

Wall-To-Wall Swimming
or
The Flood in Glenville in 1967

West Virginia History
Laura Bell Gainer
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Wall-To-Wall Swimming

"Not often can one dive from his couch into a swimming pool in his own living room." This was a statement made by Professor John E. James of Glenville State College after the flood which set all-time records in Glenville, West Virginia.

Mr. J.W. Beall, a local drugstore owner, has kept records of Little Kanawha River floods which went beyond twenty-five-foot crests. The all-time record flood waters crested on March 7, 1967, at 34.4 feet. The Little Kanawha crested Tuesday afternoon after spreading from above Burnsville, to the Hughes, and on to the Ohio at Parkersburg.

According to The Glenville Democrat, nearly four inches of rain fell from Sunday afternoon March 5 until Tuesday morning. The people of Glenville awoke Tuesday morning to view a snow storm. Temperatures were chilly until clean-up day Wednesday. This day was warm, with enough sunshine to help residents see the devastating damages.

All roads to and from Glenville were blocked. There were no bread or milk deliveries for several days. That is, there were no regular deliveries. It was reported that Broughton Dairy shipped in 500 gallons of milk. The Air National Guard had food flown in. Feeding stations were set up at Glenville State College, and in the Firemen's Hall. It was reported that about 10,200 meals were served by the Red Cross, and volunteers. Surplus commodities were also issued to families through Saturday night, March 11, 1967.

Fifty-five business places in Glenville were damaged and lost heavily. One of them, The Little Giant, was almost a total loss. Damages to business were estimated at \$500,000. About two-hundred-fifty homes in Glenville and throughout the county were damaged. 90% of them were reported as major losses. The loss of homes and furniture, clothing, etc. was set at \$500,000 also. Therefore, this was a million-dollar loss to Gilmer County alone.

Quite ironically, the only "business place" in Glenville which was not flooded was the corner pool room. This was reported by The Glenville Democrat. Later, however, a correction was made. There were two feet of water in the pool room.

Water lacked only a few inches getting into the new Kanawha Union Bank. However, the basement was full of water.

Some stores on West Main Street had approximately five feet of water. The new post office and federal building was flooded about four feet. For the first time, the First Baptist Church was flooded with thirty-three inches. Water had often backed up into the Baptist Church. During the past flood, however, every thing in the main part of the basement was destroyed. The current in the basement was swift enough to overturn a large piano which had been raised several feet on a table.

The office of The Glenville Democrat was flooded about twenty inches. Yet, the news did come out that week, with extensive pictures of the flood.

If one knows the layout of the town of Glenville, he would find it impossible to believe that only the top of the Log Cabin Service Station was visible Tuesday, March 7, 1967. "John" boats were therefore the only means of transportation through the main part of town.

One man who lives in Camden Flats Addition of Glenville drove his truck through water to go to Weston Monday morning, March 6. His mother's home on Brooke Street in Weston was near to flooding. After moving her furniture up high enough to save everything, the man returned to Glenville, on Monday evening. After waiting several hours to get a boat across the flood waters under the stop light, the man gave up and returned to Weston to spend the night.

Mr. Adren Jones, a local member of the County Court, was reported missing during the day Monday. After several attempts to call him, my father walked to Glenville, got a boat across the flood waters, and walked the rest of the way to Mr. Jones' home on Leading Creek. He "blazed a trail" from the Recreation Center up over a hill, and finally arrived Monday evening after dark at the Jones' home. Perhaps it was his "pioneer" spirit and sense of direction which enabled him to find the way to the house and back to his home on Kanawha Street in Camden Flats. This "trail" had been un-familiar to him until this trip. Mr. Jones was not missing. A "missing report" had been given simply because no one could reach him by telephone. Fortunately the only trouble was a phone which was "out of order."

There was, however, one report of a drowning in flood waters of the Little Kanawha. The body of Mr. Floyd Howes was missing for several hours. Mr. Howes had taken a niece from the house to the highway. In doing so, both slipped and fell into the water. The nine-year-old girl was rescued, but Mr. Howes could not be found.

Three town restaurants were all flooded and closed to patrons Monday and Tuesday. One restaurant, the Conrad, had been flooded many times before. The Conrads, also owners of the Conrad Motel, lost money extensively in the hotel and motel. Architects for the motel had measured before building the motel the highest point where the water had risen before. The motel was built several feet beyond that point. However, the motel was flooded nearly up to the second floor. One car parked in front of the motel was almost completely submerged. Other cars were stranded in different areas. People in the motel were from some other states. They were quite amazed that their only food for a time was crackers.

Since food deliveries by truck were not made, Glenville benefited much by air deliveries. The college students were especially helpful in distributing food to stranded persons. Most people in Brooklyn Addition were stranded in the second story of their homes. One woman reportedly could not move any of her furniture. Therefore, she left everything and went upstairs with only some crackers and a can of soup. College students were so helpful that this same woman was brought food three different times Monday night, by different students of course. The fourth time food was brought to her, she politely refused.

Dr. Vernon Hoefer's wife and son sought entertainment while "camping out" in their upstairs with a kerosene stove. Mrs. Hoefer began a diary of the flood period. Her last entry before being able to go downstairs was, "I'm pooped."

At Hay's City Addition, the Little Kanawha spread out, rolling into the Community Super Market. Reports were that the water was up to the third shelf. DunRite Crafts and the local drive-in were also flooded. It was reported that the water was to the top of the drive-in restaurant.

The Health Department requested that all persons take typhoid shots after the flood. Hundreds reported to the Town Hall for them. A local college English teacher (who wishes to remain anonymous) said, "I didn't mind helping clean the basement of the Baptist Church; but those shots really hurt!"

On Wednesday, when clean-up began, Dowell trucks moved in a huge pumper truck to clean out basements of many buildings, and houses. College students were also very helpful. There was a feeling of togetherness in the community.

In spite of the serious effects of the flood, many were able to laugh at some of the flood experiences. One local incident could have been serious. Fortunately the persons involved were able to collect their dignity and continue to their destination.

Glenville's Trinity Methodist minister, until the 1967 conference, Rev. Robert Fuqua and a guest evangelist came out about 4:00a.m. Tuesday morning to check flood water. The two men got into an aluminum boat, operated by Tommy Luzader, a local Water Company employee. When the boat was being turned around, it went under and the two ministers found themselves in icy water. Rev. Fuqua's reported remark was, "Boy, it was cold."

An attitude not previously mentioned was an important factor in the heavy losses that many people suffered. As one local minister tried to get his congregation to move all furniture and literature upstairs in the church, people laughed at him. Everyone said, "The water's never gotten this high before." So, people didn't begin moving furniture until it was too late in many instances.

In talking with local college students, I found that many had volunteered to go into basements to turn off the gas and people rather laughed at their suggestion. The Glenville Democrat reported that Professor Robert Lord of Glenville State College waded in water up to his neck to turn off the gas in a local home. This became necessary as the Little Kanawha kept rising to its all-time record crest.

One lady in Brooklyn Addition had a unique experience. Two of her sons came from Oak Ridge, Tenn., parked in Camden Flats, and waded in to help.

Many Glenville State College teachers had new, but not particularly pleasant experiences. At the GSC stadium, Coaches Bill Hanlin and Earl Adolfson worked long, hard hours. College boys assisted them.

Another college professor, his wife, and small son moved in the local Baptist parsonage, along with the pastor's family of four, and another pastor's family of three. Many humorous incidents were described there. A somewhat communal system of living existed there. The deep-freeze of one of the families was moved to the Methodist parsonage to keep it from flood waters. This became their storehouse for a week.

Few people living in Gilmer County will ever forget the record-breaking flood in 1967. Though I was not in town during the flood, I too can hardly forget the experiences of clean-up, particularly the smell of seemingly gallons of Lysol which is present in the basement of the First Baptist Church even now in July.

On the following pages, I have placed the pictures which I collected. These seem, to me, to show the areas which were hardest hit.

The top picture on the following page shows the Church of Christ after the March flood. One can easily see the mud which accumulated on the church lawn and in many basements, including the Baptist Church basement. The Church of Christ building is the brick one to the right in the picture. The Baptist Church is the white building in the left corner of the picture. In the foreground one may see a dozer which helped to scrape the rubbish out. For many days State Road trucks hauled loads of furniture, clothing, and food out of town. The disposal of even canned goods was necessary according to the Health Department. Also in a close look at the top picture, one may see the willing workers: college students.

In the lower picture on the following page one may see the hard-working college students. These students are removing what seemed like tons of mud and sand from the chairs of the First Baptist Church. The look on most faces indicates that most college students were glad to help anywhere they were needed.

All of the students in the picture are un-familiar to me, except the boy in the extreme right. He is Blair Ellison, past president of the Baptist Student Movement, a campus organization. Most of the students in the picture had never attended the Baptist Church. One boy remarked, "I've never been in that church in my life. But here's where the most people were; so I thought I'd join you!"

In the extreme left of the bottom picture is a white house, the home of Doy Fitzpatrick. Ironically Mr. Fitzpatrick prepared for the flood, but not sufficiently. His car, an older model, was moved far beyond where flood waters had been before. Water kept rising, however, until the car was submerged deeply in the flood waters. The two houses in the background were also flooded. The first house on the right is the home of a retired doctor, Dr. Guy Stalnaker. Both his home and his office were flooded.

The large white pillars which are scarcely visible in the extreme top right of the picture are a part of Mr. Andrew Whiting's front porch. Mr. Whiting, an older Glenville resident, was amazed at the co-operation of college boys. Some two or three waded into water almost to their necks to turn off the gas in his basement. This was only one example of kindnesses shown.

One might also notice faintly in the extreme top left of the picture the famous clock tower of Glenville State College. Fortunately GSC was high and dry. Also slightly visible is Women's Hall. This building served as sleeping headquarters for many marooned people during the flood. Headquarters were provided in the basement.



On the following page, the depth of water on College Street in Glenville is shown. The depth in the top picture appears to be lower than the depth in the bottom picture. Both pictures were taken by Rev. David Kidd, the local Baptist minister, from about the middle of College Street.

The large white house on the right in the top picture is the home of Mr. and Mrs. Moore. They are owners of Moore's Grocery Store, the only store in town which was not flooded. This is also the house in which Miss Ann Kellerman, a college teacher, lived during the school year 1966-67.

Directly in the middle of the top picture is the Stump Funeral Home. The bottom picture shows more clearly how badly the business was damaged. Stumps also operate a funeral home in Grantsville, West Virginia, where there was also extensive flood damages.

Easily seen in both pictures on the following page is the snow which fell during Monday night. One might have called Tuesday, March 7, 1967, a freak day. Not often does one see snow, and a flood at the same time of year.

In the bottom picture, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Chaddock is visible. It is the first house to the left of the funeral home. Mrs. Lillian Chaddock is a college teacher in the Home Economics Department at Glenville State College. Like the house next to it, the Chaddock's basement and first floor were badly flooded.

The house next to the Chaddock's is Rev. and Mrs. Don Taylor's. The unique achievement of this family is that they lost nothing in the flood. They ignored comments such as, "The river's never been that high before. Don't worry!" They began moving furniture to the second story Sunday evening. Mrs. Taylor during the day on Monday kept a record of how many inches the river came up each hour. They saved everything, even books, games, and paper.

In the bottom picture, the brown house is Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Beall's. Mr. Beall has kept a "log" of floods going beyond twenty-five feet as far back as 1918. So far as I know, this flood is the only one which "drove" them from their home.

Three houses beyond the brown one on the left side of College Street is the Methodist parsonage. Somewhere in the area of flood waters in the bottom picture Rev. Fuqua and his minister friend took an icy dive into the water at 4:00a.m. on Tuesday, March 7.

Behind these houses is the section of Glenville known as Riverview. Certainly these people had a view of the river. The water rose to almost the second story in one of the houses in Riverview which was farthest from the river.



The pictures on the following page show the serious damages to many local business places. The three candid shots were taken by Rev. David Kidd.

The top picture shows only a part of the destruction of The Little Giant store. Mr. Sayre, recently moving here from Weston, West Virginia, to operate this independently-owned store, suffered almost total loss. According to many reports, he saw no hopes of re-opening until college students and local residents "flocked" in to help clean-up operations. A report from a college student was that from the roof of the Ford garage he saw one of Mr. Sayre's freezers float out the window. This report proved to be false.

On the following page, the picture on the top right is that of the interior of Ben Franklin Store. Mr. Willis Perry, local manager, was "stranded" at his home in Hay's City Addition. Therefore, I believe it is correct to say that nothing was saved in this store. Ben Franklin is a chain-operated store. Therefore, after the flood, employees from other chain stores came in to Glenville to help clear out refuse. Ben Franklin was completely remodeled. This took several weeks. Everything in the store was taken out by trucks and dumped, according to reports which I heard.

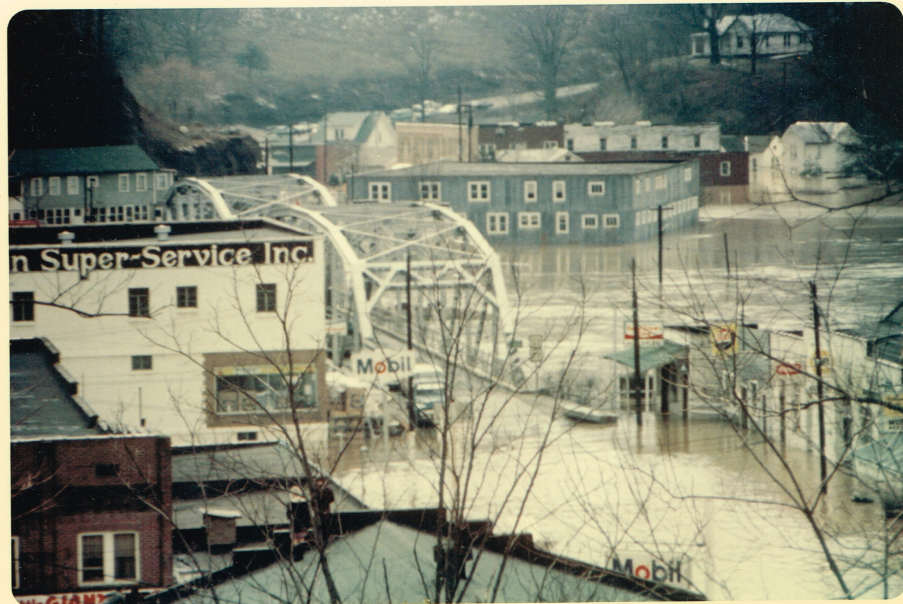
The bottom picture shows many business places which had several feet of water in them. This picture was taken from the roof of the Ford garage. In the immediate left of the picture is the Little Giant, which was just mentioned in the second paragraph of this page.

The latter letters of the sign on Calhoun Super Service are visible. The basement of this building was completely flooded. In front of the store one may see furniture which was moved. Mr. Oral Cunningham, local manager, began, with volunteer help, moving furniture to the second and third stories of the building. Therefore, very little was lost.

As one can see, the flood waters were up to the floor of the bridge. The large gray building to the right of the bridge is Paul Woodford's lumber and building supplies store. To the right of it is the Brooklyn section in which every house was flooded.

In the lower right of the picture, one can see a "john" boat, which became the modern mean of travel during the flood. Also visible on the lower right are Kuhl's Place, a local beer parlor, and a garage and body shop.

These three pictures easily show why there was a million-dollar damage to the Glenville area. Only the section of Glenville known as Camden Flat's Addition, shown in the extreme top right of the bottom picture, was high and dry, with no damage done. Many of these residents provided housing for those in flooded areas.



The last three pictures which I collected show the deepest flood waters in the Glenville section. The top two are pictures of the "stop-light" section of town.

In the top picture one can hardly miss seeing the car half-submerged in the water. This happened to many people's cars. Several reports were that in the Tanner section of Gilmer County several cars washed away.

The first white building on the left of the top picture is the former McGee Funeral Home building. Now it houses the local Pizza Shoppe. Beyond that building is the Ford garage which is hardly visible. If one notices closely in the middle of the top picture he can see the stop light.

In the middle picture, the view is from the hillside behind the court house. The large gray building on the right houses Minnich Florists and a furniture store. Also within this area are Coleen Collin's Beauty Shop and a local laundromat.

Beyond the two buildings on the right one can faintly see the "Texaco star." This garage and filling station is operated by Jack Chapman I believe.

With a close look beyond the star one can see the Esso sign. This is in front of the Log Cabin Service Station. As one can see, only the roof and a small part of the station was visible during the flood.

In the bottom picture is a small, brown building which is scarcely visible. This is Sue's Dairy-ette, a small drive-in restaurant. Several weeks of clean-up restored the drive-in to a neat establishment.

Five of the worst-flooded homes in Brooklyn are shown in the bottom picture. Some college students who have had classes to Professor John James of Glenville State College might be interested to know that the second house from the right of the picture was rented by him until the week of the flood. After the flood, many college students helped him move his furniture to "higher ground," an apartment in Pine Manor section of Glenville. Mr. James reported that he lost over \$600 in books, music, and irreplaceable items. Yet he was able to laugh about some of his post-flood experiences. One was that his model boat which he put together was still "high and dry" on the mantel! Unfortunately Mr. James was one of the people who had no second story in his house. He could only take a boat from his home and leave his furniture.

The picture which appears on the last page of this article is an aerial view, taken by Mr. Chet Hawes of The Charleston Daily Mail. This picture appeared in several West Virginia and out-of-state papers.



LITTLE KANAWHA RAMPAGES THROUGH GLENVILLE



Glenville, normally a quiet, peaceful college town, wasn't so peaceful yesterday as the Little Kanawha River rampaged through downtown streets and was at floor level on bridges dividing the town. The main business district

is at top center. The college is high and dry atop the hill behind the business district. — Daily Mail Aerial Photo by Chet Hawes.

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