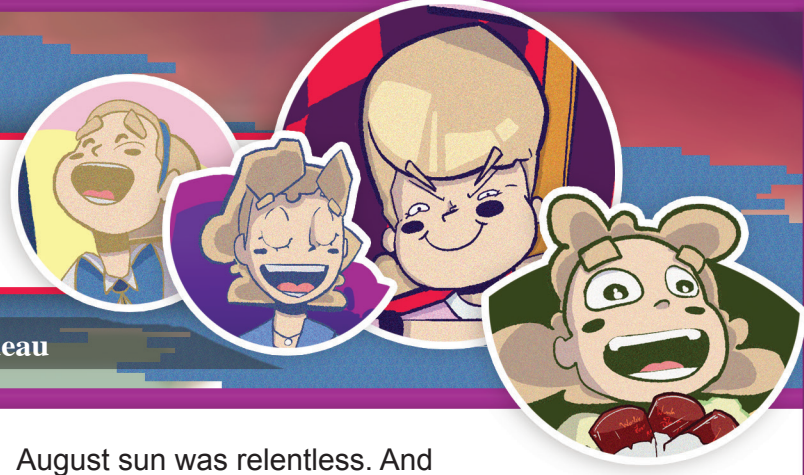


Generations of Missouri

Written by Carolyn Mueller | Illustrated by Philip Goudeau



Floods Chapter Eight

Barbara, age 47 & Lauren, age 16 | 1993

Lauren's alarm clock went off at 6 am. It was a summer Saturday, but Lauren was now up.

Her mother, Barbara, poked her head into the room. "Wear old clothes," she reminded Lauren. "I packed a cooler full of cold bandanas to wear around our necks."

This was the last thing Lauren wanted to do today. She'd rather sleep in and go to the pool. But her mom insisted they go to Ste. Genevieve to sandbag. Sandbagging did not sound fun. Lauren grew up in St. Louis. But she'd never thought much about either the Missouri or the Mississippi Rivers. She'd been to the Arch and watched fireworks on the riverfront, but the rivers had never impacted her life. This summer, though, lots of snowmelt from up North combined with rain here had created a disaster. Both of the rivers were flooding! Homes were being swept away. Towns were flooded. Farmers were losing crops.

As Lauren and her mom arrived in Ste. Genevieve, they were appalled to see the brick town square flooded. The river was so close to breaching the levee that Barbara had volunteered herself and Lauren to be sandbaggers.

"Thanks for coming!" the coordinator said. "The sand and bags are over there. Fill the bags with sand, then throw them in the wheelbarrows. See where we're stacking them?"

Lauren stared at a massive line of sandbags piled up along the swollen river. Volunteers were hoisting bag after bag, buttressing the levee.

Lauren's family traditionally witnessed and participated in making history, but this was on another level.

Ten minutes into sandbagging and Lauren dripped with sweat. The chilled bandannas helped, but the

August sun was relentless. And sand was heavy. They joined into the repetitive work of filling, then throwing sandbags into the wheelbarrow, alongside other volunteers from all walks of life. All the while, the river lapped at the sandbag wall. Lauren was one of the youngest, but she was an athlete, and she kept up.

Many hours and sandbags later, the crew called it quits. Lauren knew her arms and back would be sore tomorrow.

Across the street, there were folding tables lined with tin platters of food.

"Thank you all for your help!" an older woman called. "Come eat!"

Lauren and Barb loaded their plates and sat on the curb for a well-earned dinner.

"Thank you all for coming. That's my house there," she said, nodding to a bungalow across the street. "I've lived there for fifty years. If the river reaches it..."

she trailed off while dabbing her eyes. Lauren

looked to the river, then back toward the house. "Mom," Lauren said as they walked to their car. "Let's come help again next Saturday."

Barb nodded proudly as they began their drive home.



NEWSPAPER CONNECTIONS

Using the facts in this story, write an article describing the story with a strong lead sentence and include the 5 Ws and 1 H: who, what, where, when, why and how.