

Dozens Forced From Homes in Blackwell By Chikaskia River

2 Monday, April 20, 1970 THE DAILY OKLAHOMAN

Water Covers 40-Block Area Of Residences

Trucks, Graders, Boats Employed In Rescue Work

By Bill Kronholm

BLACKWELL — About 40 square blocks in Blackwell residential sections were flooded early Sunday as the Chikaskia River rose more than 6 feet above flood stage.

Dozens of families were forced from their homes in Blackwell's east and north sides. About 180 homes were surrounded by the high water, while another 50 houses had water inside ranging up to 2½ feet deep.

Flooding in other parts of Oklahoma appeared minor. But two elderly Wichita, Kan., persons were missing and presumed drowned in a flooded creek just north of the Oklahoma state line.

Others Seek Help

Evacuation efforts in Blackwell began Saturday night and continued into Sunday afternoon. County employees, Red Cross workers, law enforcement agencies and other volunteers brought motor boats to rescue stranded residents.

"We started evacuating those who would believe our predictions last night (Saturday) about 8 p.m.," said Mrs. Wilma Frohock, executive secretary of the Blackwell Red Cross chapter.

She said evacuation efforts continued until 2 a.m. Sunday, then resumed about 6 a.m. when remaining residents began calling for help.

'Everyone Out Now'

Kay County Commissioner Tom Hall said the county began using road graders and large dump trucks to evacuate residents, but then turned to boats as the river rose.

"We took out about 15 families this morning," Hall said, "We think everyone is out now."

Mrs. Frohock said an exact count of those evacuated could not be made because some left on their own before the water was high enough to stop autos.

About nine families were sheltered at the Smelter Union Hall in Blackwell, where the Red Cross provided food and cots. Other evacuees stayed with relatives or in hotels.

Harvey Barrows of Blackwell, one of those staying in the union hall, said he, his wife and their six children evacuated their east Blackwell home Saturday night.

"I work for the county,"

River Floods At Blackwell

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and I've seen it before," Barrows said. "I didn't want to take a chance with my family."

"When we left, it was just running through the yard," he said. "This afternoon when I checked, we had 12 inches in the house."

"My mother, we had to go out and get her in a boat today," he added.

Another evacuee at the union hall, Floyd E. McCoy, 59, said about 2½ feet of water was running through his home.

"I imagine I've got a tee-total loss," he said. "It's happened to me one other time, in 1939."

Five highways surrounding Blackwell were flooded, leaving only one highway in or out of the city.

Closed were U. S. 177 north of Blackwell, U. S. 60 east of Tonkawa, SH 156 north of Marland, SH 11 east of Blackwell and the I-35 exit at Braman.

Blackwell was hardest hit of Oklahoma towns. The town of Jefferson in Grant County was evacuated late Saturday night and early Sunday morning, but the highway patrol reported all residents were back in their homes by mid-afternoon.

Kansas authorities reported William H. King and his wife, Mildren, both 60, disappeared when they inadvertently drove their car into a rampaging

creek that had flooded a road.

Their 15-year-old grandson, Russell King of Arkansas City, Kan., a passenger in the car, managed to break out of the car and make his way to shore. His efforts to save his grandparents were futile.

Efforts to find the victims' bodies were hampered by the swift water. The car apparently was swept toward an area where the current entered a large area of timber and brush.

The accident occurred on a county road in Cowley County, southeast of Arkansas City.

Ponca City was expecting a crest on the Arkansas River about 2 feet above flood stage Monday morning, while the Cimarron River near Dover was expected to crest Sunday morning about 3 feet above flood stage.

In northeastern Oklahoma, the Little Caney River is expected to crest about 1½ feet above flood stage Monday night.

The Poteau River in eastern Oklahoma was falling Sunday after cresting more than 3 feet above flood stage near Panama.

The weather forecast for Monday called for fair to partly cloudy skies with no important changes in temperature through Tuesday. Highs Monday were forecast to be in the 70's.

State of Okla
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City of Blackwell Flooding
By Chikaskia River on
April 18, 1970.

File Floodfile-Kay County

Daily Oklahoman - Monday April 20, 1970

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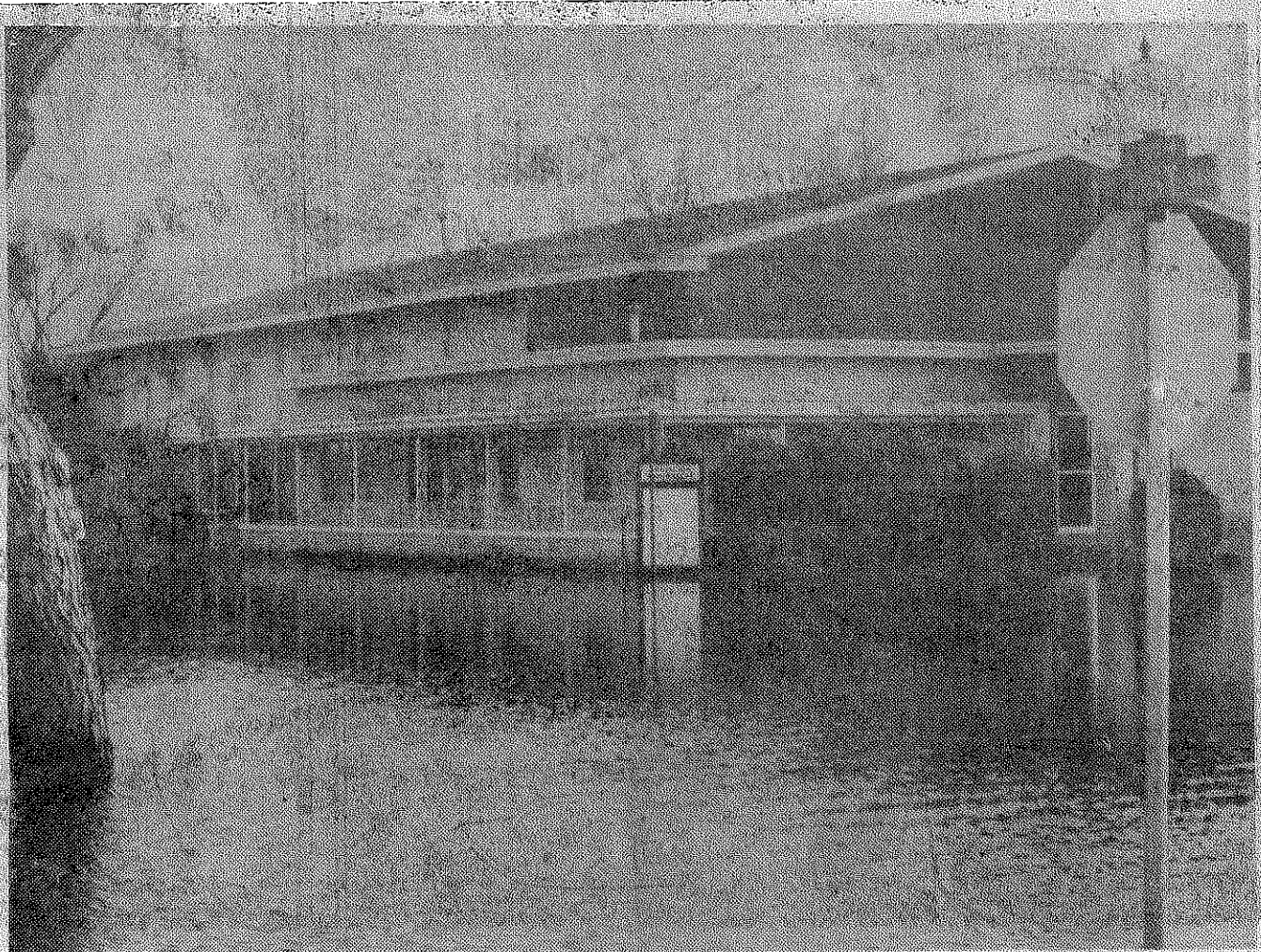
Mc. Ross-Flooding in Kansas

State of Okla. Dept of Highways, Survey Division

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WADING DOWN PADEN STREET is this unidentified woman as the Chikaskia River flooded 40 square blocks of Blackwell's east and north residential districts. (Staff Photo by Joe Aker)



FLOODED CHURCH sits in the middle of a small lake at Doolin and First Streets in Blackwell. About 40 square blocks of Blackwell were inundated by the floodwaters of the Chikaskia River, which rose more than six feet above flood stage. Story on Page 1. (Staff Photo by Joe Aker).

City of Blackwell Flooding From Chikaskia River on Sunday, April 20, 1970, from Daily Oklahoman of April 20, 1970

File Flood File - Kay County (ASIS)