

THE EVANSVILLE COURIER

VOL. 84—No. 215 FINAL EDITION EVANSVILLE, INDIANA, TUESDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 29, 1929 TWENTY-TWO PAGES PRICE THREE CENTS

STOCKS CRASH TO NEW LOW RECORDS

Norris to Demand Censure of Senator Bingham

**ROBINSON SCORES
HIRING OF LOBBY
WORKER BY SOLOH**

Connecticut Legislator Pro-
poses Savage Exchanges
With Illinois on Proboscis

DEFENDS USE OF ETANSON

Resolution Will Call on Senate
to "Punt" Member for
First Time in 27 Years

By J. M. STEPHENSON

Presented This and when

Washington Oct. 29.—

The first session of a new session of

the House of Representatives

opened today in the capitol

building in Washington

and the speaker of the

House, Charles McNary

of Oregon, took the oath

of office and delivered

his opening address

to the members of the

House and the public

gathered in the capitol

building.

The speaker's address

was a review of the

work of the House

during the past year

and a statement of

his plans for the

present session.

He said that the

House had passed

more than 1,000

pieces of legislation

during the past year

and that he hoped

to accomplish more

work during the

present session.

He also mentioned

the fact that the

House had passed

the bill to amend

the constitution

to give the federal

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**Girl Sues Aged
Real Estate Man
For Heart Balm**

Thomas Hunsell, 74, DeLone-
and in \$50,000 Arden; Calls
Charge "Bribe"

Chicago filed by her
mother and other relatives
of the aged man who
had been in the city
for several years.

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— Synonymous —

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TIME TO
SUBSCRIBE

CHURCH
DRYDEN
GATE

**WITNESSES CLAIM
DRIVER IN FATAL
CRASH WAS DRUNK**

Boys & Youth Girls on Trial
in Circuit Court on Misdemeanor Charge

SHOWS LITTLE CONCERN

Man "One of Cheapest Boys
Several Blocks as He Flees
From Accident Scene

SENATOR BURTON

Of Ohio, Dies at
Home in Capital

PRICE LANDSLIDE

**EVEN WORSE THAN
BREAK LAST WEEK**

**Senator Burton,
Of Ohio, Dies at
Home in Capital**

Price of stock market
crash is estimated to be
\$2,125,000,000, according to
figures of the Federal Reserve
Board.

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Scene from Main Street in '37 Flood. Courier



Red Cross exec Paul Schmidt falls from boat in '37 Flood.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Twenties Crash to a Close

The Roaring Twenties roared into their final years. Business was booming. Many wise men said that it all had to end -- but when?

Business was better than ever. New inventions were appearing almost daily. Radios were selling like hotcakes. Everybody had to have an automobile.

The New York Stock Exchange was higher than ever and going higher every day. People were borrowing money to buy stock. When the stock went up in price, they would sell and make a profit. Then they would borrow more money and buy more stock. After a few years, many people were millionaires. They had enough money to pay back what they had borrowed, then borrowed more. They invested their money in more stock. Would the stock market keep going higher?

In October of 1929, the event that many people said was coming finally arrived. The New York **Stock Market** crashed. Black Tuesday, October 29, 1929, was a very sad day. Nobody was buying stock and the prices got lower and lower. People who had lent buyers money began to ask for it. With stock prices falling, the buyers did not have the money to pay back their loans. Within a couple of months the economy of the United States had come to a screeching halt.

There were no jobs. There was no money to buy cars, homes, or food.

Brother, Can You Spare a Dime

With the stock market crash, many companies canceled orders for new goods. Automobile plants, furniture factories, clothing companies, steel mills, and many other plants closed down. People were laid off from work and sent home.

Many Americans had borrowed money to buy cars, homes, and furniture. Now they were not working. They could not make payments when they were due. After a few months, the banks that had loaned them money had to take their homes and cars. Things got worse.

People stopped buying new clothes, new cars, and homes. The clerks in the stores were laid off. Car salesmen and **real estate** salesmen lost their jobs. Carpenters, plumbers, and electricians had no new homes to build. Grocery stores cut their number of workers.

Prices began to fall. Auto prices, home prices, clothing prices, and food prices came down. Nobody had money to buy them even at cheaper prices. Farmers could not sell their crops. Many of them lost their farms because they could not pay their loans.

People were going hungry even though there was food in the stores. People were without homes although there were many empty houses. Even though the stores were full of clothes, many people were wearing ragged clothes.

Banks had made the loans for people to buy cars and houses. The people could not pay the money back. Their cars and homes were taken and put up for sale. But no one had money to buy them. The people who had put money in the banks wanted some of their savings. The banks could not give their money to them. Suddenly, everyone became afraid of banks. Everybody wanted all of his money from the banks. The banks could not give people their money because it had been loaned to other people. People who did have money, hid it at home because they did not trust banks. The amount of money in circulation was greatly reduced.

Many banks closed. In 1931, eight banks closed in the city of Evansville. The automobile plant closed down. Furniture companies closed down or cut back production. Some businesses went broke. Several of Evansville's stove works went out of business. Nationwide, one out of four workers was out of work.

People who were lucky enough to have a job were working for much lower wages. Many women worked fifty-hour weeks for \$5.00

a week. Men were lucky to get \$15.00. Farm workers earned \$.50 a day. Skilled workers could earn \$.50 an hour -- if they could get work. Many workers received even less.

Some people who had come to Evansville from farms in the Tri-State went back home to live on the farm. At least they could always find something to eat there. In the cities there were people standing in line to get bread or a bowl of soup. Many people without homes lived in "shanty towns" along Pigeon Creek. Shanties were often made of scrap lumber and pieces of discarded tin or cardboard. Shanties had dirt floors. Some lived along the Ohio River between the Pigeon Creek and St. Joseph Avenue.

Many people who were out of work sold apples or pencils downtown. Others stood on the street with their hats in their hands asking for a few coins.

Happy Days Are Here Again?

The Presidential election of 1932 was approaching. After three years of **depression** everything seemed to be getting worse. America seemed to be ready for a change. President Herbert Hoover had tried a number of ideas to stop the depression. Hoover was a Republican. A Democratic Congress had been elected in 1930. They would not go along with Hoover's ideas.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt ran against Herbert Hoover in November, 1932. He promised to make big changes if he was elected. The Democrat campaign song that year was *Happy Days Are Here Again*. Not many Americans were very happy, so Roosevelt won by a landslide.

Under Roosevelt's leadership, Congress gave approval for a number of projects to create jobs for the unemployed. Many of these projects were known by their initials. We called the Civilian Conservation Corps the CCC. The National Recovery Act was known as the NRA. The Tennessee Valley Authority was known as the TVA.

Many of Evansville's unemployed found jobs with the PWA (Public Work Association) and the WPA (Works Project Administration). Many young people needed jobs to stay in school. They were helped by the NYA (National Youth Administration).

Washington Middle School, Dress Plaza, Lincoln Gardens, and Burdette Park were built as projects of the PWA. The WPA hired more Evansville residents than any other agency. The WPA repaired roads and cleaned ditches in the county. Women were given jobs canning and sewing. The WPA organized projects for unemployed artists, musicians, writers, and teachers.

Gradually the nation began to rise from the depths of the depression. It would not be until the eve of World War II that we would completely recover. Here in Evansville, the Sunbeam Electric Company began making refrigerators for Sears, Roebuck and Company. By the middle of the 1930s they employed almost 1000 men. Business was getting better at Servel. Their plant employed nearly 6000 people by the middle of the 1930s. This was a larger number of jobs than the furniture industry had provided at its peak.

The old Graham-Paige plant on Columbia Street was bought by Briggs of Indiana. They made automobile bodies for Plymouths. Chrysler was making Plymouths in the plant they occupied when they merged with Dodge. Together, Chrysler and Briggs hired several thousand people.

River Stay Away From My Door

The beginning of January, 1937, was very mild. Heavy rains fell over the entire Ohio Valley. Snow in the highlands of Virginia and Pennsylvania began melting. The level of the Ohio River rose. Sunny weather for several days led the weather men to forecast a forty-two foot crest for the river. It had crested at about forty-eight feet in 1913.

The next few weeks brought more rain. Floods upriver gave the people of Evansville an idea of what was going to happen. Many began to move out of low-lying areas. Some of them did not get

moved in time. On Friday, January 22, 1937, the Ohio River passed the crest of 1913. The city was almost isolated.

It was difficult to get in or out of the city. The only railroad that had tracks above water was the C&E.I. Their tracks were only above water along Highway 41 north of Pigeon Creek. The only entrance to the city from the north was Stringtown Road. Lincoln Avenue, Newburgh Road, and Boonville Highway were open to the east. The West Side could be reached from New Harmony Road.

Thousands of people were forced to leave their homes and seek shelter in schools, churches, and public buildings. The Coliseum was the headquarters of the Red Cross. They were in charge of rescue operations. The Carpenter Home was the Red Cross Hospital.

Chrysler, Bell Bakery, and Servel provided space for refugees to sleep. Later, church and school buildings were added. The waterworks was under water and could not provide water for the city. Water trucks passed out limited amounts of water on street corners.

The biggest flood to hit the Ohio Valley finally reached a crest of nearly fifty-four feet on January 31, 1937. Water covered 500 blocks of the city and damaged 7500 homes. The old business buildings along Riverside were damaged beyond repair. In Evansville alone the damage amounted to nearly twenty million dollars.

The Evansville-Henderson Bridge was good for the economy of Evansville. The bridge had been built in 1931 and was opened in 1932. It connected Evansville with the South. Before the bridge was built, it was necessary to ferry cars across the Ohio.

Another business that helped the Tri-State area grow was petroleum industry. Oil had been discovered in the area in 1929, but the oil boom didn't really begin until a gusher was brought in near the Green River in Kentucky in 1938. Oil men began pouring into the area immediately. As Evansville was the largest city in the Tri-State area, it was the place that many of the major oil companies located their offices.

Several important building projects were undertaken during the last part of the 1930s. Several PWA projects have already been

mentioned. The National Guard Armory on Rotherwood Avenue was built by the federal government. Several schools were built or enlarged. Mechanic Arts High School was completed in 1938. It later became part of North High School.

When George L. Mesker died in 1936, he left a trust fund of half a million dollars for improvement to Mesker Park. In 1900 he gave the city forty acres of wooded land adjoining Oak Summit Park at the top of Oak Summit Drive. The entire park was renamed Mesker Park. During the 1930s the Mesker Park Zoo was enlarged and improved. They placed larger animals in barless pens which were as much like their natural habitats as possible.

Evansville's population continued growing. In 1930, the city had grown to 102,000. The 1940 census showed that Evansville's population had dropped from 102,000 to 97,000. People were not moving away from Evansville. More and more people had automobiles. They were building homes in the suburbs. The suburbs in 1940 were made up of the area east of Weinbach Avenue or north of Pigeon Creek.



House which floated downriver from Leavenworth, Indiana during the 1937 Flood.

Courier



Looking south across Washington Avenue from Kentucky Avenue during the 1937 flood.

Courier