

Copied from the account of the
Flood of 1913.

Hope that this will be helpful to you for
your work in view.

This need not be returned

Written by Sister Mary Adelaide
for many years a member of
the Franklin Street Community

The Flood. March 25, 1913. Tuesday, A. M.

The Sisters of Notre Dame, Franklin and Ludlow Sts.
Dayton, Ohio.

5. 25 A. M. On our way to Chapel. No car tracks visible on Ludlow Street, water to the side walk. The Reverend Father Kassmann came earlier than usual, we had Mass at 6:00 Received Holy Communion. We left the Chapel immediately after Mass, removed Refectory tables, chairs, kitchen utensils and some food to the Community room, first floor; other articles were removed from the basement to the Hall and Library. Took a little breakfast, the last hot drink for several days.

The water forced its way into the basement with the roar of a Niagara, and we hurried to the next floor, to remove furniture to a place of safety. Three men were saved by climbing on to the roof of our boiler room. These men helped to carry the heavier articles.

From the parlors, by this time we found that every thing we had placed in the Community Room, Hall and Library had to be removed to the next floor, (Class rooms.)

8:30 Explosion of natural gas on Washington St., fire very near.

9:20 The wall around the Convent fell.
This wall was 12 ft. high.

Shortly after it was considered necessary to remove the Blessed Sacrament. Father Kassmann brought our dearest Lord to the Senior class room, and placed it into the little Tabernacle, reserved for the Repository on Holy Thursday, which had been hurriedly placed on Sisters' desk.

About 10:30 fourteen persons, eight men and six women from the neighboring houses across the alley were pulled with a rope through the water, and on to the roof of the boiler room, then, by ladder, to the second story of the old building. (The Ark.)

Later in the morning Father Kassmann carried the Blessed Sacrament to the third floor corridor,

Blessing the cardinal points.

3:00 P. M. Current fifty miles an hour. - All kinds of debris beginning to pass carried by the current.

Father Fassmann advised the Sisters to make an act of perfect resignation, as resignation to God's Will is the most perfect form of prayer. All the Sisters made the oblation of their lives into the Hands of God.

4:00 - Almost dark. How the night was dreaded! Boat containing five persons was seen to capsize near the Emmanuel School; the Chaplain gave them conditional absolution.

5:00 Father Fassmann blessed again the cardinal points with the Blessed Sacrament.

The greater number of the Sisters prayed all night before the Blessed Sacrament. Water rose steadily until one o'clock, but contrary to expectation, when it stopped rising it did not begin to go down. Oh, the length of that awful night, all over the city intense darkness, with here and there the gleam of only a candle. Away over the hill the electric lights from St. Mary College

and from the National Cash Register only made the darkness over the stricken City darker still. The rain poured; wind blew; cold intensified, the weary hours wore away.

Wednesday A. M. The Sisters received Holy Communion and the Father communicated Himself. Watching - praying - hoping - the hours of Wednesday passed slowly away.

Night - Fall again

Father Lassmann blessed the cardinal points with the Blessed Sacrament, this time it was so dark that he blessed from the class room; it was too dark to see even this, for not even the Sanctuary lamp was burning; there was danger of an explosion, owing to the oils and gasses in the water. After the fourth blessing the Father said: "Sisters, the blessing now is for you." We could not see him, the darkness was intense. Shortly after this we heard explosions and saw fire on Third St. This lighted up the room and the silent Tabernacle became visible.

The cry came over the waters by Megaphone, "Put

out-your-lights."

Father Kassmann's brave efforts to rouse the men at the Union Station to put out the light in the tower. The red sky cast its reflection on the water, until at last one scarcely knew whether it was sky or "sea" that was on fire. Voices of people from the low buildings calling to the Sisters, the Father answered. He went to each side of the building and called to the people on the roofs to keep up their trust in God. He was like an Angel of Goodness going from place to place.

The Sisters prayed and sang, sang and prayed; (no one fainted, no one screamed) Between one and two o'clock, the waters began to go down.

Thursday 27 All day the water kept going down slowly. The Thermometer registered 45 dg. in the rooms, the corridors were even colder. That day we helped ourselves to the little food that was left. In the morning we had puffed rice and rain water.

3:00 - Martial law established.

A boat sighted and hailed, men replied, but

no one could come to us. National guards came in boats; water only six feet in the streets. A little later a boatman brought provisions from Mrs. Schumaker, and took a message to Father O'Reilly to be forwarded to our Provincial Superior, then in the East. From the Cash Register, a note was also sent to the Brothers asking for bread and water.

Late in the afternoon it was possible to go into into the Sanctuary and secure the Altar stone which had been left there on Tuesday. The water had not quite reached to the table of the Altar.

Another dark night. But we were more hopeful. Took a little rest, while Sisters in turn kept watch, so as to give warning in case of danger.

Burning buildings still seen.

Friday A. M. Holy Communion.

At 6:30 A boat laden with ham sandwiches prepared by the Brothers of Mary, and bottles of water from the Life Saving Crew. Brother Louis Reinbolt and Brother Rappel were on the boat. They had hoped to reach us Thursday afternoon with the sandwiches, but could not possibly come

near the convent until Friday morning; that was the reason of our receiving meat on Friday. We were told by our Chaplain, to eat what God had sent to us. After our breakfast the whole Community, (fifty-nine sisters) assembled before the Blessed Sacrament to sing the Te Deum.

Later the Louisville Life Saving Crew brought fifty bottles of water, and fifty loaves of bread.

The boat rowed in over the iron gate to the Franklin Street door. All day Friday refugees were brought to the Convent on Franklin Street.

Friday afternoon the Archbishop accompanied by Father O'Neil and Father Gallagher of South Norwood came. After his return home when asked what he had seen, he replied: "What the eye hath seen the tongue can never tell."

Friday evening four Dominican Sisters and fourteen of their girls from the Home were brought to us. We began cleaning on the first floor.

Saturday, A. M. Mass and Holy Communion.

There was no Mass on Friday because it was not safe to light the candles.

Sunday. Three Masses. The two Reverend Fathers from Emanuel Church came and brought with them the Ciborium containing the Consecrated Hosts. The Ciborium from the Loretto Guild was also brought to us. Our dearest Lord also took refuge in the Senior class-room with His spouses.

The Tabernacle being small, the two Ciboriums were placed outside, on either side of the Tabernacle, and a Benediction Veil covered all.

We had two Masses daily for nearly two weeks.

Sunday. P. M. Nineteen Sisters were sent to Cincinnati. They could not get a car, and were therefore obliged to remain for the night with the Brothers of Mary, where 500 refugees were sheltered.

By special permission of the Governor of Ohio, they were allowed to use a private car on Monday.

Doctor King of Cincinnati and two trained nurses went with ^{them}. Our Provincial Superior had communicated with the Governor in our behalf.

For two days it was supposed that the convent would have to be vacated on account of unsanitary condition. God came to our aid, and disinfectants did the work.

Marshall Law, in all its rigor needed to hold down the looters. From Saturday morning until the following Tuesday 78 persons were brought to the Convent half starved, half frozen; one woman having stood on a roof from Tuesday until she was brought to us on Friday. Doctors and nurses were constantly coming in to see if the refugees needed their aid. Every body was kind to us.

During the first ten days after the flood six hundred persons were served with food by the Sisters, who got it from the Relief Committee; ten Sisters were busy serving all day. Former graduates of the Academy came with baskets for relief. At night, at any hour, the relief wagons came to the Convent, and the provisions had to be received. Father Fassmann answered every call. April 4. The Sisters of the Precious Blood came to take our clothes to their laundry, this they did for several weeks. Received substantial relief from our Sisters in Cincinnati, Reading,

Hamilton, Columbus. There was no light for nearly four weeks; the curfew rang for three weeks

at five o'clock, then it rang at six, then for some days at seven, then at nine, finally at eleven-thirty. Martial law was over, it had lasted from March 27 to May 6.

The destruction all over the city was terrible, in our convent and on our grounds it was awful. In the basement the order of progress was, as follows: laundry, medicine room, refectory, kitchen, scullery, pantries, cold storage, bakery, children's lunch room, day-boarders' dining room, Sisters' cloak room, all simply destroyed.

On the first floor, all the floors ruined, chapel benches and communion rail spoiled, two grand pianos utterly ruined; windows and doors wide open for weeks; glass in windows in basement all broken. On the grounds the big wall on Franklin St., Ludlow St., Washington St., and the alley gate demolished; many trees of the south lawn swept away, grape arbor gone, shrine of the Blessed Virgin statue and all gone. St. Joseph and St.loysius gone, St. Anthony left standing in the fragment of the wall that remained.

The lawn piled with debris, wagons, barrels, a dead horse, new furniture from stores, old shoes and new ones (all sizes.) Mud everywhere - on the library shelves, one foot. The odors were stifling.

As soon as messages could reach Dayton telegrams and letters came from all parts of the country inquiring after some loved one.

The letters from our beloved Mother General, from the Superiors of every house, - from Massachusetts to California, with enclosed checks, loving invitations to come to them and the oft repeated expression of their desire to aid us in any way they could, made us rejoice, in our sorrow, that we were Sisters of Notre Dame; even from submerged Hamilton came the offering of relief, though they were doubly our sisters in suffering.

The Brothers of Mary were our best friends, Brother Webleben, Brother Rappel, and Brother O'Reilly risked their lives to help us. The Sisters of St. Francis were very kind. The refugees helped to shovel out the mud. One of them returned on Friday with hot coffee which he had made

for the Sisters, another returned on Wednesday with a can of coal oil. They both knew the Sisters had neither coffee nor oil. A plumber came to take down the gas fixtures and attend to the gas meter, because, he said: "You were good to me and mine." Father O'Reilly brought the Doctor to attend the sick and ailing. His brother Frank did all our errands through the line of bayonets. A book might be written on the ingenuity of our friends and relatives, - the refinement of their charity - the manner in which they gave expression to it. The work of rebuilding began the very day the waters receded.