

ANTICIPATED FLOOD.**Unensiness in the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers Bottoms—Great Floods in Former Years.**

From the Carrollton (Ill.) Record.

The towns and cities situated immediately on the Missouri River have of late manifested considerable uneasiness in relation to the probability of a disastrous overflow of the Missouri in the coming spring. This apprehension is not ill-founded, and it is well that attention is called to the subject at so early a day. The heavy falls of snow during the winter in the Black Hills, on the plains, and the main range of the Rocky Mountains create great fears that many of the great feeders which debouch into the Missouri will swell the volume of water to an unprecedented altitude. Old mountaineers shake their heads dubiously when the subject is referred to, and are not loth in expressing their fears of coming disaster.

In view of the immense interests at stake it will not be amiss to take a brief retrospect of the effects and results of the high water of 1844 in our own immediate vicinity. The great flood of 1844 left a damaging legacy to a considerable portion of the southern part of Carroll County. In the bottom the losses in property reached a large amount, rising many thousands of dollars; the river extended from bluff to bluff, nearly twelve miles in width. Houses, barns, horses, mules, hogs, cattle, and gathered farm crops were swept away in great numbers. Nathan King, living in the upper bottom, near Miles Point, had moved to Carroll County in 1842, bringing with him a fine lot of horses, cattle, and hogs, and was farming on a large scale; and Jacob Francis, Paul Alder, John Kenton, and the Messrs. Fuller—all thrifty farmers—suffered heavily, saving but few cattle or other stock, and losing thousands of dollars. Mr. Alexander Hill, the oldest pioneer in Carroll County, lost all his stock, and barely escaped having several of the members of his family drowned. Colonel Thompson and the Austin settlement were more fortunate; living on higher ground, they saved nearly all their stock. Where the Messrs. Woolsey lived, on the river bank, the water came in the rear, cutting off their retreat, and they were obliged to take refuge on the opposite side of the river. Their entire stock was lost except a few cows, which were driven into the river, and swam to the opposite shore. The lower bottom alike suffered. Hicks Moss, the Farris, Neets, and Careys, lost nearly all their stock, grain, and growing crops, amounting to thousands of dollars, in addition to the above. Captain Barker had 150 head of cattle drowned, and lost otherwise to a considerable extent. Colonel Safford, who was building at the time, met with serious losses in the washing away of his house. Mr. Coates, too, as well as many others, suffered much from the disastrous overflow of 1844.

The winter of 1844 was somewhat analogous to that of the present year—deep snows fell in the mountains and very little in this Valley. The spring thaw came on; the "June rise" also then began, the snow rapidly melted, while a heavy rain commenced to fall all over Kansas and Western Missouri. This rain, we are informed by several old settlers of the Valley, continued to fall for the space of thirty days, causing the upper streams to pour into the Missouri their immense volume of water, thus swelling that river to Amazonian proportions.

It must be borne in mind that in 1844 the spring rains had saturated the river bottoms; Crooked River, Wakanda and Moss Creeks, etc., had already overflowed their banks. The rise of 1869, greater we are informed than that of 1844, found us in the midst of a "dry season," with very low water, consequently the mighty river failed to "back" on the streams of this part of the country—hence disaster was averted. So, upon this contingency we hang. If the spring season finds the bottom lands dry, streams low, and little rain, the chance of escape from apprehended danger the approaching spring is flattering. Otherwise we must look out for the worst.

The great inundation of 1844, according to a reliable writer at that time, was ten or twelve feet higher than that of 1808, or 1826, and higher than ever known, except in 1785, when it rose thirty feet above the common level, and from the record in Beck's History of Illinois and Missouri, it was the greatest flood known during the last one hundred and fifty years, at which period the Mississippi washed in a part of Fort Chartres. Mr. Cerre, the oldest French settler in St. Louis, says the inundation of the Mississippi and Missouri was not as high by some four or five feet in 1785 as it was in 1844, and all the old settlers of Kaskaskia agree in saying that the overflow of 1785 left one dry spot in the town of Kaskaskia, which was covered in 1844 with water five feet deep. The steamer Indiana was chartered by the nuns to take the pupils of the nunnery to St. Louis, and received them on board at Colonel Menard's door, and passed along the road to St. Louis, on which there was from six to fifteen feet of water, leaving the river far to the left the whole route. Some 200 citizens went from Kaskaskia on the Indiana, and about 300 found shelter on the premises of Colonel Menard, and many more spread their tents along the bluffs. Millions of dollars will not cover the loss sustained by this flood in the States of Illinois and Missouri. Some of the most valuable farms in those two States have been rendered worthless for several years. The whole American bottom, from Alton to Cairo was submerged, containing 700 square miles of the finest lands in the world. La Beete a Reynard was the only point of land out of water in 1785—so says the St. Louis Republican. The great flood was caused by the swelling of the northern rivers which empty into the Missouri and Upper Mississippi, and by the melting of the snow on the eastern declivity of the Rocky Mountains."

The Spanish and Portuguese historians of DeSoto's marauding expedition tell us that in March, 1542, all the high grounds on the west side of the Mississippi, from the mouth of the Ohio to Red River, were submerged several feet. There is a document in the Clerk's office of Randolph County, Ill., at Kaskaskia dated 1725, soliciting a grant of lands and lots from the Crown of France, and urging as a reason the "great flood" of the preceding year, 1724, which overflowed the village, destroyed the houses, and drove the inhabitants to the bluffs.

The bottom lands along the Mississippi from Alton to Cairo, at the mouth of the Ohio, average five miles in width. Since the Mississippi was first discovered by Europeans, the waters had passed over all the low grounds, from bluff to bluff, several times. The bottom was submerged several times from bluff to bluff in 1812 and 1724. In 1783 this bottom was again covered, and small boats passed from St. Louis to Kaskaskia over the land. In 1811, at the annual June rise of the Missouri, a part of the American bottom and the common fields of St. Genevieve were inundated. In 1826 the river inundated the town of Illinois opposite St. Louis, and also the low lands along the American bottom, but not as high by ten feet as the flood of 1844. The flood at St. Louis attained its greatest height on the 27th of June, of that year, and was thirty-eight feet seven inches above the low water mark.

It is stated that the Mississippi bottom now appears unusually clean and healthy, all the decomposed vegetable matter being washed away, and all the shrubs and undergrowth which the water covered are killed, together with all the beech, sassafras and other species of timber.