assistance to the flood victims or the city. Two articles revealed the sources which appear to have been shaping the Governor's decision making process.

LEFT, BUT NOT HIGH AND DRY

A headline on page three of the Indianapolis News, April 2, 1913, read, "Effort to Correct False Impressions." A second heading read, "To Counteract Flood Scare." The article continues, "The wholesale trade division of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce has issued a statement under the heading, "The Truth About Indianapolis," in which all if its members are urged to help in counteracting the mistaken impression that Indianapolis business is paralyzed by the flood." A splinter portion of the business community was alarmed that reports on the flooding of Indianapolis would hurt their business. They appeared to have gained the ear of the

governor and convinced him that accepting outside aid for flood victims would do damage to their business operations. The governor's refusal to accept aid for the battered people added to their suffering from cold, hunger, loss of furnishings, and lack of clothing. It compounded the peoples' losses, and cut off several avenues of potential recovery. All of this was done in order to keep the image of commerce shiny. Had the shoe been on the other foot, you can be sure the governor would have organized some sort of relief for commerce. As if this wasn't enough damage, these individuals did more damage to the community at large. On Thursday, April 3, 1913, page eight of the Indianapolis News carried a banner headline that read, "Jury Investigation of Flood Reports." The article continued, "Grand Jury Empowered to Require Managers of Telegraph Companies to Produce Copy." The text read, "A grand jury investigation to ascertain whether newspapers in other cities and towns published libelous reports concerning the flood situation in Indianapolis last week." The flood had been shown in pictures covering vast regions. The pictures of several collapsed bridges were also published. The numerous deaths from the flood were listed. The heroics and tragedies reported and the largely amazing attempts of the people to recover had been described. Indianapolis had a very real emergency on it's hands.

NO BRIDGES TO CROSS

Washington Street Bridge over White River was the first bridge leading to the Westside to wash out in 1913. Of course, the Morris Street Bridge was closed because it was "out of plumb." The Kentucky Avenue Bridge was closed when the levee broke Tuesday night, March 25, 1913. Oliver Avenue Bridge was closed Wednesday morning about 10:00 p.m. when a portion of its western abutment was washed away. The levee began to cave in south of it letting water pour through in a raging torrent. West Indianapolis had lost its bridges connecting it to the city.

DOCTOR'S HOUSE CALLS

A short article on page seven of the Indianapolis News, Thursday, March 27, 1913, has a headline, "Doctor Crosses Flood." The article explains how Dr. Fletcher Hodges had a patient in Haughville which he treated on Wednesday morning shortly after the Oliver Avenue Bridge was closed. People had just been crossing the bridge before the police and army troops refused to allow anyone to cross. Dr. Hodges was not pleased by the refusal of passage since there were no other bridges to cross. Thus, with an uncommon single set of mind, he decided to cross the mad waters of raging White River on the Vandalia Railroad Bridge. The Vandalia Railroad Bridge is the first railroad bridge north of Oliver Avenue just past the dam, looking toward town. This bridge was also in danger of being swept away by the river. Railroad cars had been pushed on it to strengthen it like vertebrae in a spine. Dr. Hodges crossed the Vandalia Railroad Bridge walking over the top of the railroad cars with the swirling waters of the river just beneath him. Officials had thought about using that bridge for evacuation, but decided against it. They felt people might lose their equilibrium and fall through the spaces between the railroad ties. They then would have been swept to a certain death by the river.

Dr. Hodges' determination apparently overcame any fear or reservation he might have felt. He managed to get across the bridge and then was held up by the water in a washout of the

railroad's roadbed west of the bridge. He finally worked his way to Haughville and served his patient. When he turned back toward Indianapolis, he had to cross the flood in a skiff at a point near the Hominy Mills on West Michigan Street. In the course of his trip, he reported he encountered a dozen, flood bound freight cars filled with squealing hogs, a rooster perched on a house far from dry land, persons being taken from the second-story homes, and one old man who appeared to have been driven insane by the disappearance of his relatives. The Vandalia Railroad Bridge, which Dr. Hodges had crossed on foot to reach his patient, collapsed into the river after he crossed it. He not only was a man of focus, but he was a very lucky man.

SHELTERS FOR THE VICTIMS

The people fleeing the flood waters of the Valley in West Indianapolis in 1913 were sheltered at the first point of safety they could reach. These points varied considerably in nature according to information contained in the Indianapolis News evening editions from Wednesday, March 26, through Thursday, April 3, 1913. The following points were listed. The people who lived near School #47 on Drover Street, Nordyke Street, and Kentucky Avenue south of Morris Street ended up in the Abbitor south of the Morris Street Bridge. People from other locations were housed in the Piel Brothers Starch Company, the Stockyards Hotel, south of where Miller Street intersects Kentucky Avenue, and the Nordyke Morman Plant on Kentucky Avenue. Those refugees in the Abbitor had the best supply of food and other comforts. Those in the Stockyards Hotel were better cared for and were very comfortable. The Stockyards Hotel housed more than three hundred people, while the Abbitor housed approximately five hundred people.

The people living on either side of Oliver Avenue on River Avenue, Birch Avenue, Holly Avenue, Marion Avenue, and Warren Avenue that fled out on foot across the Oliver Avenue Bridge were housed primarily in Thomlison Hall next to the City Market in back of the present City County Building. There were five or six hundred people there. The people living in the vicinity of School #48 on River Avenue, Division Street, and Ray Street had managed to get out on foot in the floods first waves, were housed in the church on the corner of Blaine and Reisner Streets, Assumption School, Red Man's Hall, School #46, on the corner of Howard and Reisner Streets, Lodge Halls on the corner of Blaine and Howard Streets, and Blaine and Morris Streets. Two hundred people were housed in School #46. Two hundred more people were sheltered in the church on Blaine and Morris Streets which later had to be evacuated when the flood waters began to pour into the half basement of the church. A little less than one hundred people were housed at Assumption School. A number of people were also housed in other areas not mentioned. Nearly one thousand people were fed at School #46 which was everyone housed in the buildings mentioned, and from many, many private homes.

About eighty people were trapped in the second floor of the tavern at the corner of Morris and Division Streets in a refuge called Wulf's Hall. The floor of Wulf's Hall collapsed, but no one was injured. Some people were trapped in the Parry Manufacturing Plant where the present Chevrolet Truck Plant is now located. Others were trapped in the Martin Forging Plant on Harding Street below Oliver Avenue. All of these included about two thousand five hundred households. It can be assumed as many as fifteen hundred or more people remained trapped in their homes, or were in other places not listed in the newspapers in 1913. This accounting fits well with the estimates listed in the newspapers of about three thousand households or fifteen

thousand flood victims. One of the things the flood victims wanted most was blankets. The next thing they most wanted was food. They also wanted to know what was happening, and newspapers were the best source. Copies were handed from person to person and the contents were consumed. Of course, the flood victims were reading about other flood victims. The following are some flood stories from the newspapers.

FEATHER YOUR NEST

(Indianapolis News, Page Eight, Wednesday, April 1, 1913) "Romey May, age twenty-six, rescued 122 persons. His boat was tipped by a woman who carried a keg. The keg slipped from her arms and when she felt it going she made a move that tipped the boat. May went to her rescue, and they both drowned."

A SWINGING TIME

(Indianapolis News, Page Fourteen, March 26, 1913) "Two men who climbed a telephone pole on the westside of Fall Creek near Indiana Avenue, attempted to cross the creek by swinging hand-over-hand on the wires. They narrowly escaped being killed when one of the poles broke and fell. The men were near the east side of the stream however, and they were able to reach the ground safely."

SNARL, SNARL

(Indianapolis News, Page Twenty, Thursday, April 2, 1913) "Mayor Shank has announced the order of the City Board of Health to muzzle all dogs on and after today will not be enforced until further notice. Dealers have been unable to obtain a supply of muzzles owing to confusion in transportation. The mayor says the police department is so busy at this time with cleaning up the flooded districts, that it cannot give attention to the muzzling of dogs."

KA-BOOM

(Indianapolis News, Page Twenty, Thursday, April 2, 1913) "A utility shed, which had been located beside the railroad tracks, broke free and floated twenty-seven miles before it came to rest in a farmer's field when the waters receded. The farmer hammered the lock off and opened the door. He found a ton of dynamite inside. He raced to the telephone and insisted authorities remove it immediately."

PUMPED UP FOR A WEDDING

(Indianapolis News, Tuesday, April 1, 1913) "Faced by the fact there was no car or train running to take himself and his bride from their home at Sellersburg to Jeffersonville to obtain a marriage license, Maurice L. Smith borrowed a handcar used by trackmen, and with Miss Nellie Keith, they made the trip to the city. In order that they might start their honeymoon, they were married. Husband and bride then left for Sellersburg on the handcar."

HUNG OUT TO DRY

(Indianapolis News, Page Eight, April 3, 1913) "Charles Lewis and William Laramore, two junk dealers, who took a carpet from a home in the flooded district when the family which had returned left it outdoors to air and dry. They were fined one dollar and costs and sentenced to sixty days in the workhouse."

JUST LET IT ALL HANG OUT

(Indianapolis News, Page Ten, April 2, 1913) "The call for clothing contributions for the flood victims was very successful, but some garments were badly worn. Many persons had contributed to seatless trousers. One of the kind women working in the distribution said, "Now maybe that came from some person who actually needed it himself, but thought someone else might need it worse."

JUST JACK HER UP

(Indianapolis News, Tuesday, April 1, 1913) "STICKS TO HER POST AND WARNS FARMERS TO FLEE. Miss Velva Stallings, telephone operator stayed at her post with water swirling around her chair. The switchboard had been elevated several feet to get it out of the water, and Miss Stallings chair had been jacked up to keep her from getting wet. Miss Stallings sat at her post until she had warned all of the farmers in the vicinity that the Illinois Central embankment had broken and they must flee for their lives."

THAT'S A HEAP

(Indianapolis News, Page Fifteen, April 2, 1913) "A photo shows a man standing by a heaped mass as high as his waist." The photo caption read, "16,267,088 KILLED IN WORCHESTER, MASS., IN MIDSUMMER." The article continues, "Now it is becoming evident, that if, in April, someone had killed two mother flies before the breeding season began, the slaughter would have been as great as the pile of flies killed in mid-summer."

(Indianapolis News, Page Eight, April, 1913) "The funeral of P.R. Gray of West Indianapolis, whose body was recovered near the fire engine house, on West Morris Street, was held at the home of a cousin, J.L. Stamper, yesterday, with burial in Crown Hill Cemetery."

This was the death announcement of my grandfather who was one of the first to die in the 1913 flood, and the last to be found and buried. This volume is dedicated to him and all the others who died in the 1913 Flood.

May God bless them all.

DIFFICULTIES RESCUERS FACED IN 1913 FLOOD AS REPORTED IN THE INDIANAPOLIS NEWSPAPERS

MAN REPORTED MISSING

William Wolf, who started down into the flooded territory on Tuesday night with a bread wagon, accompanied by Dan Smith, a partner reported that he had not seen Smith since. The two were able to drive about five blocks south of the Oliver avenue bridge, when the water got too deep for them. Smith and Wolf unhitched their team and each mounted a horse. Wolf says he saw Smith's horse throw him into the water twice in a swift current, and that he never saw his partner afterwards. The wagon carried three hundred loaves of bread sent by the Century Baking Company to the sufferers. These were left in a grocery box, and Smith managed to reach a house where he stayed all night, being rescued yesterday morning.

Many old men and women when taken into the boats remarked: "Well, this is my first boat ride." George Hart, the blind shoestring vendor, who was rescued from 505 Division street, said he had not been in a boat since he lost his site twenty years ago. He trusted the boatmen implicitly. As he was rowed down the street he was hailed from every side by persons who knew him. "Say George, bring me back a pair of shoestrings" one man shouted. "All right, Jim," the blind man replied, recognizing the voice despite the peculiar surroundings.

Mrs. Louise Sculf was taken from the second story of her home at, 1052 West McCarty street. She left her husband and five sons behind, and tears came into her eyes as she pleaded with the boatmen to go back after them, saying that they were starving and without water.

Lewis Baxter was an old man who was saved from his home on Marion avenue in an invalid chair. He was suffering from paralysis and was lifted into an ambulance, chair and all. He carried a dog in his lap, and his wife, who was taken out before her husband; carried a yellow cur dog in her arms. In the boat that brought Mr. Baxter to safety, there were two dogs. Mrs. Baxter said that two boys had been left at the house, and wanted to know if either of them had been brought in. They had been instructed to save two canes belonging to Mr. Baxter, which he prized very highly. The Baxter's were taken to the home of Lilly Trees, 1508 North Capitol avenue. Noble Watson, living at 517 Marion avenue, next door to the Baxter's, who was taken out later in a canoe, clung tightly to the canes he had been told to save.

Many men and women refused to leave their homes with the rescuers. They were left to the care of the cruel waters that had already claimed so many victims and caused so much suffering. In one home there was a woman and a family of small children, among which was a baby but three days old. She refused to leave with the rescuers. There were a dozen families who declined the assistance of the workers, but others gratefully accepted it.

The first accident and the one that came close to resulting in a fatality, was when a boat containing the Rev. O.K. Doney pastor of the Morris Street Christian Church, and a young man who refused to give his name, was caught in the down current at Drover street and swept out toward the river beyond. The boat overturned and both men clung to it's side. They were exhausted from several hours of hard rowing in an effort to get all of the people out before the levee below the Oliver avenue bridge broke. They were powerless to aid themselves and seemed doomed. As the boat was swept into Drover street Frank Hulse, 825 North East street sprung into his boat and started after the men. He caught them and succeeded in loading the boy in his boat, but floated far out into the open water covering River avenue before he

was able to get the Rev. Mr. Doney in the boat. Time and again it seemed that the minister would drown; that he could hold on no longer, and when he was taken from the boat at the shore he fell against a nearby wall from sheer exhaustion.

Editor's note:

The first part of the following article was not available

They were partly underwater. The woman seemed to be about 30 years old and the child about a year. I never cried so hard in my life as when I saw them.

We tried to get them out by breaking the window and reaching them with driftwood, but could not and had to give up. We then went over to Belmont street and there we saw a man floating in the water. We could just see a part of his head and couldn't tell what he looked like. Both of us were exhausted and it had started to snow, so we went back to get someone to take the boat. We also were pretty sick of the job after seeing all of those dead people.

STOPPED BY DARKNESS

No one wanted to take the boat, so we started out again. We picked up two stray boats and towed them in and then went west on Oliver to the Belt Railroad. We lifted our canoe over and then went up to the Pennsylvania tracks and lifted our boat over that.

As we passed the plant of the Lauter Company we could see that there was about twenty feet of water in it. We went up to Washington street and looked west and could see the water stretching out almost to the Insane Asylum. From what we could see the asylum is in no danger from the water.

We went back on Washington street to Bloomington and tried to go up to the schoolhouse, but the current was too swift for us and we had to go back. We started in the work in West Indianapolis again and took off a load of three women and another of three men all of whom were in the same house.

We saw an old couple in a house, but couldn't get to them in our boat and had to send for a flat boat that took them to the bridge. One man tried to make us take a trunk in with him and we couldn't argue with him, so we left him and let another boat take him too. By that time it was dark so we pulled our boat in and quit.

According to the men working with the boats, one family is marooned in the attic of a house on Morris street between the I & V tracks and Kentucky avenue, across from the office of the Nordyke & Marmon Company. All chance of these people getting out are cut off, they say, and the roof will have to be chopped in to get them out.

Ralph Jones and Douglas Pierce, both Indianapolis attorneys, saved a woman from drowning at a point one-half mile from the end of Oliver avenue bridge.

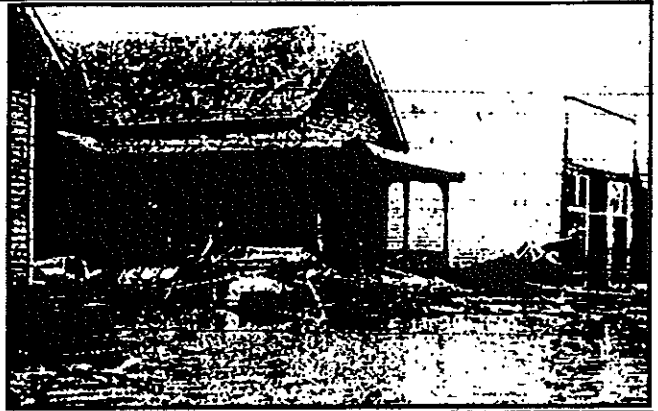
One man who said he was a member of a railroad men's organization, went down twice when his boat tipped over and was pulled out by Pierce and Jones. He was taken to the Elks Club in an ambulance.

D.L. Stone and J.W. McCullum who were operating one of the rescue canoes, saw a boat which carried another rescue team capsized in a cross current.

THE FLOOD'S GONE - WHAT IT LEFT BEHIND

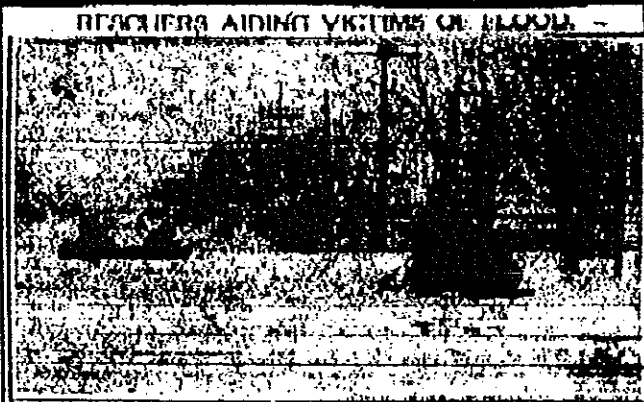


Kentucky Avenue, looking northeast. At the right is shown a heavy roll of cable carried quite a distance by the swift current.



Oliver Avenue, showing how wreckage of all kinds is piled up around the houses. Some of the barrels are full.

IMAGINE THESE BOATS IN SWIFT CURRENTS IN THE DARK OF NIGHT



CARRYING REFUGEES DOWN OLIVER AVENUE TO LANDING PLACE.



LANDING WOMEN AT OLIVER AVENUE

THE MAYOR WAS THERE, BUT VOLUNTEERS WERE FEW

Mayor Shank responded valiantly to his own call for volunteers to help clean up the west side of the city. The threatening rain prevented many from leanding a hand, but he picked up assistants on the way and spent the greater part of the day with hoes,hose, wagons, etc., scrubbing homes and clearing away debris. This picture shows the mayor directing the work of loading debris which he had taken from a home on River Avenue.



THE FIRST of MANY HERO'S

FATHER
WEBER
IS
FLOOD
HERO



THE REV. JOSEPH F. WEBER.

Where Officials Direct Relief Work



Becomes Leader in Rescue
Work in Devastated Region of
West Side.

AIDS WITH HEART AND PURSE

Priest Criticizes City Govern-
ment for Failure to Build Ade-
quate Levee.

Calamities that make horrors make heroes too, and the flood that has devastated West Indianapolis has revealed more of the admirable qualities of a man who long has been a favorite.

Father Weber is that man. The Rev. Joseph F. Weber, pastor of the Catholic Church of the Assumption thus is he officially known, but to West Indianapolis, he is just "Father," affectionately named, _____ (unreadable)

Father Weber has been the leader of West Indianapolis during the entire period of the flood. Police have come and gone, citizen's committees have organized and disintegrated, the military authorities have grasped the situation with an iron hand, but the real leader, the soul and hope of West Indianapolis remains Father Weber.

At the first break of the waters Father Weber entered the fight to save lives and he never ceased for food, for sleep, for rest of any sort.

His own house was safe, high on the hill at 1117 Blaine Avenue, next to his church. Father Weber threw open its doors, gathered all obtainable provisions and set a table for all that might be hungry, opened his wardrobe to the needy and gave his bedrooms to the sick.

HOUSE BECOMES REFUGE

This clergy house usually quiet, became the refuge of all the ailing, the headquarters of the Red Cross, of the police, and of the military authorities.

But Father Weber was not in the house. He had gone forth in the flood to fight for those who suffered. He became the counselor of all, the support for the weak and the sick. He manned an oar in a boat, he paddled a canoe, he dared death in the dangerous rapids and in the sick rooms of those with contagious diseases. He bent his back and carried out the children and carried property. He supplied food and drink, clothing and shelter, hope and faith, all alike, to men women and children of all faiths, if a woman had lost a child it was Father Weber who found it. If a man was separated from his wife it was Father Weber who reunited them. If some one's life was threatened it was Father Weber who organized and procured the relief.

"We'll have nothing dead but rats." That has been the good father's battle cry and it seemed last night as if his cry was a prophecy for hour after hour of search went by with no bodies of the dead to be reported.

BLAMES CITY GOVERNMENT

The unanimity with which the credit for practically every good thing in West Indianapolis is credited to Father Weber is at first amazing and then convincing, in this day of coldly practical conduct, it is hard to conceive of any man who could be father, brother, or friend to every living soul in an entire community, but Father Weber has been all of these things to West Indianapolis.

Father Weber, however, no matter how much he may have sacrificed himself is a bitter enemy to any imposition upon community of "children." And just at present his wrath is upon the city government of Indianapolis.

"It is negligence," he said, "that made this flood possible and the city authorities have been inefficient in the handling of it. If a share of the money spent on fine boulevards and decorative works had been expended in the building of the levee which West Indianapolis had pleaded and prayed for for so many years. such a catastrophe as this could not have happened."

It is rumored in West Indianapolis that Father Weber's stand will be made a political issue in the approaching campaign, and that the solid support of the southwestern district will be given to the candidate who pledges himself and his administration to preventive measures, it is believed in West Indianapolis that this is the only means to which a repetition of the present disaster can be avoided.

MEN WHO AWAKENED AND RESCUED VICTIMS



WILBUR CATT and CHRIS ZIMMERMAN

Chris Zimmerman and Wilbur Catt, with the only boat available early yesterday morning, successfully battled the swift current of Eagle Creek and rescued several families from their half-submerged homes.

Eagle Creek, normally a stream feet wide, has become one-eighth of a mile wide. It spreads out over the lowlands and is threatening the plant of the Indianapolis Sanitary Company, which was recently burned to the ground. The plant is situated on a stretch of land extending into the path of the flooding creek. Officials of the company said that they expected no serious damage to result.

The family of George Crunk, occupying two small houses on the bank of Eagle Creek, had narrow escapes. Crunk explained his escape and that of his two sons and daughter.

"I was awakened when the water leaked in through the front door," he said. "I could scarcely realize what had happened. I pushed my hand over the side of the bed and thrust it into the water on the floor.

I aroused my family and we

dressed hurriedly. I was almost afraid to open the front door. The water was then nearly to the window.

I waded out into the stream and shouted for help. There was a slight depression between where I stood and the bank, and I could not swim. Soon we aroused Wilbur Catt and he got a boat and one by one we were taken from our home.

MAN RESCUES BOAT

Crunk left seventy chickens to drown. It was almost impossible to handle a boat in the water, he said, and no attempt was made to save the fowls.

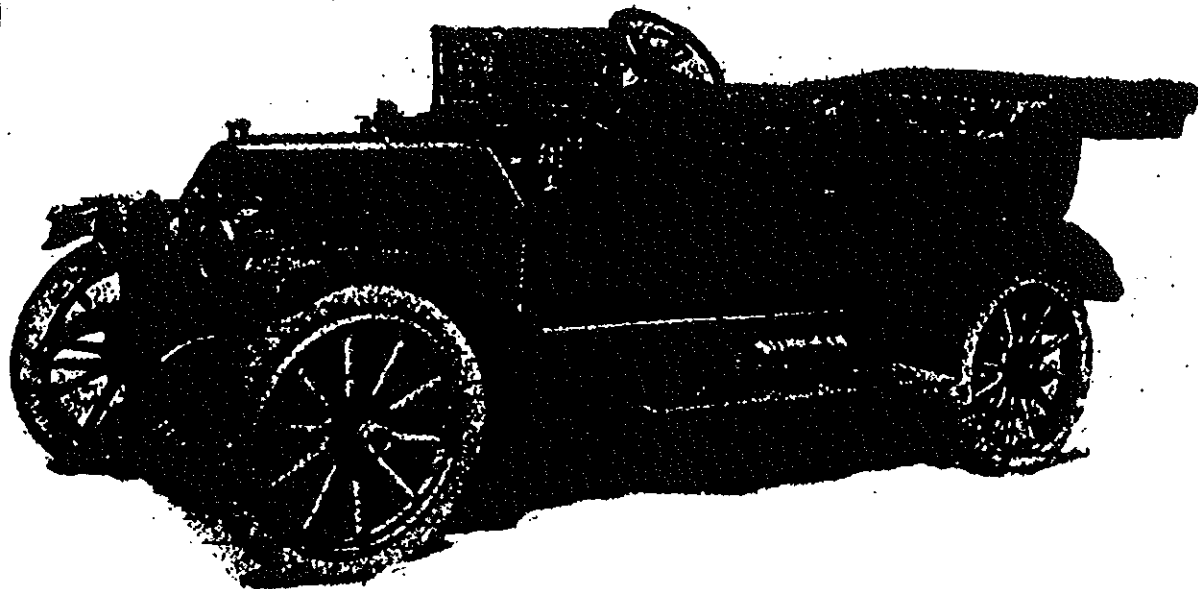
Chris Zimmerman, formerly a saloon keeper who resides in the ??? Club, situated on the point of Kentucky

Avenue and Belmont Avenue, and Catt were the heroes of the day in the neighborhood. In a flimsy boat belonging to Zimmerman, and early in the day named "Zimmerman's little green boat," they plied back and forth in the flooded neighborhood and afforded relief wherever it was needed.

The home of Fred Melieschmer, 2080 S. Belmont Avenue was threatened seriously for a time in the afternoon. Melieschmer was awakened from a sound slumber by the volunteer life-saving crew and told that the water was creeping into his front door. He was taken from his home in a boat. His wife preferred to remain pending more serious danger.

Jason Burns, who lived in the rear of the Melieschmer home, and his family of five were removed from the home with the first floor flooded.

AT LAST IT'S HERE



The New Maxwell "Model 35-4" \$1,085.00—Fully Equipped

EVER SINCE OUR ANNOUNCEMENT some sixty days ago of the New Maxwell line interested buyers and dealers everywhere have daily besieged us with inquiries seeking information about the most sensational of cars which we had promised to build for 1913.

WE HAVE TOLD THEM THE TRUTH—that we would begin deliveries on our Model 35 on April 1st—that it would be the best value which could be produced that it would meet the expectations of the most critical.

WE ARE NOW READY TO PROVE OUR CLAIMS. The new Maxwell Model 35 will be shown for the first time to Indiana buyers at the Coliseum Auto Show this week.

THE MAXWELL 35-4" is a 5-passenger, 35 H. P. touring car, equipped with mohair top, top cover, rain vision windshield, speedometer, Prest-O-Lite tank, five lamps, self-starter, horn and tools with extra tire irons in rear.

TO THE PUBLIC: We commend this car for your most critical inspection. It is the latest word in motor car construction.

TO DEALERS: We ask you to visit our exhibit and avail yourself of the opportunity to represent us in your locality. Possibly we have not yet signed up in your territory in any event, pay us a visit.

A WORD ABOUT DELIVERIES: While our enormous plants are working night and day to turn out cars enough to meet the demand, we would suggest that you do not delay in placing your order, thereby saving yourself possible disappointment. Deliveries will begin April 1st, **EXACTLY AS PROMISED.**

We will also show the "Maxwell 50-6" (formerly Flanders 50), a most completely equipped, seven passenger touring car, six-cylinder, 130 inch wheel base, electric lights and electric starter, Klaxon horn, top, windshield, Warner speedometer, electric cigar lighter and trouble lamp. Price, \$2,350.00.

MAXWELL MOTOR CO. Inc.