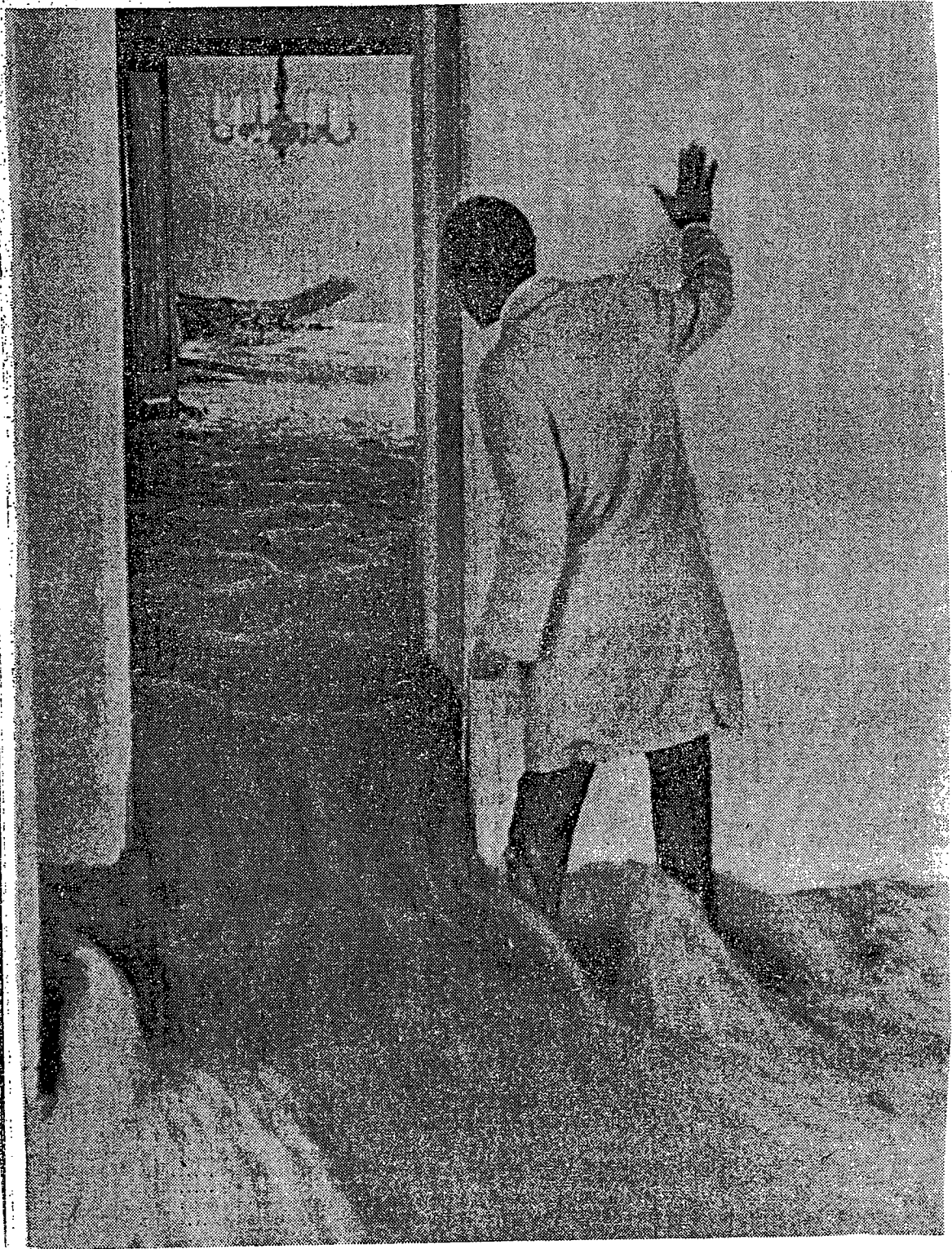




**FLOOD'S POWER**—Gaping hole creates a waterfall in the 3000 block of Mandeville Canyon Road—one of many washouts in the area. Times photo by Frank Q. Brown

# Vignettes of Disaster





**FLOOD EFFECTS**—Rescue worker stands next to front door of home at 2969 Mandeville Canyon Road as water pouring through plow's over his legs. Workers attempt to winch car from ditch in photo at top right. The auto wound up in ditch after section of road in Mandeville Canyon gave way. Driver, Mrs. Betty Shepherd, is in the center. Times photos by Don Cormier



(UPI/Telephoto)

CHICAGO TRIBUNE  
MONDAY JANUARY 27, 1969

### Sandbag Defense Against Erosion

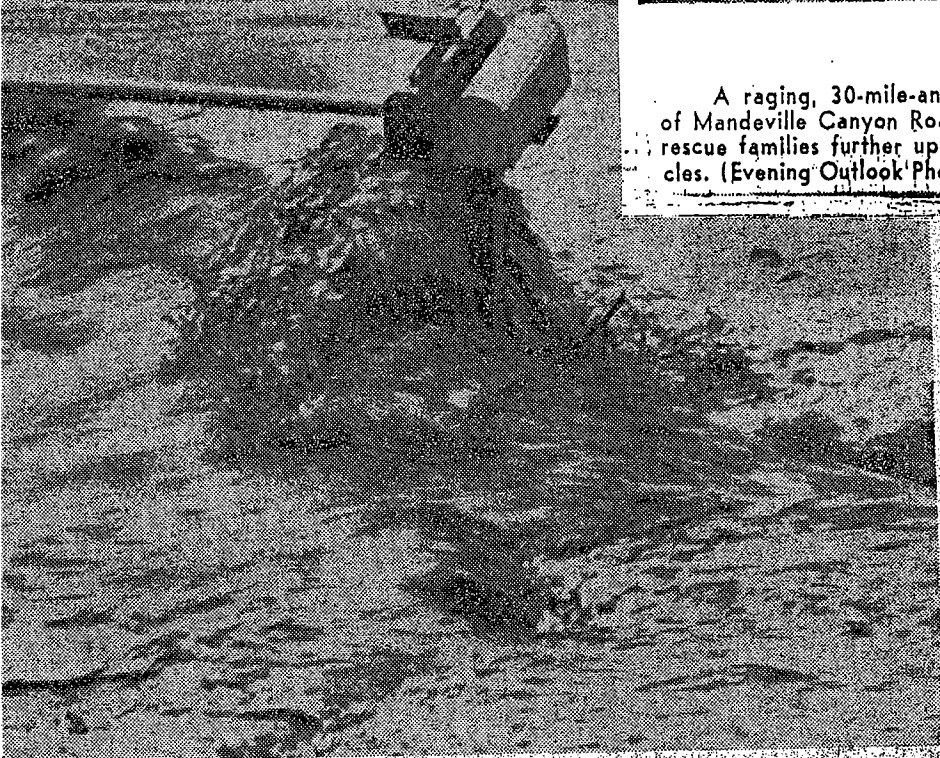
National guardsmen and other workers in Brentwood area of Los Angeles sandbag bank next to stream along Mandeville Canyon road in effort to prevent more erosion of bank. Nine straight days of rain contributed to many deaths and more than 15 million dollars in property damage in southern part of state.

(Story on page 1)



### *This Is A Bridge*

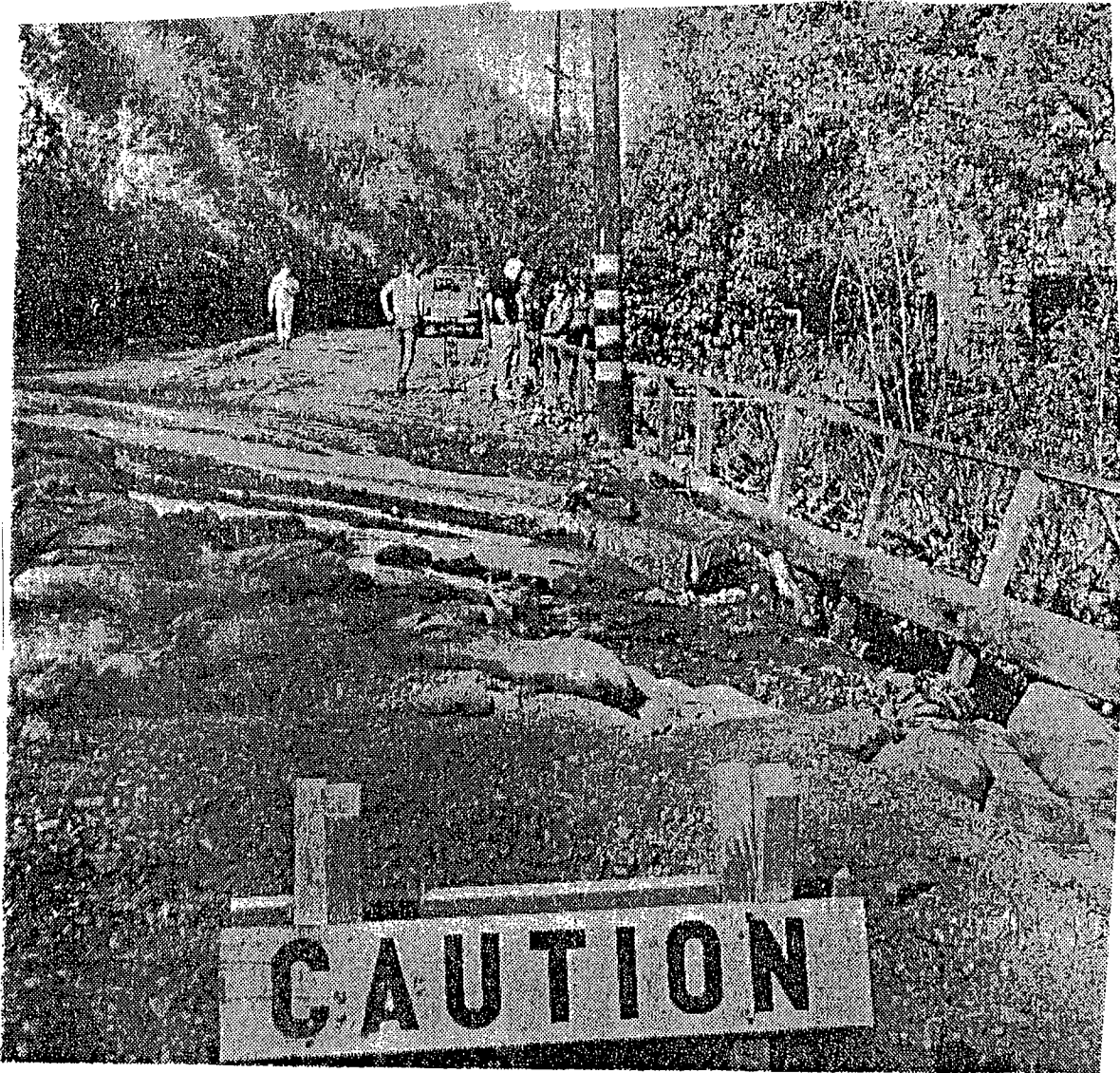
A raging, 30-mile-an-hour torrent of water rushes over bridge in 2900 block of Mandeville Canyon Road late Saturday. Only vehicles that could get through to rescue families further up road were firetrucks and large street maintenance vehicles. (Evening Outlook Photo by G. Robert Smith.)



**DITCH OVERFLOWS**—Swiftly running water leaps out of flood control ditch along Mandeville Canyon Road. Many bridges were impassable or washed out. Times photo by Don Cormier

LATIMES

1-29-69



ERIS—A trail of desolation marks the 2800  
k of Mandeville Canyon, Brentwood. Sand-  
s, a wrenched fence, torn pavement marks vio-

Staff Photo by Peter Banki  
lence that roared in form of tons of flood waters.  
Work crew is engaged above. Pedestrian cautiously  
walks in the middle of the canyon.

## Posh Homes Ruined

# Canyon Families Flee Rain Peril

By NOEL SWANN  
Evening Outlook Staff Writer

At least a dozen luxury homes were ruined by mud and more than 50 persons were evacuated when rampant rainwaters turned the Mandeville Canyon Road creek into a swirling river over the weekend.

Hundreds of National Guardsmen, police, firemen and civilian volunteers worked from Saturday afternoon through the night and through most of Sunday evacuating the stranded and shoring up countless homes with sandbags to

prevent further damage.

Gushing water from the crests of the Santa Monica Mountains burst the banks of the tiny Sylvan Creek in many places. And the flood waters roared down Mandeville Canyon Road instead of the creek—eating out big chunks of the pavement in several spots.

By late Sunday the road was still impassable to normal traffic from the 2600 block northwards. Only four-wheel drive vehicles and bulldozers were able to fight their way up the riv-

Turn To Page 11 Column 1

### Mandeville Closed

Lawrence C. Jones, Bureau of Street Maintenance director, said Mandeville Canyon Road in Brentwood was still closed from the 2600 block, just north of Chalon Road, for a two-mile stretch to Mulholland Drive.

The county supervisors have urged the state legislature to act immediately on a special law to permit property tax assessment reductions for persons whose homes and businesses were damaged by floods and mud.

The supervisors also called on the legislature to enact a temporary one-half cent increase in the state gas tax with proceeds earmarked for repairs in the county.



### Flooded Mandeville Canyon Home

Mud and water pour through the home of Dr. Jesse Frank, 2960 Mandeville Canyon Rd., as flood waters crest in canyon Saturday: Raging torrent that flooded several homes in area can be seen through picture window at rear.

—Evening Outlook Photo By G. Robert Smith.

# Canyon Families Flee Waters

Continued From Page 1

er-road from that point.

The canyon area had already taken a thrashing from the torrential rains that continued through most of last week.

Late Friday an avalanche of mud crashed through a home at 2077 Mandeville Canyon Road smothering the owner, Michael Riordan, chairman of a mutual fund firm, as he slept in his bed.

The wall of mud first shoved him in his bed against a wall. Then, as half-dozen firemen fought to free him, a second slide slammed into the bedroom, bowling over the rescuers and burying Riordan.

The firemen narrowly escaped with their lives and when they had dug Riordan out about 10 minutes later, he had already died from suffocation.

## New Downpour

A fresh downpour Saturday caused the creek waters to rise to danger point about noon.

The creek, which runs down one side of the tortuous canyon road, serves as the area's storm runoff drain. County Flood Control officers had planned to install a concrete storm water drain in the area but this has been bitterly contested by a number of residents, who charged it would destroy the esthetic qualities of the creek.

As the swollen creek burst its banks, mud and debris slammed into several homes and tore away foot bridges in many places.

The canyon was declared a disaster area and the National Guard—a detachment from the Army 240 Signal Co. stationed at the Federal Avenue Armory, West Los Angeles—was called in.

A command post was set up at the Paul Revere Junior High School where scores of volunteers and private truck owners joined Army, police and fire officials in the rescue and shore-up operation.

## 50 Evacuated

Rescuers evacuated at least 50 persons during the night and dozens of families moved out on their own.

Evening Outlook Managing Editor R. D. Funk and photographer Doug Andrews made a sweep of the area in a jeep late Saturday.

North of the 2900 block they saw at least four homes in the \$70,000 to \$80,000 price category abandoned, their front doors opened to mud-filled inside

rooms.

At the home of Dr. Jesse H. Frank, 2969 Mandeville Canyon Road, they saw water rushing through the house. A piano had floated against a doorway and behind the piano was a mass of torn branches and debris that had come through broken windows.

Near the Robert Taylor Ranch at the 3100 block the roadway had been sheared off to the center divider line by the rushing water.

Department of Water and Power vehicles had to inch past the gaping hole where the water churned like a whirlpool and plummeted to a lower level carved out the side of the roadway.

## Seeks Assistance

Up and down the canyon families were beckoning to passing vehicles to stop. "Are you coming back soon? Will you take us out?" they'd ask.

Some were cut off by the swirling waters, others were fearful the hills above their homes would send mudslides crashing down during the night.

A typical homeowner who had decided to leave was Stephen G. Valensi of 2727 Mandeville. The Valensi home had a sheer cliff of wet rock and earth hanging over its back yard.

"I just don't want to stay here tonight," Mrs. Valensi told the Evening Outlook team, who loaded the family on to the jeep and took them to friends in Pacific Palisades.

With them was their daughter Gabriel, aged about 3, dressed in a yellow raincoat and hat. The family's three cats were in a cage covered with plastic. And they had two suitcases packed and ready to go.

## Rock, Mud Peril

Down the canyon road in the 2500 block, a broad ridge of mud and rock covered the road to a depth of two feet with water pouring across it.

Two young boys were trying to hitch-hike to their home in the 3700 block. A County Lifeguard truck driver told them to come with him and he took them to the command post at the Revere school.

When the water had reached its most turbulent state about noon Saturday, Evening Outlook photographer G. Robert Smith was on a city street department truck which helped evacuate the Robert Altman family from their home at 2957 Mandeville.

The Altmans had been completely trapped in their

home unable to get to the road across the flood of water.

Their home was near the area where at least three other homes were inundated with mud, rock and murky water.

## Driven By Torrent

In many sections boulders and rocks were being driven down the road by the torrent at speeds of about 15 miles an hour.

Residents said the floodwaters had receded considerably by early Sunday morning. But several additional showers in the morning once more heightened the flow. And scores of homes were again threatened.

The canyon became a hive of activity as residents and rescue workers feverishly built sandbag barricades to divert the water from homes and from the road.

In the 2600 block one family built a wall out of ping pong tables, plywood boards and scrap materials when sandbags were in short supply.

In several sections, guardsmen and city workers had to shore up the banks of the creek which were in danger of breaking. In two or three other sections parts of the pavement had crumbled and fallen into the creek.

## Divert Swell

Bulldozers working near the 2600 block shoved tons of debris into the road forming a dike to divert the swell back into the creek.

Springboard for most of the activity was the Revere School where several thousand bags were stacked ready for filling with sand.

Officials there were full of praise for the scores of teenage volunteers, many students at the school, who helped fill the bags with sand brought from the city dumps.

They also praised the Red Cross and Salvation Army workers for the back-up support they provided in terms of food, medical needs blankets and other supplies.

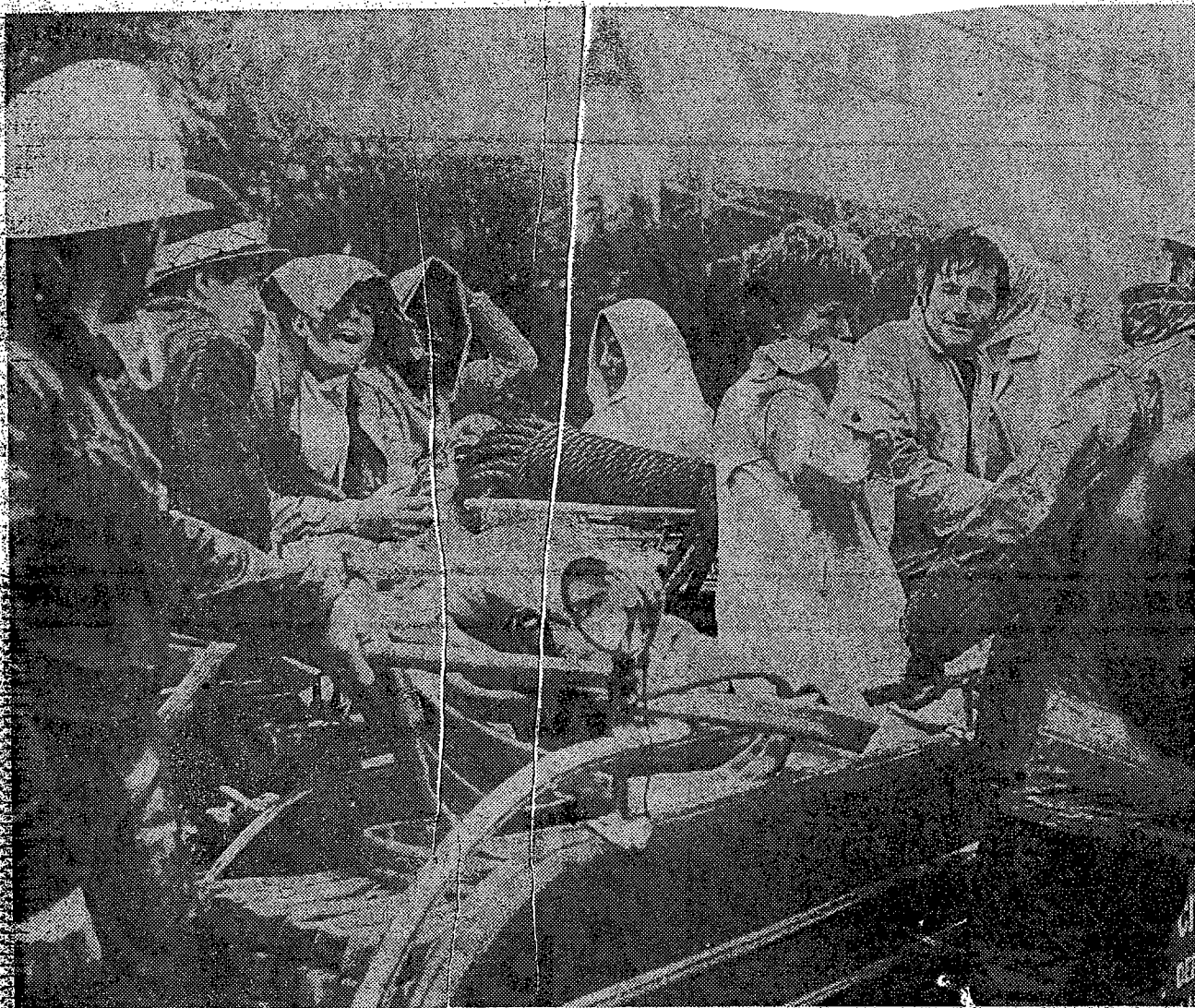
Late Sunday officials said it was just about impossible to arrive at a damage estimate in Mandeville Canyon.

## Abandon Homes

There was no accurate tally of the number of homes inundated by mud. And in many cases officials could not get in touch with the owners because they had temporarily abandoned their homes.

Several homes appeared unscathed from the front, but had in fact suffered extensive damage to the back of the property.



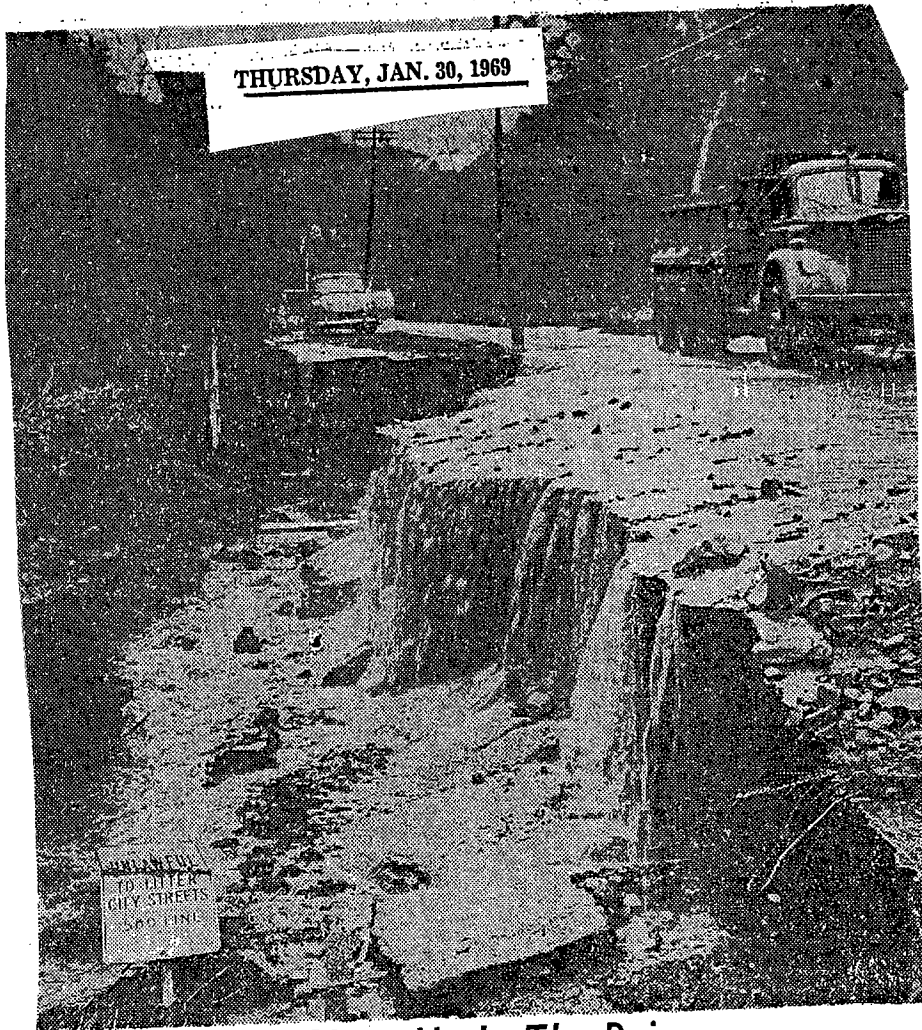


### **Firemen Evacuate Mandeville Family** [REDACTED] 1969

The Robert Altman family was rescued by fireman in Mandeville Canyon Saturday after river of mud and water filled their home at 2957 Mandeville Canyon Rd. and stranded them. Here they sit safely atop fire

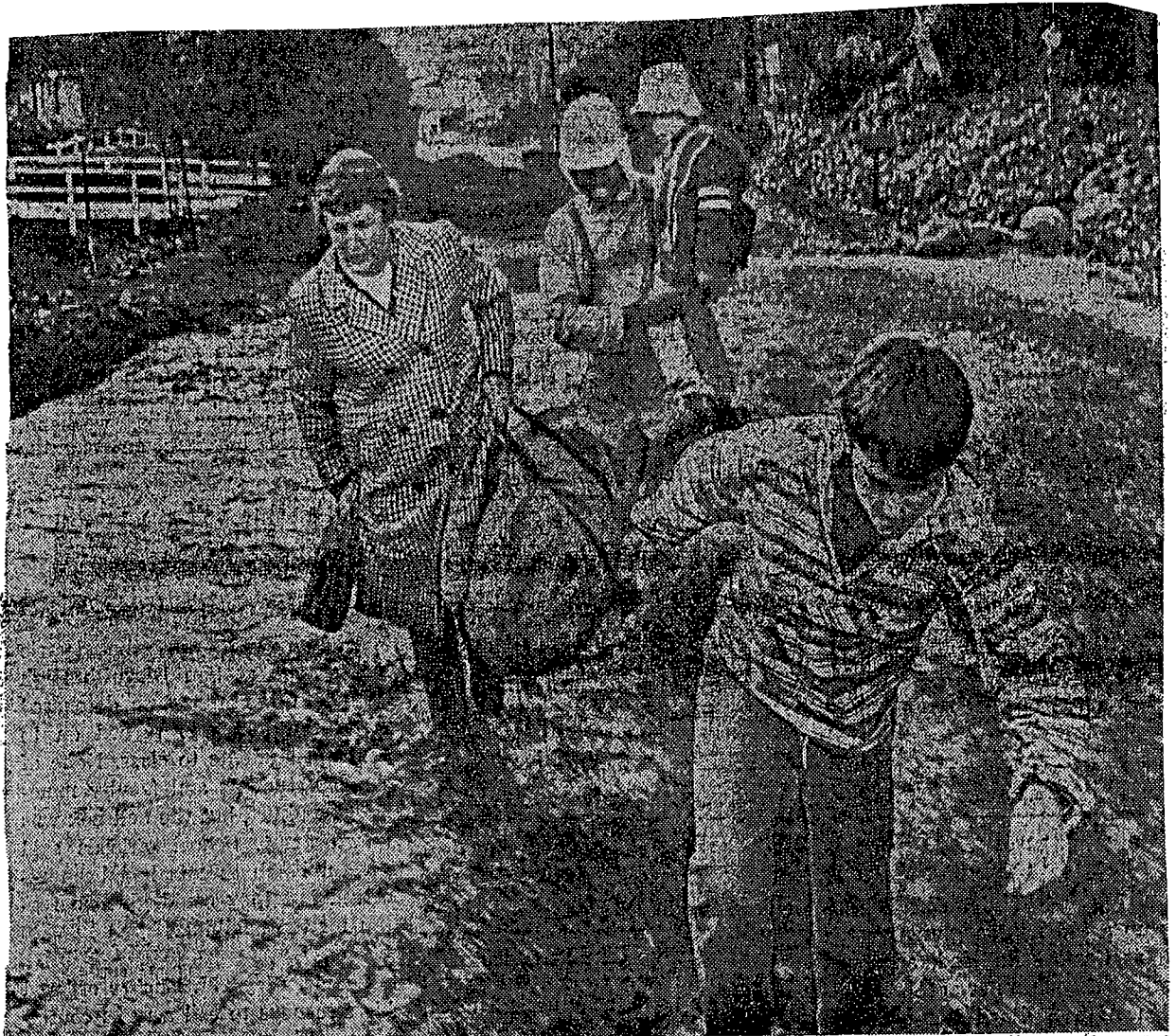
truck. This picture was taken from big street maintenance department truck that had made its way up canyon. (Evening Outlook Photo by G. Robert Smith.)

THURSDAY, JAN. 30, 1969

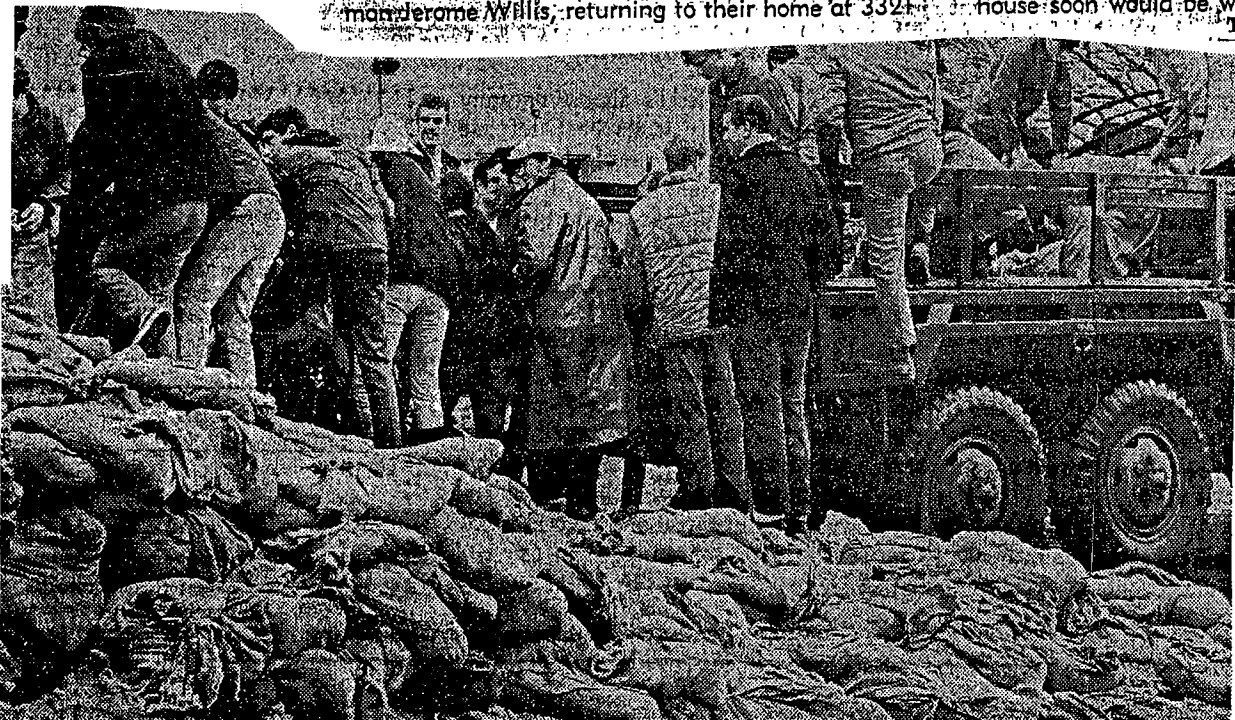


### *Clean-Up In The Rain*

A big street maintenance truck carrying debris from further up swashes down only lane left of Mandeville Canyon roadway in 3100 block. More rain was falling on stricken area when this picture was taken.



**THE ROAD BACK**—Mrs. Peter Sargent and sons Sam, in foreground, and Peter, carried by manderone Willis, returning to their home at 3321 Mandeville Canyon Road. The Sargent family had left during the rainstorm Saturday night, fearing the house soon would be without electricity and water. Times photo by Frank Q. Brown



### **Sandbags--Hundreds Of 'Em**

Volunteers help load sandbags brought by National Guard to Paul Ravara Jr. High School in Pacific Palisades. Teams of volunteers then went up Mandeville

Canyon with bags to block flood waters from damaging more homes in stricken canyon. (Evening Outlook Photo by Moses Armstrong.)

# Mudslides Claim Nine Victims in One Day

Nine persons died in mudslides Saturday as the number of dead and missing rose in the wake of the worst Southern California flooding since 1938.

Twelve other persons have lost their lives in traffic accidents since the second consecutive storm began Thursday.

One person drowned in raging flood waters and five others were reported missing.

In the first phase of the storm, which began last Saturday, 47 persons lost their lives in storm-related accidents, including three in a plane crash and one of a heart attack. It has rained for eight straight days.

## Mudslide Victims

Killed in mudslides were:

Neil B. Slater, 60, and Minnie Richardson, 63, both of Lexington, Ky., buried in mud at the home of Mrs. Slater's daughter at 30418 Buckingham Road, Glendale. Both women were sleeping when they were trapped in the mudslide.

Robert Adler, 55, caught in a mudslide in his hillside home at 15421 Deerhorn Road, Sherman Oaks.

Concetta Milano, 41, found dead in her mud-filled bedroom in her home at 3837 Sherview Drive, Sherman Oaks.

Joe Gonzales, 2, and his brother, Steve, 10 months, killed when a hillside collapsed and poured five feet of mud into their two-

bedroom home at 1279 El Paso Drive, Highland Park. Their mother, Mrs. John Gonzalez, was seriously injured.

Michael Riordan, 41, chairman of the board of Equity Fund of Beverly Hills, killed when mud crushed his \$100,000 home at 2077 Mandeville Canyon Road, Brentwood.

Mrs. Winifred Telford, 61, a visitor from England, was smothered in mud in the bedroom at the home of a friend on Coombs Road in Thousand Oaks when a hillside behind the house gave way.

## Unidentified Man

An unidentified man near the 860 block of Old Topanga Canyon Road, Topanga.

The drowning victim was:

An unidentified man who was found floating in the rain-swollen Cucamonga Wash in Upland in San Bernardino County.

## Missing were:

Michael Hetrick, 11, of 164 Claremont Ave., Hacienda Heights, who was swept into the raging storm waters of San Jose Creek in the City of Industry after falling into a flood control channel.

A woman tentatively identified as Mrs. Gale Gordon, and her two children, a boy, 3, and a girl, 5. Their home at 539 Creek Trail in Topanga Canyon was destroyed in a mudslide and washed away.



**BRIDGE OUT**—Flood waters overran and almost obliterated this Mandeville Canyon Road bridge making it hazardous to cross, but a similar bridge, below, which also crosses the creek, is high and dry two days after rain. There is still opposition from residents to install storm drain.

Times photos

## Brentwood Tragedy

# Bay Man Dies In Sea Of Mud

By DAVE BERMAN

Evening Outlook Staff Writer

Death in the form of an avalanche of black, oozing mud came to Mandeville Canyon Friday.

Michael Riordan suffocated to death while firemen were attempting to save him in a mudslide at his home at 2077 Mandeville Canyon Road, Brentwood.

Riordan, 41, chairman of the board of a Beverly Hills mutual fund firm, was trapped when a mudslide caved in the south wall of his two-story home and

shoved him, in his bed, vertically against a wall.

As six of the firemen worked frantically to rescue him, another slide slammed into the house bowling over the rescuers and burying Riordan. Other firefighters worked quickly to extricate the seven rescuers, but Riordan was dead when he was removed about 10 minutes later.

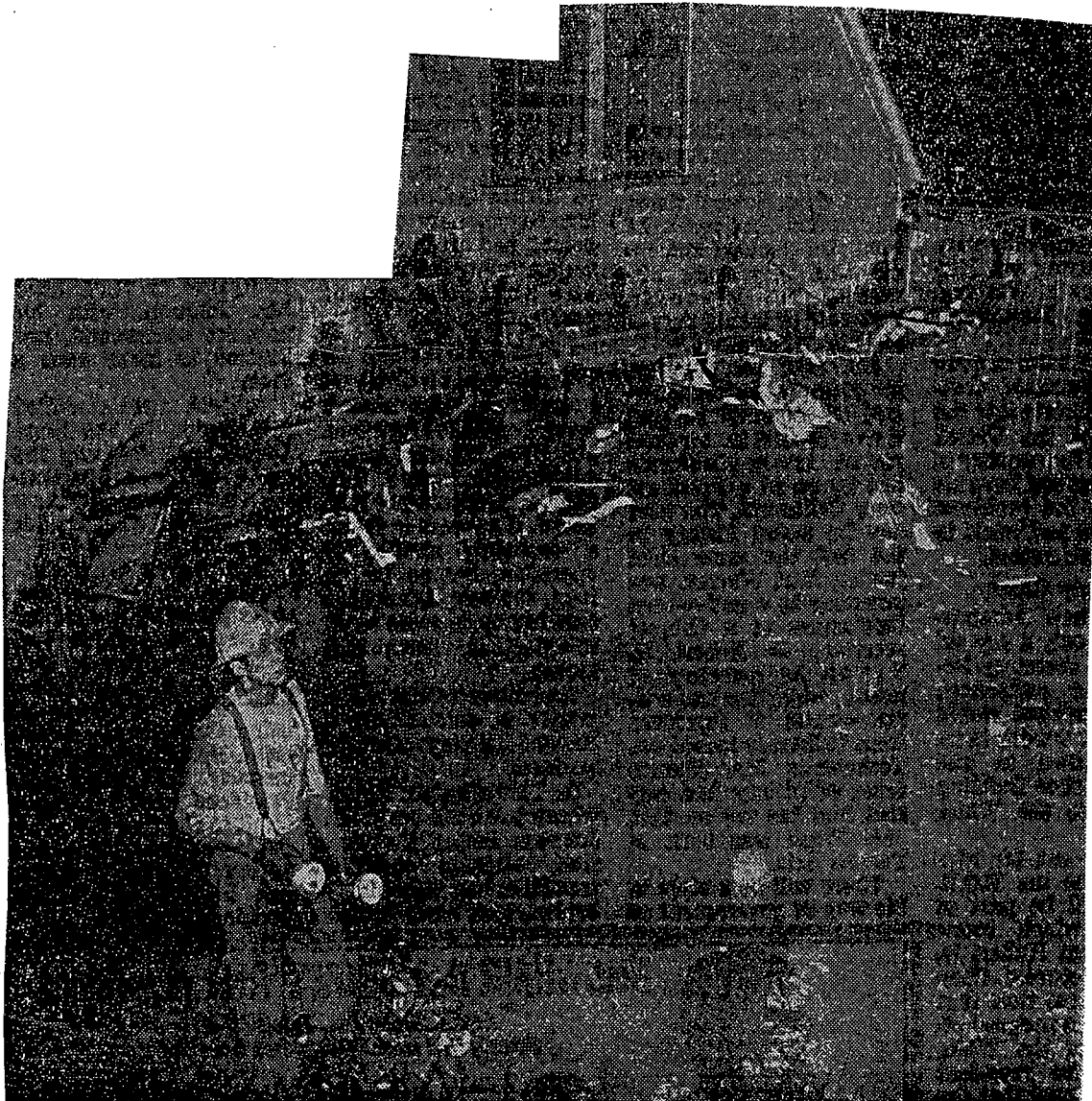
The second slide had sheared off a gas meter, according to reports, and, as fireman William J. Tannahill went to shut off the

main, a third slide slammed Tannahill through the outside across a room and through a partition inside house, and finally deposited him in a bathroom.

Tannahill suffered cuts and bruises.

Captain Charles F. Ler suffered fractures in the rescue operation. Fireman William J. Tannahill sustained a broken leg. Three other rescuers suffered cuts and bruises, as a

Turn To Page 2



**MUD BREAKS THROUGH WALL**—Mud went through the rear of this 2077 Mandeville Canyon. The owner of the home was killed and fireman

## Service Held For Canyon Slide Victim

Requiem Mass. was recited today for Michael R. Riordan, 41, who was killed Friday when a mudslide destroyed his home at 2077 Mandeville Canyon Rd.

Services for Riordan, board chairman of Equity Funding Corp. of America, were held at St. Martin of Tours Catholic Church in Brentwood.

Riordan suffocated to death Friday when he was engulfed in a second mudslide while firemen were attempting to dig him out of an earlier one. Six firemen were injured in the second slide.

His wife, Jacqueline, and their three children, Michael Jr., 13, Carol, 11, and David, 8, were in another part of the house and were not injured.



**INJURED FIREMAN**—City firemen aid Bill Tannahill of Engine Co. 19, who was injured attempting to save owner of home in photo below, who was killed.  
Times photo by George R. Fry

## Flood Victims

# Canyon Family Still Roughing It

By DAVE BERMAN  
Evening Outlook Staff Writer

The Jesse Franks are "roughing it" these days.

Their home at 2969 Mandeville Canyon Road, Brentwood, was almost completely destroyed by mudslides last January and the long trip back to normal living conditions is still far from over.

The drainage ditch overflowed Jan. 25 and sent a rush of water three feet high into the house. Furniture and personal belongings were destroyed or washed away. Glass doors were shattered, rugs, floors, the plaster in the walls were ru-

ined. Mud was everywhere—even in the oven.

With the help of hundreds of teen-age neighbors and the Watts Action Corps, the mounds of mud were removed and the few salvageable items stored in friends' homes.

The Franks went to live on a friend's yacht, harbored in the Marina Del Rey, for six weeks. Then they stayed in a motel for awhile.

Finally, two weeks ago, they decided to come home and contend with it all.

They brought two beds,



'What A Job!' Mrs. Franks Seems To Think



# Canyon Family 'Roughs It' Following Storm

Continued From Page 13

two chairs and a television set. Neighbors loaned them dishes, pots and pans and silverware.

## Rebuild Home

Inside the home, dozens of cans of paint lie stacked in the middle of the floor. The walls all had to be replastered from the floor up three feet. And painted, naturally.

Woodwork had to be refinished. All the doors, including ones on closets, had to be replaced. A new linoleum floor had to be laid. Glass doors still have sponge stickers on them they are so new.

Two and a half months after the tragedy, the Franks are still feeling its consequences.

About \$30,000 worth.

Mrs. Frank estimates it will be at least another two months before the house is back in livable shape.

## 'Doing Fine'

"We're doing fine," she said wanly.

Each day is a new adventure, with new people to meet—painters, paper-hangers, carpet layers, men

who will regrade the yard, install the sprinkler system, plant some flowers.

New things are being found still in the mud. A week ago the Franks unearthed an antique ame-

thyst pendant purchased in Lisbon. ("I never thought I'd find that," Mrs. Frank said.) Dr. Frank, an Inglewood pathologist, found his wedding band the previous day.

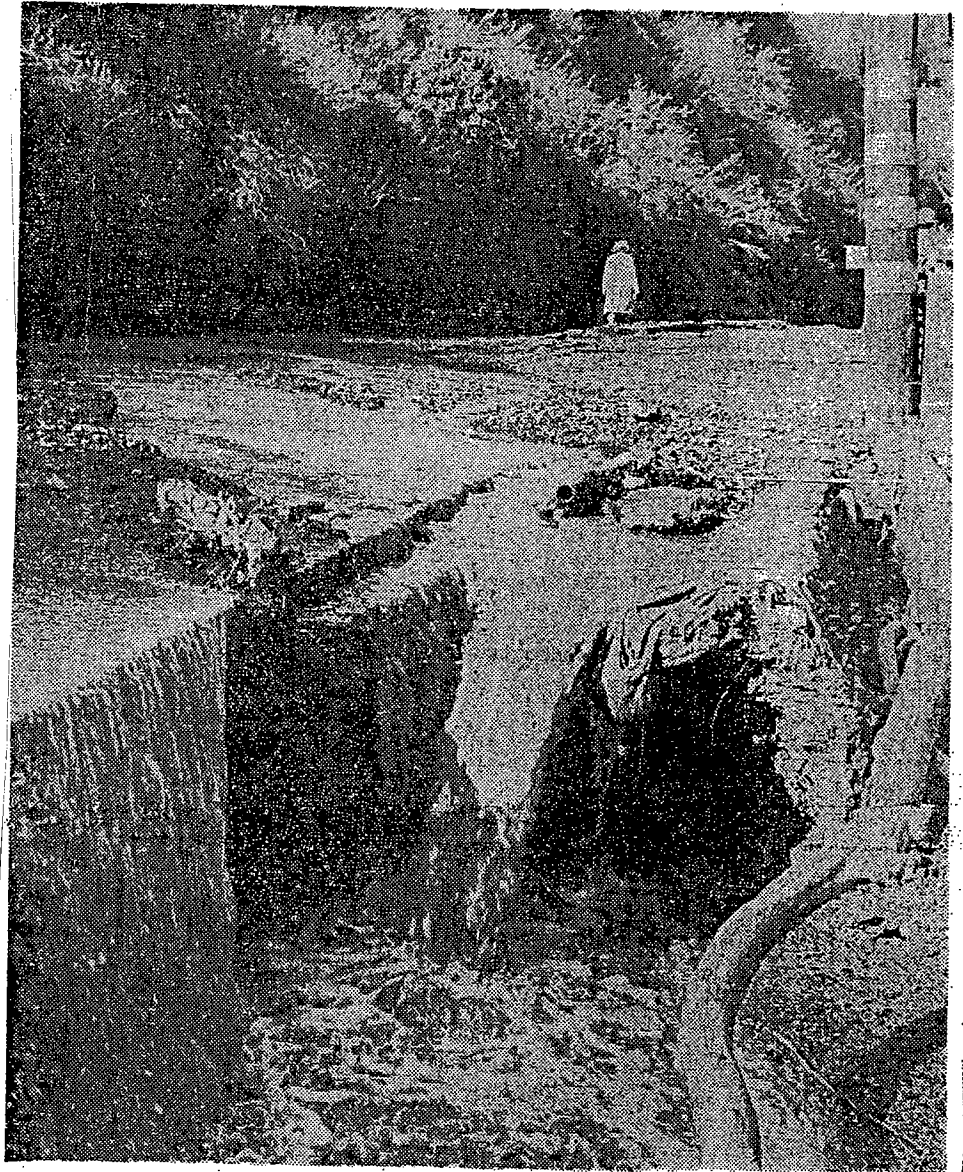
So the Franks go about the business of rebuilding a home and refurbishing it, like newlyweds, with a lifetime's collection of household goods and memorabilia.



Still Time To Laugh



Once A Devastating River



**WITH CAUTION**—Fugitive from Mandeville Canyon flood zone walks carefully in center of channel, avoids danger of deluge. Staff Photo by Peter Banks