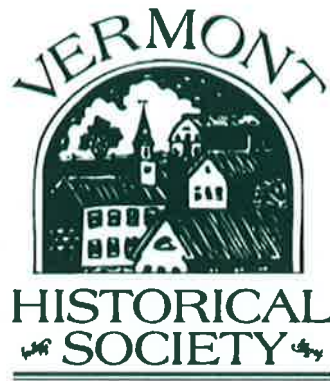


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[Buzzell], Bertha

Dec. 19, 1927.

Dear Clara:

Believe me I was sure glad to get your letter this morning and I am sure ashamed that I haven't written you before. I knew you had been in the hospital for Harry Yeaton told me, and then too Laura and I had a little chat one day and she told me about it also, but I am sure the bunk on letter writing. I am sorry you have had so much trouble. I guess the old saying that troubles never come single is true. I sure hope that you keep on gaining and that you won't have any more sickness for you have had your share. I guess an appendix is a good thing to be without for you don't seem to be able to tell when you will be the next victim. Is the brother that lives in Bellows Falls, and the one who was hurt, the one I know? I thought that one lived in Underhill. I knew Tom had changed jobs for Harry Yeaton told me. Tod and I went down to Andover with Fred and Blanche Yeaton over one week end this summer, and I hoped that we could come and see you, but it rained most of the time we were there, so we couldn't go anywhere.

I am sorry I haven't written you about the flood before this for of course I know you are interested in Montpelier. No matter what you have heard and read, it hasn't been exaggerated for the place is a mess. Everyone who lived in this valley sure got hit and hard at that, but I think everyone has been wonderful about it and feel thankful that they are alive for believe me when the water kept rising to the ceilings we began to wonder how much longer we would be above it.

I left the office about 4.30 (we had, by the way, a very busy afternoon with conferences, etc. etc.) and most everyone had gone except in our department. However, Gladys and Mr. Hamilton left even before I did and succeeded in getting home, but I felt duty bound to stay, since they had gone, and because the boss was still here, so when I finally did leave I had trouble getting up the street, but did get to about Read's Jewelry Store when I saw the water come rushing around Wheatley's corner, so I could see that getting across the street was impossible, so I knew the only thing I could do was to go back down the street, which I did, and went down to the old Fifield house (next below Old National Life Building), where Julia Pitkin now lives. There I stayed during the flood and am still there. As soon as I got into the house I called Tod, thinking that he would immediately come down to get me in the car, but he said there was already two feet of water around his house and that he couldn't get out and for me to stay there. I had no choice by that time, and stay I did. The water rose steadily until one o'clock that next morning. Cars, houses, bridges, pianos, furniture, etc. etc. floated down by the house like toys. The lights went out at eight o'clock in the house and of course the fires. It sure was awful. The State House lights in the yard stayed on quite a while and that helped us out quite a lot, but enabled us to see the awful sights going down by all the more. The most terrible thing that we experienced was when the Taylor Street bridge went out and hit the big iron railroad bridge right in back of that house (Fifield's) and made that collapse. The noise was terrible and of course it was so pitch dark that we couldn't see a thing and of course we could only guess what it was and where it

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where it was. Right after that some one began to scream for "help" and of course we all rushed to the doors (for we could still stay down stairs) but we couldn't see a thing it was so dark and of course if we could have seen someone in the water we were helpless for one couldn't stand up in that current a minute. Everyone around heard that cry for help, but no one seemed to know just where it came from, but we found out the next day that there was a man and little boy on top on one of the freight cars and we think it was the man calling for help. Just imagine spending a night on top of a freight car with that awful water rushing down past, and even moving some of the freight cars (some were tipped right over) and raining guns.

There were twelve marooned in the house where I was, fourteen in the Old National Life building and several in the station. The water in the Fifield house only came to the third stair on the first floor and there were enough of us there so that we succeeded in getting almost all of the furniture up stairs before the water started coming in.

Up where I really lived the water came almost to the ceiling and of course covered everything I had. I didn't save a thing, naturally - not even any clothes, so of course it was rather inconvenient for awhile. The people who were in the house all got up stair and waited and watched and they told me that from the windows upstairs they could touch the water, so you can imagine a little how high it was. My things were practically all ruined. I just wish I could explain to you how my house looked tome when I got in Saturday afternoon. When I left Thursday morning I had left my house in the usual way (picked up so it was fairly presentable) but honest the furniture was all moved around in different places - my bed was across the room by the closet door and all out flat just like when I sleep on it, my victrola was flat on the floor, my radio on the floor, my dishes all around everywhere, etc. etc. and worst of all about a foot of mud all over everything. Honest you can't imagine how awful that mud was. Of course the only thing to do was to duff in and start in cleaning up, but of all the discouraging things to do. Carroll Pitkin got a man from the Lane shops to come down and hlep and the three of us started Sunday to clean. First of all we got a hose (for we hadn't had enough water) and hosed everything and hosed, shovelled, and hoed out that mud. After we had gotten out the worst of the mud we dumped the rugs, mattress, etc. etc. out on the porch and then I tried to see what I could save. I had a few pieces of antique furniture and that seemed to weather the flood the best of anything and those few pieces, with the dishes, were all I saved. My victrola, radio, rugs, chairs, bureau, bed, etc. were all ruined and they were carted off to the dump. I gave up the apartment for I didn't feel that I could afford to pay rent and refurnish, especially as I had it along. (Dorothy is attending school in Boston for a year, so she wasn't with me then). Mrs. Murphy (the woman who runs the Fifield house) had an extra room, so I took that and am still there.

I expect now to leave next Monday for California for the winter at least. I had planned to go for a long time, and now the time seems right. My people are all about crazy for they think I am cold, hungry, and sick. They have read terrible accounts of it in the Calif. papers.

Did you know that Katherine was here visiting me this summer? She was here about two months and believe me it seemed good to see her. She brought Peggy with her (that is her oldest girl). She has another little girl, but she left her with Marion. Wish you could have seen them. K looked just the same and Peggy was a little dear.

I am looking forward to getting acquainted with my family again. I haven't ever seen Marion's husband and then too my father has married again and of course I haven't seen his wife, but I have had dandy letters from them all and they seem anxious to have me come out, so now I am going. I have my tickets ordered and expect to hear today just when I start. Hope you will write me at my Dad's address - 6132 Poppy Peak Drive, Los Angeles, Calif.

I guess the Burbank's got hit pretty badly by the flood. The meadow and Elm street were terribly wrecked. The Lane Mfg. Company iron bridge went out and landed in Fred Gleason's yard right against his porch. Up in the section where Tod lives was badly hit. The current was terribly strong there and it tore the ell of their house right away from the rest of the house. Luke Harrington also lives up in that section and it tore his barn off the back of his house and the porch off the front. Tod's car was in the garage by the house and when it stayed in the garage it had three feet of water over the top of it, so of course you can imagine the shape it was in. He has had it thoroughly overhauled but of course it was soaked. The cushions are still wet and now that cold weather has come on they have frozen and are just like cakes of ice to sit on.

The Taft's barn, or rather garage, got disconnected from its moorings and is now tight up against the house where I did live. Mr. Baird says he has another garage.

All the bridges went out, including the School Street, Langdon Street, Taylor Street, Lane Mfg. The railroad is sure on the blink. They tell that the C.V. will be running in two months, but believe me if you could ride to Middlesex you would say it wouldn't be running until next summer at the earliest. Middlesex is a terrible looking place. I don't think there is any question but what they were worse hit than we, but of course it is a small place and not so much to destroy, but it is practically gone.

Practically every plate glass window in the stores was broken and the water just rushed through the stores taking out the goods of the merchants.

The water came into this building and ruined the Free Public Library, the printing department and about 50,000 books that belonged to the State Library that were in the basement, besides the supplies for all the offices in this building. Everything down there is ruined. The water didn't get up on to the first floor, although it came way up to the top of the last step just inside the door so you can see it came pretty close. The State Asylum at Waterbury was badly hit too. I think they succeeded in getting all the patients up stairs, but of course they water came in and badly damaged the building and all the blooded cattle that they had was drowned. You probably heard that the special session, called by the Governor, voted to bond the State for  $8\frac{1}{2}$  million - 8 million for roads and bridges, \$400,000 for the State departments (in flood) and \$100,000 for emergencies.

I really don't know how must the merchants call it they lost here. We were talking with Fred Yeaton one day and he said Bailey & Co. were heavy losers and of course they must have been. I think the Lane Mfg. Company was another company that took an awful licking. We keep getting reports that merchants aren't going back into business, but so far the only one to drop out is Dick Standish. I don't know just why he got out, but he has and the Ladd Company from Barre has gone in there.

They keep telling that McCuen is going out, but I don't believe it for he has quite a bit of new Xmas stuff in and seems to be going ahead with cleaning up.

Am glad Tom likes golf. I played once or twice this summer but can't say that as yet I am crazy about it.

Guess the shrine here took quite a licking from the flood. Ed says there loss is about \$9,000 , or something like that. They lost all their uniforms, scenery, etc. I told him the other day that when they had their meeting in Jan. that I guessed they had to have a few evergreen frees sat around instead of those palms that usually adorn the back of the stage. I also suggested that since they had lot those uniforms that they have different designs when they bought new ones - at least a little more becoming ones. The patrol lost all their uniforms too, I understand. I suppose Ed expects to be the big ~~XXXXX~~ cheese when they have their election of officers. I hope he gets it for I think he will be terribly disappointed if he doesn't. I am a firm believer in that if you start a person in office that you should stand back of them right to the finish.

I guess the Sargent's were quite badly hit for they live on Elm Street. I met her one day quite recently and she was telling me about things received from Concord and she seemed very appreciative. I like her quite well, but I know some that don't.

Yes, I think Helen Burbank has got a good job, although I haven't any idea what salary she gets. She and Laura are both smart girls. I knew that Laura was going to have another baby, so wasn't as surprised as you.

I hope when I come back from Calif. that I can come down and see your new home. I had planned to come down with Tod sometime, and I hope I still can.

I feel guilty in taking the money which you sent me Clara, and I wish you hadn't sent it. I should think you had had enough ways to spend money lately, so that you needed it as badly as I. However, I want to thank you a lot and I shall certainly get something with it that I really need and can think of you when I use it. I haven't bought a Xmas present and I am not planning to. Nobody here is doing a thing. Of course the stores are terribly crippled and haven't much to sell. Everyone who was hit by the flood feels too poor to do anything and it so happens that just about all my friends lived in the flooded area, so all feel the same toward Xmas. The Cleaves' were flood to the ceiling and Agnes Pitkin too.

Mr. Baird has my apartment all fixed up again and Fred and Blanche Yeaton have it.

Well I guess I had better get busy for I have a number of things that I want to finish up before I leave the office for good. Hope you will write me when I get out there for I shall be terribly lonesome for Old Vermont and my friends in these parts.

Hope you and Tom have a good Christmas and that you are blessed with all the good things in the year to come. Give my love to your mother when you see her.

Lots of love,  
Bertha.