The Spring flood in the fields south of the Stadium . . . a crowd of Ohio Staters at an out-of-town game . . . one of the mammoth buses used by some of the football teams . . . the omnibus for across the river . . . All aboard . . . Phi Gam speedball champions . . . a popular meeting spot in front of Commerce Building . . . polo mallets in action . . . Professor French entertains his department with a snooker (note the size of the pipes, and reach for a Lucky). Red Trautman and his Ohio Relay tags.
Great Flood of '13; a waterlogged saga

By LINDA HOWARD

When students began the slow trek back to classes after the Great Flood of 1913, which covered a large part of Columbus, over 1,000 of them were still waterlogged.

Once the flood alarm sounded announcing the Olen-tangy and Scioto Rivers had overflowed on March 24 after continuous heavy rains, University students volunteered for relief and rescue work. And they had plenty of work to do. On Columbus's west side 100 had died and damage costs soared into the millions. The campus was also flooded, but by that time most students had been evacuated.

Many of the remaining students went to work fishing families out of houses and placing them in rickety canoes. Others, including home economics majors, dished out food and clothing to the vast numbers of people needing supplies.

One student relief worker, in a written narrative describing canoe rescue work with a friend, said they worked for as long as 12 hours without food. He added that they had as much drinking water as they needed, however.

The student described a ride down Monument Avenue near Main Street where he and his co-worker ran into several dangerous cross-currents. Caught in one, they nearly plowed into some wreckage before the old Cooper Insurance Building.

Although 192 acres of the campus was covered, only about $10,000 in damage was done. Much of it occurred at the extreme west campus, especially at the poultry building.

About two days after the flood began, the waters started to subside. Returning students required vaccinations, but it was a while before classes returned to normal. In the April 2, 1913 Lantern, it was reported that less than 50 per cent of classes were being held. Most students had not returned and others were still engaged in relief work.

After the flood, dikes were built up along the rivers and played a large part in cutting down future flooding problems.
Hurricane remnants flood Columbus

By Susan Prentice

Heavy floods caused by the tail end at hurricane Frederic flooded basements in homes throughout Columbus Thursday and left an estimated 12,000 residents of a Madison Township housing development without safe drinking water.

Drake Union also suffered from the floods. Officials at the union said there was a small amount of standing water in the building, but the boat docks were extremely damaged. They said they would not know the extent of the damage until crews come in to repair the docks.

It will be at least one week before the boat rental will be open again because of the floods.

The National Weather Service at Port Columbus recorded 5.86 inches of rain, the most ever recorded there in a 24-hour period.

The rains caused a levy on Big Walnut Creek to break, contaminating the drinking water in Blacklick Estates, located southeast of Columbus, according to Madison Township police.

Residents are being asked to boil all of their water until they receive word from the health department that the water is safe to drink. Madison Township authorities said they have no idea when that will be.

At least seven homes in the development suffered major damage, and at least 61 homes had minor damage such as flooded basements, said William Lockhart, director of Red Cross disaster services. Damage assessments have not yet been completed, he said.

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The Red Cross has been going door-to-door in Blacklick Estates, Reynoldsburg and Wonderland, all areas southeast of Columbus, trying to assess the damage so that assistance can be provided.

The Reynoldsburg Police Department has sent letters to residents who have been affected by the flood to try to assess damages.

Damage to some homes in Reynoldsburg was as high as $5,000, said Lt. James Krouse of the Reynoldsburg Police Department.

Columbus hospitals reported no flood-related injuries over the weekend.

The rains brought the total rainfall for the year to 40.27 inches, which is 11.42 inches above normal.

Frolicking in Frederic’s floods

Several children splash in the flooded soccer field flooded when Hurricane Frederic brought heavy
No, Ohio Stadium has not been moved to the banks of the Olentangy River, nor has the river been re-routed nearer the stadium. Trick photography is not responsible for this watery scene either. But heavy rain Friday from Hurricane Frederic make kayaking a natural on the soccer fields between Lincoln and Morrill towers.
The 1913 flood's devastation was recorded in these pictures taken by the late Walter D. Nice, who was a photographer for The Dispatch and the Ohio State Journal.

MAROONED at the CORNER of AVONDALE and SULLIVANT

By FLORENCE BURINGTON BUCHER
A SECOND RAINY day has spoiled my walk in the yard. Searching for a project, I open the cedar chest to select some yarn for my knitting.

There, peaking out from layers of tissue paper, is the red crushed velvet coat with the white Skinner satin lining which had belonged to Sara Belle, my favorite childhood doll. Next to the coat is a tiny bonnet made of white ribbon and lace. Sara Belle always looked so pretty in that bonnet and coat fashioned with loving care by my Grandmother Buntington. They were Sara Belle's best clothes.

My mind goes back to March 1913, when the coat was new. We had had one rainy day after another. The rains were the harbinger of the Flood of 1913.

My parents and my three brothers and I lived on the southwest corner of Avondale and Sullivant Aves. Richard was 11, I was 9, Arthur was 7 and John was 4. Our white frame house was near my Grandpa and Grandma Stevens, who lived south of us on Bellows Ave. Nearby, in various homes, all built by Grandpa Stevens, lived my mother's married sisters and brothers and their families. We were closely knit.

Grandfather Stevens was a carpenter who built houses for a living. Through him my father had purchased our Sullivant Ave. home, with its side yard where children had space to run and play.

There were lots of shelves in our pantry. When I was not playing with her, Sara Belle was supposed to stay on one of those shelves. Our pantry was not stocked with tinned food like other families' pantries. Instead, the shelves held our toys, balls, games, skates, crayons, watercolors, books and, of course, Sara Belle. My father did not like toys lying about. Each child had one shelf.

There was no food in the pantry because my mother bought food daily from Mr. Davis' store across Avondale Ave. just east of us. In fact, we went to the store so often that we had made a permanent opening in our short privet hedge. The path led right in the direction of Mr. Davis' side door, at the back. We liked to go there when our parents paid the bill, because Mr. Davis always gave us a sack of candy.

Early on the morning of Tuesday, March 25, my mother was standing on our back porch with John and me, preparing to go to the store. As we went slowly down the steps to walk to the store, we glanced north on Avondale Ave. and saw a two-foot waterfall of muddy waters rushing toward us. My mother screamed, "Flood waters! Back into the house!" while she ran across the yard through the hedge toward the store.

Mr. Davis shoved two loaves of bread into my mother's arms. "It's the last of my bread," I heard him shout. "Hurry home!" He bolted the heavy side door. The water had already crossed Sullivant Ave. and reached my mother's feet. She slipped and fell. Luckily my Uncle Jack appeared on the run, lifted her bodily and carried her wet, muddy sister to our back porch. She still clutched the bread in her arms. Her dirty clothes dripped on the porch floor. She was out of breath with fright but recovered quickly. Uncle Jack was soaked to his knees.

At our house there was much confusion. Small items were hastily taken from the first floor to the upstairs. Uncle Jack carried the heavy blue and white double crock of home-filtered drinking water to the upstairs hall. It contained five gallons of water and was heavy. The top crock had filters in it. A little spigot on the lower crock dispensed the water. When we were allowed a drink of water in the days that followed, we thanked Uncle Jack.

The first night at bedtime, my father, who was a very religious man, followed the usual procedure of family prayer. (He was the Sunday School superintendent at Dr. Washington Gladden's First Congregational Church.) The Christmas candles which someone had found in the attic flickered as he read.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waves thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."

The second day, it snowed, and my parents gathered snow from every window sill and the porch roof. They melted the snow for more water. The bread was all we had to eat. You probably won't believe it, but the bread tasted good. Our spirits were high, and we children played old maid, casino and other card games while we sat on the bed, huddled under covers and wrapped with sweaters and coats to keep warm. That night my father read, "Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." We prayed for food.

The third day, the water rose within one step of the second floor. In our prayers we asked that the top step be kept dry. We observed the flood from the windows of the second floor. Outside, in the swirling waters, sections of houses and barns floated by. We saw a yellow and white cow, trying to balance herself on a floating shed door. We saw dead dogs and cats, but when dead people floated by the adults persuaded us to leave the windows.

When a floating telephone pole threatened to ram the side of the house, Uncle Jack, wearing my father's shiny black top hat to make us laugh, crawled out a window onto the front porch roof. From there, with a heavy wooden curtain rod, he tried to guide the telephone pole away from the house. But he stopped in his endeavors when he saw a large stalk of bananas caught in the wires. With skillful manipulation and with the aid of the curtain pole's ornamental hook, he got the bananas to the porch roof. It was almost a whole stalk. A lot of the bananas were partly green, but they looked beautiful to us. Some of the bananas were gone from the bottom, as if the stalk had hung in a store. That night my father gave thanks for the gift of food. He said over and over, "God will not forsake us. There will be a way."

The fourth night was ghostly as the floating upright piano in the front parlor banged repeatedly against the walls with a shuddering, eerie, clicking sound which I had never heard before and have never heard since. My mother repeatedly said, "The walls will hold. My father built this house. And if the water gets any higher we can go to the attic where we found our Christmas candles and the chamber pots."
FLOOD
continued

It was very cold, but we had plenty of covers. Grandma Stevens had always said, "No family can have too many quilts." She was always giving us one, and they were all in a trunk in the attic. Mother spent half the time in bed trying to keep John warm, or sitting in a rocker with him. They had quilts under them and all around them.

The cold finally got to Uncle Jack. He spent a lot of time in the attic. He found a lot of wood and brought it down and laid it in the bathtub. Just before setting a match to it, he asked my father's permission. My father just put his foot down and bellowed NO, that he wouldn't have fire AND flood.

The water had crested within one step of the second floor. "God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in time of need." My father's voice put me to sleep.

On the fifth day, when the current had abated, two men in a rowboat reached our house. After having our faces and hands cleaned by cotton pads moistened in witch hazel, my brother Arthur and I were removed by way of the second-floor windows. I was told to look after him. We were deposited carefully in the small boat, with a suitcase full of clean clothes. The men warned us to hold tight.

Although I am now 76 years old, I still vividly remember the experience of riding in a rowboat in the deep muddy waters and talking with all the friendly people who were leaning out of their second-story windows. Everywhere the boat passed, people talked to us. Our unknown rescuers rowed us to the safety of the Rich St. bridge. They then returned to our house to bring more members of the family to safety.

Volunteers took us to the warmth and shelter of Grandpa Burington's home at 645 E. Rich St. We were called "flood sufferers" and were given much attention.

The house where we spent five days hungry and cold still stands, but I never returned to it. I have heard that 40 houses built by Grandfather Stevens withstand the currents of the flood waters. Our parents rented a house on King Ave., where we were told we would walk to grade school, high school and college. And that is exactly what we did.

The true flood sufferers in our family were my parents, who lost more than half of their household belongings. They literally started over. They were not alone. Hundreds of families started over. The flood covered one-fourth of what was then the city of Columbus. Almost 100 people drowned, among them one of my classmates, the little red-haired Cooper boy. We had been given no warning of the flood. Communication in those days was nil compared to today.

Sara Belle, bravely sitting on the toy shelf in the pantry on the first floor, was a casualty of the 1913 Flood. In the rush to get upstairs I had forgotten her. But her little red coat and the lace bonnet which were always kept in my bedroom dresser were saved. To me, the coat symbolizes the end of one era and the beginning of a new one. 

Florence Burington Bucher still lives in Columbus. She taught school from 1924 to 1936 and is the widow of Professor Paul Bucher of Ohio State University's mechanical engineering department.
"Columbus weather 'reigns' again"

Story by Michael Sopko

"Flood pants" sales are booming at High Street clothes emporiums and the OSU Rowing Club has announced it will be holding its future practices on Mendenhall Lake on the Oval.

These two "facts" might come true if the rain continues to fall in Columbus.

The National Weather Service says 1.29 inches of rain fell on Columbus from 9:10 to 9:45 Monday morning and more than two inches had fallen since the day began — the heaviest 1980 rainfall in that time span.

"Just about everywhere had problems" with flooding, says Charles Busch, OSU assistant director of physical facilities.

Busch says the "main reason for the flooding has been the rapid runoff." He says the sewage system was unable to handle the volume of water.

About 25 campus buildings had flooding problems severe enough to require custodial work, Busch says.

Dennis Poole, a maintenance worker, says the building worst hit by the heavy rains was McPherson Lab, with 4 to 5 inches of water in the hall leading to lab rooms.

Diners in Baker Commons were treated to the sights and sounds, as well as the feel, of cascading waterfalls as they ate breakfast Monday morning.

Water began to seep under window wells and doors and down stairs about 9:15 a.m. says Mary Sylvester, commons manager.

However, the mess was "all cleaned up and we were ready for business" by lunchtime thanks to the help of students from the dorms, she adds.

Traffic on campus was stopped for about an hour at two campus locations — on Carmack Road under the pedestrian overpass on West Campus and Clinic Loop on the medical campus, says Troy Grim, assistant manager of the Division of Traffic and Parking.

Flooding was also reported in some campus parking lots, he adds.

But, perhaps the worst flooding took place just off campus at 14th and High streets.

Four-foot-high water forced many motorists to abandon their floating cars. Matters were worsened by passing buses and trucks which caused waves to engulf sidewalks and even higher land.

When the water finally subsided, between 10 and 10:30 a.m., mud and 'driftwood' showed where the water level had reached — about half-way up the Ohio Union lawn and about 4 feet high on buildings at 13th and High streets.

"Jus Family," an ice cream shop, 1758 High St., had its front window broken when a wave was created by a Sohio truck cutting its way up "High Creek." Water reached to the store's steps, about 6 feet above street level.

"This is just terrible," says Evonne Brown, co-owner of the store. "We never got it this bad before. This is the third time in two weeks we had to close."

Another victim of the "USS Sohio" was the car of Doug Williams, a resident of northeast Columbus.

Williams was on his way to his home when he realized High Street was impassible.

"I realized I couldn't make it and tried backing up to 13th. That's when the Sohio Truck came by."

Williams says the truck created a wave which pushed his then-floating car across the street where it wound up in front of the Ohio Union.

Another establishment to suffer water damage was Tech Hi-Fi, 1728 N. High St. About $15,000 of stereo equipment was ruined.

Steve Baer, of Tech, blames the flooding on the store sewer system. Pointing to road damage done in front of his store, Baer says, "That's what they get for not fixing it (the sewers)," he said.

Not much relief is in sight for campus or Columbus as the National Weather Service has issued a forecast calling for more heavy rains through Friday with possible flash flood conditions existing.
Williams, a Columbus resident caught in Monday's torrential pour, climbs from his stranded auto at the corner of North High St and 14th Avenue.

Up to his hips in swirling water, Williams helps a passenger from his flooded vehicle. Almost 1.5 inches fell within a 35-minute period Monday morning.

Williams' abandoned vehicle lies beached on High Street, one of many ms of Monday's damage. It later floated up on the front lawn of the
The Ohio State University Flood Map

Map created by Mike Fulmer, Office of the CIO, July 12, 2000, from Countywide Flood Insurance Rate Map dated August 2, 1995. Received from: Jody Clark on 1-26-05.