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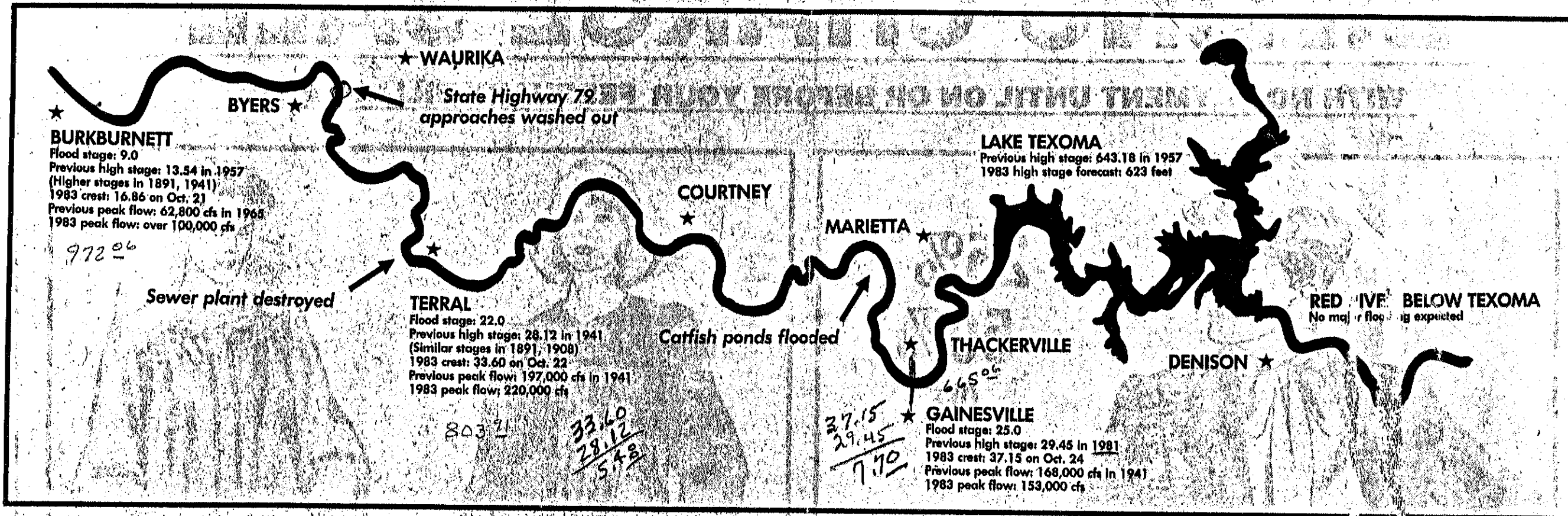
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## Red River flood smashes records



By Joe Lobell  
City Editor

The Red River upstream from Lake Texoma crested last week and began returning to its banks, but not before inundating virtually its

entire flood plain and sending previous record floods into the history books. The flooding between Burkburnett, Texas, and Lake Texoma appeared to be the worst in the last 100 years, according to records compiled by the U.S. Geological Survey office in Oklahoma City.

The Red River between Thackerville and Gainesville crested at a stage of 37.15 feet, more than seven feet higher than the pre-

vious record stage of October, 1981. At its peak, the Red River was flowing at a rate of nearly six billion gallons per hour, according to figures supplied by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The story was much the same upstream, where new stage records were set at Burkburnett and Terral, Oklahoma.

At Burkburnett, the Red River crested at a stage of 16.86 feet, or eight feet

above flood stage. The previously-recorded maximum stage at Burkburnett was 13.54 feet in June of 1957, although historical information indicates that somewhat higher floods occurred there in 1891 and 1941.

At Terral, the Red River crested at 33.60 feet, more than 11 feet above flood stage at that location. The previous record stage at Terral was 28.12 feet on

June 8, 1941. Historical records indicate that similar floods occurred there in 1891 and 1908. Another major flood, that of May 19, 1935, reached a stage of 27.2 feet at Terral.

The amount of water flowing down the Red River valley between Thackerville and Gainesville was measured at approximately 153,000 cubic feet per second near the crest. Ironically, the record flow on the Red River at the same

location was 168,000 cubic feet per second on June 9, 1941, at a stage of only 24.15 feet—13 feet lower than the 1983 crest last week.

George Robbins, a Corps of Engineers hydrologist based in Tulsa, said the change in the relationship between the flow and the stage at Gainesville could be caused by changes in the river channel or the flood plain adjacent to the river.

The effect of the flood on Lake Texoma will be signifi-

cant but nowhere near the high levels experienced in 1981, 1982 and 1957.

Robbins said the highest level ever reached by Lake Texoma was 643.18 feet above sea level in 1957, at which time water flowed over the spillway. The lake reached a level of 632.11 feet in June of 1982 and an elevation of 630.71 feet in the fall of 1981.

Robbins said the current projections are for the lake to rise to an elevation of 623

feet. "It might not be that high," Robbins said, "since the peak at Gainesville was not quite as high as we had projected. The peak flattens out a little and you don't get hit by all the water at once."

The Red River east of Denison Dam will continue to rise as water is released from Lake Texoma, Robbins said, but pointed out that the river should remain within its banks.