

A VENT WINDOW VIEW
YES, “NO” CREEK REALLY WAS
JANUARY 2016

TV and radio newscasts about the recent spate of storm-caused floods that caused so much misery around the country reminded me of a long ago occasion that almost shattered my innocent and ignorant belief that Dad and Mom could and would always keep me safe.

I still remember in vivid detail the events that blotted out much of what should have been a wonderful memory of a “Saturday Night on the town.” In truth, for a kid who had only recently celebrated his seventh birthday that evening’s events were, for the most part, a bit too memorable. Of course, one must understand that the occasion’s fifteen-mile trip to the Grundy County seat was a big deal even before Dad provided my brother Lynn (age twelve) with the cash and instructions to escort me to a movie theater. I was barely able to restrain my joy. It did not matter that neither of us knew what was showing, but for sure between the two black and white main features there would be a cartoon, the latest chapter in an ongoing serial (I cannot recall ever viewing two chapters in a row), a newsreel, and previews of upcoming features.

Keep in mind that this was the height of farm country entertainment before the advent of TV; in fact, in the late Forties following the end of World War II and prior to the REA’s arrival with electrical service, some rural folks like us were still using battery powered “table” or “console” radios. These units required an expensive *dry cell* battery about the size of a six or twelve volt wet cell car battery which is why my parents rationed the amount of time our radio could be used.

The best thing about going to a theater with my brother was that my two younger sisters, one still a babe in arms and the other two years younger than I, did not attend with us. They remained with my parents who would be shopping for groceries and other needed items while Lynn and I were enjoying a B-rated epic from Hollywood.

Lynn and I were unaware that a torrential rain storm had passed through that section of Missouri while our attention was centered upon the big screen. Not until we exited the theater did we realize there had been a true downpour!

We were soon aboard the family transport (a black 1941 Ford “Tudor” sedan) and heading south on a “Federal” paved highway; eight miles later Dad steered the Ford onto a graveled county road that would take us home. This thoroughfare’s worn layer of gravel offered some traction in spite of wet weather until we started across the lowlands where the road crossed over No Creek (really, “No” was its name). Unfortunately, much of the rain that had fallen over the areas north of our route was now flowing across that graveled path to home and safety.

Dad eased the Ford onward, but about 100 feet before we reached the No Creek Bridge which we could now see was awash with water four to six inches deep, the V-8 gave up the ghost when the engine fan slapped a splash of water onto some portion of the car’s ignition system.

At this juncture, seemingly unconcerned about wading through the flowing water, my father walked my brother across the bridge and then sent him racing up the hill beyond to “fetch the horse.” Amazingly, it took Lynn less than half an hour to return aboard “Baldy;” neither horse nor boy seemed concerned about crossing the bridge which was still under about four to eight inches of rushing water. Nonetheless, ten minutes later, with Mom, the baby, and my pre-school sister aboard Baldy, my father led the animal out of the flooded

area. Lynn was appointed by Dad to “hang onto” me during the bridge crossing. Soon we were all in our beds and sleeping without a worry.

By the time I arose the next morning Dad had recovered the Ford. The flood had receded and No Creek was once again flowing in its usual channel. Now, like so many childhood events this event will never fade from my memory, but my little sis and the baby were too young to remember that night. The other three, Dad, Mom, and older brother, are now in a place that never floods, where Fords never quit, and where all the movies are shown in Technicolor!