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DAYTON, OHIO—BIRTHPLACE OF AVIATION

I WAS THERE!

by Charles O. Adams

At the urging of John Bosch, the following is an account of our family's experience in the 1913 Dayton Flood and a few comments about what happened afterward.

In March 1913, with the ground frozen, three major storms converged over the Miami Valley, dropping huge amounts of water that the ground could not absorb. Early on March 25, Dad walked from our home on Rung Street, across N. Main Street, and looked at the Great Miami River about to overflow its levee.

Before he could get home, it broke through the levee at Great Miami Boulevard and started coming up Rung Street. Mother's aunt and uncle, Dr. Otterbein Fries, Sunday School editor of the United Brethren Publishing House, lived on the next street north, on higher ground. Dad, holding my twin sister, Lois, Mother, holding me, and Dad's father climbed over the high terrace behind our house and went to Uncle Ottie's house.

By 3 p.m., the water had risen to the first floor—no heat, no way to feed or care for two 11-month-old babies. Dad hailed a rescue boat to take us to a friend's house on high ground. Mother, Dad, and his Dad got into the boat, and Lois and I were handed over the porch railing to Dad and Mother. As the boatman pulled away, the strong flood current caught the boat, slammed it against a tree, and we were all dumped into the muddy water. Mother was in trouble and dropped me, but my grandfather grabbed me. Dad helping Mother, lost Lois, who went tumbling over and over

in the fast-moving water. Dad, Mother, Grandpa holding me, and the boatman, Carl Sinks, were able to grab branches of a tree several doors down the street. Another boat, manned by John Ryan, tried to help Mother, who was holding me, but it, too, capsized, and Mother lost me. I was now carried by the flood

lifted me out of the water, and put me into the arms of two ladies in the back seat of his boat. Mother, Lois and I were taken to the Presbyterian church at Grand and Forest Avenues, where a Dr. D.E. Miller resuscitated Lois and me. Mother, Lois and I were then taken to the Marquart home in Upper

Riverdale. Dad didn't know we were alive until the next afternoon when Warren Marquart boated back to Uncle Ottie's to bring Dad and Grandpa to his house to join us.

Lois and I developed pneumonia from exposure to cold, muddy water. Mother's brother, a pharmacist, took Mother, Lois and me to Mother's father's home, Dr. J.W. Hicks, the U.B. Manse in Fostoria, Ohio. Mother and a Dr. Hale worked three weeks to get us over the crisis of pneumonia, since this was before penicillin. Dad and his father cleaned up our home on Rung Street (now Neal Avenue). Obviously, at 11 months old when "I was there," this account was told to me by first-hand observers. For instance, Harold Miller, husband of Ivonette

Wright Miller, said he saw me in the water from his boat upstream at Warder and Main Streets. He could only help by adding his voice to those screaming for people to help. I thank God for all those who helped in our rescue.

After the flood, Dad frequently took me to watch the construction of the Englewood Dam, part of the Miami Conservancy District. That is a whole, different, related story.



CHARLES OTTERBEIN AND LOIS VIOLA ADAMS

waters by myself, following Lois. Dudley Arts, in another boat, saw and rescued Mother. Firemen Jack Korn and Warren Marquart, in another boat, rescued Dad and Grandpa and took them back to Uncle Ottie's. Bob White and Howard Ooly were able to get to Lois and lift her into their boat. Mr. E.L. Riley, on Geyer Street, was called by observers to help. He took an oar out of an oarlock, put it into a whirlpool,