

'Who's Giving Up?'

Mother and 12 Children Saw Their Home At Stafford Wash Away

Mrs. Harriet Williams, 39-year-old mother of 12, said Saturday how she and her family stood by helplessly as turbulent flood waters of the Eel River washed their four-bedroom home away.

"You've just got to admire children in these situations," she said. "They hold up so much better than we adults do."

Mrs. Williams and eight of her children were among the first to be rescued Saturday from Stafford, about 12 miles south of Eureka. They landed at Murray Field in Eureka aboard a Marine Corps helicopter, from the aircraft carrier Bennington.

Her husband and the four other Williams children were on a later flight.

"We just had no idea when we moved to Stafford six years ago

(from Bandon, Ore.) that this could happen.

"We were watching the river Wednesday with some neighbors when someone told us that our house was going down the river. We had managed to get away with the clothes that were in the washer and dryer.

Mrs. Williams said her husband, a 53-year-old unemployed auto mechanic, and their 17-year-old son carried groceries and Christmas gifts from the home in waist-deep water Tuesday night.

"There were about 100 of us that gathered on the highest ground we could find. There was nothing we could do but watch the homes go," she said.

The Williams children didn't open their Christmas gifts Friday until a boat arrived with emergency food and gifts for the seven children.

"We just didn't feel right about it," she said. "They had their presents and the other kids had nothing."

"Most of Stafford's residents took their plight in good stride," she said.

"There were two people who were sick when this started and they had a fairly hard time.

"But we're not complaining. We have a dry place to sleep and something to eat."

The Williams family spent Friday night in a Boy Scout cabin on a hillside, she said.

"When the kids finally got to sleep last night, my husband and I talked about what we're going to do.

"The Lord knows — we don't — what's going to happen to us now. We can't go back until communications are renewed.

"Some of our neighbors told us we were lucky that our house washed away. They said they went back to their homes and was sickening to see what had happened.

"I guess we are lucky. We're all alive and together.

68 Persons Homeless In Shively

SHIVELY — Sixty-eight people of the farming community of Shively lost their homes when the swollen Eel River overflowed its banks in the worst flood ever recorded here this past week.

However, quick action by the Humboldt County civil defense averted any serious injuries from the flooding.

All the barns and barns on Shively flat are gone but the Arlen Millapp residence said it reportedly is coated with nine feet of mud.

Eugene Whitney and Frank Mill, county employees assigned by civil defense Monday to the community which is situated just southwest of Pepperwood, efficiently and quickly organized the population with the aid of store owner Cliff Cook.

The inhabitants of Shively, according to Whitney, have been through many floods before and worked well together. They were very cooperative.

An embankment which holds the railroad tracks acted as a buffer on the rising waters and kept most of the houses on the East side fairly dry although four feet of water was reported in the school, store, church and The Pacific Lumber Company barn where the evacuated were first housed.

By Wednesday morning the entire population was quartered in houses on the East side of the tracks.

The community is serviced by water from springs in the nearby surrounding hills and is receiving milk from two dairies which resumed operations Wednesday.

Mail Arrives Here By Cargo Planes

Eureka Postmaster Alfred Houle said last night 20,000 pounds of mail, which has been delayed in San Francisco, arrived at the Arcata airport at 10 p.m. Distribution will begin tomorrow.

The mail was transported here by military cargo planes. It was unloaded last night, taken to the Eureka office this morning and will be delivered as rapidly as possible, beginning tomorrow morning. Another shipment from San Francisco of an equal amount is expected to arrive here today, according to Houle.

Until yesterday, Houle said, the post office hasn't wanted to ask for mail delivery because food and medical supplies were carrying such a high priority.

Mail delivery out of this area has been possible because large transports, which have been bringing supplies into this area, have been leaving empty and have taken out-going mail with them.

In addition, all preferential mail was moved last night to Crescent City. This was the first area since December 21.

Houle said it is expected that as soon as the health and welfare missions of helicopters in this area are completed, these aircraft will assist in mail delivery to isolated areas.

Food, Clothes Available

St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Salvation Army have food and clothing available for all refugees and John Cooper, of Eureka, urges anyone in need to contact either organization.

The St. Vincent de Paul Society is located at 312 Second Street and the Salvation Army at 212 G Street, in Eureka.