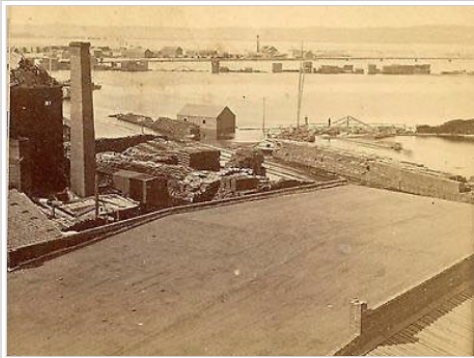


# FLOODS (Record)

From Encyclopedia Dubuque



A photograph by Samuel ROOT taken in June, 1880.

**FLOODS (Record)** The highest flood to wreak havoc on Dubuque occurred on April 26, 1965, when the river crested at 26.81 feet. The underlying cause of the flood was an abnormally cold winter which prevented the melting of an excessive snow cover in the upper reaches of the basin. Heavy rains late in March followed by rapid melting triggered the runoff which caused the floods. (1) The great flood of 1965 on the Mississippi River, along the eastern border of the State, exceeded any flood known in 139 years. It cause damages probably in excess of ten millions of dollars in the State of Iowa. (2)

Rushing into Dubuque at the rate of 3,000,000 gallons per second, depths of water reached seven feet on some streets. (3) An estimated two dozen businesses were closed or had to be relocated. (4) Schools closed as an estimated 3,500 volunteers filled an estimated 400,000 of sandbags. (5)



A flooded parking lot at Dubuque Greyhound Park and Casino reminds residents of past floods.

The record 1965 flood left the Packers, Dubuque's professional BASEBALL team, without a home field for forty-one days. Home games were played in Cascade or Dyersville for nearly one-fourth of the home season. The record crest of 26.81 feet, 9 feet over flood stage, "pretty much stopped Dubuque" according to Walter A. PREGLER. The principal concern, according to Pregler, was keeping Dodge and Locust STREETS open as an approach to the JULIEN DUBUQUE BRIDGE so that people in Grant and Jo Daviess counties would have access to the hospitals in Dubuque. A fire at a cold storage facility at the future PORT OF DUBUQUE led to a fireman having to go underwater to hook up a fire-hose to a hydrant. Civic leaders, once the waters receded, returned to their work to secure federal funding for flood control. (6)

A flood in April, 1967 led to thousands of dollars in damage. In July, Dubuque vowed to be first when the State of Iowa began providing interest-free flood loans. Six months later, Dubuque was still in line--waiting. (7)

The damage led to the construction of a 6.5 mile long FLOODWALL thirty-three feet high along the riverfront. Other record floods in Dubuque include:



Date-----	River Crest
April 23, 1969-----	23.1ft.
May 6, 1975-----	22.8ft.
April 25, 1952-----	22.7ft.
April 22, 1951-----	22.7ft.
October 6, 1986-----	21.7ft.
October 24-25, 1881----	21.2ft.
September 20, 1938----	20.6ft.

Flooding of the Mississippi River was only part of the problem. The BEE BRANCH on the city's North End caused flooding from the earliest history of the city. Between 1999 and 2016 flooding of a 6.5-square-mile area in the basin of the Bee Branch caused an estimated \$70 million in damage and led to six presidential disaster declarations. In 2016 the area was the focus of a \$219 million flood-mitigation effort and in June city council members approved a plan to help homeowners in the affected area. About \$8.4 million of a \$31.5 million grant was approved to be used to help 320 property owners make repairs from the 2011 flood. (8)



Flooding near the Julien Dubuque Bridge--note sandbags



Aerial view showing downtown flooding in 1965

Dubuque's history of flooding includes the devastation on July 4, 1876 when a flash flood wiped out Rockdale along the banks of CATFISH CREEK. Witnesses claimed it took only 30 minutes for the waters to wipe out the village and kill 41 people.

The flood at UNION PARK on July 9, 1919 caused the death of five people.

Although the park was rebuilt, the former grandeur of the site was never recaptured.





April 22, 1951 flood around the Page Hotel. Unpublished photo courtesy: Bob Reding



April 22, 1951 flood showing the Adams Company. Unpublished photo courtesy: Bob Reding



The small marker on this building at 5 Jones Street is really a marker of history.



This is why the marker has importance.

**1965 Flood Video--**

[https://video.search.yahoo.com/video/play;\\_ylt=A2KLqIKm6K5WtTIA1e00nIIQ;\\_ylu=X3oDMTByZWc0dGJtBHNIYwNzcgRzbGsDdmlkKBHZ0aWQDBGdwb3MDMQ--?p=Dubuque+Flood+%281965%29&vid=e608b2166ef7d22d8f2713dad953e4d5&turl=http%3A%2F%2Ftse2.mm.bing.net%2Fth%3Fid%3DOVP.V2adc2d9ae0130e5a1bdf8&tit=Dubuque+1965+Flood&c=0&h=168&w=300&l=222&sigr=11bltt5o3&sigt=10iqm68e6&sigi=131tknb7b&age=1391147701&fr2=p%3As%2Cv%3Av&fr=yhs-iry-fullyhosted\\_011&hsimp=yhs-fullyhosted\\_011&hspart=iry&tt=b](https://video.search.yahoo.com/video/play;_ylt=A2KLqIKm6K5WtTIA1e00nIIQ;_ylu=X3oDMTByZWc0dGJtBHNIYwNzcgRzbGsDdmlkKBHZ0aWQDBGdwb3MDMQ--?p=Dubuque+Flood+%281965%29&vid=e608b2166ef7d22d8f2713dad953e4d5&turl=http%3A%2F%2Ftse2.mm.bing.net%2Fth%3Fid%3DOVP.V2adc2d9ae0130e5a1bdf8&tit=Dubuque+1965+Flood&c=0&h=168&w=300&l=222&sigr=11bltt5o3&sigt=10iqm68e6&sigi=131tknb7b&age=1391147701&fr2=p%3As%2Cv%3Av&fr=yhs-iry-fullyhosted_011&hsimp=yhs-fullyhosted_011&hspart=iry&tt=b)

---

Source:

1. U. S. Geological Survey. Online: <https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/ofr65145>
2. Ibid.
3. Barton, Thomas J. " The Big One: Dubuquers Recall the Massive Flood of 1965," *Telegraph Herald*, April 26, 2015, Online: [http://www.thonline.com/news/tri-state/article\\_6d7743c8-5bdb-5309-9494-2eb0d0bed9cd.html?sp-tk=4028FCD9FB08CA449E7720D7E345F956581C28FA53EDF73AFB070EA18C33F5B7DE3CB7C74AB4A0CE05B9918A6EEA4E3A754029B4CA6A89B06064E7EA4](http://www.thonline.com/news/tri-state/article_6d7743c8-5bdb-5309-9494-2eb0d0bed9cd.html?sp-tk=4028FCD9FB08CA449E7720D7E345F956581C28FA53EDF73AFB070EA18C33F5B7DE3CB7C74AB4A0CE05B9918A6EEA4E3A754029B4CA6A89B06064E7EA4)
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Hogstrom, Erik, "55 Years Ago, River Set Record High," *Telegraph Herald*, April 26, 2020, p. 7A
7. "Chronology," *Telegraph Herald*, December 31, 1967, p. 18
8. Barton, Thomas J. "Flood-Relief Plan Approved," *Telegraph Herald*, June 23, 2016, p. 1

Retrieved from "http://www.encyclopediadubuque.org/index.php?title=FLOODS\_(Record)&oldid=162243"

Categories: [Events](#) | [Weather](#)

---

- This page last modified 30 April 2020.
- Copyright Creative Commons BY-NC-SA.