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Article Title: Postscript: The Lincoln Flood of 1908

Full Citation: Don Cunningham, "Postscript: The Lincoln Flood of 1908," *Nebraska History* 88 (2007): 60

URL of article: <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/publicat/history/full-text/NH2007PSFlood.pdf>

Date: 2/08/2013

Cataloging Information:

Nebraska Place Names: O Street, Lincoln; Salt Creek; Antelope Valley

Keywords: US Army Corps of Engineers, Soil Conservation Service

Photographs / Images: two young men on a motorcycle submerged in water at Twelfth and O streets, Lincoln

The Lincoln Flood of 1908



NSHS RG2158-2861

TWO YOUNG MEN BRAVE RAIN AND FLOOD-waters on O streets in Lincoln. Although they are still upright, it seems highly unlikely that their motorcycle is still running. The building with the arched entrance (to the Central National Bank) is the Security Mutual Life building on the northeast corner of Twelfth and O streets, replaced by the building now called Centerstone.

Lincoln's first recorded major flood occurred in July 1908 (*see cover*). The Nebraska Department of Resources reports that the city has experienced one hundred floods since 1900, seventeen of them "major," thirty "moderate," and the rest mere "flood events." This photograph by an unknown

photographer is dated 1912, but major flooding did not occur that year, and this view appears to meet descriptions of the 1908 flood when O Street was covered from Eighth Street east to Twenty-fourth, and the entire Antelope valley was flooded to G Street.

Major flooding in 1950 and 1951 led to the construction of ten dams in the Salt Creek watershed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and thirty smaller upstream dams by the Soil Conservation Service (now the Natural Resources Conservation Service). Lincoln has not had a major damaging flood since those projects were completed. 📷

DON CUNNINGHAM