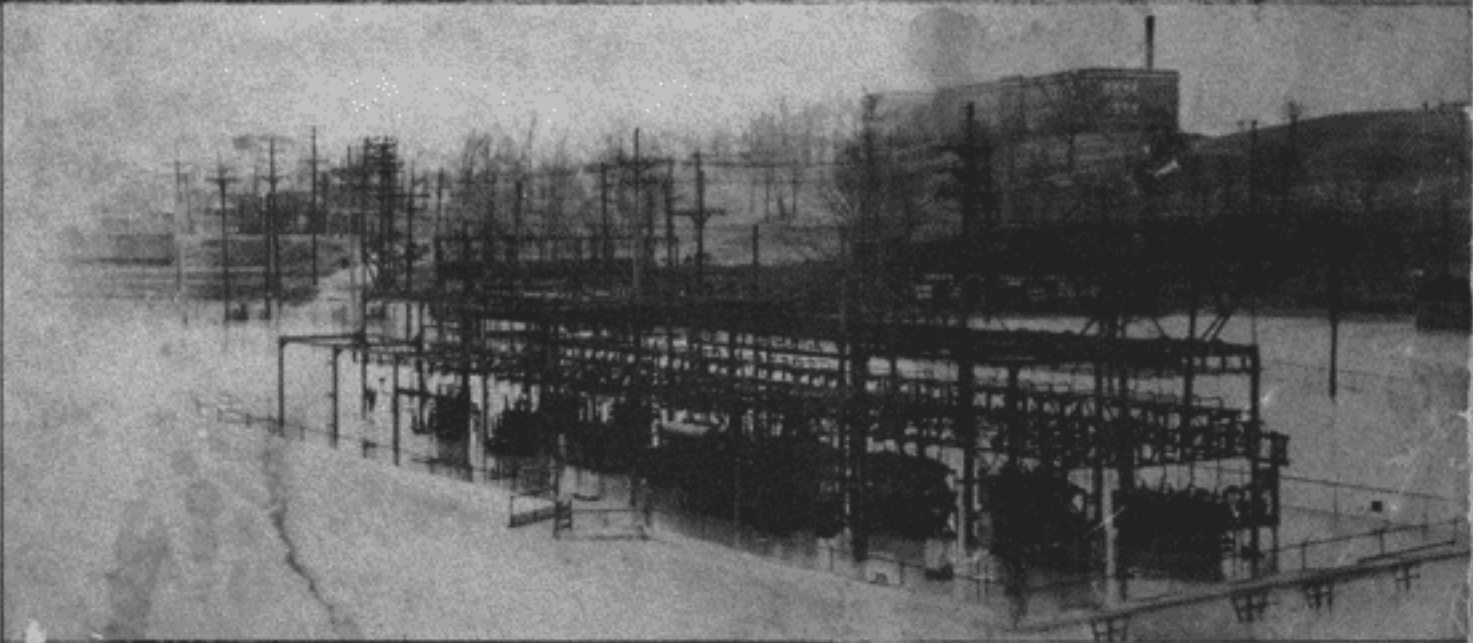


THE GREAT FLOOD OF 1937



EVANSVILLE, INDIANA



SIGECO NEWS • March 1937
Vol. 4 Number 9

This Souvenir of the great flood of 1937 is issued
by the Southern Indiana Gas and Electric Co., as
the March issue of its monthly publication,
Sigeco News.



SOUTHERN INDIANA GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY
EVANSVILLE, INDIANA

Fellow Employees:

Our company has just passed the most severe test to which it has ever been subjected. That it passed through this crisis with flying colors is a glowing tribute to the men who designed and built our facilities -- and to the hundreds of you loyal employees who gave every ounce of your strength and ingenuity in combating this flood.

It has been an inspiration to all of us to observe to what extremes you could and would carry your service to the company and to the community. For it was a tremendous service to the community, a service that no doubt saved the city from complete panic and much additional suffering.

Every one of you had a job to do -- some dramatic -- some just hard work -- and every one did his job to the utmost of his ability and opportunity. Your company and your city is proud of you.

The flood itself is past ---- but we are still facing a related crisis -- that of restoring normal service to every one. You are giving this phase of the emergency the same whole-hearted attention that you gave to the rising flood. We must keep on. Even with no possible catastrophe to spur us, we must keep up the pace until normal conditions prevail.

You have proved yourselves during a crisis and you are proving yourselves during the trying period of reconstruction. To our way of thinking that is the highest tribute that can be paid to members of a public service organization.

We are thankful that in spite of great hazards, there has been no loss of life nor serious injury among the hundreds of our men and women who took part in the battle.

For the courage, loyalty, intelligence and efficiency with which you met and conquered the great flood of 1937, we express our sincerest thanks and appreciation.

Sincerely yours,

F. B. Colby
F. B. Colby
Vice-President



Evansville's Water Front as seen from the air

THE GREAT FLOOD OF 1937

The "Beautiful Ohio" Goes on the Worst Rampage in History



The McCurdy "boat yard"



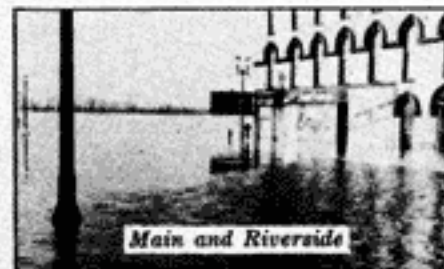
Seen from the Elks' Club steps



Floating dock beside the McCurdy



Looking down Riverside from Locust



Main and Riverside



Sunset Park

Out of the upper reaches of the Ohio Valley there descended on Evansville, a few weeks ago, a catastrophe which will forever be identified in history as the Great Flood of 1937.

The river which has been a source of the valley's greatness, which has provided avenues of commerce, watered our richest farmlands, and added to the scenic loveliness of our region, became almost overnight the mightiest and most fearsome enemy our people have ever had to face.

Peaceful valleys and busy cities, which awakened on a Monday morning under a heavy January rain, expecting nothing more than the usual spring rise in the river, were by the end of the following weeks scenes of desolation and horror. Death, destruction and threat of disease were rampant as the huge and muddy tides swept remorselessly to the Mississippi.

The Ohio, greatest of our rivers, was the most merciless in the punishment it inflicted. But it was not alone in its guilt. The lesser streams joined in the great conspiracy. Even humble brooks and creeks, which never before had dared challenge man-made works along their banks, became raging torrents. Through hours that lagged, and days that seemed endless, Nature donned the habiliments of the savage.

As these lines are written, the event is too recent to give it proper appraisal. Weeks and perhaps months must elapse before Evansville and the lower Ohio Valley will be able to measure the human and material sacrifice it has offered up to its angry river.

This souvenir issue of Sigeco News, which only seeks to chronicle events in the history of our company, cannot pretend to give a complete picture of the flood. Daily newspapers have devoted hundreds of columns to one of the greatest news stories of our generation, and yet they cannot begin to tell it all. In the columns of this issue, however, you will find recorded some of the exploits of the men and women of our own company during those gripping January and February days when Nature tried within a few hours to nullify long decades of hard work.

To us, of course, the manner in which our own organization battled with the flood seems all important. Through the days to come we will tell over and over again the thrilling story of the boys who wouldn't let a river lick them. We will recall countless acts of individual heroism and self sacrifice, as men worked to keep lights burning at this point, to restore service at another, to keep a steady flow of gas into mains and services. We will tell of flooded steam mains and car barns—with greedy water lapping higher and higher.

Yet in telling this we do not for a moment seek to imply that the story of the flood begins and ends with what our organization did, vital as that service was. We have a full realization of what other agencies, public and private, were accomplishing. There were the public officials, the engineers, the military and naval forces. There were the doctors and nurses who plunged at once into the battle against disease. There were the telephone workers who performed extraordinary feats in keeping the lines of

(Continued on the next page)



L. & N. Depot



No trains out today



Cars submerged across the street from L. & N. Depot



Washington and Kentucky



8 feet of water
—Washington and Kentucky



Looking South on Kentucky
from Washington



West Franklin and St. Joe



7th and Main



Looking East on Main from 8th

THE GREAT FLOOD

Continued from preceding page

communication open. And the Red Cross, the American Legion and dozens of other groups who gave distinguished service. And the police. And the firemen. The newspapers and radio. And the thousands of volunteers who performed without hope of reward, and perhaps without thanks, many acts of mercy.

Yes, the battle was won, because there was perfect cooperation and coordination and a common willingness to give every ounce of strength to the cause.

Here in brief is the general story of the Major Flood Disaster in the Evansville area.

Saturday morning, January 9, as the wind shifted and brought the temperature down from 62 to about 40 degrees, the river stood at 33.5 feet. Weather observers said it would rise slowly and was expected to near the flood stage of 35 feet. Rain and snow changing to sleet was forecast. But it was not a forecast that gave any indication of what another thirty days would bring.

Tuesday, January 12, brought flood warnings and head line read, "DANGER OF FLOOD INCREASES AS ICE HAZARDS LESSEN" Forecast of 40 feet for the Ohio River crest was issued.

January 17 brought fear that the east side of the city would suffer from the flood, as the river was swelling steadily toward a newly predicted crest of 44.3 feet. January 18 brought warning that flood conditions like those of 1913 or worse were feared. U. S. Highway 41 was closed Tuesday when flood waters washed out the levee along White River.

Then with tragic suddenness there crashed upon the tri-state district a major calamity which stands alone in the annals of the Ohio Valley. All news gave way to stories of rushing waters which poured into basements, boiled into sewers—and higher and higher into homes and stores, wholly disrupting Evansville's normal life.

Rain and snow hampered relief work as water swept across the lower parts of the city where hundreds of families were forced to evacuate. Streets were flooded and street cars had to give up. There was a possibility that Evansville might be completely isolated through the combined effect of flood, snow and ice.

Red Cross and rescue stations were established in various parts of the city. A group of 1,000 refugees was made ready to go to Terre Haute.

Side walks and streets which were built over sewers collapsed in various parts of the city causing foundations of buildings to crack, several large buildings facing Dress Plaza collapsing completely.

January 24 found Evansville completely under martial law. Louis L. Roberts was named commander of the military district with Robert L. Stilwell in charge of the 1,600 troops.

All schools, churches and business houses not catering to relief or emergency needs were closed. Gasoline tank connections burst in various parts of the city, spreading gasoline on the flood waters. Frantic fire warnings were issued.

No persons or cars or boats were permitted to enter the restricted flood area without a military pass. All persons removed from their homes were forbidden to re-enter.

The municipal water works was put completely out of commission and it was necessary to deliver water to all parts of the city in special tank trucks. Emergency sanitary facilities were erected on street corners.

Fifty-one nurses arrived from Chicago and were sent into disaster swept sections by the Red Cross. Firemen and equipment and police were loaned by other cities. Fifty boats were sent with many coast guards and naval militia.

Practically the only good news heard during the dark period were statements from Gas & Electric officials that they

anticipated no serious trouble with gas and electric service except where service was ordered shut off to eliminate fire hazards. This condition existed in inundated sections only.

Through the heroic efforts of the city engineer and other civil authorities, the municipal water plant was put back into operation, when the flood was at its height. This improved sanitary conditions tremendously.

Everyone was warned to boil water for 20 minutes before using and typhoid "shots" were advised.

Damage was estimated at \$16,815,000 in the city, not including loss of business.

At least 7,500 of the city's 22,000 homes were damaged, averaging \$1,000 each. Five hundred blocks were inundated.

All main hotel heating plants were dead and many large stores were forced to use emergency heating.

With the dawn of February came news that the river had crested at 53.74 feet and the tension began to relax.

Evansville's industries, built on higher ground, were ready to start operation immediately, with normal supplies of power and gas available, when permitted to do so by the military. These payrolls brought new life blood to a flood-stricken city.

But the saddest situation was yet to face Evansville as the thousands who had been forced to evacuate began to return to their ravished homes. Floors were buckled and broken and caked with slimy mud. Practically all wooden furniture that had been in the water was ruined. In some cases the only articles saved were stoves, metal refrigerators, and metal beds. Hundreds of families were forced to return to the Red Cross.

Rescue and relief work are over—rehabilitation and reconstruction are ahead.

The tremendous job of restoring electric and gas service to the 7,500 inundated homes was a tremendous undertaking—an undertaking to tax to the utmost our every faculty. But work is proceeding rapidly, and our every effort will be bent to soon complete this vital work.

The final word of all informed people is that Evansville escaped complete demoralization and hysteria because electric and gas service was available through the entire period.



Howell was deeply submerged



5th, looking North from Vine



Trainloads of boats came in



Bridges went under, cutting of the West Side



Haynie's corners—tough on gas service



Bosse High School



Residential streets became rivers

WHY THE FLOODS OCCURRED

What caused the great flood? The scientists and weather experts, professional and amateur, will be debating this question for many years to come.

But here are some of the factors which appear, from our own records, to have contributed to the catastrophe.

There were exceedingly heavy rains in the upper Ohio Valley which put the river above normal flood level. Then during January, record rainfall (over 20 inches in the Green River Valley, over 17 inches in the Ohio Valley and over 16 inches in Evansville) descended upon

the entire valley. Rapid run-off of this water transformed every brook and stream into raging torrents. The Ohio, already swollen, rose rapidly with these additional burdens and as the general downpour continued, exceeded all previous peaks.

If the Mississippi had been at flood stage at the same time, preventing rapid evacuation of the Ohio flood waters, the destruction would have been much greater.

Here is a graphic picture of the rise and fall of the Ohio River.

GOING UP

Flood Stage 35 Feet

Jan. 11	35.5
Jan. 12	36.7
Jan. 13	37.5
Jan. 14	38.2
Jan. 15	39.6
Jan. 16	40.7
Jan. 17	41.8
Jan. 18	42.8
Jan. 19	43.5
Jan. 20	44.2
Jan. 21	44.9
Jan. 22	46.6
Jan. 23	48
Jan. 24	49.4
Jan. 25	50.8
Jan. 26	52
Jan. 27	52.6
Jan. 28	53.04
Jan. 29	53.4
Jan. 30	53.63
Jan. 31	53.74

Crest—53.74, Jan. 31

GOING DOWN

Feb. 1	53.7
Feb. 2	53.6
Feb. 3	53.3
Feb. 4	52.9
Feb. 5	52.4
Feb. 6	51.8
Feb. 7	50.9
Feb. 8	49.8
Feb. 9	48.2
Feb. 10	46.07
Feb. 11	43.89
Feb. 12	42.08
Feb. 13	41
Feb. 14	40.5

(Stages above are 7 a. m. reading by the Evansville Weather Bureau.)

Feb. 15	40.2
Feb. 16	39.7

*FOR YOUR COMPARISON:

Feb. 19, 1883 Flood Crest	47.80 ft.
Feb. 18, 1884 Flood Crest	48.00 ft.
Apr. 5, 1913 Flood Crest	48.40 ft.
Jan. 31, 1937 Flood Crest	53.74 ft.



Refugee camps provide shelter



Buildings collapsed on Dress Plaza



Main Street, looking toward the C. & E. I. Depot



Sanitary facilities erected on street corners



Homes and furniture were badly damaged



Typhoid "shots" for all



Cleaning up the debris on Washington Ave.



This was a drug store—Petersheim's



Street car submerged near Bosse School



The car barns were invaded.



The last trip across before bridges closed

Our Transportation System—An Early Flood Victim

Several days B.F. (before flood) our transportation men, not knowing what was in store for them, thought that they had all the trouble in the world right in their lap.

Over night a thick blanket of snow, ice and sleet froze the tracks solid. Tractors, pick and shovel crews and other remedies were tried but to no avail. Many cars were stalled on the streets, some off the tracks. With the melting of the ice, came the flood waters and a desperate fight to get the cars out of harm's way. After a heartbreaking struggle, all cars were pulled in except one on Washington Avenue that was captured by the rapidly rising water, and six cars on West Franklin Street that were held captive by ice until it was too late to get them across the bridge into the barns.

But the fight had just begun, for flood water was invading the Water Street Barns—eventually reaching a depth of nearly 6 feet. Every man jumped to his post and most of the cars were successfully moved to supposed safety in the Maryland Street shops. But the flood had

no mercy and the water crept up and up until it stood a foot and a half deep in the shops. So a third evacuation was made, this time to higher ground on Maryland Street where the cars stood patiently until they could run on dry streets again.

In the meantime bus service had been maintained wherever possible—but soon came the military order clearing streets of all persons not engaged in relief or other emergency work. Our bus fleet was then offered to and gladly accepted by the Red Cross, where buses and operators performed valiant service. From January 27 until February 5th flood waters made it impossible to operate a single street car or bus line.

After the crisis was passed and receding waters hared the streets, bus service was again resumed wherever possible. Street cars were rehoused in the car barns and started out on schedule. The "flood victims" are being worked on and normal conditions now prevail.

It was a great job—with lots of hard work.

SCHUMACHER SAVES NEWBURGH'S WATER SUPPLY

The people of Newburgh can be thankful that they have a district utility superintendent who is resourceful, courageous and not afraid to work. Not only did Herman Schumacher and his boys keep Newburgh's electric and gas service intact during the flood but they lifted the city's water pumps out of the mounting waters of the muddy Ohio and kept Newburgh's water system in operation.

That sounds fairly easy—but actually it meant hours of gruelling work against heavy odds. We wish we had a picture of Squid Hurley working in water up to his arm pits. That boy can really take it.

Herman's practical engineering saved Newburgh from a serious situation, and he deserves everyone's hearty congratulations.

These Joe Johnson photos are good evidence.

*Note—It is interesting to know that Newburgh was the only town on the Ohio River that had uninterrupted water service throughout the flood and also was the first to get the state inspector's O.K. for uncontaminated water.

GENUNG AND STOCKFLETH WERE READY FOR ACTION

Far behind the actual scene of action but holding vital positions in the battle were Homer Genung at Fort Branch and Phil Stockfleth at Winslow.

When things began to look dark in Evansville and it was anyone's guess whether our generating stations could carry on, arrangements were made for two interconnections with the transmission lines of the Public Service Company of Indiana. These lines could have furnished enough "juice" for emergency service to vital points even if it could not have carried all our load. It was Homer's and Phil's job to be on duty at all times and if the call came, to cut through the switches and make these interconnections.

Through heroic efforts our stations held and the emergency call for the interconnection was never made. But it was a relief to know that Homer and Phil were ready.

MANY EMPLOYEES RENDER VITAL COMMUNITY SERVICE DURING THE CRISIS

Many of our employees gave generously of their time and ability to vital activities outside of the company's operations during the flood.

Col. Bob Stilwell, as Commander of all troops quartered in Evansville, proved an important factor in military operations here. With him, Capt. Bob Schwenker was active and highly efficient.

Jerry Smith, as head of the Boonville Red Cross, was tireless in his efforts. His own services and the use of company property for relief purposes proved invaluable to the Boonville unit.

In Evansville, the Red Cross benefited from the use of company property and from the services of many of our employees.

Everyone did their part.

Steam Heating System, Victim of Backed-Up Sewers and Flooded Basements

By the very nature of its operations, our steam heating system, serving the Evansville business area, received an early knock-out blow from the river. On that black Sunday, January 24th, backed-up sewers and flooded basements of customers overwhelmed the many pumps that F. E. Thompson had thrown into the fight. Manholes filled and by afternoon steam service was gone. As an extraordinary and emergency service, two portable hand-fired boilers were installed outside the Welborn-Walker hospital and vital heat was supplied to the patients.

When the falling river made pumping possible, mains were pumped out and the slow tedious drying out operations were started. Old Mulberry Street plant, sleeping in virtual retirement, was laboriously put into operation, pumping steam into the low pressure mains. The high pressure line from Division Street developed a bad break from a sewer cave-in but Mulberry proved she could take it.

Words cannot tell you the work and worry put in by "Tommy" and his men. Reliable reports tell us that no one could have restored service any quicker and very few men in the business could have equaled Tommy's record.

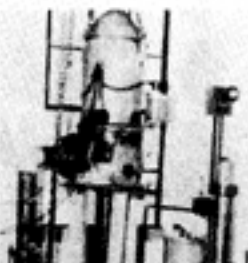
And if you think the singing of steam in the radiators wasn't sweet music—just ask any merchant or business house.



Newburgh water plant



Herman Schumacher raised the pumps



After the water went down



We furnish emergency heat to Walker Hospital



Water surrounded the gas works



Sandbags—do your stuff



Water on the gas plant floor

GAS SERVICE — PUMPS and SANDBAGS

This was a battle fought with boots and boats, pumps and sand bags.

As the water crept higher and higher, real gas trouble developed. Caved in sewers, broken water pipes and earth movements caused many of our gas services to crack, allowing water to enter. This water followed the mains back to their lowest levels, forming a water seal and shutting off the gas supply to whole neighborhoods.

This is where the "drip" men entered the battle that saved the city's gas supply. In some places these men stood in waist-deep water and pumped hour after hour in the bitter cold. In other places the water was even too deep for this, and pumping was done from boats or from the top of deliberately abandoned trucks. Hand pumps, electric pumps, gasoline pumps, all were pressed into service as the surging waters rose higher and higher in Evansville's streets.

Let's leave these men toiling at their stations for a moment as we inspect other vital positions.

Our natural gas supply lines from the gas fields were holding firmly but would they continue to do so? Backing us to

the limit in this fight for life was our natural gas supplier, the Kentucky Natural Gas Corporation. It had men stationed 24 hours a day at strategic points along the supply line to "cut in" an additional Indiana supply of gas or to tap in on the Panhandle system, if a break should occur.

Clarence Hitch had every reason to believe that our natural gas supply would hold, but he could take no chances, so he made ready at the gas plant and fired up the boilers. How he sandbagged, barricaded and pumped at the plant is a story by itself and how he had the regulator valves manned day and night is an important chapter. As it turned out, our supply lines did not fail and the gas plant was not needed, but Clarence was ready for the emergency.

One piece of our equipment that proved vulnerable to this record flood was the regulator station on Barker Ave. This station became submerged to such a depth that its operation was impossible, making it necessary to cut off gas service in Howell.

With receding waters, householders moved back into recently inundated homes and then trouble really was with

A successful battle to maintain service. us. Gas furnaces to be reconditioned and started up, gas water heaters to be put into operating condition, gas meters to be emptied of water, more mains and services to be pumped.

Day and night, Saturdays and Sundays, Clarence Hitch and his men, and the gas service boys have been on the jump. With hundreds of customers asking for service at the same time, calls were handled in an orderly, efficient manner.

Their job has not been dramatic—just hard, gruelling work, hour after hour, day after day, night after night. For this reason they perhaps should receive all the more praise.

For the officers of the Company and the gas department heads especially we wish to thank our friends in other Companies for their help and offers of help. We appreciate deeply Mr. J. A. Brown's visit and the expert advice and help he gave. We are indebted to Don Herringshaw of Jackson, Michigan, Gilbert Bell of Saginaw and Edwin Wentland of Lansing.

These men know from actual experience now, what a flood can be and what miracles men can perform when they have the spirit that won't be licked.

THE G. H. Q. OF THE FLOOD

Exciting Hours in the Main Office

Elsewhere in Sigeco News readers will find stories and pictures about the great flood. In this space we are going to present the happenings behind the scenes in Room 4, General Offices. This, the director's room, was set up as general headquarters and served as a liaison between all operating forces, military headquarters, the newspapers and radio.

In addition to dealing with stark emergencies that seemed to crop up from one direction or another almost every minute, G. H. Q. was deluged with telephone calls from customers, newspapers and radio news bureaus. In addition to our own troubles, we received constant calls from important customers to help save their service. Emergencies became commonplace—grief was the order of the day and night—for light burned all night in Room 4.

During the week when our commercial office was closed by military order—the 2nd floor became a dormitory and many learned the technique of sleeping for a few hours on army cots.

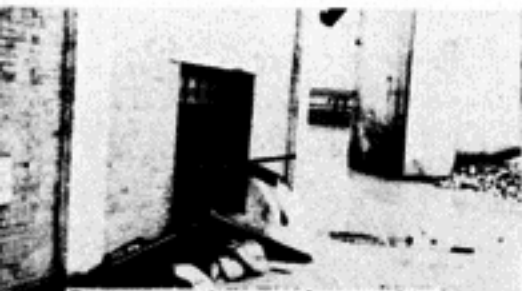
Day after day and night after night, G. H. Q. carried on. It was an experience which will not soon be forgotten. The anxiety and tense watchfulness were enough to upset the poise of the most phlegmatic person—but our leaders preserved their equilibrium and carried on in a manner worthy of military recognition.

Under stress these leaders of ours showed their true worth—their ability to lead, ability to make instant decisions, ability to carry on in the face of overwhelming odds. They were at their best under pressure.

So we salute G. H. Q. the nerve center of the flood battle.

The editor wishes to publicly thank the Evansville Press, the Evansville Courier and J. A. Johnson for the fine photos seen in this issue. It was their contribution that made this souvenir flood issue possible.

If any reader wishes additional copies of this issue the editor has a few extra copies available in Room 13 A.



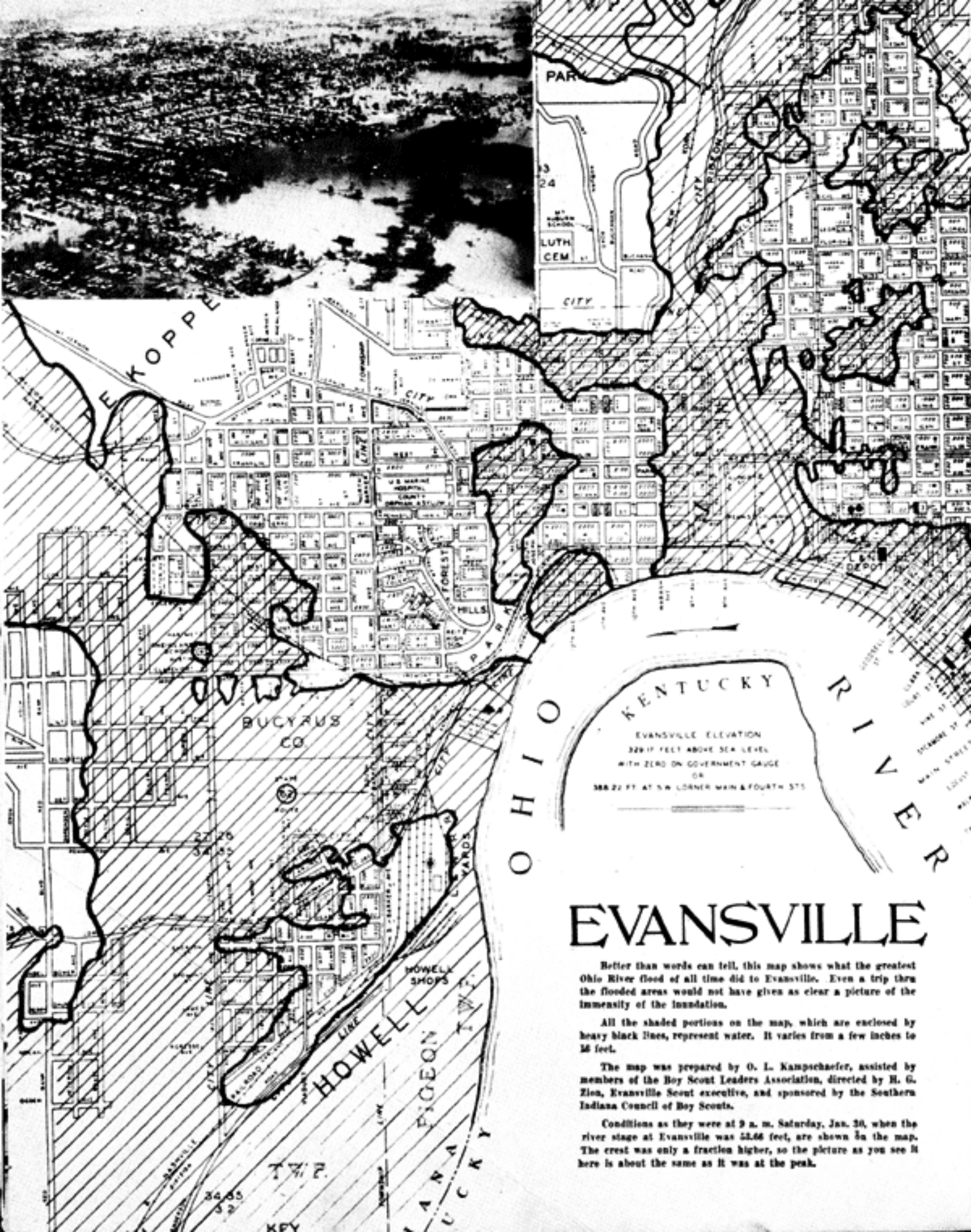
Pumps were busy at the gas plant



Noah Brothers—one of the "drip" men



Mess call at the distribution building kitchen



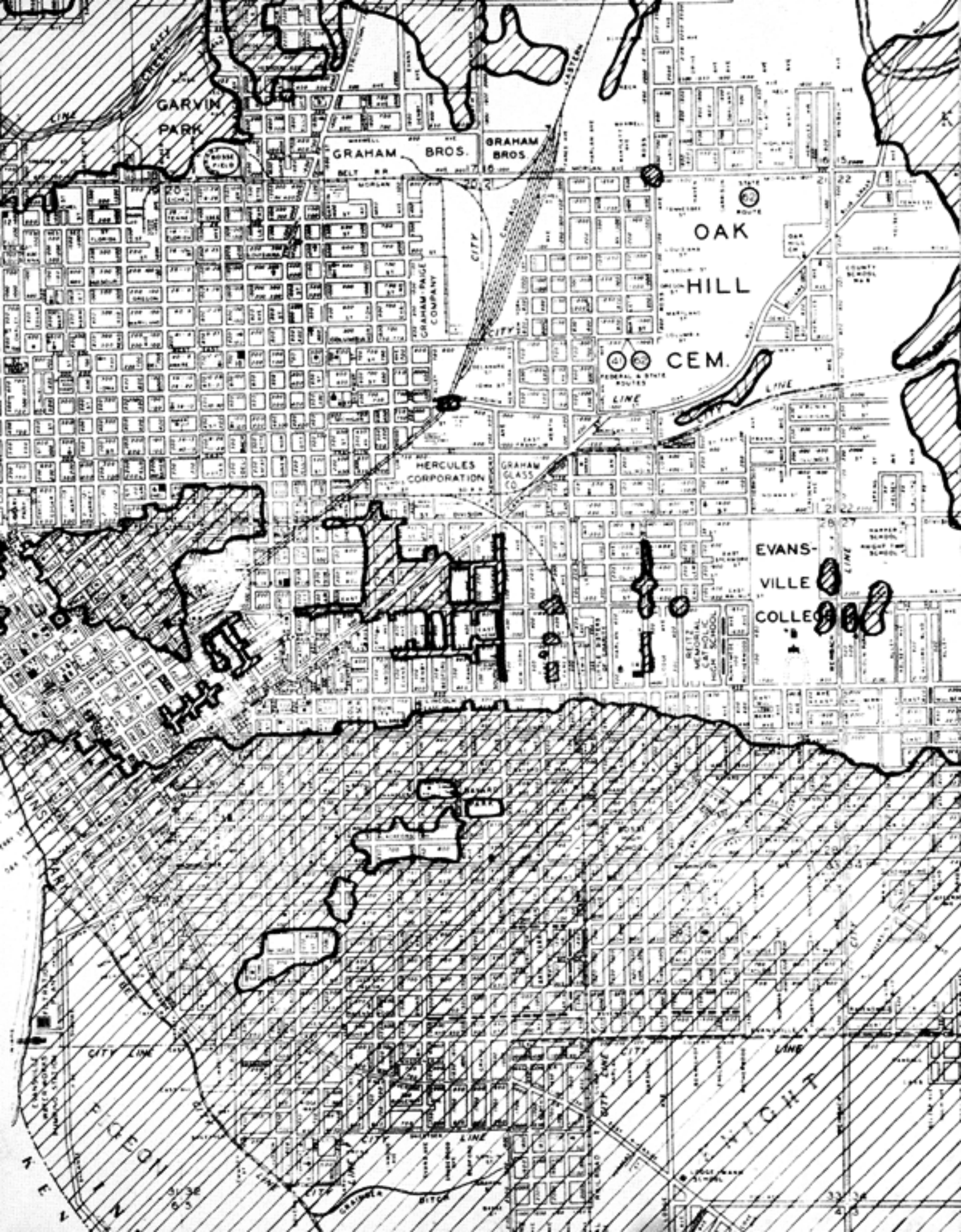
EVANSVILLE

Better than words can tell, this map shows what the greatest Ohio River flood of all time did to Evansville. Even a trip thru the flooded areas would not have given as clear a picture of the immensity of the inundation.

All the shaded portions on the map, which are enclosed by heavy black lines, represent water. It varies from a few inches to 16 feet.

The map was prepared by O. L. Kampschafer, assisted by members of the Boy Scout Leaders Association, directed by H. G. Zion, Evansville Scout executive, and sponsored by the Southern Indiana Council of Boy Scouts.

Conditions as they were at 9 a. m. Saturday, Jan. 30, when the river stage at Evansville was 52.66 feet, are shown on the map. The crest was only a fraction higher, so the picture as you see it here is about the same as it was at the peak.



GARVIN
PARK

GRAHAM BROS.

GRAHAM BROS.

OAK
HILL

CEM.

HERCULES
CORPORATION

GRAHAM
GLASS
CO.

EVANS-
VILLE
COLLEGE

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Ohio River Plant—reached only by boat



Here comes supplies via coast guard



The substation—saved by a roll of canvas

SLEEPLESS NIGHTS AT OHIO RIVER AND DIVISION STREET STATIONS

The fight to save our electric service, perhaps the most spectacular battle of all, was centered on three fronts: Ohio River Station, Division Street Station and Division Station pumping plant at the foot of Ingle Street.

When it became evident that water higher than the normal spring flood was in prospect, emergency measures were immediately taken at the plants. Timber, brick and quick setting cement were rushed in for building barricades. All equipment that could be moved up was carried out of harm's way. Manholes and conduit openings were blocked and sealed and cable ends were filled with hot pitch to seal them water tight. An emergency kitchen and dormitory were set up and supplies put away.

As the water came up, doors were sealed with layers of brick, backed up by cement and more brick. Soon it became evident that our coal supply would be covered with water and that no coal cars could get through. A derrick on a scow solved this problem. Coal was scooped up from under the water, dumped onto the barge to drain—then into the hungry hoppers. And still the water rose until it was above the level of the turbine room floor. Now it was

lapping eagerly at the big outdoor substation. A quick call went out for rolls of canvas with which the boys, in waist deep water, covered the substation fence. This canvas broke the force of the waves and prevented the hi-tension switches from getting soaked.

By this time the Ohio River plant was accessible only by boat, ferry service being operated from the plant to the Claremount substation. Soon, however, the west side of town was entirely cut off by water, so boat service from Fulton Avenue in front of the Sterling Brewery to the plant, was inaugurated. Charley Froelich is very familiar with this route as he and Dr. Conover made many trips to "shoot" the boys at the plant.

We have no words to describe the nervous tension and frantic labor of A. B. Brown, John Smith and all the boys at the plant. The community considers them as true heroes, as indeed they are.

And what was happening at Division Street all this time? Division was kept running on a light load—ready for any emergency. But the emergency nearly happened at Division instead of Ohio River. As the water rose around the plant, seepage began coming through the walls and up through the floor. Sand-

bagging and frantic pumping finally gained control but it was anyone's guess for awhile.

The two boys in the pumping plant had the really tough assignment however. When volunteers were asked for, Fred Burgrave and Charles N. Reesor stepped forward—and they really had a job on their hands. Normally, the pumping station which supplies Division Street's condensing water sets on the bank of the river, but during the flood it was almost a block "out at sea" with wind, waves and current pounding it and constantly menaced by heavy boats that passed near it to dock.

But like the rest of our employees they stuck to their jobs and saw it through. They kept the pumps going that kept Division Street "on the line."

The work of these men had a spectacular slant that made a good news story—and their exploits together with those of the Ohio River gang made the papers from coast to coast.

But whether their names were in the paper or not—all the men know that it was through their efforts that Evansville was saved the crowning horror of darkness through those terror stricken hours.

What higher praise could one receive?



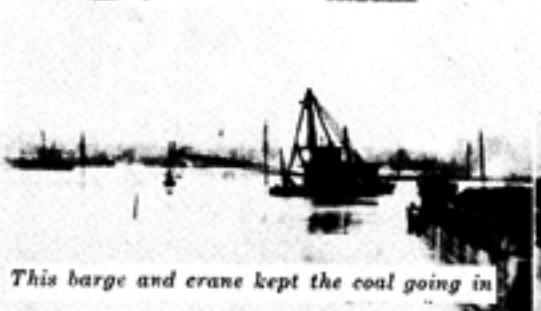
Division Street Station had a wet front yard



Division St. pumping station



Water surrounds Division Street



This barge and crane kept the coal going in



Underwater coal at Ohio River



Le Roy Atkins climbs over Ohio River's barricaded front door



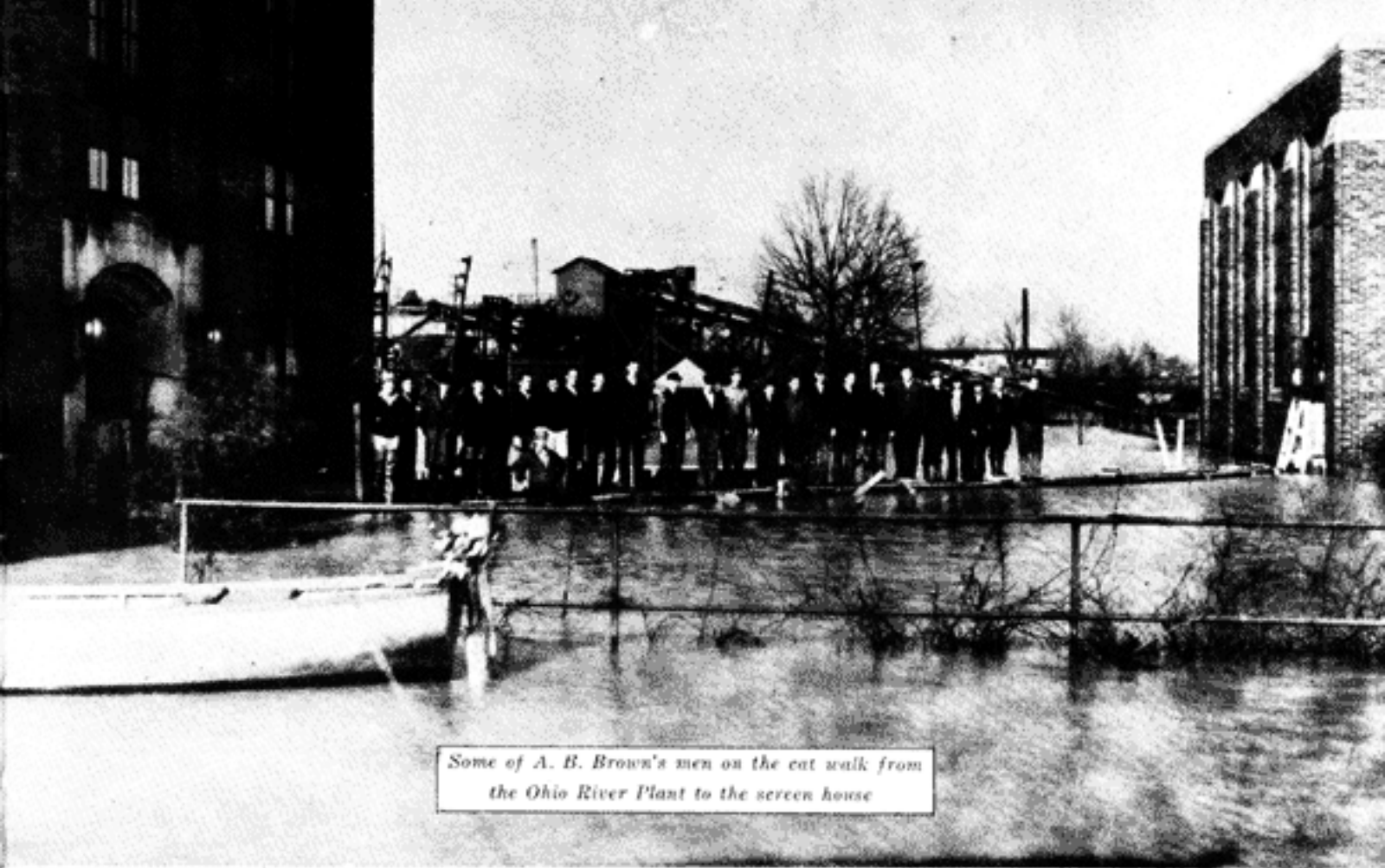
Pretty wet for a walk, boys!



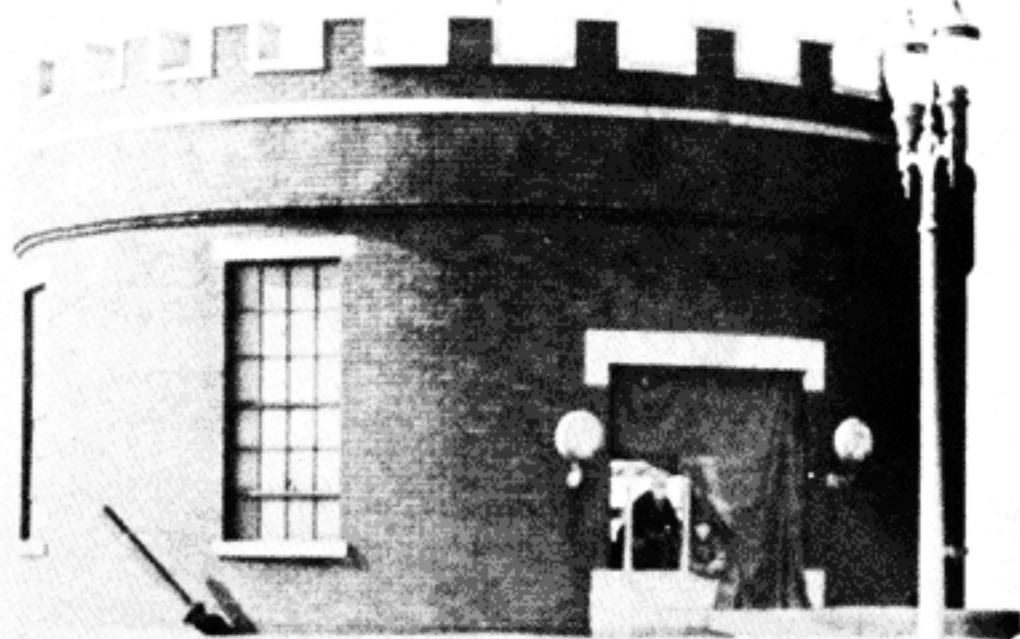
How the current tore at the screen house



The Ohio River garage was well under



*Some of A. B. Brown's men on the cat walk from
the Ohio River Plant to the screen house*



*Fred Burgrave and Chas. Reesor look at the flood
from the doorway of the pumping plant*



A boat was a necessary article of equipment



Fairechild, tired of boats, tries out a car top



The Home Service Dept.

THE LINEMEN RESPOND

The System again Conquers a Great Emergency

Not so many weeks ago, the bells were ringing "Happy New Year," but it has proved far different for Bert Bozard, Lou Momince, Elmer Wilhelm and Harold Freitag and their boys.

Early in January, the most severe sleet storm in a generation tore at our transmission and distribution system, which meant long weary hours of labor for Bert, Lou and Elmer.

Then came the great flood of 1937. As your dazed eyes read the headlines "Record Breaking Flood Stuns City" these men were on the job. Crews were rushing to the lines serving the homes that were rapidly going under. From block to block, from pole to pole, they went cutting services, pulling fuses.

Then came the fear that the water might overwhelm the plant, and crews were rushed north into the Winslow and Ft. Branch districts to make ready for an emergency inter-connection tie in. Then back to Evansville now running an emergency circuit that saved the telephone service—now another for disaster short wave radio service. A call from the all important local radio station "Our basement is filling, we must have an emergency line quick." They got it quick.

Days and nights were one constant emergency. Cold, red-eyed, dog tired, these men willingly carried on. But this was only the beginning.

With receding waters, calls for reconnection of service poured in. Over 7,500 homes and hundreds of stores, each one with a problem and each wanting immediate service.

Working under definite and common sense rules, laid down by the city authorities, work proceeded rapidly. Installations not damaged by water were immediately reconnected. Damaged wiring and cabinets were reconnected after an OK by proper authorities. Meters were replaced, wiring on gas furnaces and oil burners repaired, advice and service given on submerged electric appliances, and all the time under pressure of hundreds of phone calls and orders piling up and up.

The application department and the newly organized service department did their full share to bring rapid and efficient restoration of service.

This enormous task has not yet been completed but it is well in hand.

Due to the planning, organization and plain hard work of these departments, we can now truthfully say that conditions are pointing toward normal.



Back of the barricade



A fellow could snatch a cat nap



The boys waded right into their work—at our garage.



The Ohio River dormitory



These men saved Ohio River station—stomachs



Time to eat at Ohio River

WHAT THE NEWSPAPERS SAY ABOUT OUR SERVICE

Heroism Becomes Ordinary

Heroic deeds are becoming customary in Evansville today so far as the men who have something to do with providing vital services to this community are concerned. But most of them are not being written, or told. The stark facts of the situation demand practically all our time and attention.

But in this critical period of stress and strain let us remember that our light and power service is not being maintained without heroic action. Some sixty workers are virtually entombed at the utility plant where they fight 24 hours in the day to maintain service. Food and water get to them by boat through window tops. Workers dig coal from under water pits to keep up this power.

That is but one illustration of the splendid loyalty and devotion to duty on the part of many workers who have some contribution to make in maintaining the ordinary normal services we expect in modern everyday life. We are handicapped, it is true, but we would be worse off if it were not for splendid men who maintain these services we still possess.

Editorial Evansville Courier
1-28-37

AN EDITORIAL

It would be premature in this the first edition of the Labor Forum to be published since the flood, to attempt to present a picture of the terrific damage this community has suffered from flood water, unprecedented in our history.

In the due course of time, the Forum hopes to play its part in getting across to the people in Evansville, and the country at large, a true and accurate account of what actually happened, and how the people of Evansville pulled themselves out of the water.

In the meantime, we would remiss in our duty if we failed to acknowledge quickly the intelligent and valiant performance of our people in all strata of life during the flood. Almost without exception, every department engaged in the activities of flood rescue and relief, did an amazing and magnificent job—a job that will eventually be recognized as an impressive example of properly coordinated community action during a great public disaster.

It is impossible even to attempt to scratch the surface in giving credit where credit is due. We refer to such splendid examples of effective action in an emergency, as the maintenance of services by the Indiana Bell Telephone Company, the Southern Indiana Gas & Electric Company, and the re-establishment of the operations of the Municipal Water Works. Add to that the thousands of instances of personal sacrifice for the common good, and you will still have only a dim picture of what it took in the way of human cooperation, each man doing his job to the best of his ability to write an impressive page in Evansville's history.

—Excerpts from editorial in Labor Forum 2-13-37.

The Utility Companies

Residents of the flooded areas are asked to be as patient as possible with the telephone company and with the gas and electric company.

The men in charge of these companies thought they had troubles when the river threatened to stop their services entirely a few days ago.

With their employes they worked night and day, frequently in spots where their lives were directly in danger.

The telephone company kept communication facilities open throughout the flood, performing a service beyond price.

The gas and electric company kept its plants from the flood and only cut off service in areas where pipes had been flooded or where live wires or live pipes were a fire menace.

It will be a long time before any of us forget the value of the radio station when the water was rising. It made quick communication among rescue workers possible and kept the city informed from minute to minute of vital developments.

Had electric power failed, the radio would have been cut off instantly. Even the power for the station might have been improvised, receiving sets would have been silent.

As we said, the officials and employes of these companies thought they had troubles when the water was coming up. But their real troubles began when the water started down.

Throughout the flooded areas citizens are clamoring to get back into their homes, and all of them want gas, light and telephone service.

We know, from personal investigation, what an heroic effort is being made to meet this demand, and that all possible men and facilities are being worked around the clock.

Also that it is necessary for these companies, particularly Gaselec to comply with laws and regulations designed to guard against fires.

Building regulations are being and will be relaxed by the city to the utmost point consistent with the safety of the community from fire.

It's a vast job and a heart-breaking one, both for the utility companies and affected citizens.

In the past we have criticized these companies when we thought the occasion required criticism. But right now we can think of no words strong enough in praise of their efforts.

—Evansville Press Feb. 12, 1937

Two Men Remain on Job In Grim Fight With River

A safety line of rope has been strung to the Southern Indiana Gas and Electric company pumper station at the foot of Cour street for the use—if they can get to it—of the two men isolated in the round pill-box like structure covering the pumps, 54 feet below ground level, that suck water from the river for use in the condensers at the gas and electric company's Division street power plant.

That line, rigged by the U. S. Naval Reserve, and a boat provide the only means of escape should the terrific pressure of the water prove too much for the four-foot thick steel reinforced concrete well or the 18-inch thick brick superstructure.

A Courier reporter visited the men, Fred Burgrabe, well known independent baseball player, and Charles N. Reesor, veteran employe of the utilities company. They volunteered for their present emergency job—a 24-hour-a-day assignment.

They were cheerful, unafraid, despite the danger. And there is great danger there. But they trust implicitly in the ability of the well to resist the pressure of millions of gallons of water held at bay.

Mr. Burgrabe and Mr. Reesor have adopted a "pooch-pooch" attitude toward danger. Their chief fear lies not in the sides of the well giving way—they're pretty sure that won't happen—but they do fear some river swirling torrent, may be hurled against the brick walls of the building, cracking it open. Then they'd have to jump for it.

They've at least one hundred yards to go to safety.

WATER SEEPS CONTINUALLY

Despite the thickness of the wall the seepage is great. At some seams water is spurting into the well in streams as big as a thumb.

Aiding the pumps are auxiliary units, used constantly to keep the floor of the well clear. The river itself is 18 inches above the floor of the station. A barricade has been erected at the station's only door, but the water streams over the floor into the open mouth of the well.

If there should be a failure of those auxiliary pumps it wouldn't take long for the main pumper to be covered with water. A two-inch pump is in constant operation and about every 15-minutes a six-inch pump line cuts in which runs for a minute toading approximately 500 gallons of water back into the river.

RAIN UNDERGROUND

The writer accompanied Mr. Burgrabe down a circular staircase, to the very bottom of the well. You have to don a rain coat and hat to get there, for down there the water from the top and from the sides combine to make an underground rainstorm.

Down there the thought—the river's only four feet away through that wall is ever present, and it's a 35-mile wide river now at that.

Should a disaster occur while the men are in the pit they have two means of escape if there's time—by the stairs or by elevators that are merely oil barrels, full of water from the indoor rain.

Sleep is their biggest necessity now. The company has supplied them with all the warm clothing and choice foods they want. Neither man has averaged more than two hours sleep in 24 since they volunteered for duty a week ago.

Typical of the many feature stories used by the papers is this one published in the Feb. 1 issue of the Evansville Courier.

WHAT OUR CUSTOMERS SAY:

Here is a typical cross section of the opinion of the community upon the service we gave during the flood. Dozens of other examples could be given, but these are enough to correctly mirror the sentiment of our customers.

GENERAL FOODS CORPORATION
R. R. Thompson
Manager, Western Plants
Battle Creek, Mich.
February 5, 1937

Mr. T. A. Kenney,
Commonwealth & Southern Corp.
New York, N.Y.
My dear Mr. Kenney:
I have just returned from Evansville, where we have an important operation. It is no news to you, of course, to hear that the conditions down there are indescribable.

My object in writing to you is to offer my sincere congratulations to whoever is entitled to them for the splendid manner in which you have operated your Evansville property. It is almost inconceivable that power service could have been maintained without interruption during all of this entire period. I can just picture the conditions in the plant where your executives and operators were giving the best they had in order to serve the needs of the public, and the fact that this utility has been kept open has done much to lessen the hardship and unpleasantness of this trying period.

With kindest regards, I am

Very truly yours,
GENERAL FOODS CORPORATION
R. R. Thompson
Manager, Western Plants

"To attempt to name more than a few of those who have served so well in a hopeless undertaking, but as I think of this fine, inspiring aspect of the recent emergency—I think of the courageous and untiring and wholly effective work of the officers and men of the Southern Indiana Gas and Electric Company in avoiding failure of our gas and electric services—"

LOUIS RUTHENBURG, *President,*
SERVEL, Inc.

An excerpt from a speech before the Retail Merchants' Bureau on Feb. 22.



Many employees were flooded out



Your editor was no exception



Some homes were harder hit than others



This treatment

Evansville Chamber of Commerce
Evansville, Indiana
February 15, 1937.

Mr. F. S. Colley,
Southern Indiana Gas & Electric Co.,
City

Dear Mr. Colley:

In our opinion, the citizens of Evansville are deeply indebted to the Southern Indiana Gas & Electric Company for the superman efforts put forth by your Company during the late flood. Of course, it was bad enough for our city to be without water service. But it would have been much worse had we been thrown in darkness, because then there would have been chaos.

As it was however, your Company maintained electric lights throughout this "dark age", which was really a blessing and salvation to our community. Our citizenry realizes the days and nights of toil, privation and suffering endured by your officials and employees to keep the electric light system going, and how they battled and fought against the elements before success was assured.

Words are inadequate to express our thanks or appreciation, therefore we will conclude this communication by simply saying "we thank you very sincerely".

Cordially yours,
EVANSVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
A. F. Sherille
A. F. Sherille,
Secretary-Manager

AR:MD

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS
Warrick County Chapter
BOONVILLE, INDIANA
Feb. 9, 1937

Mr. F. S. Colley, Vice Pres.,
Southern Indiana Gas & Electric Co.,
Evansville, Indiana.

Dear Mr. Colley:

In the name of the Warrick County Chapter of the American Red Cross, and for myself personally, I wish to thank the members of the Southern Indiana Gas & Electric Company, of Boonville, for the inestimable service they have rendered to our organization.

For the past three weeks we have had our flood relief headquarters in your local office and Mr. Jerry Smith has worked untiringly to help us. He has furnished space and office equipment and extended every possible courtesy to us. Mr. Smith, and all employees, have ably assisted our organization and rendered exceptional service at all times.

As Disaster Chairman of Warrick County, Mr. Smith supervises the setup required for the emergency and we cannot compliment him too highly for his cooperation and managerial assistance.

We appreciate, sincerely, the splendid service given us by your local personnel.

Gratefully yours,
Suey Belle Wainwright
Warrick County Chapter Chairman.

N.W.

MEAD JOHNSON TERMIN
Evansville, Ind.

PERSONAL

Mr. F. S. Colley, Vice Pres.,
Southern Indiana Gas & Electric Co.,
Evansville, Indiana

My dear Sir:

As a citizen and business man, I would be remiss in my duty if I did not express my appreciation to you for the efficient and untiring work done by you and your organization during the flood crisis.

It will always remain a source of pride to me that we have behind us all the time so smoothly during extreme emergency.

You are certainly to be commended.

Sincerely,
John H. Mead
John H. Mead,
Vice President

JH:MA

COOPERATIVE AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
Warrick County Chapter
BOONVILLE, INDIANA
Feb. 9, 1937

Mr. F. S. Colley,
Southern Indiana Gas & Electric Co.,
Evansville, Indiana.

Dear Mr. Colley:

I am sorry that I cannot get to you tonight, to get you by appreciation we have for the full record of your untiring work that we have just seen.

I look forward to you personally at least a

Sincerely,
John H. Mead
John H. Mead,
Vice President

JH:MA

2621 Edgewood Drive,
Evansville, Indiana.
February 15th, 1937

Mr. F. B. Culley, Vice Pres.
Sou. Ind. Gas & Electric Co.
Evansville, Indiana.

Dear Mr. Culley:

I read with great interest your article addressed to the citizens of Evansville, concerning the service rendered by your company during the flood emergency.

My home was not affected by the flood for which we are grateful, and I feel it my duty to express my appreciation to you for the fine service given us during the flood. Almost every other community affected by flood waters was without light and gas, at least part of the time, and the fact that our service continued without interruption is something that the people of Evansville should be grateful for.

During the recent sleet ice and later the flood emergency, I could not help but think of the extra expense your company was put to. Frankly, I have been one of those that at times thought the rates for electricity were too high, but after seeing what a utility is up against in times of disaster as we recently experienced, I realize now that such emergencies must be provided for, and that a surplus to meet these unexpected expenses is essential.

I am just an average citizen, but I want to express my genuine appreciation for the splendid service given us, and assure you that we are grateful.

Yours very truly,
A. W. Walling

Indiana National Guard

MILITARY SECTOR NO. 1
EVANSVILLE, INDIANA

February
Eleventh
1937

Mr. F. B. Culley, Vice-President
Southern Indiana Gas & Electric Co.
City.

Dear Mr. Culley:

I would be remiss in my duty and deny myself an especial pleasure if I failed at the first opportunity to express to you and to the Southern Indiana Gas & Electric Company the very deepest and sincere appreciation of the Military, in which all of our citizens join, for the outstanding record made by your company, its tireless employees and maintenance management for the heroic work in maintaining electric service throughout the emergency in Evansville.

While I appreciate that neither I nor anyone not actually engaged in that work can really appreciate the magnitude of the job or the risks connected with it, it was a most satisfactory knowledge at this Headquarters to learn through Mr. Fleming, Mr. Dillingham and Mr. Sly, one of whom was in continuous liaison at this Headquarters, that nothing was being undone or omitted to insure continuous service by your company.

The harmonious cooperation which this Headquarters received from your company and its personnel was invaluable.

With kindest personal regards,

Very truly yours,

LEWIS L. ROBERTS
Lt. Col. 109th P.A.
Comdr.

LLR:IPS

WALKER & WALKER

212 N. WALKER, BROAD BUILDING
EVANSVILLE, INDIANA

February 15th, 1937.

Mr. F. Bayard Culley,
5011 Lincoln Ave.,
City.

Dear Bayard:-

In the rush of our business, the things that have happened, that I am stopping to write you a note at this time. Having had a rather close up view of the 1937 flood, it seems to me more and more surprising that the results in Evansville were not more serious, particularly as to loss of life. This fact was in my opinion attributable to the splendid manner in which everyone rallied to the need. Of greatest importance was the contribution in the way of service made by you and your company. I cannot praise too highly the fine determination, and heroic spirit shown by you and your employees. I could not let this service to our community go unmentioned by myself and it is with pleasure that I add my small word of commendation.

Cordially yours,

Henry J. Walker

es

CORPORATION

February 19, 1937

of Evansville I think
did not personally thank
performed by your company

to me as to how you
it certainly speaks well

these are very thankful
stations who can function

regulated upon your en-

truly,
S. L. A. CORPORATION
S. L. A.
General Manager

ENSION WORK

HOME ECONOMICS

EXTENSION SERVICE
HOME DEMONSTRATION BUREAU
COUNTY AGENT BUREAU
COUNTY OFFICE

EVANSVILLE, IND.
February 15, 1937

Co

not able at the meeting
and tell you how much
pride we take in the wonder-
ous the trying hours

privilege of expressing to
ing of our appreciation.

only.

Bill
A. Allen

recommended

Nor this

This house will welcome spring cleaning

Joe Johnson's Buick is
safe in this garage

Our printer is on this street
—that's why we are late.

The business district escaped
extremely deep water

He won't buy gas here, soon

This is a reproduction of the full page advertisement released by our company in both Evansville papers on February 10.

THE FRONT LINE DEFENDERS WHO SAVED EVANSVILLE'S ELECTRICITY and GAS

When the muddy flood waters of the raging Ohio were creeping relentlessly higher and higher into Evansville—when your spirits sank lower and lower as you read the newspapers and listened to radio bulletins, it was comforting to read and hear this announcement: "The officials of your gas and electric company report every part of the city—except in the flooded section where electricity—except in the flooded section where electricity—was ordered cut off by the military authorities to eliminate fire hazards."

Behind that simple statement that "All is well with the electricity and gas supply" is a story of fighting men which will stir the feelings of every grateful citizen. It is a story of a desperate but successful fight with the elements—a fight that saved a stricken city from the terror of darkness and silence—a fight that saved the electric supply of Evansville—to the best of our knowledge, a feat unequalled in any other city in the flood-ridden Ohio Valley.

When it became evident that a record flood was in the making, the men got ready—with boots and boots and axes, and equipment.

And then came the greatest deluge this valley has ever known.

At the big electric plant on the river things began to happen—and happen fast. With the coming of the water, there was only one thought—forget sleep, food or rest—keep the service on. Timbers, brick, cement were rushed in—doors and windows sealed. An emergency kitchen and cots were set up for use when nature would stand the punishment no longer. Supplies were hoisted in through angry waters and hoisted over the barricades into the plant.

More trouble—the water was reaching hungrily for the big transformers in the outdoor sub-station. "Get canvas—all the town can furnish—the urgent order—and then men fought the swirling current to encircle the substation fence with the tarps—anything to break the tremendous waves kicked up on "Lake Ohio." Every hour a new emergency arose that must be met with courage and ingenuity. Now the coal is under water—and no coal cars can get through. "Get a barge with a dip bucket on it. Dip coal out of the water onto another barge to drain then into the hoppers." Meeting these emergencies was a 24-hour-a-day assignment with bitter cold and wet for companions and the flood waters raging on all sides.

And down in the pumping plant at the foot of Ingle Street other heroes were born in the muddy torrents that were greedy to enter. Down in the dark—"it, far beneath the surface, of the water, volunteer employees stuck to their posts. These vital pumps were kept going—the danger

These "soldiers" are not through yet. The gigantic task of rehabilitation lies ahead. It takes time to clear out lines and repair damage—especially when unseasonable electric and wind storms, such as we have just experienced, complicate the situation. The city building and electrical inspectors have laid down some sensible rules of procedure which we all must follow. Your company would like to get every customer first. This, of course, is humanly impossible. But if you are inconvenienced for a while, your patience will be of great assistance in speeding the work along.

You can be sure that your company is sparing nothing in men, materials or money to restore the community's electric, gas, steam heating and transportation service to normalcy. Perhaps the most inspiring thing that emerged from this disaster was the courage and fortitude exhibited by the people and the fine spirit of service and co-operation of the military, the naval militia, the coast guard, the civil authorities, the police and fire departments, the weather bureau, the Red Cross, and all other agencies of relief and administration. These have been of inestimable value to us in our fight to keep our services in operation. We, together with the rest of Evansville, are deeply appreciative of everyone who served so willingly and efficiently.

Thank you—sincerely,
F. B. CULLEY, Vice President.

SOUTHERN INDIANA GAS and ELECTRIC CO.

of falling walls, explosions and flooding were ignored.

A less dramatic but nevertheless grueling fight was being waged too at the Division Street electric station. It was an exhausting and continuous fight on encroaching waters—water that laughed at walls and burst up through the very floors. These men, too, won out.

Meanwhile linemen were rushed from one vital point to another about the city, working at break-neck speed. Came the military order: "Cut off all power south of Washington and east of Parrett. Fires must be prevented." This may have inconvenienced many in that district that the flood did not touch—but it also eliminated a serious fire hazard that might have involved everyone.

And what about the gas during the crisis? Not for a second did Evansville's Natural Gas supply fail, although as a precaution the gas plant was fired up and made ready for any emergency. But the lines in the streets did not fare so well. Broken sewers, cave-ins and earth movements cracked many gas lines and allowed water to enter, cutting off the gas supply to many homes and stores. How the "drip" men helped and are still helping to save this situation is a dramatic story, too. Standing to their waists in water, in boats, on top of deliberately abandoned company trucks—they are working night and day in a desperate and in an increasingly successful attempt to pump the mains clear of water.

The transportation and steam heating services were early victims of the flood. The street car tracks completely ice-cased in ice were laboriously cleaned out only to have service again disrupted by flooding streets. The water invaded car barns and pieces of safety as the water invaded vital Red Cross buildings. Buses were donated to retail food stores. We are glad to report retreating flood waters have enabled us to restore transportation services to comparative normalcy.

Flooded basements of customers and backed up sewers caused by the rapidly rising river completely flooded out the downtown steam heating but service is expected to be at least partially restored tomorrow. Restoration of this service has not been dramatic, just 24-hour-a-day drudgery . . . but there has been no complaint from the workers, only anxiety to get the service restored. A thousand other stories could be told of these front line defenders—the stake was the community's electricity and gas supply. And that was worth taking the risk to save.

Your gas and electric company is proud of these men. Certainly you are, too. They did a job and did it well. And thank God not one of them was lost or seriously injured.