**SOME OVERFLOWS**

**Crest Of Previous Floods By Weather Bureau**

**1833**: 38 feet by US Engineers. Highest on record until May flood of 100 years later (1933) which turned Fort Smith into practically a besieged city.

**1898**: Water reached the Nelson Cemetery in Dyer and crossed the road in all low places, between hills or roads from the bottoms up to the Dyer gin.

**1914**: After all crops were planted and worked out, the Arkansas River overflowed and swept all crops away. It was too late to plant anything but corn when the water receded.

**1927**: Crest of 36.7 feet. Second highest in City History.

**1933**: See 1833 comments. Also see 1944 comments.

**1935**: River came out twice. Early in Spring and again late in Fall after crops were harvested.

**1941**: 37.3 feet November 3. Considered a Whang-Doodle until two years later.

**1943**: 38.3 feet May 23. Peak of second of double floods which wracked this area.

**1944**: 41.7 feet May 12, highest ever recorded in history of city.

The Arkansas River is on the south side of Dyer, and back in the early days nearly very spring we would have an overflow and as someone said, "That in about nine months there was also a flood of babies." This was before the levee was built to help hold back the waters and I remember that the men and boys, everyone big enough to take bags of sand went down and piled these along to retain the River. Sometimes they would work for several days and all night so often they would come home so weary and report that they were unable to keep Old Man River in his banks.

In **1898** was a bad one, and this was when so many people who resided at Riverside had to move away, and some settled in Dyer and community of Sixty-One.

In **1927** is another time when Old Man River decided to reach out of its banks and this time it came up the river road to the Oxford place, even into their barn lot and down the road in front of their house. On the East the back waters came to the gin road just east of cur place. Even the mail was affected as the trestle across Big Mulberry was unsafe, so the train was met on East side and mail picked up and rowed across in a boat and brought West. There were also some narrow escapes by boys who ventured out in boats in the back water and were caught in the currents and being swept back to the River, but someway were able to hold on to some tree limbs until they could be rescued.

**1943**: This one washed away the River bridge between Van Buren and Fort Smith and also changed the course of the River there. Many homes in Van Buren area were half filled with mud and water. It took months to clean and remodel these homes.

**STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL IN VAN BUREN**

**May 4, 1927**: This was a county affair. Dyer decided to make a float to be used in the Festival parade. Women worked night and day making green leaves and red cloth strawberries to put on the float. Frank Selby donated his truck to be driven and make the float on. He was also the driver. The Queen was Reba Dyer. The maids were: Jessie Vivian Manuel, Veta Edwards, Madge Chitwood, Oleta Chitwood, Datha Selby, Nona Cottrell, Wanda Ruth Rhodes, and Inez Bennett.

**TWISTER DAMAGE IN DYER**

**February 25, 1956, 12:30 A.M.**

Dyer was in turmoil of excitement over the weekend as people and cars filled with sightseers milled in and out of the town continuously all Saturday and Sunday viewing the wreckage of the disaster which struck the community near midnight Friday, February 24th. The storm which contained very little rain and some hail did its damage in a hurry, sweeping a clean path eastward.

The Hays Hurd house was destroyed before the eyes of the family who, becoming frightened, had gotten into their car to get out of the area. The wind twisted the car around and into a tree but neither they nor their two children were injured.

Just in front of the Hurd house stood the Assembly of God church just completed the summer before. Rev. J. S. Edwards who is pastor of the church and lived next door to the church in the parsonage was preparing with his wife and children to go over to the church constructed of concrete blocks for mere protection when the twister struck and blew the church apart. As Rev. Edwards with humor said later "The only reason I was not in the church at the time is because I could not find my shoes."

Another family who narrowly escaped death and injury was that of Dewey Morse whose home is located south of the Assembly of God church. He and eight other persons were huddled in the home as the howling winds picked it up and dropped it 20 feet off the foundation. They accredited the newly constructed room recently added to the east side of the house as saving their lives.

A large number of homes were damaged, barns destroyed, shrubs and large trees were uprooted. Chicken houses scattered and debris was strewn over a large area. The chicken house belonging to Henry Rich was badly damaged.

The home of Ed Isaac was moved about three inches off the foundation on the south side and all the dishes were reported broken, deep freeze was picked up and moved from the smokehouse out into the yard.

The homes of Claude Hatley and Bob Hankins were badly damaged. The porch roof on the Tom Mason house was ripped off, the carport recently built on Lafayette Peevy's home was blown off, and the family has not been able to find any part of it.

A barn belonging to Robert Wilson and one belonging to John Roden were completely blown away. The large new barn built the previous fall on the Albert Cranford farm was moved from the foundation and mashed in on west side. A garage in the yard of Mrs. Dora Moss was completely destroyed. A barn on the Claude Meadors place and where Martin Leakey resided was demolished.

Repair work on homes and cleaning away debris was started immediately. The homeless were taken in by relatives and friends in the area. The Assembly of God members attended different churches Sunday and Sunday night. Rev. Edwards held the morning service at the Methodist Church. Plans are being made to use the school house for services until the church is rebuilt.

***Filename: LookingBackAtDyer 1838-1976 Book 01, 138-139 ~ Arkansas River floods, twister***