

The Flood in Chillicothe.

On Wednesday, March 26, 1913, the city of Chillicothe, Ohio, county seat of Ross County and former State Capital, was visited by the most disastrous flood in its history.

After a week of heavy rain, the flooded Scioto river, a tributary of the Ohio, flowing past the city, broke its bounds on the morning of the above day at 4 o'clock and swept three-fourths of the city with water ranging from a few inches to twenty feet in depth.

The rushing water held in check in various ways, backed its swollen torrent into portions of the city that had never been touched in previous floods. Save in a few places water covered the city and its vicinity for an area of eight square miles.

The rise of the water was so swift that many people were caught unprepared and had only time to run for their lives. Streets in the central residence portion of the city were torn into deep ravines by the raging flood stream. Houses were undermined and sent toppling into the water.

Many thrilling rescues were made. Silas Pyle, a bartender, after rescuing twenty-five people, lost his life. Eighteen lives were lost. Besides this loss of life, 2800 houses were flooded and nearly 5000 people made homeless. The damage to property amounted to over a million dollars.

Relief work began before the waters receded. Civic, fraternal and religious bodies opened their buildings as houses of refuge. Business and professional men and society women toiled in the rescue and relief work. Forty thousand dollars was donated by citizens at home and abroad. Outside cities, firms and organizations rendered valuable financial and material aid.

All the public utilities were out of commission. All lines of railroad were wrecked. A single telephone wire was all that connected the stricken city with the outside world. In spite of these insurmountable difficulties, reconstruction work was started. Large sums of money for the work was voted by council. Health authorities kept the city free from any epidemic, and the city is emerging from its ordeal better than ever. Governor Cox and the State Relief Commission visited the city and were greatly impressed at the way in which the suffering city had borne its great trial. They promised material assistance and the American Red Cross Society also aided in the permanent rehabilitation of the homeless.

































