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Page 1 of 4 The Johnstown Flood David McCullough, 1968Simon & Schuster304 p. ISBN-13: 9780671207144SummaryAt the end of the last century, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, was a booming coal and steel town full of hard-working families seeking a slice of the country's burgeoning industrial prosperity. In the mountains above Johnstown, an old earth dam had been hastily rebuilt to create a lake for an exclusive summer resort patronised by the tycoons of the same industrial prosperity, including Andrew Carnegie, Henry Clay Frick, and Andrew Mellon. Despite repeated warnings of possible dangers, nothing was done about the dam. Then came May 31, 1889, when the dam burst and a wall of water thundered down the mountain, smashing through Johnstown, killing more than 2,000 people. It was a tragedy that became a national scandal. The Johnstown Flood is a captivating, classic portrait of 19th-century life in 19th-century America, of exuberant trust, energy and tragedy. It also offers a strong historical lesson for our century and all times: the danger that people, because they are in positions of responsibility, will necessarily behave responsibly. The bestselling author of *The Path Between the Seas* and *Mornings on Horseback* re-presents his classic chronicle of the tragic flood of Johnstown, Pennsylvania in 1889. (From the editor.) Marilyn U. reviews *THE JOHNSTOWN FLOOD* by David McCullough (Simon and Schuster, 1968) David McCullough has written a thoroughly researched book documenting the Johnstown Flood in Pennsylvania. The author is able to keep the reader's attention by telling stories of survivors. I loved reading this compelling story. Readers of this book will recognize two things: a 70-foot wall of water is a powerful force, and one of nature's most destructive forces is a flood. When a wall of water and flooding was combined by man-made dams, one of the biggest disasters occurred in the United States. On May 1, 1889, the town of Johnstown was wiped out by a dam burst. In *The Johnstown Flood*, author David McCullough examined the construction of the South Fork Dam, its maintenance, and eventually its collapse, which led to the destruction of Johnstown and a nationwide response to more than 2,000 deaths. Marilyn U., Staff WOW - what a book. I really liked it, although it was extremely hard to read. The Johnstown Flood (local, the Great Flood of 1889) occurred on May 31, 1889, after the catastrophic failure of the South Fork Dam on the Little Conemaugh River 23 km upstream of the town of Johnstown, Pennsylvania. The dam broke after several days of extremely heavy rains and released 14.55 million cubic meters of water. With a volume trumtrig which temporarily corresponded to the average flow rate of the WOW - what a book. I really liked it, although it was extremely hard to read. The Johnstown Johnstown It was the 1889 fall of the South Fork Dam on the Little Conemaugh River, 23 km upstream of The city of Johnstown, Pennsylvania. The dam broke after several days of extremely heavy rains and released 14.55 million cubic meters of water. At a volume flow rate that was temporarily the average flow rate of the Mississippi River, 2,209 people lost their lives, according to a report, and the flood caused 17 million U.S. dollars in damage - about 463 million dollars in 2017. The American Red Cross, led by Clara Barton and with 50 volunteers, undertook a major disaster response. Support for the victims came from the United States and 18 countries. After the flood, surviving survivors suffered a series of legal defeats in their attempts to get damage from the dam's owners. Public outrage at this failure led to the development of American law transforming a fault-based regime into strict liability. On May 1, 1889, a depression formed over Nebraska and Kansas. By the time this pattern reached western Pennsylvania two days later, it had become what would be called the heaviest rainfall event ever recorded in that part of the United States. The U.S. Army Signal Corps estimated that 6 to 10 inches (150 to 250 mm) of rain fell over the region in 24 hours. [10] During the night, small streams became raging streams that tore down trees and debris. Telegraph lines were torn down and railway lines washed away. Before dawn, the Conemaugh River, which ran through Johnstown, was overpowering its banks. On the morning of May 31, Elias Unger, president of the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club, woke up in a farmhouse on a hill above South Fork Dam after a night of heavy rain. Unger ran outside in the still pouring rain to assess the situation and saw that the water almost washed over the dam. He quickly assembled a group of men to save the face of the dam by trying to unplug the spill; it was blocked by the broken fish trap and debris caused by the swollen waterline. Other men tried to dig a ditch at the other end of the dam, on the western abutment, which was lower than the dam ridge. The idea was to release more water from the lake to try to prevent an overtone of the ridge, but to no avail. Most stayed on the dam, some plowing soil to lift them, while others tried to stack mud and rocks on their faces to save the eroding wall. John Parke, an engineer for the South Fork Club, briefly considered cutting through the end of the dam where the pressure would be lower, but decided against it as it would ensure the dam's failure Twice, on the orders of Unger, Parke rode to the Telegraph office in the nearby town of South Fork to warn Johnstown to explain the critical nature of the eroding dam. However, the warnings have not been sent to the in the city, as there had been many false alarms in the past, where the South Fork Dam was not kept against flooding. Unger, Parke and the rest of the men continued to work until they were exhausted to save the face of the dam; They gave up their efforts around 1:30 p.m. because they feared that their efforts were in vain and that the dam was imminent. Unger ordered all his men to fall back on either side of the dam, where they could only wait. During the day, the situation in Johnstown worsened when the water in the streets rose up to 3.0 m high and trapped some people in their homes. Between 2:50 p.m. and 2:55 p.m., the South Fork Dam broke. [13] A LIDAR analysis of the Conemaugh Lake Basin shows that it contained 14.55 million cubic meters (3.843 billion gallons) of water when the dam collapsed. Modern dam-breaking computer modeling shows that it took about 65 minutes for most of the lake to empty after the dam began to fail. The first city to be hit by the flood was South Fork. The city was on a high ground, and most people escaped by running up the nearby hills when they saw the dam overflowing. About 20 to 30 homes were destroyed or washed away, and four people were killed. On the way downstream to Johnstown, 23 km west, the water picked up debris such as trees, houses and animals. At the Conemaugh Viaduct, a 24-metre-high railway bridge, the tide was briefly contained when the debris piled up against the arch of the stone bridge. But within seven minutes, the viaduct collapsed, causing the tide to run. However, due to the delay at the stone arch, the flood received a renewed hydraulic head, which led to a stronger, more abrupt wave of water, which hit the river basins than would otherwise have been expected. The small town of Mineral Point, 1.6 km below the Conemaugh Viaduct, was the first populated place to be hit by this renewed force. About 30 families lived in the only street of the village. After the flood there were no structures, no upper floor, no underbody – only the bedrock remained. The death toll here was about 16. In 2009, studies showed that the flow rate of flooding through the narrow valley exceeded 420,000 cubic feet per second (12,000 m3/s), comparable to the flow rate of the Mississippi River in its delta, which varies between 250,000 and 710,000 cubic meters (7,000 and 20,000 m3/s). The village of East Conemaugh was next. A high-level witness near the city described the water as almost covered in debris, similar to a huge hill that rolls over and over again. [14] The engineer John Hess heard and felt the rumbling of the approaching locomotive in the city's railway yard. With his locomotive in reverse, Hess raced backwards towards East Conemaugh, the whistle constantly blowing. His warning saved many people who reached high altitudes. When the tide struck, she picked up the locomotive and pushed it aside; Hess Hess At least 50 people died, including about 25 passengers stranded on trains in the city. Before hitting the main part of Johnstown, the tidal wave hit the Cambria Iron Works in the town of Woodvale and swept railroad carriages and barbed wire into its moil. Of the 1,100 people in Woodvale, 314 died in the flood. Boilers exploded as the tide hit the Gaultier Wire Works, causing black smoke seen by Johnstown residents. For miles, his barbed wire became tangled in the rubble of the floodwaters. About 57 minutes after the South Fork Dam collapsed, the flood hit Johnstown. Residents were surprised when the water and debris wall pierced, travelling at 64 km/h and reaching an altitude of 18 m in places. Some people who recognized the danger tried to escape by running towards the highlands, but most people were hit by the rising floodwaters. Many people were crushed by debris, others were caught and/or drowned in barbed wire from the wire factory upstream. Those who reached attics or managed to stay afloat on floating debris waited for hours for help to get in. A contemporary rendition of the scene at Stone Bridge (1890)In Johnstown, the Stone Bridge, which was a significant vaulted structure, carried the Pennsylvania Railroad over the Conemaugh River. The debris carried by the flood formed a makeshift dam at the bridge, causing the tidal wave to roll upstream along the Stoney Creek River. Eventually, gravity caused the wave to return to the dam, causing a second wave to hit the city, but from a different direction. Some people washed downstream were caught in an inferno when the debris piling up against the stone bridge caught fire; at least 80 people died there. The fire at the stone bridge burned for three days. After the flooding receded, the pile of debris was seen on the bridge to cover 30 hectares and reached a height of 21 m. It took the workers three months to clear the debris, partly due to the large amount of steel barbed wire from the ironworks. Dynamite was eventually used. The stone bridge, which is still used as a railway bridge, is a landmark associated with survival and recovery from the flood. In 2008 it was restored in a project with new lighting as part of memorial measures related to the flood. The total death toll was originally calculated at 2,209 people, making the disaster the largest loss of civilian life in the United States at the time. This number of deaths was later caused by the death toll from the 1900 Galveston hurricane and terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. However, as David McCullough noted in 1968 (pages 266 and 278), a man who was reported dead (not known to be found) had survived. In 1900, Leroy Temple showed up in Johnstown to reveal that he had not died, but had freed himself from the flood debris at the stone bridge below Johnstown and from the Temple lived in Beverly, Massachusetts until 1900. As a result, the official death toll was 2,208. Ninety-nine families died in the flood, including 396 children, 124 women and 198 men were widowed, 98 children were orphans. A third of the dead, 777 people, were never identified; Her remains were found in the Plot of the Unknown at Grandview Cemetery in Westmont. It was the worst flood to hit the United States in the 19th century. Sixteen hundred homes were destroyed, usd 17 million in property damage was claimed (approximately USD 497 million in 2016) and 10 km2 of downtown Johnstown was completely destroyed. The clean-up has been going on for years. Although Cambria Iron and Steel's plants were badly damaged, they returned to full production within a year and a half. [1] For seven days and nights, workers built a wooden trestle bridge to temporarily replace the huge Steiner Railway Viaduct, which had been destroyed by the flood. The Pennsylvania Railroad was reopened to Pittsburgh, 89 km away, until June 2. Food, clothing, medicines and other supplies arrived by train. Morticians travelled by train. Johnstown's first call for help called for coffins and funeral businesses. Demolition expert Dynamite Bill Flinn and his 900-strong crew cleared the wreckage at the stone bridge. They mapped debris, distributed food and set up makeshift shelters. At its peak, the army of aid workers amounted to about 7,000. One of the first outsiders to arrive was Clara Barton, nurse, founder and president of the American Red Cross. [1] Barton arrived on June 5, 1889, to lead the group's first major disaster relief effort, she did not go more than 5 months. Donations for the relief effort came from across the United States and overseas. USD 3,742,818.78 was raised for the Johnstown relief effort from the US and 18 countries, including Russia, Turkey, France, the United Kingdom, Australia and Germany. Frank Shomo, the last known survivor of the 1889 flood, died on March 20, 1997, at the age of 108. My personal feeling is that McCullough is one of the best historical literary writers of all time. I went from being a person who was terrible in my course of history to someone who quite liked it. There are a number of places that can be researched for my review of this book. A favorite book my family had when I was very young was called *Heart Throbs*, which was a compilation of poems, stories and quotes from many different people (like 500), then they were put into an issue every two years. My sister and I both remembered a story about Johnstown called *A Mother in the Johnstown Flood*. When I burst the tears from my face Book wiped, they were a family of hundreds. Very moving. I HIGHLY RECOMMEND! ... More... More

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