

## TOPIC 5 – BLIZZARDS, FLOODS, DROUGHT

### Topic Overview

Topic 5 highlights extreme weather events in North Dakota. It includes primary sources that will help you understand how blizzards, floods, and drought have impacted the inhabitants of North Dakota.

### Topic Objectives

- As a result of the study of Topic 5, you will be able to
  - Analyze and interpret primary documents.
  - Understand the effects of extreme weather and climate conditions on the people of North Dakota.
  - Recognize the impact floods and droughts have on land use in North Dakota.

### ND Content Standards

- 8.1.1
- 8.1.2
- 8.3.4
- 8.5.1

### Common Core Standards

- RH 2
- RH 7
- WHST 2
- WHST 8

### Topic Activities

- Learning from Historical Documents
- Organizing Data
- Debate/Discussion
- Creative Interpretation

### Learning from Historical Documents 1

To access a photo/document/map, refer to the topic reading assignment or use the SEARCH feature to enter its name or number.

The Great Plains is known for uncertain weather, and winter on the northern Plains can bring snowstorms with very low temperatures and high winds. Topic 5 contains primary sources, including historic photographs and newspaper articles related to how North Dakotans have experienced snowstorms. Examine the historic photos throughout this topic. Describe what you see and discuss your responses with a partner/small group/large group.

Next, read the news articles and discuss what you learned with a partner/small group/large group. Things to consider as you read the articles:

- How were people affected?
- What is significant about these events?

### Organizing Data

To access a photo/document/map, refer to the topic reading assignment or use the SEARCH feature to enter its name or number.

Floods have been causing and continue to cause hardships and damage for North Dakotans. Although several North Dakota rivers flood from time to time, flooding on the Red River has been documented for many years. Read the introduction to flooding, the Fargo flood of 1897, flood control in the Red River Valley; view the documents related to the Fargo flood of 1897; and study the photographs found in the links below. Write about the effects of the flood in the space provided. From your findings, write a descriptive summary about the Red River flood of 1897.

1. The 1897 Red River Flood entered the young and growing city of Fargo and spread over 160 acres of businesses, homes, and farmland. This shop, where tailors made clothing for men, was located on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South. The flood waters reach the windows of Mr. Thomaier's building, which has an advertisement painted on the side.  
[http://www.digitalhorizonsonline.org/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/uw&CISOPT R=849&CISOBOX=1&REC=2](http://www.digitalhorizonsonline.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/uw&CISOPT R=849&CISOBOX=1&REC=2) : **Photo 2042.10.4**
2. This photograph shows the Salvation Army barracks (home for men) on Main Street (then called Front Street.) The building has been completely destroyed.  
[http://www.digitalhorizonsonline.org/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/uw&CISOPT R=7182&CISOBOX=1&REC=4](http://www.digitalhorizonsonline.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/uw&CISOPT R=7182&CISOBOX=1&REC=4) Salvation Army : **Photo 2006.83.16**
3. The Northern Pacific Railroad (NPRR) suffered damage, and its trains stopped running during the flood. To protect the bridges from damage, the NPRR placed trains on the bridge for extra weight. Although the company took a chance on losing the train and the bridge, the extra weight was usually enough to prevent the bridge from excessive damage from flood waters.  
[http://www.digitalhorizonsonline.org/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/uw&CISOPT R=7171&CISOBOX=1&REC=5](http://www.digitalhorizonsonline.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/uw&CISOPT R=7171&CISOBOX=1&REC=5) **Railroad Bridge**
4. The flood waters reached the underside of the railroad bridge. The train remains parked on the bridge. This photograph was taken from Moorhead facing toward Fargo.  
[http://www.digitalhorizonsonline.org/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/uw&CISOPT R=5993&CISOBOX=1&REC=7](http://www.digitalhorizonsonline.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/uw&CISOPT R=5993&CISOBOX=1&REC=7) **Railroad bridge at height of flood.**

### Organizing Data (continued)

5. The flood of 1897 was so extensive that it reached into the finest neighborhoods in town. Major Edwards' home on South 7<sup>th</sup> Street is surrounded by flood waters. The yard and probably the basement have been damaged. Note the wooden sidewalk. Both sidewalks and streets were sometimes paved with wood that would float away in the flood waters.

[http://www.digitalhorizonsonline.org/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/uw&CISOPTR=5692&CISOBX=1&REC=10](http://www.digitalhorizonsonline.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/uw&CISOPTR=5692&CISOBX=1&REC=10) **Edwards residence.**

6. The city's pavement piled up along flooded streets. Even after flood waters went down, the streets would not be usable until the pavers were cleared out. The city would have to restore the street surfaces after each flood.

[http://www.digitalhorizonsonline.org/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/uw&CISOPTR=5665&CISOBX=1&REC=11](http://www.digitalhorizonsonline.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/uw&CISOPTR=5665&CISOBX=1&REC=11) **Wood pavers floating in street.**

7. In spite of the flood, ordinary life continued. In this photo, Nate Harris delivers groceries on South 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Boats were the only way to travel in the city during the flood.

[http://www.digitalhorizonsonline.org/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/uw&CISOPTR=5652&CISOBX=1&REC=12](http://www.digitalhorizonsonline.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/uw&CISOPTR=5652&CISOBX=1&REC=12) **Delivering groceries.**

8. During the flood, some houses had wet basements, but other houses were completely destroyed. The residents of these homes had to move to new quarters. They would have had to buy new furniture, dishes, and other personal items for their new homes.

[http://www.digitalhorizonsonline.org/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/uw&CISOPTR=4925&CISOBX=1&REC=14](http://www.digitalhorizonsonline.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/uw&CISOPTR=4925&CISOBX=1&REC=14) **Floating houses item no. 51.32b.8.**

9. The Keeley Institute was a place where people could be treated for alcoholism. This building on South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street had water up to the first floor.

[http://www.digitalhorizonsonline.org/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/uw&CISOPTR=4691&CISOBX=1&REC=15](http://www.digitalhorizonsonline.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/uw&CISOPTR=4691&CISOBX=1&REC=15) **Keeley Institute item no. 51.32a.4.**

## Organizing Data (continued)

### RED RIVER FLOODING

#### People

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#### Land

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Descriptive summary about the Red River flood of 1897:

## Debate/Discussion

In small groups, research and discuss what steps are currently being taken in North Dakota to curb flooding of the major rivers in North Dakota (e.g., Missouri, Heart, Mouse (Souris), James, Sheyenne, Red). Present your research findings to the class.



### Creative Interpretation

To access a photo/document/map, refer to the topic reading assignment or use the SEARCH feature to enter its name or number.

Listen to the story ***No Place Like Home*** told by North Dakota storyteller, Ceil Anne Clement. This is a family story about her grandfather Tom Clement, who was an early homesteader in southwestern North Dakota. Ceil Anne Clement has a Master's degree in Storytelling from East Tennessee State University and has shared her stories with students of all ages.

Discuss with a partner the struggles encountered by Tom Clement and if people face these struggles today.

Credit: A selection from Ceil Anne Clement's award winning recording *Blizzard Stories from the Dakota Prairies*.

