

The Chronicle

Weston Historical Society

Winter 2011

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2011: A YEAR TO REMEMBER

Two thousand eleven will certainly be remembered for many things, most of all the weather. It all began with a snowstorm the day after Christmas and proceeded to be one of the worst winters ever. It seemed to never stop snowing and it was cold as well. Not a very pleasant winter to say the least.

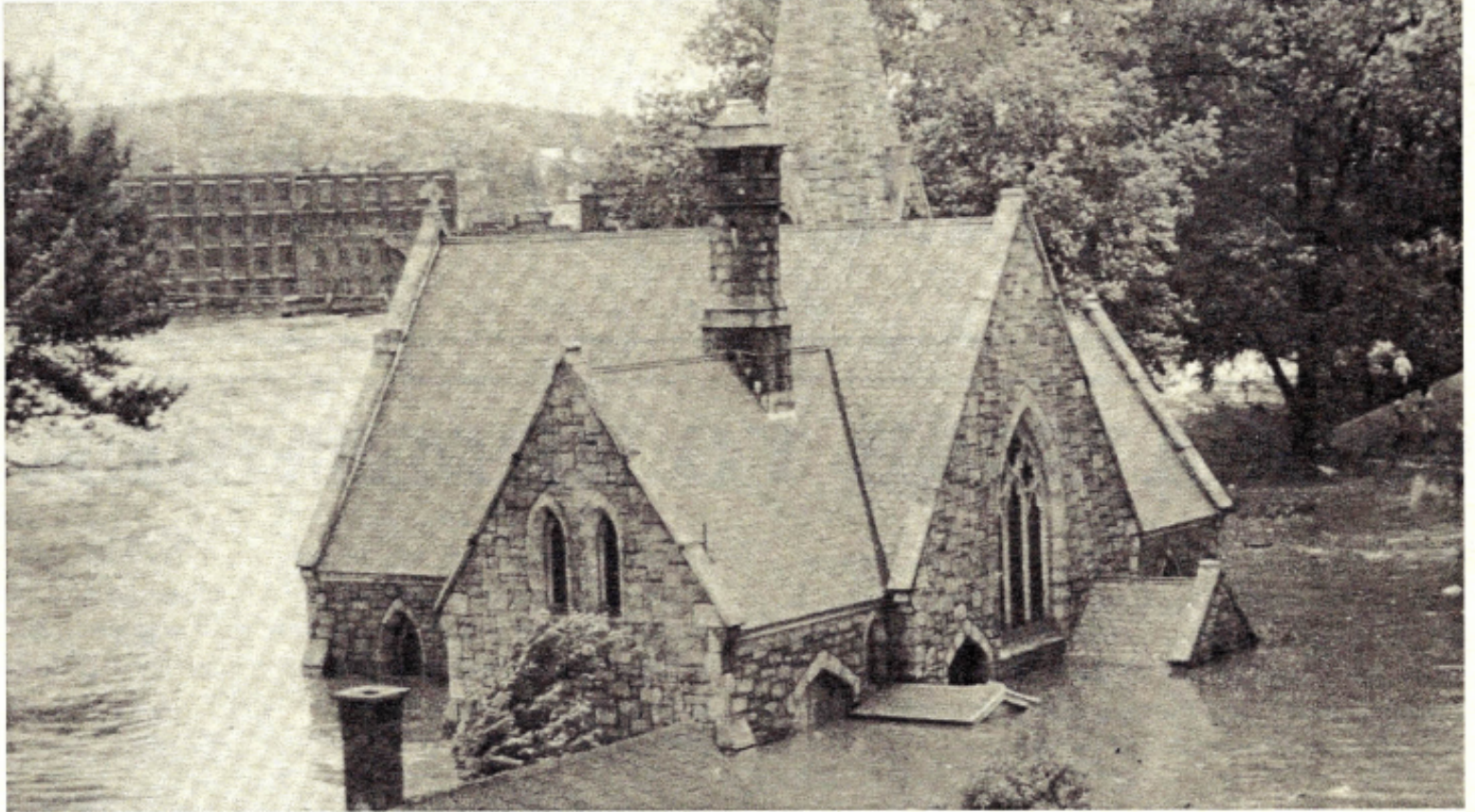
However, one should not forget the Blizzard of '88—1888 that is. It snowed and blew snow as high as 12 feet in places. It took some farmers most of the day just to shovel a path to their barn so that they could feed and water the livestock. Folks did not see another person or vehicle for days. There were no snow plows

and road crews as we are blessed with today. Men had to shovel a section of road and a neighbor would shovel another section and so on until the road was passable. Citizens banded together for the greater good of the community and somehow made it all work, even if primitively.

In September we had hurricane Irene and in October we had a freak nor'easter named Alfred which brought down limbs and knocked out power to thousands across Connecticut. Irene also took down trees and caused flooding not only in Weston, but in other towns in Massachusetts, and Vermont.



Weston Road Washout: Gullies cut by raging rainwater, into which the cars of Gerald Vosburgh and Arnold Bernhard stumbled in the driving rain Saturday night.



Waterbury's Riverside Cemetery chapel was a lonely outpost along the section of N. Riverside St. where the flood took its greatest toll in private home damage. Starting at a point opposite the chapel, which is just inside the cemetery gates, it ripped away 17 residences. Photo was taken from a high point in the cemetery at the rear of the chapel.

According to an article written by Jim Hoe of Newtown Turnpike, 1949 saw a snowstorm which produced 30 inches of snow and all but crippled Weston. Snow plows were in short supply and the only 4-wheel-drive vehicles belonged to the Army. In the early 1950's we suffered a severe drought. All the shallow wells went dry and there were only puddles left in the Saugatuck Reservoir. The following winter produced an ice storm and the ice-loaded trees bent down over the narrow roads and made them into tunnels. The cold remained for several days, the roads were blocked and the area was without electricity for up to three weeks.

1955 proved to be a year for Weston to experience a terrible flood as well as the rest of Western Connecticut. A hurricane came up the coast and after it blew through it stalled and the rain came down for hours. It started to rain in Torrington, Ct. on Thursday, August 18 and rained 2 ½ inches in a matter of two hours. The already sodden ground of the Naugatuck Valley could not absorb the water and the rain came down all night and the next morning, August 19, 1955. As the sun came out at noon, people witnessed that the water had wreaked havoc, the likes of which had not been seen before. Old buildings, cemeteries, new edifices, facto-

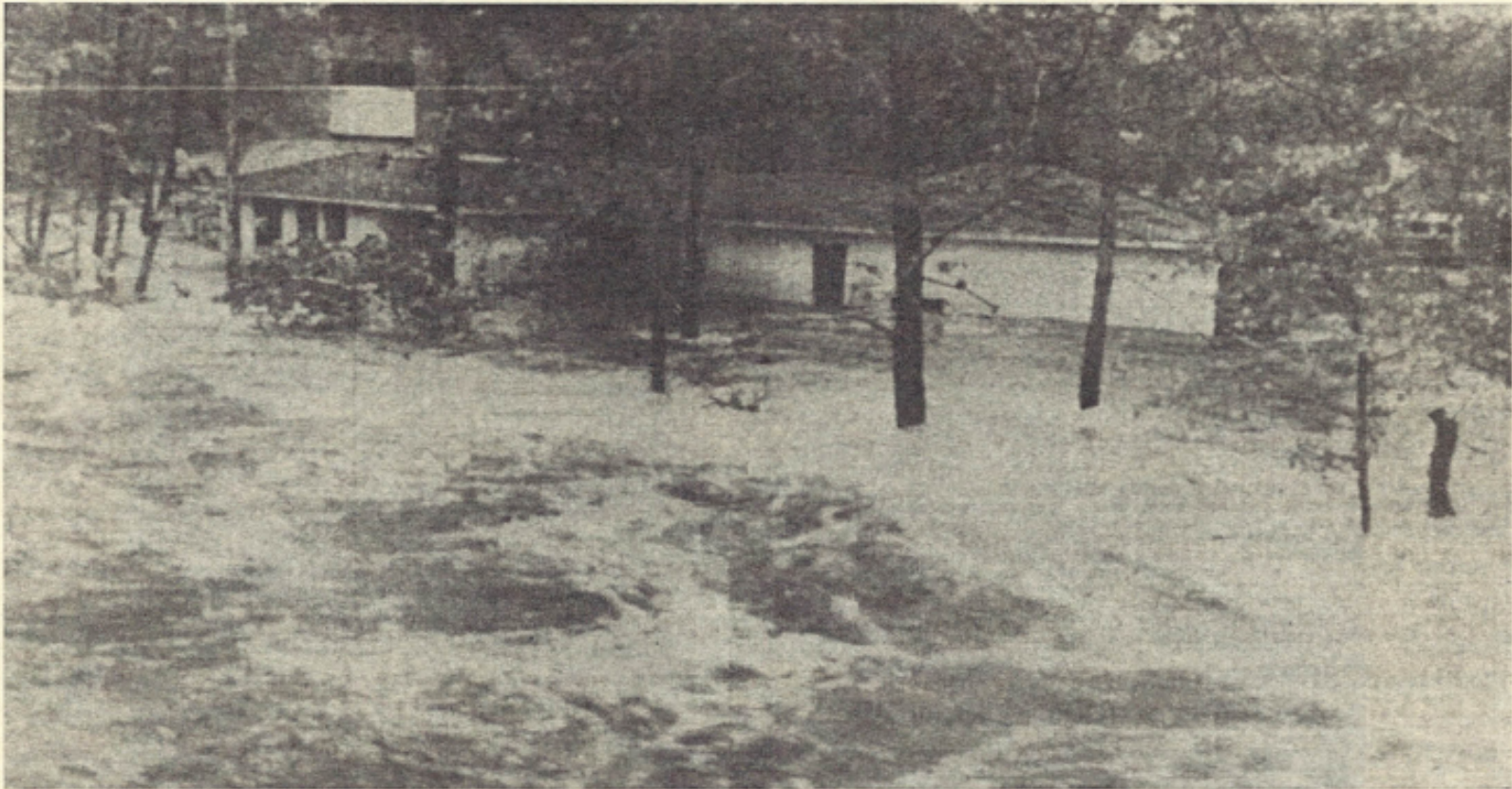
ries, houses, concrete and steel bridges, lumber yards, oil tanks, black-top roads and bulky freight cars were washed away by the rushing waters. Unfortunately, several human lives were taken as well.

We in Weston were lucky not to have had any deaths, but the flood devastated not only Weston, but Westport as well. The following pictures show the destructive power of the water. Again, the hardy, stalwart folks of Weston banded together and came through on top. We were lucky to have a road crew at that time as well as a fire department which helped out immensely, everyday men and women became heroes for their deeds, great and small. We hope that 2012 will not disrupt our lives as has happened this past year. However, if it does, we will again do what needs to be done to get through, neighbor to neighbor.

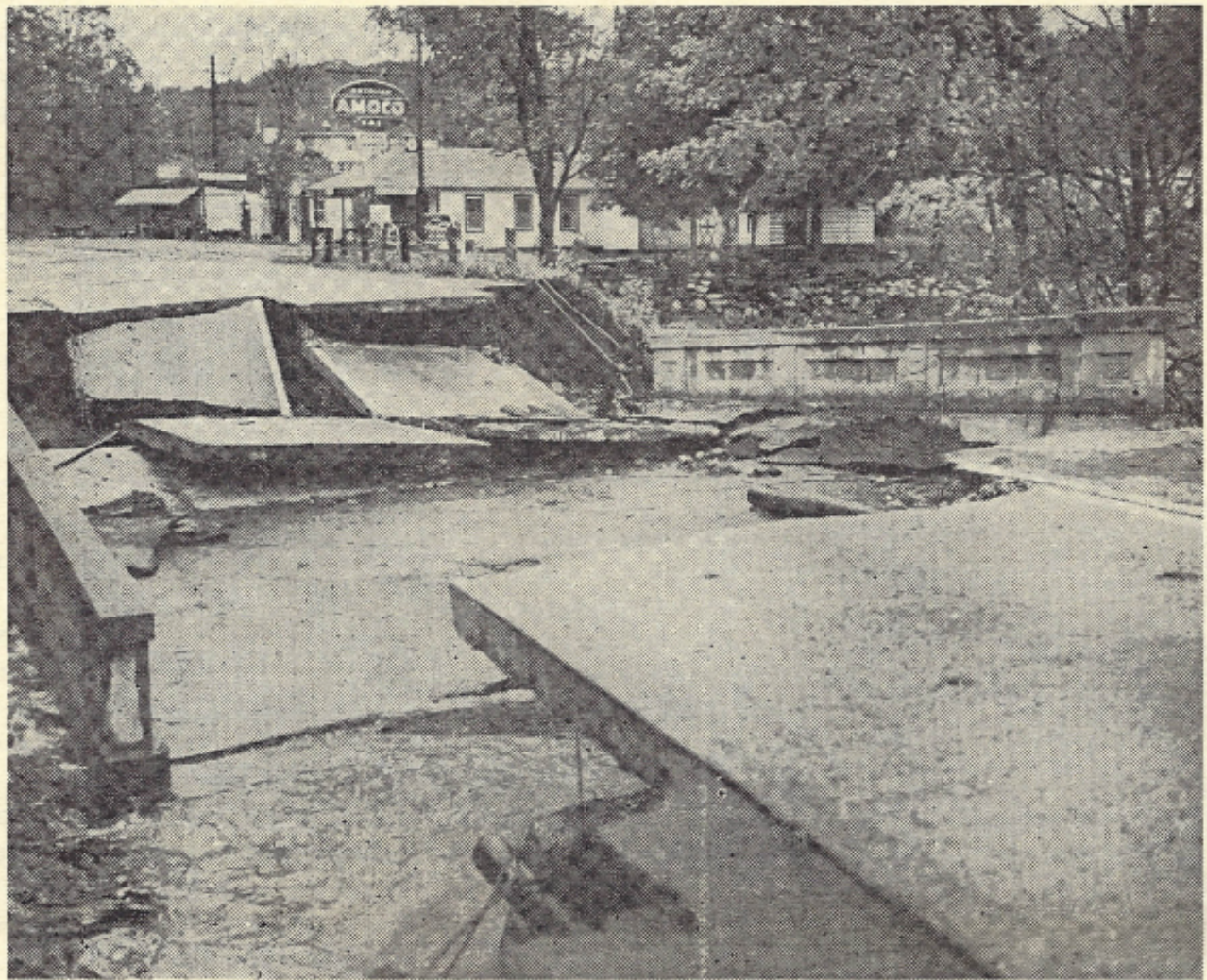
We wish you and your families a wonderful Holiday Season and a peaceful and prosperous New Year. Thank you for your continued support of the Weston Historical Society. It means a great deal to our organization and to the Town of Weston to preserve these events and memories—good and bad. Happy 2012. 🍷



Norfield Road near Weston Road: An excellent example of the pitfalls into which motorists fell during the rain at the height of the storm.



Goodhill and River Roads: Former home of B. V. Brooks (bought Friday by Simon J. Milburg) during the morning of Sunday when River Road really lived up to its name.



This Route 7 concrete bridge, just south of Branchville, collapsed early Saturday evening. At just about the same time the steel railroad bridge a few hundred feet to the right fell into the roaring river. Traffic on the highway was maintained because a much older bridge used before the road was strightened withstood the strain of the flood. Photo by Clarence Korker.



An automobile came to a perilous stop on the edge of this gaping hole in the new Georgetown Overpass approach, and its five occupants were rescued 90 minutes later. When Clarence Korker took this picture Sunday afternoon a crowd was gathering to see what could be done to get the car off its perch. Holes like this one, some bigger, some smaller were common sights throughout this area.