

Table at Ss. Peter and Paul convent floated to near ceiling and returned to floor, settings in place.

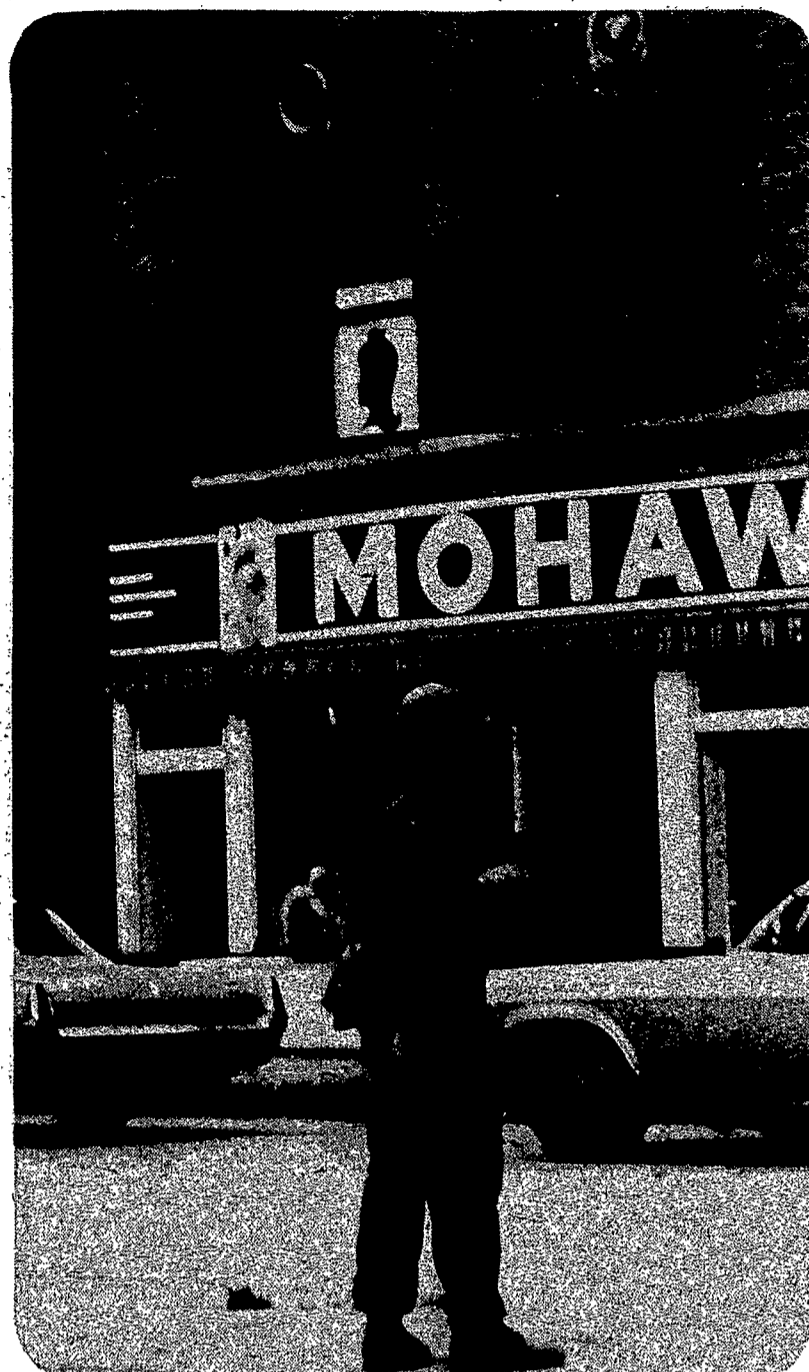


Photo by Anthony J. Costello

Uniform of day included fixed bayonets in Elmira.

## Strange Things Happen

By CARMEN VIGLUCCI

Every flood, or any other natural catastrophe, that ever happens in the Southern Tier from now on undoubtedly will be compared to this year's, which will be talked about for generations to come. And many of the stories will be about the offbeat happenings generated by the flood waters.

For instance, at Ss. Peter and Paul convent, a dining room table fully set with china, silverware, glasses and flower decor apparently floated neatly atop the several feet of water inundating the dining room and settled back neatly in place when the water receded, everything as it was.

In Elmira Southside we asked Mrs. Jane Osborne whose house that was leaning against her sister's house on Campbell Street.

"I have no idea," she said matter of factly, "when we came back after the flood, there it was."

And one of the eeriest sights must have been at the Elmira Burial Case Co. where a 125-pound casket floated out the door, around vehicles in the parking lot before coming to rest. When opened it was completely dry inside.

Father Robert Kanka of Ss. Peter and Paul, one of the most devastated churches, told of watching the water creep up from the river towards the rectory.

"At first it didn't seem too worrisome," he said. "We were evacuating about 6:15 a.m. Friday to go to St. Joseph's Hospital across the street. But it sure

picked up. We watched from the hospital and could see it rising. By about 11 a.m., there was 11 feet of water in the streets."

A workman told about a horse in Big Flats which climbed atop a five-foot fire wall and still had to raise his head full length to stay above the water. The animal survived.

And speaking of Big Flats, the supervisor announced over the emergency radio network that there was up to "three feet of gasoline" in some streams there. The area was blocked off because of the danger.

We talked to one of the crewmen from Buffalo's Elmwood Tank Cleaning Co. who were trying to clean the streams and pump out the fields.

He said some gasoline was involved but that it was mostly fuel oil and amounted to about two inches. Still plenty dangerous.

St. Cecilia's Church is about two miles from the river and seemed like a safe place, so some of the first evacuees were brought there.

Father Edward J. Foy, administrator of St. Cecilia's as well as new pastor at Ss. Peter and Paul, told of going to the store and buying plenty of sandwich meat and bread but the water very quickly got to his church (eventually reaching a height of four feet) and the evacuees had to move on to the greater safety of Diven School. The food went with them.

And speaking of Father Foy, how about this for luck? Just a week before, he was appointed pastor of Ss. Peter and Paul and one of his duties as pastor was to assess flood damage. And it

was significant at Ss. Peter and Paul.

"But at St. Cecilia's it's not too bad," said Father Foy. "Some damage in the basement but water didn't get into the church itself."

It was understandable the streets had to be guarded by Army Reserves — but with fixed bayonets?

And there was a young man who had left Florida just before Hurricane Agnes struck there and had been bragging about his good fortune. That was before he arrived in Corning last week.



Photo by Anthony J. Costello

Wayne McLaud of Elmira Burial Case Co. examines interior of casket which floated into parking lot.



Mrs. Jane Osborne doesn't know where that house came from. It landed alongside her sister's in Elmira Southside.