Screams For Help Penetrated City As People Swept Away

Darkest time in the 100 year history of Rowan County came in the early hours of July 5, 1939, when three months of air (storms) met and resulted in a cloud burst. The forty-six inches of rainfall in less than two hours was the heaviest known in the United States, according to National Geographic Magazine. Historians report (as you will read throughout this edition) that 34 Rowan Countians lost their lives. Actually, sides of these were from adjacent counties. The Morehead Independent gave this account of the flood in its July 11, 1939 edition.

Death and destruction came to Rowan County early Wednesday morning when a smashing, irresistible wall of water snuffed out the lives of 23 people, made hundreds homeless and destroyed two million dollars worth of property.

Since no other persons have been reported as missing in the county, it is being assumed that the reported number of dead is complete.

In Breathitt County, which was flooded at the same time, scores were swept into the Kentucky River and the number drowned was still unknown Friday.

The flash flood, caused by a cloud burst near the Carter County line, came down the valley about 1:15 p.m., sweeping homes, trees, livestock and human beings in its wake.

Many were caught in their crumbling houses like rats in a trap, others took to the trees. A few were able to swim to safety. Families were separated.

The roar of the torrent, the screams of the doomed and the terror streaked victims from the darkness will be forever remembered by those who witnessed the scene.

Wednesday morning Morehead was cut off from the outside world. The only road open was a dirt path along the creek.

C.J. Scores Scoop On 1939 Flash Flood

A Courier-Journal reporter, Douglas D. Cornette, and a photographer, George Bailey, were returning from an assignment in Eastern Kentucky when they rolled into Morehead on that fateful morning following the July 5, 1939 flash flood.

Bailey secured many pictures and Cornette wrote one of the biggest stories of recent years. Mr. Cornette has, among other journalistic honors, won seven elected President of the Kentucky Press Association while Mr. Bailey is rated one of the nation's top photographers.

Unfortunately the 1939 flood pictures have been discarded, but the Courier-Journal meticulously used a new process to reproduce from their files the pictures that appear here and on the next page. Much clarity and detail have been lost because the original negatives were not available. These pictures are used with the courtesy and permission of the Louisville Courier-Journal.
ONE OF THE VICTIMS—C. C. C. workers James Lee and Norman Berry share the body of an unidentified woman who was drowned in the 1939 Morehead flood in an ambulance. The body was found in a field between Morehead and Bluestone.

TINY TRIPPLET CREEK rose with such fury that automobiles were washed away and overwhelmed twin men who were plowed from foundations like matchboxes. This is not a picture but at Morehead, near Jayne Stadium of the State Teachers College, estimated the ton crew, truck and equipment were overturned and piled on barely save their lives by getting to the nearby hills when the wall of water hit.

Friday the majority of the fencemen were held and rehabilitation was being started.

The Red Cross set up headquarters in the city hall with Mrs. Renne Wells, as head, until the arrival of national representatives from Washington who arrived Thursday.

Delivery of mail from the outside was resumed Thursday. The George Washington at six o'clock Thursday night was the only passenger train to get through.

Water service was resumed Thursday afternoon and electric power Wednesday afternoon.

Rescues were taken to Morehead State Teachers Dormitories and the Morehead Public School gymnasium. The college is also housing 26 high way policemen and two doctors from the state board of health. W. H. Rice, college engineer, stayed up two nights getting the power plant ready to operate.

The flood swept away about two miles of C&O Railway trackage, about a mile of it on each side of town, a small railroad bridge and a highway bridge.

Morehead and other towns in the flood area were cut off by rail and highway after the cloud burst. Telephone and telegraph communication lines were out most of the day. Communication with the outside world was established at intervals from time to time, but was quickly broken.

The fire department, police and volunteers were recovering the bodies as the water receded. The cloud burst struck shortly before daylight and as residents of this community slept, Trippelet Creek rose with such fury that automobiles were washed away. It reached its peak by about two o'clock Tuesday morning, united States meterologist, re-

THE WORST—Courier-Journal photographers snapped this picture of a K. Jones as he picked out his damaged store. Mr. Jones said it was the worst in his 31 years relocation.
1939 Flash Flood Took Lives Of 25

Six people who lived in one dwelling were drowned in Rowan County in the July 5, 1939 flash flood. They were Mrs. Mary Frances Salyers, 25, and three children, Ivan Eugene 3, Bobby Carl 6, and Alberta Mae, 3; and Mrs. Salyers' mother, Mrs. Mahala Mae Ratliff, 49 and son, Lorn 6.

Coroner Lester Caskey listed the following 19 as the other flood casualties.

James Elmer Sparkman, 9, and brothers and sister, Paul Edwin, 6; Bobby Everett, 7 months, and Thelma Lee, 4.

Mrs. Minerva Boggess, 77.
Albert Porter, 46, and wife, 45.
Mrs. Minnie Carter, 38, and son, Junior Bays, 11.
Mrs. Canna Amburgey, 46, and two daughters, 8 and 14.
Mrs. Emma Tolliver, 77.
Mrs. Lula Mae Perry Collins, 32, and daughter, Maggie Frances, 12.
Miss Sylvia Lee Perry, 16, sister of Mrs. Collins.
Mrs. Walter McRoberts, 24, and daughter-in-law, Ruby McRoberts, 22, and son, Harrison McRoberts, Jr.

THE MERRY-GO-ROUND and everything else broke down when the raging torrent of the 1939 flood swept through Morehead's downtown section, and demolished a carnival being sponsored by the American Legion. A few hours before all was merriment. The carnival was a brand new one and the flood resulted in bankruptcy for the company.

"SIX FEET DEEP" was the answer given by Ralph Tomlinson, Fairbanks Avenue, when the photographer asked him how deep the mud was in his house.

FLOOD MUD—Mrs. S. B. Mubters began shoveling the mud and debris out of her restaurant at Morehead as soon as the July 5, 1939 waters rolled away.

Hurt-Tippett
Starting Sunday, May 20th at the Trail Theatre.
Farmers History Dates Back To The Revolution

Farmers was the first settlement in Rowan County. The exact date is not known, but it has been estimated by a local authority to have been around the time of the Revolutionary War. Farmers was known at first as Confederate Cross Roads, later as Farmers Cross Roads and today as Farmers. Major Jim Brain, an aristocrat of Virginia, was probably the first settler. A little later Nick McIntyre, Jim Tabor and Vince Calvert brought their families and friends and erected homes and cleared the land. The first drug store was established here and the first physician located at Farmers. At that time timber was abundant in this section, water could be had from the Licking River and salt could be obtained at a short distance.

Proclamation Issued On Mayor Clayton Death

(From 1911 Newspaper Clipping)

Out of respect for the memory of our late mayor, the Honorable Claud L. Clayton, whose death occurred at his home in this city this morning, I proclaim Tuesday, Oct. 31 a day of sorrow in Morehead, and order all business of the city to stop and request all citizens to close their respective places of business from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m., during the hours of the funeral and burial service.

DR. G. C. NICKELL
Acting Mayor

L. P. Haldeman Gave Name To Town

Haldeman was named after a man by the name of L. P. Haldeman. The Haldeman Brick Yard which employed about 300 men was constructed in 1917. There had been an old brick yard operated there before this. The General Refractories Company has been operating clay mines in Rowan County since 1919. Haldeman at this time was the society settlement.

Car Swept into Cornfield—This car, swept off the Owingsville-Morehead Road by the 1939 surging waters, contained seven persons, all of whom miraculously escaped death in the torrent.

In A Mess—Mrs. Hazel Reynolds, daughter of Bluestone’s Postmaster, John W. Jones, is rehabilitating flooded mail, money orders and stamps in the combined post office and general store.
George Bailey and I first saw the results of the ravaging torrents at Bluestone, where we came across pitiful scenes such as this one where Elwood Warren was removing ruined bedding from his flood-swept home. Little did we realize that it was to become worse as we went on toward Morehead.

We were amazed that such a tiny creek could rise to such might that it overturned automobiles as if they were toys, and tore houses from their foundations as if they were matchboxes. It still was hard to believe, even after we had taken this picture.

"Six feet deep" was the answer given by Ralph Tomlinson, Fairbanks St., Morehead, when George and I asked him how deep the mud was in his house. He wasn't losing time in getting rid of it, though.

We sympathized with Mrs. Hazel Reynolds, daughter of Bluestone's postmaster, J. W. Jones, as she began the task of rehabilitating flooded mail, money orders and stamps in the combined postoffice and general store.
CRACKER BARREL

COMMENTS

By Woody Hinton

Mr. Russell Beck of Halderman.

Morehead was united in marriage to Mrs. Russell Beck of Halderman. The young couple were married at the church. The wedding occurred at the St. John's Baptist Church of Morehead.

The young couple were married in a ceremony attended by friends and family. The bride wore a dress of white and the groom wore a suit. The ceremony was conducted by the Reverend Turner of the Christian church.

The newlyweds are planning a honeymoon trip through the South and plan to be at their new home on the Flemingsburg road after October 1.

Mrs. Parard was graduated from Claybourn Training School and attended Morehead College. While enrolled there she was freshman cheerleader.

Mr. Parard was graduated from Ashland high school and attended the University of Kentucky and Morehead College. He was a member of the Phi Kappa Tau fraternity while at the university.

Mr. Parard is owner of the Parard grocery store in Morehead.

MISS HATTIE E. HOFFMAN, worthy grand matron, is honored at convention.

Squire Turner

HOLEBOO-PARARD / B39

A life-long Democrat and one of the best informed writers on Kentucky politics, Squire Turner still contributes to several weekly newspapers in the state. His philosophy, which is emphasized in each of his 10,000 editorials, is reflected in this simple statement: "I forget their shortcomings and elaborate on their good qualities."