

The Recurring Problem - Flooding in Albury

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Flooding of low lying areas of Albury was a recurring problem until the construction of the Hume Weir enabled some control the flow of the Murray River.

The flood of October 1867 was among the worst of the 19th century. All approaches to the Union Bridge in Albury were washed away. One report stated that “35,000 bricks intended for the first telegraph office were swept away.”

Worse was to come in October 1870. The *Ovens & Murray Advertiser* reported “At Albury, the Murray has been higher during the week than at the time of the great floods in 1867. The lower part of the town was completely under water, and boats were plying from Mate’s store, near the centre of the town, to Wodonga.”

Albury Council was looking for solutions to flooding. The *Albury Banner* reported: “Mayor, Ald G Day, drew attention to the damage and inconvenience caused by the overflow of water from the Bungambrawatha Creek, and suggested that something ought to be done.”



Flooding in Bridge Street Albury during the 1917 floods

Flood mitigation work did not help much in the floods of October 1917 (see photo). In the *Banner* of October 12: “the Murray at Albury was in a condition of high flood. The river had reached a height of 15ft 7in above summer level, which has been exceeded on only one occasion.”

Water receded, but two weeks later the river rose to record levels. The *Banner* of October 26: “at 5pm Monday the highest point ever reached, in 1867, was attained. The rise was maintained and at 2am on Tuesday the gauge showed that the flood was the greatest that had ever occurred on the Murray, the reading being 16ft 10in ... In the afternoon two spans of the bridge over the Wodonga creek were swept away, and two minor bridges also lost spans.”

On November 30, the *Banner* reported the start of: “work effecting temporary repairs to the bridges on the Albury-Wodonga road. It is intended to make provision at present for light traffic only, and it is expected that the work will be completed before Christmas.”