

The Teton Dam Disaster Collection

Matt Cureton – Life during the Teton Flood

By Matt Cureton

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Box 6 Folder 2

Oral Interview conducted by Doris Shirley

Transcript copied by Alina Mower April 2005

Brigham Young University – Idaho

DS: Matt, would you please spell your name?

MC: Matt Cureton.

DS: Where were you born?

MC: Portland, Oregon.

DS: How long have you lived in Rexburg?

MC: Six years.

DS: What is you dad's name?

MC: Robert Cureton.

DS: And what does he do?

MC: Shingles houses.

DS: Do you remember what you were doing Saturday morning, June 5, just before the flood?

MC: We were driving from New Mexico to Missouri. We didn't know anything about the flood and that night when we stopped at the motel, I was listening to the news while everybody else was asleep. I was half asleep and I heard the news (Down in Missouri they called it the Teeton Dam, and it's really the Teton). I thought, that must be the Teton Dam in Idaho. Then I woke everybody up and all night we were trying to call people that we knew, our family and everybody in Rexburg. We tried to call them all night and we couldn't get through because all the lines were down.

The next morning when we got up, we went to my mom's sister's house and we ate dinner but we told them we couldn't stay the night because we had to get back as fast as we could. We drove all that day and that night. We got to Denver and stayed there with my sister. When we got up the next morning we were listening to the news and it told that the water was already gone. The next day we had to drive miles around to get home. The road was out in lots of places and there was dead cattle and houses across the road that we had to drive around. When we got home we all started cleaning up the muck. I helped the Red Cross by giving out shovels and brooms and soap to the people who came in the Field House. Everyday, I'd go up to my friend's house and he had tons of pop and we'd go up there and drink pop. It was really good the way our Safeway Stores helped clean up, and they did it so fast.

I stayed down at my brother's house for a couple of days before I came home. When we got back to Rexburg we were really glad because one of my brothers lived in a second story apartment and the other one it didn't hit, but it just went around his house like it was on a little island. We had to rip all our carpets and everything out. By the time I got home (I had been staying most of the time at my sister's) it was

pretty well cleaned up except we didn't have any carpet and there was mud everywhere. You could go out and see all kind of muddy candy bars and stuff in the yard. Our yard was full of stuff from the drugstore, pills and all this, just muddy. There was a new car in our front yard. I was hoping that nobody would claim it but after a couple of days, a guy came by and got it and a couple of dishwashers.

There were people from Provo and they helped a lot by coming and helping us clean up the mud. They were really happy to do it and one of the men from Provo that worked even sent us a Christmas Card. Now we're pretty well cleaned up and everything. I can't describe it, but it was nice the way the people came and helped you get your stuff cleaned up.

DS: You are living in the same house, but it's been all repaired?

MC: Yes, the water got up enough to ruin the wallpaper and the carpets so we got new wallpaper and carpets.

DS: Thank you, Matt.