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**Francis J. "Dr. Mike" Michelini, 1955 - 1975
Professor Emeritus and President Emeritus**

The Economist

SEPTEMBER 2ND-8TH 2017

State-sponsored quackery in China

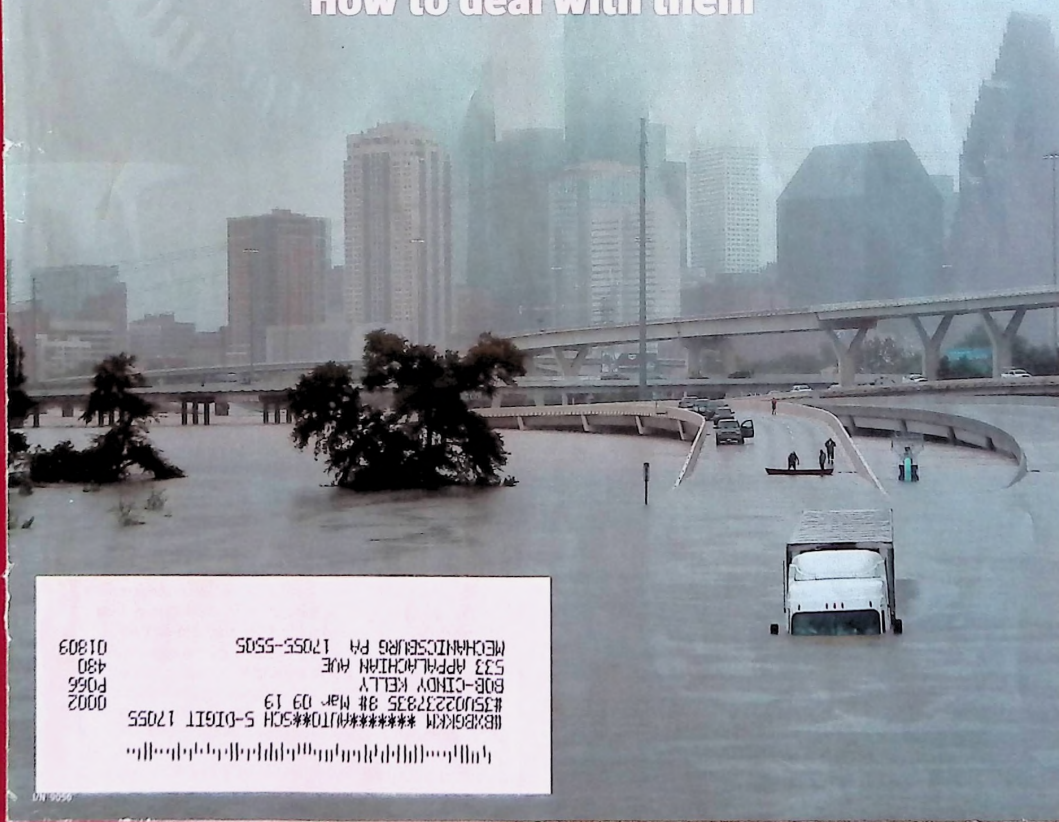
Guatemala's unfunny president

America's biggest private firm opens up

When Ponzi schemes make sense

Floods

How to deal with them



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How to cope with floods

The to-do list goes far beyond getting to grips with climate change



RING COMMAND BEZEL



ANNUAL CALENDAR

sixth day, Hurricane Harvey had already set records as America's most severe deluge (see briefing). In Houston it drenched Harris County in over 4.5trn litres of water in just 100 hours—enough rainfall to cover an eight-year-old child.

The fate of America's fourth-largest city holds the world's attention, but it is hardly alone. In India, Bangladesh and Nepal, at least 1,200 people have died and millions have been left homeless by this year's monsoon floods. Last month torrential rains caused a mudslide in Sierra Leone that killed over 1,000—though the exact toll will never be known. Around the world, governments are grappling with the threat from floods. This will ultimately be about dealing with climate change. Just as important, is correcting short-sighted government policy and the perverse incentives that make flooding worse.

Judgment day

The overwhelming good news is that storms and flooding have caused far fewer deaths in recent decades, thanks to better warning systems and the construction of levees, ditches and shelters. The cyclone that struck Bangladesh in 1970 killed 300,000-500,000 people; the most recent severe one, in 2007, killed 4,234. The bad news is that storms and floods still account for almost three-quarters of weather-related disasters, and they are becoming more common. According to the Munich Re, a reinsurer, their number around the world has increased from about 200 in 1980 to over 600 last year. Harvey was the third "500-year" storm to strike Houston since 1979.

At the same time, floods and storms are also becoming more costly. By one estimate, three times as many people were living in houses threatened by hurricanes in 2010 as in 1970, and the number is expected to grow as still more people move to coastal cities. The UN reckons that, in the 20 years to 2015, storms and floods caused \$1.7trn of destruction; the World Health Organisation estimates that, in real terms, the global cost of hurricane damage is rising by 6% a year. Flood losses in Europe are predicted to increase fivefold by 2050.

One cause is global warming. The frequency and severity of hurricanes vary naturally—America has seen unusually few in the past decade. Yet the underlying global trend is what you would expect from climate change. Warmer seas evaporate faster and warmer air can hold more water vapour, which releases energy when it condenses inside a weather system, feeding the violence of storms and the intensity of deluges. Rising sea levels, predicted to be especially marked in the Gulf of Mexico, exacerbate storm surges, adding to the flooding. Harvey was unusually devastating because it suddenly gained strength before it made landfall on Friday; it then stayed put, dumping its rain on Houston before returning to the Gulf.

Again, that is consistent with models of a warmer world.

Poor planning bears even more blame. Houston, which has almost no restrictions on land-use, is an extreme example of what can go wrong. Although a light touch has enabled developers to cater to the city's rapid growth—1.8m extra inhabitants since 2000—it has also led to concrete being laid over vast areas of coastal prairie that used to absorb the rain. According to the Texas Tribune and ProPublica, a charity that finances investigative journalism, since 2010 Harris County has allowed more than 8,600 buildings to be put up inside 100-year floodplains, where floods have a 1% chance of occurring in any year. Developers are supposed to build ponds to hold run-off water that would have soaked into undeveloped land, but the rules are poorly enforced. Because the maps are not kept up to date, properties supposedly outside the 100-year floodplain are being flooded repeatedly.

Government failure adds to the harm. Developing countries are underinsured against natural disasters. Swiss Re, a reinsurer, says that of the \$50bn or so of losses to floods, cyclones and other disasters in Asia in 2014, only 8% were covered. The Bank of International Settlements calculates that the worst natural catastrophes typically permanently lower the afflicted country's GDP by almost 2%. America has the opposite problem—the federal government subsidises the insurance premiums of vulnerable houses. The National Flood Insurance Programme (NFIP) has been forced to borrow because it fails to charge enough to cover its risk of losses. Underpricing encourages the building of new houses and discourages existing owners from renovating or moving out. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, houses that repeatedly flood account for 1% of NFIP's properties but 25-30% of its claims. Five states, Texas among them, have more than 10,000 such households and, nationwide, their number has been going up by around 5,000 each year. Insurance is meant to provide a signal about risk; in this case, it stifles it.

Mend the roof while the sun shines

What to do? Flooding strengthens the case for minimising climate change, which threatens to make wet places wetter and storms stormier. Even those who doubt the science would do well to see action as an insurance policy that pays out if the case is proven. However, that will not happen fast, even if all countries, including America, sign up to international agreements. More immediately, therefore, politicians can learn from Houston. Cities need to protect flood defences and catchment areas, such as the wetlands around Kolkata and the lakes in and around Pokhara in Nepal, whose value is becoming clear. Flood maps need to be up to date. Civil engineers, often starved of funds and strangled by bureaucracy, should be building and reinforcing levees and reservoirs now, before it is too late. The NFIP should start to charge market premiums and developing countries should sell catastrophe bonds. All this is a test of government, of foresight and the ability to withstand the lobbying of homeowners and developers. But politicians and officials who fail the test need to realise that, sooner or later, they will wake up to a Hurricane Harvey of their own. ■

How to cope with floods

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Briefing Flooding



Submerged

AUSTIN, TEXAS

The unprecedented floods that Hurricane Harvey visited on Houston reflect a worldwide trend

THE images were disorienting, the reports were surreal. Vast swathes of Houston were underwater. The highways that encircle the city had become canals. Colonies of fire ants, having swarmed together, were floating around like rafts of live embers. Alligators appeared, seeking higher ground. At a nursing home south-east of the city, half a dozen women sat in several feet of water. A man caught a fish, by hand, inside his home.

Harvey was the first hurricane of category 3 or above (that is to say, one with wind speeds over 95 knots, or 176km per hour) to hit the United States since 2005, the year Katrina devastated New Orleans—a 12-year hiatus longer than any other in the historical record. It wrought most of its havoc, though, not through the strength of its winds but through the volume of its rains. "The breadth and intensity of this rainfall are beyond anything experienced before," the National Weather Service (NWS) reported. Some weather gauges measured more than 50 inches (127cm) of rainfall between the evening of Thursday August 24th and the afternoon of Tuesday August 29th. If Harvey's rain had been spread over the entire country it would have stood the best part of a centimetre deep.

The Houston floods make Harvey the

most damaging weather event America has experienced since Hurricane Sandy, which walloped New York and New Jersey in 2012. As *The Economist* went to press the number confirmed to have died due to Harvey was just 31, though it is sure to rise. Hurricane Ike, which hit Galveston in 2008, claimed 113. In terms of property damage Harvey could well exceed Ike's \$30 billion.

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A week before Harvey arrived on Texas's Gulf Coast, it was a mere tropical wave—the spectral remains of a storm that had fizzled out in the Caribbean, en route to Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. But then it reorganised itself abruptly and turned north. Sucking energy from the warm waters of the Gulf, it became a fully fledged hurricane on August 24th.

The next day the NWS was warning, accurately, that "Harvey's forecast path is slow and meandering, meaning a long duration flood threat with catastrophic results." In Corpus Christi, the city closest to the hurricane's projected point of landfall, the mayor, Joe McComb, encouraged residents to evacuate voluntarily. The mayor of Houston, Sylvester Turner, did not. That afternoon the governor of Texas, Greg Abbott, questioned the mayor's decision.

Also in this section

18 A deadly monsoon

19 Ever more frequent

"Even if an evacuation order hasn't been issued by your local official, if you're in an area between Corpus Christi and Houston, you need to strongly consider evacuating," he said at a news conference. "What you don't know, and what nobody else knows right now, is the magnitude of flooding that will be coming."

But that uncertainty was one of the reasons that local officials of both parties agreed with Mr Turner. For most of the cities in the path of the storm, including Houston, a sedentary stoicism seemed the most reasonable response. Two million people live within Houston's city limits. More than 6m live in Harris County and the rest of the greater Houston metropolitan area. And by Friday afternoon, the storm was already bearing down on them. In 2005, when Hurricane Rita was hurtling towards Houston less than a month after Katrina had hit New Orleans, city leaders had ordered an evacuation on similarly short notice, with awful results. More than 100 people died in the attempted exodus and then the hurricane bypassed the city. That experience weighed heavily on the minds of Houston's leaders, as did the fact that Harvey presented a different kind of risk. "We'll have a lot of water," said Ed Emmett, the Harris County Judge, on Friday afternoon. "But it's not the kind of water that

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Monday

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► we would ask people to evacuate from.”

Hours later Harvey made landfall just north-east of Corpus Christi as a category 4 hurricane, with winds of over 110 knots. On Sunday morning Houston—the fourth-largest city in America, 300km away—woke up to catastrophe. The drama of the day was heightened by the fact that so many of the people affected turned to social media to send an SOS. Local officials and law-enforcement officers, similarly, used social media to co-ordinate their response. The tweets and Facebook posts that surfaced throughout the day asking for help were dispatched from a disaster that most Americans had not been expecting and struggled to imagine.

The city of Houston tweeted that emergency operators were overloaded: “If you can shelter in place do so, a few inches in your home is not imminent danger. Only call if in imminent danger.” The chief of police, Art Acevedo, warned people not to get trapped. “Have reports of people getting into attic to escape floodwater,” he noted. “Do not do so unless you have an ax or means to break through onto your roof.”

The sheriff of Harris County, Ed Gonzalez, relayed SOS messages between rescue attempts. “Got to use the kayak to pull out a family of 3 and their 4 cats,” he reported at one point on Sunday afternoon. Mr Emmett, the judge, called on locals with boats to step up. With the roadways flooded, he explained, “We can't wait for assets to come from outside.” Hundreds answered the call.

Their efforts proved crucial over the next few days, as Harvey, having arrived, stayed put. Houston is flat and low-lying; its long-standing opposition to zoning has encouraged development that sprawls over an area larger than several states and pays little heed to the need for drainage. As the rain came down the streets filled up. Water had to be released from the two reservoirs built to cope with such contingencies

into the Buffalo Bayou that runs through the centre of the city. One of them, Addicks Reservoir, overflowed for the first time in its history.

On Tuesday, the sun emerged over Houston, as Harvey continued to meander up the Gulf Coast. City officials warned that the crisis was not yet over; the recovery, certainly, has not yet begun. Tens of thousands had been displaced, all along the Texas coast, to inland cities like Austin and San Antonio; thousands more were still sheltering in Houston, waiting for the waters to recede from their homes.

The damages will be immense, with implications far beyond the Gulf Coast: the ports of Houston, Corpus Christi and Beaumont are among the largest in the country and the region is the heart of the nation's oil and gas industry. By Wednesday morning, more than 3m barrels a day of refining capacity—roughly half of Texas's total—was offline, including America's biggest refinery, in Port Arthur. American petrol prices jumped. Antoine Hall of Columbia University's Centre on Global Energy Policy notes that when Katrina hit New Orleans it was flooding that did most of the lasting damage to refineries. Since then flood readiness has improved, but Harvey's extraordinary rainfall might overwhelm all such preparations.

As state and national officials have already recognised, the recovery from Harvey will take years rather than months. And while rebuilding, Texas will have to confront questions that its leaders have long preferred to avoid. The aftermath of the disaster will reveal whether the state's investments in infrastructure have been commensurate with its pell-mell growth, and whether it has taken appropriate precautions in response to the projected impacts of climate change.

In the meantime, there may be something to say for Houston's spontaneous and largely self-organised response to Har-

vey. The city's approach to disaster relief was, in some respects, alarmingly ad hoc. But thousands of people were rescued as a result. It looks a far cry from Katrina, which led, directly or indirectly, to the deaths of more than 1,800 people, mostly in Louisiana. Roughly a million were displaced; the damage was estimated at \$108bn. And some of its consequences were incalculable. No one was prepared for the levees surrounding New Orleans to break. For days, Americans watched helplessly as people drowned.

The deadliest hurricane in American history, though, was the one that hit Galveston in 1900, in effect wiping it out. Many of its survivors resettled in Houston, which was, at the time, more of a one-horse town. Their descendants, damp as they are, have fared much better. ■

India and Bangladesh

Hard hit

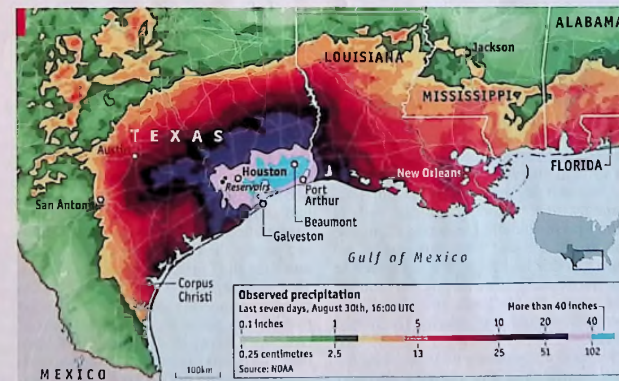
DELHI A below-average monsoon can still prove deadly

WITH the giant Himalayas caging its towering clouds, the great basin where the Brahmaputra merges with the Ganges and Meghna rivers is prone not only to heavy rainfall but also to sudden deluges. Bits of the Indian state of Meghalaya receive over 11 metres (36 feet) of rain a year, making them the wettest places on the planet. Where there is so much water plus so many people—the basin, which covers just 1% of the world's land area, is home to one in ten of its people—flooding is a perpetual hazard. In the thickening heat of every summer the locals greet the monsoon with both relief and trepidation.

This year's monsoon has seen as many as 1,000 Indians killed in floods, half of them in the country's poorest state, Bihar, where 12m people may have abandoned their homes. On August 29th 33cm of rain practically shut down Mumbai; on the 31st a building there collapsed.

In neighbouring Bangladesh, flooding killed more than 144 in August, with some 11m people affected. As much as a third of the country was briefly submerged when waters peaked late in the month. A similar number lost their lives in Nepal.

The region has seen worse. In 2007 floods killed 3,300 people in India and Bangladesh. In 2010 flooding killed 2,100 people in Pakistan, and in 2013 some 6,500 people died due to floods in India. Bangladesh saw catastrophic floods in 1974, 1987, 1988 and 1998, when the capital city, Dhaka, was inundated. In July 2005 Mumbai received almost a metre of rainfall in a single





ubmerged

HE UNPRECEDENTED FLOODS THAT HURRICANE HARVEY VISITED ON HOUSTON REFLECT A WORLDWIDE TREND

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Pushed to extremes

24-hour period.

But the death toll in this year’s floods is still high—even though, according to the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), this summer has been no wetter than the long-term average for rain across northern India. Despite floods in Assam in April, in Gujarat in July, in Bihar in August and most recently in Mumbai, this monsoon’s rainfall is still some 3% below average.

This contrast is part of a pattern. In recent decades the volume of rain brought by the monsoon (which in a typical year provides 85% of all India’s rainfall) has declined; this year’s slightly sub-par affair is being greeted across most of the subcontinent as a welcome return to form after a couple of dry years. At the same time the incidence of short periods of sudden, torrential rain has been increasing, particularly in July and August. A paper published in *Nature Climate Change* in 2014 by researchers at Stanford states that the intensity of extremely wet spells and the frequency of extremely dry spells during the South Asian monsoon season have been increasing since 1980. “We are looking at rainfall extremes that only occur at most a few times a year, but can have very large impact,” says Noah Diffenbaugh of the Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment.

His team found that central India’s average July and August rainfall has fallen from 11cm a day to about 0.9cm a day over the past 60 years. However its day-to-day variability has increased. At some level, these stronger rains may be compensating for an overall weakening of the monsoon.

In Bangladesh, this year’s floods are the most extensive since 1998, when two-thirds of the country was inundated, over 1,000 people died and 30m were affected. More than half a million houses have been destroyed; the overflowing Brahmaputra, locally known as the Jamuna, has washed away embankments and cut train links. Over 6,000 square kilometres of standing

crops have been damaged, and farmers in the north of the country will not be able to replant their paddies. (As ever, Dhaka’s politicians have accused India of not giving them enough notice before releasing floodwater down the more than 50 rivers that flow from India to Bangladesh.)

But loss of life has been limited, in part because of investments in risk management. The defences around Dhaka have held, though the city’s Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre says the level of the Brahmaputra is still threatening embankments south of the capital. Forecasting has improved. Text messages are now used to warn of disasters. The days when cyclones would leave hundreds of thousands dead seem now to be in the past.

The government is providing food assistance to 2.8m people. Sheikh Hasina, the prime minister, has reassured the public that there will be enough food. That she had to say so was disquieting. In usually food-self-sufficient Bangladesh, which is the world’s fourth-largest rice producer, stocks are depleted. An earlier, unseasonal flood ruined rice crops in north-eastern Sylhet and sent rice prices spiralling. To limit

The chances of disaster

Frequency modulation

Centuries ain’t what they used to be

IN 1979 it was Claudette; in 2001 it was Allison; now it is Harvey: in 50 years, the city of Houston has been hit by three separate “500-year floods”. A 500-year flood does not have to happen only twice a millennium. But a run of three in one place does make it feel as if the past climate were no longer a reliable guide to the present—as if the climate itself were changing.

So, of course, it is. The world’s average temperature is between 0.6 and 0.7°C (1.1–1.3°F) higher than it was in 1979. Scientists have understood since the 1850s that hotter air holds more water vapour; a law known as the Clausius-Clapeyron equation states that for every degree Celsius of warming, the atmosphere will hold 7% more moisture. In 1989 two Japanese researchers used computers to model this wetter air would lead to more of the heaviest rains rather than, say, near-perpetual drizzle. It is thus no surprise that insurers see an increase in water-related disasters (see chart 1 on next page).

Other lines of evidence bear out the insurers’ loss data. In 2015 researchers from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany compared computer



it the political fallout, the government cut the duty on rice imports from 28% to 2% and ordered 1.5m tonnes from overseas. That should succour the displaced as they watch the monsoon tail off and the waters recede—and start to prepare for the challenges of the next year. ■

models of the atmosphere as it now is and as it used to be to see how much of an impact these effects might be having. They found that the planet Earth experienced 12% more record-breaking downpours between 1980 and 2010 than might have been expected had the climate not been changing (see chart 2 on next page). The same year Reto Knutti and Erich Fischer at ETH Zurich, a Swiss university, found that the warming recorded since pre-industrial times made new one-day records for rainfall over land 18% more likely. For 2°C of warming, the target below which countries vowed to keep global warming under the Paris agreement of 2015, the figure would rise to 40%.

Despite these general relationships, climate scientists have for the most part been cautious about blaming particular events on the climate change driven by the emission of greenhouse gases. Heavy storms, for example, result from a complex confluence of factors. What made Hurricane Harvey so unusual—and unusually destructive—is that it intensified very quickly in the 24 hours before it hit Texas, thanks to a particularly warm eddy of water in the Gulf, and it then stopped dead in its tracks. ■

Briefing Flooding



Submerged

STIN, TEXAS
Unprecedented floods that Hurricane Harvey visited on Houston reflect a worldwide trend

THE images were disorienting, the reports were surreal. Vast swathes of Houston were underwater. The highways at encircle the city had become canals. Colonies of fire ants, having swarmed together, were floating around like rafts of embers. Alligators appeared, seeking higher ground. At a nursing home south-east of the city, half a dozen women sat in several feet of water. A man caught a fish, by hand, inside his home.

Harvey was the first hurricane of category 3 or above (that is to say, one with wind speeds over 95 knots, or 176km per hour) to hit the United States since 2005, the year Katrina devastated New Orleans—a 12-year hiatus longer than any other in the historical record. It wrought most of its havoc, though, not through the strength of its winds but through the volume of its rains. “The breadth and intensity of this rainfall are beyond anything experienced before,” the National Weather Service (NWS) reported. Some weather gauges measured more than 50 inches (127cm) of rainfall between the evening of Thursday August 24th and the afternoon of Tuesday August 29th. If Harvey’s rain had been spread over the entire country it would have stood the best part of a centimetre deep.

The Houston floods make Harvey the

most damaging weather event America has experienced since Hurricane Sandy, which walloped New York and New Jersey in 2012. As *The Economist* went to press the number confirmed to have died due to Harvey was just 31, though it is sure to rise. Hurricane Ike, which hit Galveston in 2008, claimed 113. In terms of property damage Harvey could well exceed Ike’s \$30 billion.

Six crooked highways

A week before Harvey arrived on Texas’s Gulf Coast, it was a mere tropical wave—the spectral remains of a storm that had fizzled out in the Caribbean, en route to Mexico’s Yucatan Peninsula. But then it reorganised itself abruptly and turned north. Sucking energy from the warm waters of the Gulf, it became a fully fledged hurricane on August 24th.

The next day the NWS was warning, accurately, that “Harvey’s forecast path is slow and meandering, meaning a long duration flood threat with catastrophic results.” In Corpus Christi, the city closest to the hurricane’s projected point of landfall, the mayor, Joe McComb, encouraged residents to evacuate voluntarily. The mayor of Houston, Sylvester Turner, did not. That afternoon the governor of Texas, Greg Abbott, questioned the mayor’s decision.

“Even if an evacuation order hasn’t been issued by your local official, if you’re in an area between Corpus Christi and Houston, you need to strongly consider evacuating,” he said at a news conference. “What you don’t know, and what nobody else knows right now, is the magnitude of flooding that will be coming.”

But that uncertainty was one of the reasons that local officials of both parties agreed with Mr Turner. For most of the cities in the path of the storm, including Houston, a sedentary stoicism seemed the most reasonable response. Two million people live within Houston’s city limits. More than 6m live in Harris County and the rest of the greater Houston metropolitan area. And by Friday afternoon, the storm was already bearing down on them. In 2005, when Hurricane Rita was hurtling towards Houston less than a month after Katrina had hit New Orleans, city leaders had ordered an evacuation on similarly short notice, with awful results. More than 100 people died in the attempted exodus and then the hurricane bypassed the city. That experience weighed heavily on the minds of Houston’s leaders, as did the fact that Harvey presented a different kind of risk. “We’ll have a lot of water,” said Ed Emmett, the Harris County Judge, on Friday afternoon. “But it’s not the kind of water that ▶

Also in this section

18 A deadly monsoon

19 Ever more frequent

▶ held between two high-pressure systems as though in a vice.

But the fact that severe storms, like Tolstoy’s unhappy families, all differ in their details does not mean that there are no generalisations to be made about the chances that something will make a family unhappy, or a storm severe. By running climate models again and again under different conditions it is possible to get a sense of how much more likely a given event is under today’s conditions versus yesterday’s. “If climate change doubles the probability of an event, there is a sense in which half the blame is attributable to humans,” argues Myles Allen of Oxford University.

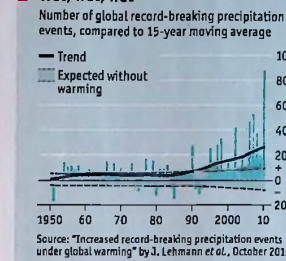
Since 2012 the American Meteorological Society has published an annual bulletin entitled “Explaining Extreme Events from a Climate Perspective”. Sometimes no link is found between specific meteorological anomalies and man-made climate change: that was the case with Britain’s winter storms at the start of 2014 and the water shortages in south-east Brazil later that year. In other cases—droughts in Kenya in 2012, a Japanese heatwave in 2013, torrential downpours in south-west China two years later—signs of human exacerbation can be discerned.

Coming for some time

All this matters because the models engineers rely on to build resilience into roads, buildings, bridges, dams and levees have tended to presuppose that the climate of the recent past represents the climate of the foreseeable future. This opens them up to two sorts of surprise: that tomorrow’s climate may be different; and that the day-before-yesterday’s climate may have been more variable than their records suggest. The likelihood of calamities that fall beyond the range seen in the recorded data is determined by extrapolating what the “tails” of the sample distribution might look like. Those extrapolations, it now appears, have sometimes been conservative.

Victor Baker, a palaeohydrologist at the University of Arizona, studies floods far away in time and space (he is particularly renowned for his work on catastrophic tor-

Wet, wet, wet

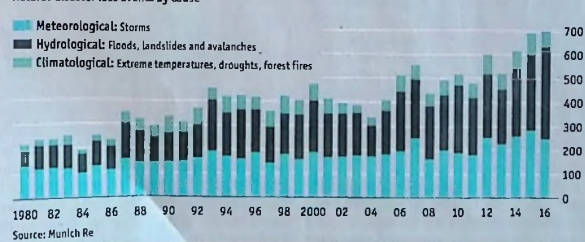


rents in the distant past of Mars). The scars left by the biggest past events provide benchmarks for what might happen again: as Mr Baker puts it, “What has happened, can happen.” In 2013 he and his colleagues analysed 44 ancient inundations of the Upper Colorado River, estimating the floods’ intensity from the volume of sediment and establishing their age using a technique which reveals when quartz in those sediments was last exposed to daylight. Their analysis showed that the river’s “500-year floods” were twice as severe as estimates based on modern records alone implied: what had been considered a once-a-millennium flood turns out to occur more than once a century.

Chinese hydrologists, prevented from setting up modern rain-gauge infrastructure in the 20th century by invasion, civil war and the Cultural Revolution, have long relied on ancient records, both geological and human, to inform the design of dams and canals. Although in the 1990s America’s Bureau of Reclamation developed similar techniques to study the potential risks to large dams from very rare, extreme flooding, most Western hydrologists have tended to regard such things with scepticism, highlighting the difficulty of reliably interpreting the geological record. But interest in the field has grown. In September Mr Baker will give the keynote address at a big geologists’ shindig in London and, a month later, another to the annual meet-

A rising tide

Natural-disaster loss events by cause



ing of the Geological Society of America.

A greater respect for the past will help people modelling hazards. So will better statistics. Advances in so-called “extreme-value analysis” have helped statisticians improve their projections of the under-sampled tails in their data. And modellers can augment the real world with thousands of computer-simulated scenarios.

Besides supplementing real-world data for statistical purposes, generating virtual weather this way is handy for risk assessment. As Mr Allen remarks, “We are, almost by definition, harmed by events that haven’t happened before.” Lea Müller, a natural-hazards expert at Swiss Re, a reinsurance company, recalls how one north-Atlantic storm simulation had charted the curious path that Hurricane Sandy subsequently took when it buffeted New York in 2012. It was just one of many generated scenarios and came too late for the city to impose stricter building standards, say. But it shows that scrutiny of possible worlds may alert people to potential perils in much the same way Mr Baker’s excavations can.

In 2015 the Federal Highway Administration asked the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to assess how much the assumption of an unchanging climate affects “Atlas 14”, NOAA’s repository of flood-risk estimates. Sanja Perica, who led the project, says the idea was to see how greater weight could be given to more recent data, which are more indicative of what a hotter future may look like. “The project ended with more questions than answers,” he admits. But his team soldiers on (though some fear that the flow of federal cash for such projects may dry up under President Donald Trump, whose budget has cut funding for various climate-change initiatives).

Understanding the risk of flooding in the future will demand pursuing many courses: statistics, simulations and sediment studies all have a role to play, says Peter Thorne of Maynooth University in Ireland, who contributed to the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the current US Climate Assessment. The good news is that scientists are on the case. Sadly, engineers and their political taskmasters have been reluctant to embrace the advances they feel they can offer. They cling to “old data, poor data or no data at all,” gripes Mr Thorne.

Perhaps, Mr Knutti ventures, they prefer what they know and understand. Swiss building standards have not been updated in 40 years. Updating NOAA’s Atlas 14 may require a political decision, and given the lamentable stance of the administration support is far from assured, Harvey notwithstanding. What looks certain is that Houston, Mumbai and a host of other cities can expect more “hundred-year” floods before the century ends. ■

PREAMBLE TO FLOOD HISTORY

The year, (1962 – 1963), I spent in Washington at the National Science Foundation primarily involved assignment to the Institutes Section as an Associate Program Director. In addition to visiting grantees and evaluating program initiatives, I also had an assignment to cover hearings on Capitol Hill when discussion on issues of concern to NSF, especially relating to the budget, were scheduled for testimony or action. Since my academic institution was in Dan Flood's congressional district and an NSF staff person with a connection to his home district, I always introduced myself to Dan and his staff person Mike Clark and office secretary Helen Tomascik. They knew Dan's moods and behavior patterns and never failed to pave a path for seeing Dan on a "good" day.

In later years after I returned to Wilkes and later in my post Wilkes career when the independent sector had to provide testimony or simply a presence at a hearing, the new National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, (NAICU) often had educational issues before Dan's committee. They frequently called on PACU President Jim Ream or me to provide testimony or simply a presence, anticipating a welcome from Dan, which he always provided when residents of his district had an interest. Dan was the consummate politician. Jim Ream was one of the earliest recipients of a prestigious National Award, the Henry Paley Memorial Award for Outstanding Service to American Higher Education, for his articulate analysis of many of the issues of concern to higher education institutions from all sectors.

The accompanying article from the November 28, 1977 Chronicle of Higher Education, is Dan at his best.

Of particular interest to Wilkes was this relationship with Senator Warren Magnuson from Washington State. These two men basically initiated and controlled the major budget components of the House and Senate subcommittees on Labor, Health, Education and Welfare and Dan also was the Chair of the subcommittee on Defense. He personally had initiation and oversight of two-thirds of the entire United States Budget!

That was real power and Dan knew how to use it.

When the flood from Hurricane Agnes inundated the Wyoming Valley, Dan went on a mission to take care of his people. He called on his friend "Maggie" and within five weeks executed a totally new piece of legislation, the Federal Emergency Management Act, (FEMA), with the always critical funding provided for implementation.

Senator Magnuson orchestrated the support of his Senate colleagues. As I was led to understand, "Maggie" used as the "precedent" for getting their support for extending federal financial aid in a natural disaster to a "private institution", a 1964 earthquake that had struck Fairbanks, Alaska. The earthquake had destroyed the only hospital providing service to that population. It happened to be a Catholic Hospital and the Congress had supported allocation of funds for re-building that hospital. It was the first private, non-profit institution to receive federal aid to assist in disaster recovery! The Bill's in the House and Senate providing assistance to "All" institutions affected by Agnes were approved.

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STAPLES

THE CHRONICLE

of Higher Education

November 28, 1977 • \$1
Volume XV, Number 13

News Summary

Articles on inside pages

Differences in the impact of colleges and universities on students are smaller than commonly supposed, according to economist Howard R. Bowen. Mr. Bowen compares institutional differences in an excerpt from his book *Investment in Learning* on Page 9.

Crime is being covered in a new way by a number of local newspapers that are offering a "course by newspaper" developed at the extension division of the University of California at San Diego. Story on Page 7.

Two white students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill have successfully challenged the constitutionality of a rule that guarantees places in the student government for persons who are members of minority groups. Story on Page 2.

46 new colleges and universities were established between 1970 and 1976, according to the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. New institutions and mergers of existing institutions are listed on Page 6.

The number of scholarly articles published by faculty members in Land-Use survey on Page 2.

Figure set by the Carter Administration

Wheeling and Dealing on Capitol Hill

How 'Dapper Dan' and 'Maggie' handled funding for colleges

By Anne C. Roark

WASHINGTON

Sporting a stage-villain's mustache, white patent-leather shoes, and rings on nearly every finger, Rep. Daniel J. Flood, the 74-year-old chairman of one the most powerful subcommittees on Capitol Hill, swooped into a Congressional hearing room last March and began his oration to the crowd of onlookers:

"Act II, Scene I. This is the second act of a bad play. I feel I have already seen it."

Indeed, the former Shakespearean actor from Wilkes-Barre, Pa., not only had watched but had been a star in the same performance many times before in his 10 years as subcommittee chairman.

had yet to be played.



Ph.D. from the Fletcher School, sent

How Georgetown and Tufts could get a \$12-million plum

By Ellen K. Coughlin

WASHINGTON

Georgetown and Tufts Universities are due to receive an unusually generous Christmas gift from Congress this year—\$12.2-million in federal grants and loan guarantees to split between them.

A House-Senate conference committee this month approved a supplemental appropriations bill for fiscal 1978 that includes money for the construction of "demonstration model intercultural centers" at the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts.

The lawmakers are expected to give final are turned.

schools is entirely inappropriate.

administration requests to avoid a Presidential veto.

Indeed, Mr. Michel, the appropriations subcommittee's ranking minority member, introduced an amendment to cut \$563 million from

Community colleges are seeking local and national support to expand their role in international education and to increase their enrollments of foreign students. Story on Page 5.

Foreign students and the colleges that enroll them could both be harmed by the experience if care is not taken to insure that the students fit into the campus environment and curriculum, the College Entrance Examination Board has warned. Story on Page 6.

China, which has already reinstated university entrance examinations, plans to make further changes in its education system. Officials described some of them to Mary F. Berry, U.S. Assistant Secretary for Education, during a visit to China this month. Story on Page 3.

British university teachers have held the most serious industrial-relations action in their history in an effort to get the government to increase their salaries. Story on Page 4.

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tion. Yet 66th health and education programs came out consistent ahead of the President's Higher-education programs were to receive nearly \$3.6-

It was the Flood subcommittee's opening day of hearings on a massive money bill for the Departments of Labor and Health, Education, and Welfare for fiscal 1978.

A few days later, a similar scene would take place on the other side of the Capitol—with an actor of a different style.

Puffing on a fat, black cigar and leaning on a cane, Sen. Warren G. Magnuson, a 72-year-old Democrat from Seattle, quietly entered his subcommittee's ornate hearing room.

He paused just inside the door to see that the press was comfortably seated. Shuffling to his own seat, the Congressional veteran of over 40 years stopped at least once along the way to whisper something—perhaps a reminder of some forgotten favor—in a colleague's ear.

2 of Congress's Most Powerful

"Dapper Dan" and "Maggie," as these colorful characters are known on Capitol Hill, are two of Congress's most powerful lawmakers.

As chairmen of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Labor, Health, Education, and Welfare, they have the job of leading their colleagues through the long and complex process of recommending to Congress how it should divide approximately \$60-billion among the nation's social endeavors, scientific-research projects, and educational programs.

The production of the Labor-H.E.W. appropriations bill for fiscal 1978 began pretty much on schedule last spring, when dozens of high Administration officials paraded from their executive offices to the Hill. There, before the appropriations subcommittees, they defended the President's budget requests.

Mindful that the President has the power to veto whatever they do, Mr. Flood's and Mr. Magnuson's panels used the President's proposals as a starting point and cautiously calculated where they could make additions. After Mr. Flood and the 10 other Congressmen on his subcommittee drafted their version of the spending bill, the House Committee on Appropriations and the full House of Representatives approved their decisions, with few changes. Then, having completed their hearings, Senator Magnuson and his 11 colleagues began to draft the Senate version.

Continued on Page 10, Column 1

tional Institute of Education, the Fund for the Improvement of Post-

hours saying so—even though the cost of the program that Mr. Stokes

In contrast to their outspoken and deeply influential predecessors, who in the spending ceilings set by Congress and close enough to the Ad-



CHRONICLE PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN C. PHILLIPS

"We all have our notes and our dramatic speeches on how we ought to spend more money for this or that. ... It sounds like the second scene of a bad first act."
—Rep. Daniel J. Flood (above)

approval to the measure when they reconvene this week. If they do, President Carter will probably sign it before the holidays.

As an extra stocking stuffer, another \$3.7-million—from funds already appropriated for the construction of higher-education facilities—has been earmarked for Georgetown and Tufts at the direction of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health, Education, and Welfare.

Proponents of the special financing—most of them friends and alumni of the two universities—cite the increasing need for government support of foreign-service education. Georgetown and the Fletcher School are the undisputed leaders in that field, they say, and have provided an invaluable service to the country in training professionals for government service.

Critics Dismayed at Cronyism

The Fletcher School alone can boast some 14 graduates now serving as U.S. ambassadors and another 261 working in the State Department.

Critics of Congress's largesse, however, say they are dismayed at the apparent cronyism at work behind the scenes.

The provision authorizing the intercultural centers—part of the Education Amendments of 1976—was introduced by former Sen. J. Glenn Beall, a Maryland Republican defeated in last year's election. More than one observer on Capitol Hill has said, however, that the move was made at the instigation of, in the words of one, "the Georgetown folks."

Indeed, the report accompanying the Senate version of the amendments says the provision for the centers was included "at the suggestion of Georgetown University."

The education amendments, including the authorization for the intercultural centers, were signed into law 13 months ago. Despite the reference to Georgetown in the Senate report, the law did not specify any institution as a potential recipient of the funds.

Several months later, however, the House passed a supplemental appropriations bill for fiscal 1977 that provided \$6.1-million in grants for an intercultural center at Georgetown—a plan that included, among other things, an elaborate physical-education facility. The Senate wouldn't buy it, though, and the appropriation was defeated.

House of Representatives support for the

Continued on Page 11, Column 3

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Wheeling

Continued from Page 1

of the money bill. It, too, had to be approved by that body's full appropriations committee and then by the Senate itself.

Any differences between the two chambers would have to be hammered out in a House-Senate conference by Oct. 1, when the new fiscal year would begin.

At least, that was the way the process was supposed to work.

An innocent who came to The Hill for the first time to see how such weighty decisions were made might have expected high drama. He might have assumed that there would be important debates on why higher education should be allotted only 5 per cent of the Labor-H.E.W. funds, while public-assistance programs would receive nearly 33 per cent.

Despite the serious business going on and the impressive cast of characters, the process was often more like a circus, sometimes featuring personal buffoonery and comical disputes.

Mr. Hodgkinson's Trying Time

Take, for example, the day that officials from the National Institute of Education testified before Mr. Flood's subcommittee.

Education research has never been particularly popular with Congress. Harold L. Hodgkinson, then director of the research institute, knew this well and carefully tried to defend his \$109-million request. The figure the budget suggested was \$39-million more than N.I.E. had received the year before, but \$91-million less than Congress had authorized in a 1976 law extending the life of the agency and setting its spending ceilings.

Bored Congressmen squirmed in their seats or dozed as Mr. Hodgkinson explained the efforts his agency had made to upgrade education research, improve teaching, and eliminate crime in the public schools.

Suddenly an enormous, befuddled-looking Congressman with a wild mop of white hair stood up. With a loud "harrumph," Rep. Edward James Patten, Democrat of New Jersey, interrupted Mr. Hodgkinson's testimony:

Congressman 'Laid a Fried Egg'

"There's no end to what I hear about the public schools," snorted the 72-year-old Congressman, who is known to add comic relief to formal hearings by wandering in late, peering over witnesses' shoulders, and even tugging from their hands the written testimony that they were presenting to the subcommittee.

"I went out to Linden High School to talk. They have something to be proud of there," he said, pounding his fist on the table. "I tried to make those kids proud that the largest oil company in the country is there. Jesus! They blew me out."

"I tried to make them proud that Cadillac, the best automobile company in the world, was right there in their town. I laid a fried egg. I was shocked. I was hurt. I don't mind telling you that."

Mr. Patten paused, peering through thick glasses at Mr. Hodgkinson. The Congressman grinned. "You're not the guy who started this Hodgkin's disease, are you?"

"You know the point I'm making. There is no respect for this country."

I don't feel like some great hero—I can't—I'm exhausted." He plopped down in his chair.

But then something else occurred to him and he leaned forward. "[President] Carter told us no one knew anything about the history of my country. . . . Congressmen don't get any respect. I'm depressed."

With that Mr. Patten, folded his arms and leaned back in his chair.

It was a hard act to follow, but Mr. Hodgkinson nodded sympathetically and tried to explain what N.I.E. had done to solve such problems.

Within weeks, however, the appropriations panel would cut the National Institute of Education's request for funds by more than \$20-million.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Capitol, Mr. Magnuson's subcommittee grilled Marie D. Eldridge,

secondary Education Statistics had been cut by millions of dollars.

Although the Labor-H.E.W. appropriations panels routinely, and often casually, agreed to spend billions of dollars for some programs, the same Congressmen and Senators found themselves caught in long and heated debates over the wisdom of allocating a million or even a few thousand dollars to others.

Not infrequently, some of the smallest programs were ones that affected colleges and universities the most.

"The problem," said one education lobbyist, "is that their minds are so bogged at the thought of how much money they are dealing with—over \$60-billion—that they can't begin to deal with the big issues. As a

second would amount to less than one-hundredth of 1 per cent of the total bill.

Rep. Robert H. Michel, Republican of Illinois, said he didn't "buy the theory that white doctors treat whites and blacks treat blacks."

The dispute was finally settled in favor of the Georgia school.

However, there were other serious conflicts over spending for health. Some Congressmen, who might have been bored with the medical-school debate, proposed large increases in the multi-billion-dollar health-research programs of the National Institutes of Health.

"Don't overplay a scene," Mr. Flood advised the health-research advocates on his panel.

Mr. Flood knew as well as anyone that the more money that went to scientific research, the less there would be for other programs. For years, he has been one of The Hill's staunchest supporters of education programs.

Disease Hits Close to Home

On the other hand, even Congressmen and Senators have to think about their health.

Just bringing up the subject caused the small, ornate committee rooms on both sides of the Capitol to fill with denser-than-usual clouds of cigar and cigarette smoke. Disease had hit close to home for many lawmakers.

One Congressman argued that, because his mother had died of cancer and his wife had suffered from it, the government should spend more money to find a cure for the disease. Another argued that more money should be channeled to the National Eye Institute: His father had died blind and he, the Congressman, didn't want to do the same.

"We all have our notes and our dramatic speeches on how we ought to spend more money for this or that," said Mr. Flood, reminding his colleagues that he had been operated on not many years before for cancer of the stomach.

"It sounds like the second scene of a bad first act," he said of the debate over increasing allocations for the National Institutes of Health.

Mr. Flood later pointed out to his colleagues on the House floor that the Congressional actors were not quite "so loquacious" in the "really tough scenes—the ones where decisions had to be made about how to finance their favorite programs and still keep the Labor-H.E.W. bill alive."



CHRONICLE PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN C. PHILLIPS

administrator of the National Center for Education Statistics, on why her \$13-million agency should get an additional \$3-million.

Ms. Eldridge methodically explained the importance of education statistics. But she, too, was interrupted when Senator Magnuson came in a half an hour or so late for his panel's 2 o'clock hearing on the Labor-H.E.W. bill.

"As you know, I've been an opponent of N.I.E. for years," Senator Magnuson said as he sat down. "I don't know what they do with all this data when we get it."

"Actually, sir," Ms. Eldridge timidly interjected, "this is the National Center for Education Statistics."

The Senator showed no embarrassment. "Yeah, well," he said, "all you data-gatherers look the same."

By the time the appropriations bill had worked its way through Senator Magnuson's subcommittee, the full Committee on Appropriations, and onto the Senate floor, the Administration's budget requests—which some educators contended were inadequate to begin with—for the Na-

result, they have to talk about the little ones."

One of the little issues in which the lawmakers became embroiled during the hearings turned into one of the hottest political debates on many college campuses this year.

When the celebrated "reverse discrimination" case between Allan Bakke and the University of California's medical school at Davis was heading toward the Supreme Court this past summer, Rep. Louis Stokes, Democrat of Ohio, was urging the House appropriations subcommittee to do something about the "chronic shortage of black doctors."

Hours of Discussion

One way to alleviate the problem, argued the black Congressman, was to help a predominantly black medical college in Georgia build a basic medical-science building. The cost to the government would be \$5-million.

Mr. Stokes's colleagues on the appropriations panel were skeptical—apparently not about the legality of supporting such programs, but about the value of it. They spent many

ministration's requests to avoid a Presidential veto.

Indeed, Mr. Michel, the appropriations subcommittee's ranking minority member, introduced an amendment to cut \$563-million from the final House version of the bill.

The effort made by education lobbyists to stop that amendment was one of the best-executed scenes in the whole production of the 1978 Labor-H.E.W. bill.

The Washington lobbyists' entrance onto the Congressional stage was impressive. They divided up lists of members; they deluged Senators and Representatives with letters; they organized state universities to exert pressure from home districts.

tion. Yet both health and education programs came out considerably ahead of the President's requests. Higher-education programs alone were to receive nearly \$3.6-billion—\$311-million above the Administration's budget and \$385-million more than the year before.

To come up with such figures, Mr. Michel of Illinois told his colleagues when they voted on the compromise version of the bill, took some fancy "bookkeeping manipulation." The final bill, he charged, contained "phony reductions" for welfare programs, and was a "substantial \$2.3-billion over the President's budget."

Dealing

Continued from Page 1

Georgetown center remained strong, however, reportedly with the aid of the chairman of the Labor-H.E.W. appropriations subcommittee, Pennsylvania Democrat Daniel J. Flood. Congressman Flood knows Georgetown's President, the Rev. Timothy S. Healy, very well, according to a staff member.

word of his support for the centers to all the conferees.

Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey, Democrat of Minnesota, also sent "Dear Colleague" letters to members of the conference committee, citing the two universities' "leadership in foreign affairs." According to a member of his staff, Senator Humphrey has had a

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a circus, sometimes featuring person-
al buffoonery and comical disputes.

Mr. Hodgkinson's Trying Time

Take, for example, the day that officials from the National Institute of Education testified before Mr. Flood's subcommittee.

Education research has never been particularly popular with Congress. Harold L. Hodgkinson, then director of the research institute, knew this well and carefully tried to defend his \$109-million request. The figure the budget suggested was \$39-million more than N.I.E. had received the year before, but \$91-million less than Congress had authorized in a 1976 law extending the life of the agency and setting its spending ceilings.

senting to the subcommittee...
"I went out to Linden High School to talk. They have something to be proud of there," he said, pounding his fist on the table. "I tried to make those kids proud that the largest oil company in the country is there. Jesus! They blew me out."

"I tried to make them proud that Cadillac, the best automobile company in the world, was right there in their town. I laid a fried egg. I was shocked. I was hurt. I don't mind telling you that."

Mr. Patten paused, peering through thick glasses at Mr. Hodgkinson. The Congressman grinned. "You're not the guy who started this Hodgkin's disease, are you?"

"You know the point I'm making. There is no respect for this country."

ROOM 1235

CHRONICLE PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN C. PHILLIPS

administrator of the National Center for Education Statistics, on why her \$13-million agency should get an additional \$3-million.

Ms. Eldridge methodically explained the importance of education statistics. But she, too, was interrupted when Senator Magnuson came in a half an hour or so late for his panel's 2 o'clock hearing on the Labor-H.E.W. bill.

"As you know, I've been an opponent of N.I.E. for years," Senator Magnuson said as he sat down. "I don't know what they do with all this data when we get it."

"Actually, sir," Ms. Eldridge timidly interjected, "this is the National Center for Education Statistics."

The Senator showed no embarrassment. "Yeah, well," he said, "all you data-gatherers look the same."

By the time the appropriations bill had worked its way through Senator Magnuson's subcommittee, the full Committee on Appropriations, and onto the Senate floor, the Administration's budget requests—which some educators contended were inadequate to begin with—for the Na-

result, they have to talk about the little ones."

One of the...
law...
the...
political debates on many college campuses this year.

When the celebrated "reverse discrimination" case between Allan Bakke and the University of California's medical school at Davis was heading toward the Supreme Court this past summer, Rep. Louis Stokes, Democrat of Ohio, was urging the House...

Hour of Discussion

One way to alleviate the problem, argued the black Congressman, was to help a predominantly black medical college in Georgia build a basic medical-science building. The cost to the government would be \$5-million.

Mr. Stokes...
proposed...
apparently not about the legality of supporting such programs, but about the value of it. They want...

on the small, ornate...
rooms, the process was often more like a circus, sometimes featuring personal buffoonery and comical disputes.

One Congressman argued that, because his mother had died of cancer and his wife had suffered from it, the government should spend more money to find a cure for the disease. Another argued that more money should be channeled to the National Eye Institute: His father had died blind and he, the Congressman, didn't want to do the same.

"We all have our notes and our dramatic speeches on how we ought to spend more money for this or that," said Mr. Flood, reminding his colleagues that he had been operated on not many years before for cancer of the stomach.

"It sounds like the second scene of a bad first act," he said of the debate over increasing allocations for the National Institutes of Health.

Mr. Flood later pointed out to his colleagues on the House floor that the Congressional actors were not quite so loquacious in the really tough scenes—the ones where decisions had to be made about how to finance their favorite programs and still keep the Labor-H.E.W. bill with-

ministration's requests to avoid a Presidential veto.

Indeed, Mr. Michel, the appropriations subcommittee's ranking minority member, introduced an amendment to cut \$563-million from the final House version of the bill.

The effort made by education lobbyists to stop that amendment was one of the best-executed scenes in the whole production of the 1978 Labor-H.E.W. bill.

The Washington lobbyists' entrance onto the Congressional stage was impressive. They divided up lists of members; they deluged Senators and Representatives with letters; they organized state universities to exert pressure from home districts.

Said Mr. Michel, as his proposed spending cuts were being rejected: "If we would take all the money they are spending lobbying against my amendment, I would not be surprised but that we would have all the money we need for some of these programs they are interested in."

The \$61.3-billion measure that was approved by the House of Representatives in June would have cost nearly \$700-million more than the version the Senate approved a few days later. Higher-education programs were to receive \$3.38-billion—\$201-million more than the Senate approved.

How the complicated tradeoffs would resolve themselves had to be worked out in perhaps the most colorful scene of all—the House-Senate conference.

Appropriations at Auction

Crowded into a Senate hearing room—with a mural depicting the Roman goddess of war over the door—13 House members and 14 Senators began to settle their differences in July. By November, they still had not concluded the final act.

"One of the most frustrating experiences in the world is sitting down in an H.E.W. conference," Sen. Magnuson told his colleagues. "It's enough to give you cardiovascular disease."

However, most of the process of deciding how much money should be spent—particularly on education—went as smoothly as an auction:

SENATOR MAGNUSON: "Take \$35-million?"

MR. FLOOD: "Make that 20 and we'll take it."

SENATOR MAGNUSON: "Make it 30 and we'll split the difference on the next item."

All told, the Labor-H.E.W. bill that the conferees settled on was a healthy \$425-million less than the figure set by the Carter Administra-

tion. Yet both health and education programs came out considerably ahead of the President's requests. Higher-education programs alone were to receive nearly \$3.6-billion—\$311-million above the Administration's budget and \$385-million more than the year before.

To come up with such figures, Mr. Michel of Illinois told his colleagues when they voted on the compromise version of the bill, took some fancy "bookkeeping manipulation." The final bill, he charged, contained "phony reductions" for welfare programs, and was a "substantial \$2.3-billion over the President's budget."

Despite Mr. Michel's opposition, by August the conferees had but one task left: to hammer out the final language of another controversial amendment attached to the bill. The provision would deny, totally or partially, H.E.W. funds to poor women for abortions.

Anti-Abortion Lobbying

Hundreds of anti-abortion lobbyists who could not find seats in the tiny conference room lined the halls of the Capitol, as the conference continued nearly every day throughout the fall.

Women and children stood impatiently in line, holding up artificial red roses to those who passed as a sign of their support for the unborn young's right to life.

In the corner stood a priest, quietly praying. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil."

In October, other protesters marched outside the Capitol—mourning the death of a woman who had resorted to an illegal abortion.

Inside, the House-Senate conferees were deadlocked over how far the restrictions on such controversial operations should go. Senator Magnuson, speaking for his chamber, insisted that the language should not be as restrictive as that adamantly supported by Mr. Flood and his colleagues in the House.

After weeks of stalemate on the Labor-H.E.W. bill, Congress recessed early this month. The final words that stood between the two sides—the number in a "cheap telegram," said Senator Magnuson—still remained to be settled.

Thus, months after decisions had been made on the real purpose of the bill—to determine what Congress wanted to spend on the hundreds of programs operated by the Labor and H.E.W. departments—the final act of the annual appropriations process had yet to be played.

Dealing

Continued from Page 1

Georgetown center remained strong, however, reportedly with the aid of the chairman of the Labor-H.E.W. appropriations subcommittee, Pennsylvania Democrat Daniel J. Flood. Congressman Flood knows Georgetown's President, the Rev. Timothy S. Healy, very well, according to a staff member.

To broaden Congressional support for the idea beyond Mr. Flood's subcommittee, Georgetown officials approached several other institutions with foreign-service schools to join them in submitting proposals for an intercultural center.

Among those contacted were the University of Washington, in the home state of Warren G. Magnuson, chairman of the Senate Labor-H.E.W. appropriations subcommittee, and Tufts University in Massachusetts, the home state of Sen. Edward W. Brooke, the subcommittee's ranking minority member.

Only Tufts University's Fletcher School accepted. Jeffrey A. Sheehan, assistant to the dean at Fletcher, said the school had been unaware of the Congressional authorization before officials there were contacted by Georgetown. The legislation, he said, seemed made to order for the Fletcher School.

When the first supplemental appropriations bill for fiscal 1978 was being drafted in the House this fall, a provision for the intercultural centers was included once again, this time naming Georgetown and Tufts as the recipients.

Only 2 Witnesses at Hearing

Congressman Flood's subcommittee held a brief hearing at which the only two witnesses were representatives of Georgetown and Tufts. The panel subsequently included in the bill \$9.1-million in grants and \$7.2-million in guaranteed low-interest loans for the two institutions.

The Senate appropriations subcommittee had decided to defer the matter until next year. When the House and Senate versions of the supplemental appropriations bill reached the conference committee, lobbyists for the intercultural centers intensified their efforts and lined up an impressive array of spokesmen.

Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan, a New York Democrat with an M.A. and a Ph.D. from the Fletcher School, sent

word of his support for the centers to all the conferees.

Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey, Democrat of Minnesota, also sent "Dear Colleague" letters to members of the conference committee, citing the two universities' "leadership in foreign affairs." According to a member of his staff, Senator Humphrey has had a "long-standing" relationship with the Fletcher School and is a friend of its dean, Edmund A. Gullion.

Henry A. Kissinger, the former Secretary of State who has recently been appointed university professor of "diplomacy at Georgetown's foreign-service school, lent his support.

According to a Congressional staff member who was present at the conference committee's deliberations, one of the conferees remarked that he had never been under such pressure to approve a piece of legislation as he had been with the Georgetown and Tufts centers.

Opposition from Staff

Kenneth Schlossberg of Schlossberg-Cassidy and Associates, a Washington consulting firm that represents Tufts University on Capitol Hill, insisted that the only "adamant opposition" to the measure that he encountered was among the Democratic staff of the Senate appropriations subcommittee.

By and large, Mr. Schlossberg said, the reception in Congress was "cordial and favorable."

The Rev. T. Byron Collins, a Jesuit priest who directs Georgetown's federal-relations office, would not speak to a reporter who called him.

Aside from the political maneuvering, some opponents have suggested the special earmarking of money for the two universities may be illegal.

For one thing, they say, the college-construction program under which the money was appropriated calls for open competition among eligible institutions for any money that is available.

The law also prohibits spending more than 12½ per cent of the construction funds in any one state.

The Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, Joseph A. Califano, Jr., told the Senate subcommittee last spring that "the earmarking of these funds for specially selected schools is entirely inappropriate."

In contrast to their outspoken and influential adversaries, the critics of the move are often ambivalent about the reasons for their opposition.

None of them question the qualifications of either Georgetown University or the Fletcher School. Most admit that even if there were open competition for the money, those two would be among the leading contenders for it.

"If two of our colleagues can get something the rest of us can't, more power to them," said Charles B. Saunders, Jr., director of governmental relations for the American Council on Education.

No Expansion of Programs

He pointed out, however, that the law stipulates that money appropriated under Title VII is to be used for the reconstruction of academic facilities to provide access to the handicapped and to make buildings safe and more energy-efficient.

The proposed centers at Georgetown and Tufts simply do not have the highest priorities for that money, Mr. Saunders said.

Other critics say the appropriations bill is a high price to pay for bricks and mortar when neither the institutions involved intends to expand its program or enrollment.

The Fletcher School's proposal for its intercultural center calls for an addition to existing library facilities: an auditorium, classrooms, offices and other "support" space—a total of 100,000 square feet at an estimate cost of \$10-million.

Georgetown's blueprint is more vague, but a spokesman said the university planned a 119,000-square foot "multi-purpose academic learning resource center," which the foreign-service school will share with the School of Language and Linguistics. Last year's plan for an athletic facility has been dropped, the spokesman said.

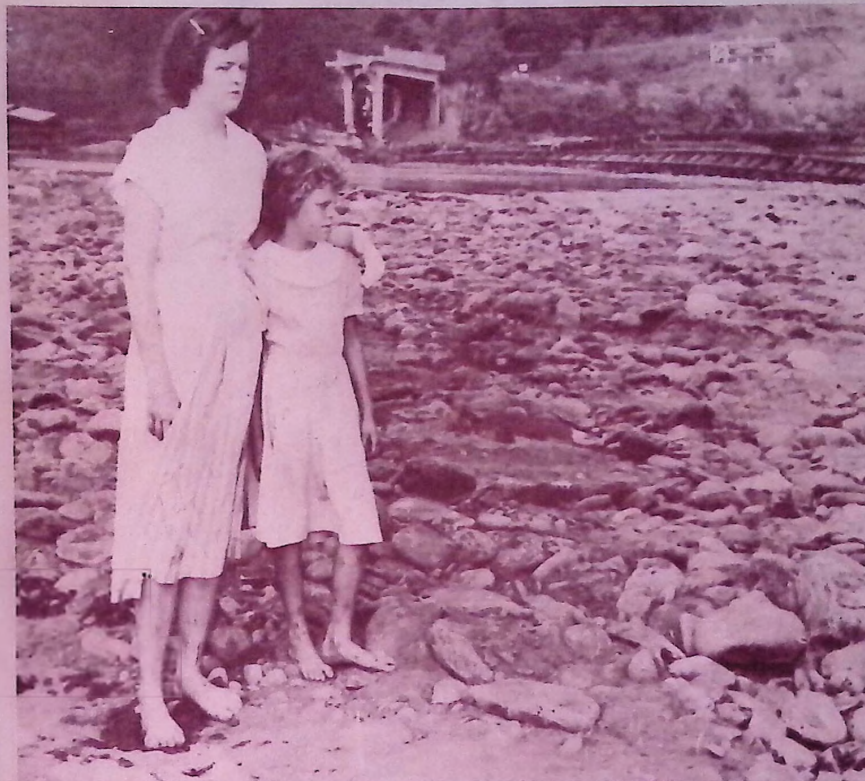
Although Georgetown, Tufts, and their supporters won out this time, opponents of the provision did gain some concessions.

In a compromise move, the House and Senate conferees cut the \$9.1 million in grants provided in the House bill to \$5-million, although \$7.2-million in loan guarantees remained the same.

In addition, the money will be the last direct handout to the two universities, at least for the time being.

"The conferees agree," the conference report says, "that this is the final amount to be provided for these projects until higher-priority items are funded."

Diane Drowns Delaware Valley



Camp Davis: They Survived—Others Didn't

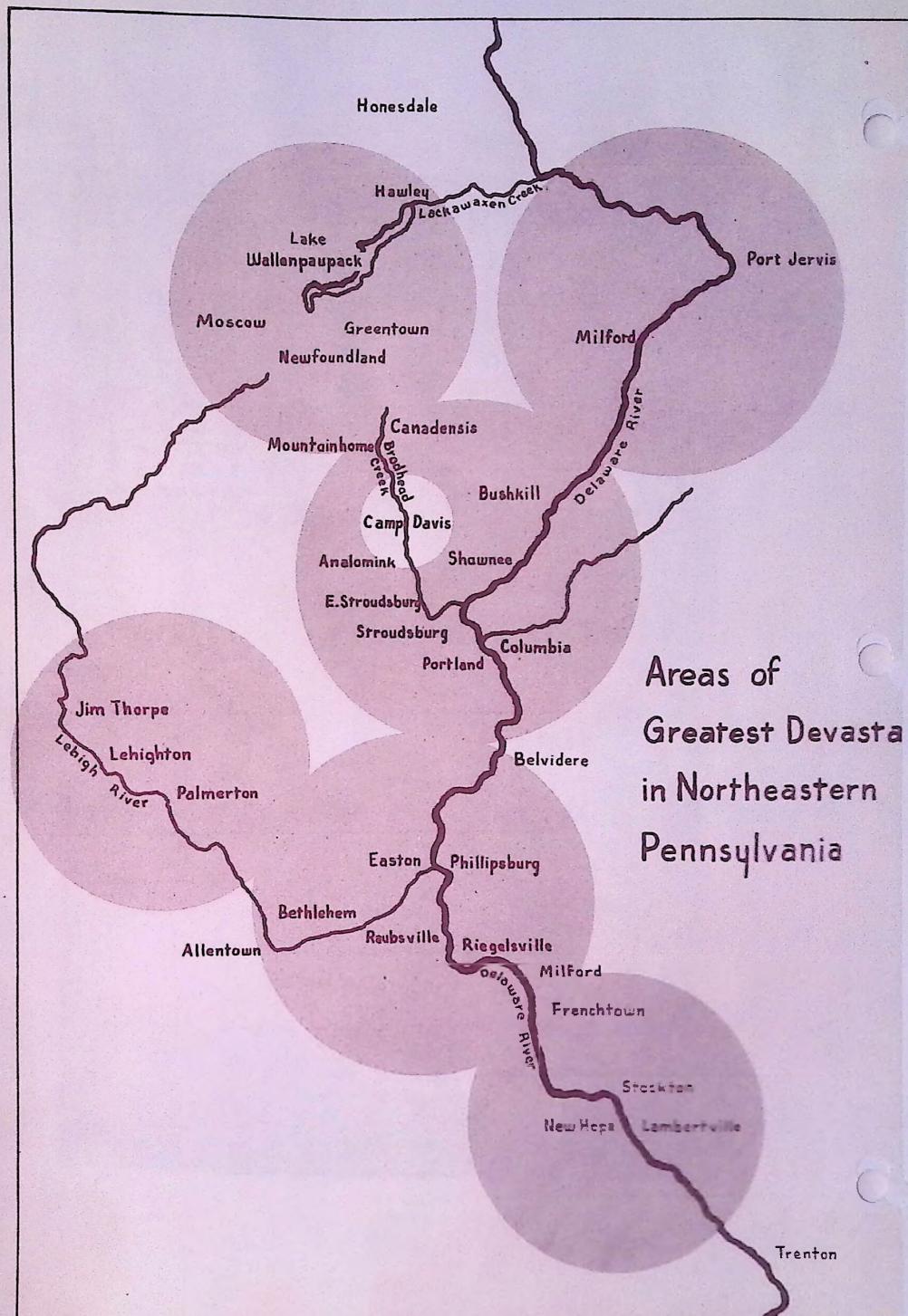
(Story in Stroudsburg Section)

AUGUST 18-19, 1955

A Pictorial Coverage of the Flood Disaster by The Easton Express in the Lackawanna, Lehigh, Brodhead, Delaware, and Bushkill Valleys, Including Heretofore Unpublished Photographs.

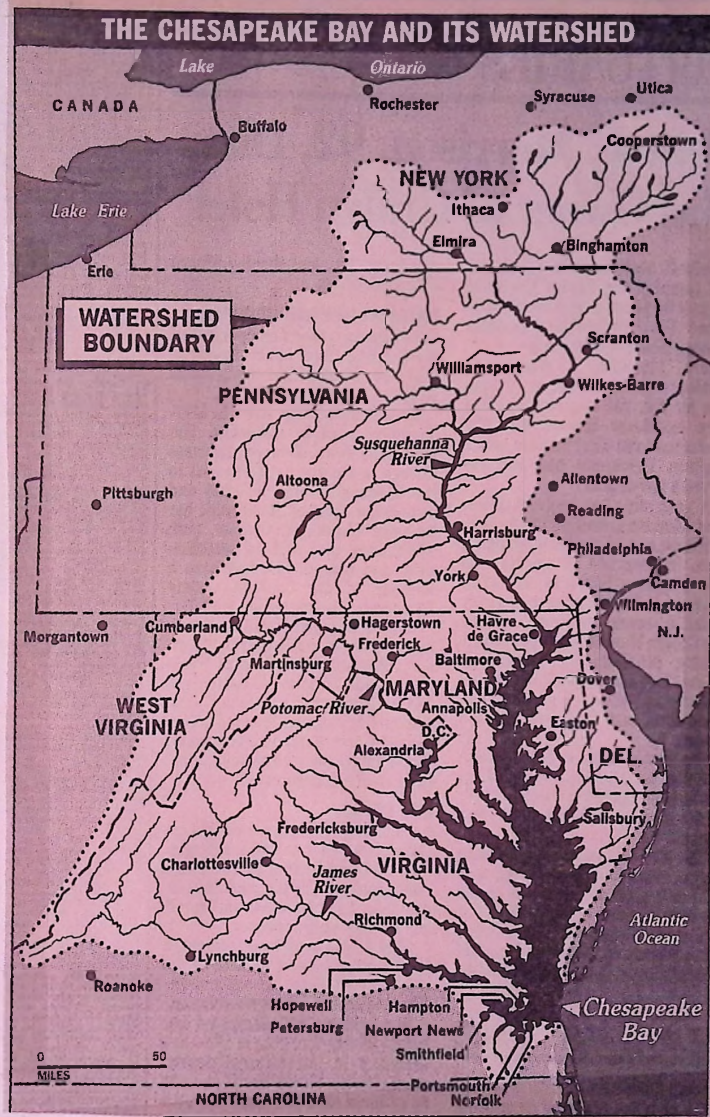
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What's going on? people asked each other. "Who's doing it?"

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1987 C5



What's going on? people asked each other. "Who's going to be the first to..."

THE WRATH OF AGNES – Carl J. Romanelli and William M. Griffith

This publication is one of the most complete and inclusive reports of the Agnes Flooding on the various communities of the Wyoming Valley.

The early pages have photos of the major political figures who early on were involved in assessment of the recovery challenge. Pages 10 to 16 show the presence of Gov. Milton Shapp; Secretary George Romney from the federal Housing and Urban Development agency; Sen. Hugh Scott; Cong. Dan Flood; Gen. Frank Townend, head of Civil Defense for PA; Max Rosenn with Dan Flood and Hugh Scott,

This report covers many of the valley communities with damages shown to homes and businesses.

Pages 21 to 35 show the devastating impact on many areas of Wilkes – Barre; and the surrounding communities of the Valley.

Of particular interest is the section on the Forty Fort Cemetery; pages 80 to 83. Wilkes Placement Director lived directly across the street from the cemetery and watched from his front steps as a large tree in the middle of the grounds suddenly started to shake and erupted straight up out of the cemetery grounds with hundreds of caskets and bodies from broken coffin containers being carried away by the rushing waters. It is noted that the estimate was that two thousand bodies were displaced by the eruption of the river water that actually went "under" the dike from the tremendous hydrostatic pressure that had built up at that point in the river. Other photos in some of the publications show the actual breach point and the steel piling displaced by that water pressure. National Guard units and graves registration personnel from the military collaborated with local personnel to recover, identify and re-bury as many bodies as possible but some were lost forever in the raging waters.

"THE WRATH

OF AGNES"

A COMPLETE PICTORIAL AND WRITTEN HISTORY OF THE JUNE, 1972, FLOOD IN WYOMING VALLEY

COMPILED AND EDITED BY

Carl J. Romanelli

and

William M. Griffith

PUBLISHED BY

Media Affiliates, Inc., Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

WORLD WIDE QUALITY

What's going on? people asked each other. "Who



Shapp decorates Rematta.

was a miracle loss of life and injuries was so

On Saturday, June 24, Nixon sent Vice President Spiro Agnew to fly over the area to assess the damage.

Then followed Gov. Milton J. Shapp and Governor Ernest Kline, whom Gov. Shapp named head of the State Disaster Relief, not only for Wyoming Valley, but also the other areas in the State which felt the wrath of the flood.

By the time the week end came to a



Hairdryer used on Bell wiring.



Tobin, Scott, Flood explain aid programs.

close, the military, including Army units, Pennsylvania National Guard, Navy, Coast Guard, and Marines were on the scene with the regional Civil Defense in charge of Reserve Gen. Frank Townend.

The waters started to recede Sunday, June 25, and within the next two days the cleanup was on. Wyoming Valley quickly began a comeback.

Federal and State offices temporarily were located in the Valley, mostly in Wilkes-Barre, the largest municipality.

The people began returning to their homes and most all were shocked at what they saw.



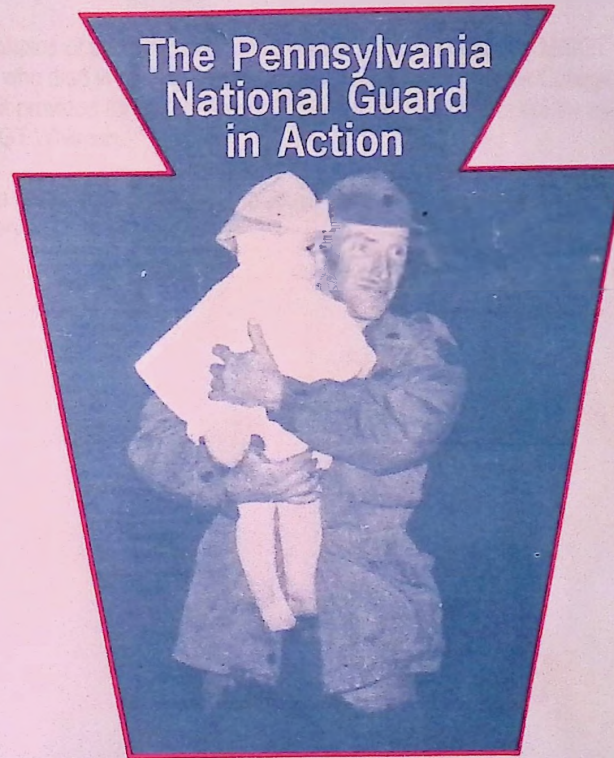
Shapp and Romney after conference at Dan Flood School, Wilkes-Barre.

Summer of '72:



Agnes' Fury in the Keystone State

The Pennsylvania
National Guard
in Action



Pictorial and Documentary Story of the Pennsylvania National
Guard's Citizen-Soldiers Rendering Humanitarian Service During
Worst Natural Disaster to Strike the Commonwealth in History

"What's going on?" people asked each other. "Who
is that?"

This publication is a report of the Pennsylvania State National Guard.

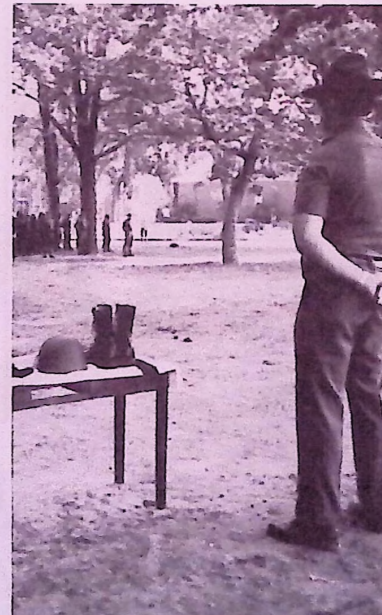
In early 2017 in a casual conversation with my neighbor Robert Risaliti, we got to talking about the 1972 flood in Wilkes-Barre and he mentioned that his unit had been called up and assigned to the Forty Fort area. He became involved in the cemetery clean up and despite this being many, many years later, became really emotional about the experience. There was a military graves unit assigned to the task of identification of remains and the task of reburial. Photos of the treatment of the remains are pretty rare and the subject is usually dealt with in a very general way.

Page 5 shows a photo of the homes on S. River Street where the dike was breached and a photo of the cemetery after the flood waters receded.

Page 30 shows photos of the ceremonies on the river common honoring M/SGT Robert Whitman who died in the line of duty while working on the Wilkes College campus. This unit provided for replacement of an organ in the fine arts center as a memorial to M/SGT Whitman.

Page 32 is a map of the entire state and the areas of National Guard involvement in post flood recovery.

May 19, 2017
F. J. Michelini



**In Memoriam
M/SGT ROBERT E. WHITMAN**

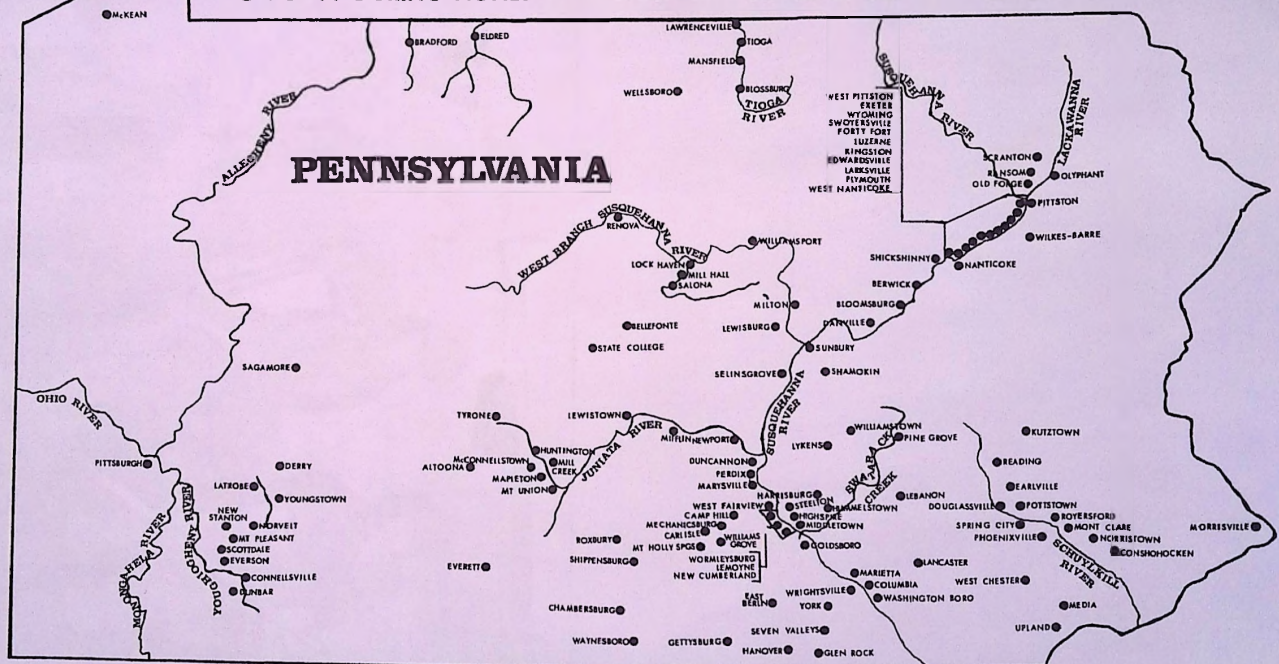


Ceremonies were conducted in Wilkes-Barre by members of the 1st Battalion, 103rd Armor, 28th Infantry Division and Pennsylvania State Police in memory of Master Sergeant Robert E. Whitman, an Army National Guardsman from Johnstown, who died in the line of duty on 14 July 1972.

At the time of his death, his unit was engaged in clean-up operations at Wilkes College as a result of the destruction caused by Tropical Storm Agnes.

Pennsylvania Guardsmen contributed to a special memorial fund used to renovate and rededicate the flood-damaged organ at Wilkes College, scene of his untimely passing.

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS WHERE PENNSYLVANIA NATIONAL GUARDSMEN SERVED ON DUTY DURING AGNES' FLOOD DISASTER FROM 22 JUNE-6 AUGUST 1972



June 22, 1972 is a day which will remain in the minds of hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians who were caught in the worst storm to hit the Commonwealth in history.

The fury of Tropical Storm Agnes resulted in billions of dollars in damage, the evacuation of thousands, and a rebuilding effort which will take months.

Over 10,000 Pennsylvania National Guardsmen were ordered to state active duty at one time or another by Governor Milton J. Shapp.

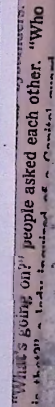
There were three primary areas where the Guard played a major role: Wilkes-Barre-Scranton, by far the hardest hit area in the nation; the Harrisburg-York-Lancaster areas; and the region covered by Milton, Williamsport, and Lock Haven.

The Wilkes-Barre, Forty Fort, and Plymouth areas suffered the heaviest damage when the Susquehanna River shot tons of water into the low lying regions along the river. The primary work of Guardsmen took place in these areas.

Units from all over the state were called to help. Engineer units from Philadelphia moved north and put their sophisticated training to good use; medical and supply units saw that the human needs were taken care of; and infantrymen provided the back-breaking labor which became a necessity as residents went back to their homes only to find them in ruins.

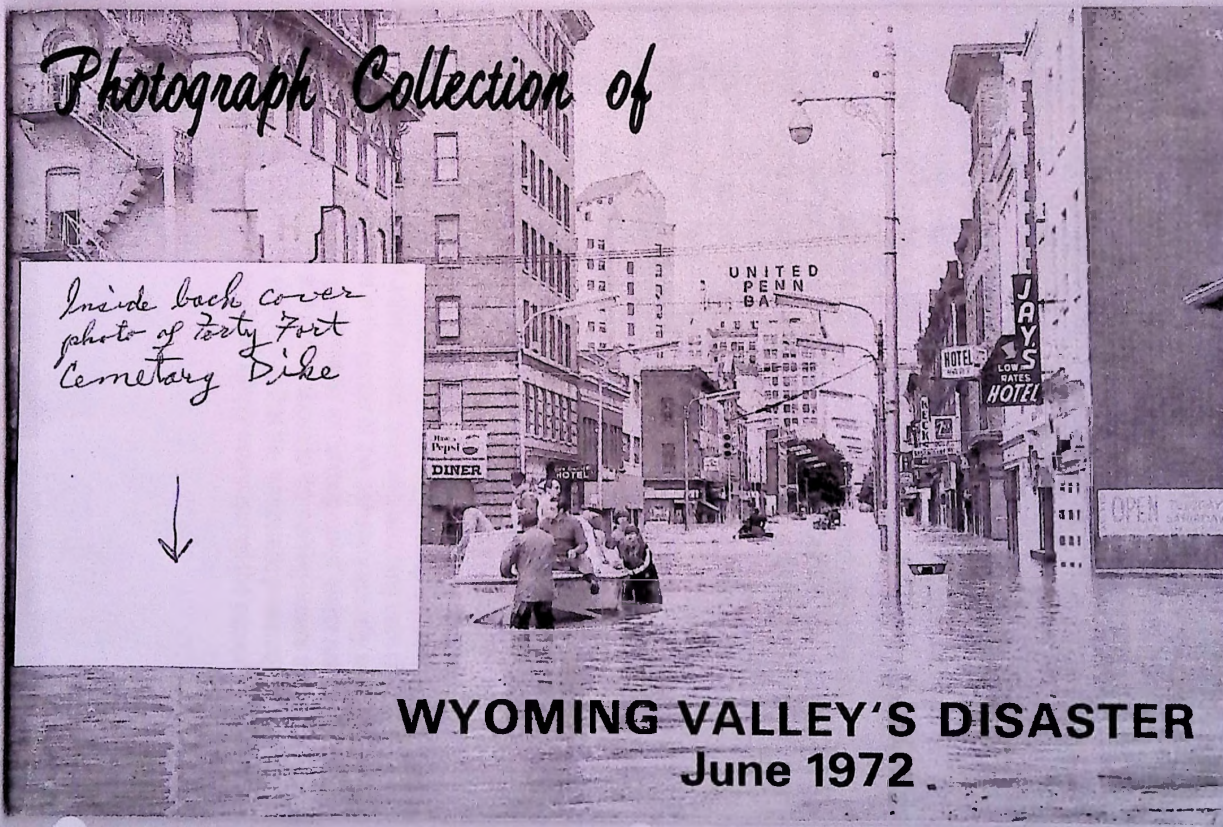
The Pennsylvania National Guard did an admirable job—a job that showed to the people of Pennsylvania that the Guard belongs.

"What's going on?" people asked each other. "Who is that?" a lady inquired of a Capitol guard.



Photograph Collection of

Inside back cover
photo of Forty Fort
Cemetery Dike



WYOMING VALLEY'S DISASTER
June 1972

"What's going on?" people asked each other. "Who
is that?" a lady inquired of a Capitol guard

Forty Fort Cemetery

This "Photographic Collection of Wyoming Valley Disaster", is a small and selective collection of some critical elements of the flood event. The photo of the County Courthouse is one of the very few I have seen and reflected the rise in elevation of that section of Wilkes-Barre adjacent to King's College.

As a result of federal redevelopment in the Courthouse area, King's College enjoyed acquisition of significant property in that area which enabled construction of facilities to meet college needs. At the time of the flood they occupied about five buildings that were on the fringes of the high water level reached by the flooding. Most of the flood effects were to the basement areas of some of those buildings.

The Wilkes College campus consisted of 59 buildings, many of which were the old family homes of the "first families" of the time. These homes had been "Grandfathered" in to zoning requirements required by later state requirements.

Every Wilkes building was under water to a significant degree except the visiting team locker room on the athletic field across the river in Kingston. That building had previously been the location of the elevator shaft machinery servicing the mines of the area and was the only facility of the college above the high water mark. It has since been remodeled with significant additions and serves as the center of the current University outdoor athletic complex.

Of particular technical interest is the photo on the inside back cover. This shows the west shore steel dike pilings at the bend of the river at the Forty Fort Cemetery. The "River" is on the far side of the pilings but the position of the pilings show the "base" of the pilings flowing away from the river itself ! The engineering explanation is confirmed by eye witness account of John Chwalek, who was watching from his home across the street, that a large tree in the center of the cemetery actually began shaking and moving, then finally erupting into the air as "underground" water rushed "UNDER" the pilings and took caskets and bodies above to the rushing waters that flowed through to Kingston. Engineers established that the hydrostatic pressure created by the immense volume of water above simply overwhelmed the capacity of the dike system to contain it.

F. J. Micheline, May 19, 2017

VIN-WI
OMER PA



Forty Fort Cemetery

"What's going on?" people asked each other. "Who is that?" a lady inquired of a Capital man

WORLDWIDE TOUGHER



Flood Waters Show No Respect

"What's going on?" people asked each other. "Who is that?" a lady inquired of a Central man.

\$3⁰⁰
TAX
INCL



A PORTRAIT OF
AGNES

"What's going on?" people asked each other. "Who is that?" a lady inquired of a friend.



WORLDWIDE Patent

A PORTRAIT OF AGNES Photographers – Kozemchak Family

For my years at Wilkes the college photographer was a member of the Kozemchak family photographers pictured on the back page of this publication. Jimmy Jr. is the one I remember during the years of my administration.

This publication has to rank among the best and most complete inventory of flood photos of Wilkes-Barre and neighboring communities. An introductory text succinctly summarizes the post flood activities in many valley communities.

As I prepare this for the Wilkes Archives in May of 2017 I have numbered the pages to make it easier to reference specific photos.

Some comments in red ink were recorded by Anne Marie Micheline when she reviewed this publication shortly after publication.

F. J. Micheline, May 19, 2017

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Please enclose \$3.00 plus .25 for handling.

A PORTRAIT OF AGNES PART TWO - PERSONAL COMMENTARY

This publication provides a good base for recording my personal experiences during the flood itself and to the post-flood recovery of the college. I have taken the liberty of numbering the pages to make accurate reference more convenient.
F. J. Michelini, May 19, 2017.

It is hard to describe the very limited role of government in the social and political culture of the post WW II world. The immediate post war expansion in education resulting from the G I Bill was accompanied by funding research in the sciences that led to rapid and profound change. In medicine the introduction of penicillin during the war precipitated the rapid expansion of research in antibiotics; the equally profound impact of scientific research and engineering that resulted in jet aircraft and atomic weapons continued during the "Cold War" competition developing between the Soviet Union and the U. S. resulted in an unanticipated continuation of research in many new areas that followed on war time initiatives. The rapidity of the post war advances in mathematics and in the continued development of computers originally designed to permit more accurate weapons and delivery systems but became critical in analyzing encrypted messages transformed the concept of information systems. The rapid focus of research on advanced jet propulsion and rocketry led to decades of space research and put man on the moon!

Suddenly the pre-war culture of post secondary education and access to advanced professional school limited to family members or the economic elite abruptly ended and a vast range of higher education became accessible to a very broad range of the American society. The limited view of professions being closed to women, people of color, and/or of limited economic and social status was transformed. Wilkes College had been born in that period of recognition of the need for societal change and was an active participant in that societal transformation in the Valley. The 1947 ascendancy to College from the Junior College mission in this post war world positioned it to flourish in this new focus on education and science.

The continuing threat to democracies by other ideologies provided increased federal government incentive to continue the support of the war time research efforts and the National Science Foundation was created and funded to achieve that federal objective. Pell grants, now Basic Education Opportunity Grants, (BEOG) and support for early student introduction to research initiated an increasing change in the role of the federal government in all kinds of areas previously exclusive to state funding and oversight.

A Wilkes Board member, Walter Carpenter, had been a war time business leader at the Du Pont Corporation and saw the role that Wilkes College could play in this new environment. He personally donated funds to build a state of the art science

building that provided for high quality science teaching and research in a facility to be named for his life time friend Admiral Harold Stark. When I arrived at Wilkes fresh out of graduate school in 1955 I found an institution poised to enter this new age in educational opportunity. I submitted a proposal for and received a National Science Foundation research grant that involved students in undergraduate science and success of that program led to an invitation from NSF to me to spend a year in Washington, D.C. working in the Institutes Section of NSF observing programs designed for science teachers in the nations' high schools. New curricular materials had been developed in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and three curricular models in Biology. This experience in turn led to Wilkes conducting a number of summer institutes for science teachers from all over the country.

This is a simplistic overview of the post war culture that also maintained federal involvement in the war time civil defense structures. They were "not" totally disbanded and with the "Cold War" assuming a more dangerous world the civil defense structures had been assigned important state responsibilities. Governor's had dominant roles in maintaining National Guard facilities and training and this was reflected in the government responses to the devastation of Hurricane Agnes in June of 1972. This is all a prelude to Page 3 of this publication which profiles the roles of the three major Civil Defense figures that coordinated the initial responses to Agnes. Major General Frank Townend; Lt. Colonel Nick Souchick; John McCormick, Esq. Other than those three men and the National Guard organized within the state of Pennsylvania the flood experience led to a new era of federal financial involvement and oversight of many areas new to the federal level of government. The extreme and unexpected nature of this unique natural disaster was to change the role of the federal government in what had been uniquely state functions.

The evolution of the resulting centralization of disaster relief at the federal level after Agnes is a doctoral dissertation in and of itself. The unique location of this disaster in a major state, with a powerful figure, Congressman Dan Flood controlling the House of Representatives budget planning process in the sub-committees of Health, Education, and Welfare, (HEW), and Defense appropriations, constituting two thirds of the U.S. Budget at the time, in a Presidential election year, was a powerful testament to a higher power at work!

F. J. Michelini, May 21, 2017

"What's going on?" people asked each other. "Who is there?"

SELECTED PHOTOS OF SPECIFIC INTEREST in A PORTRAIT OF AGNES

Pg. 3 - Civil Defense Officials Townend, Souchik, & Mc Cormick

Pg. 7 - Fire Departments had fire fighting equipment for unique environments where there are no fire hydrants or on scene pumper tank trucks to provide water. The photo on the bottom right corner of this page shows a small portable gas fired engine that could draw water from a flooded basement or for pumping water from a swimming pool for example to use in fighting a fire. Actually fighting a fire during a flood is a very difficult task. Hydrants are under water and pumper tank trucks cannot reach flooded areas if streets are impassable.

The fire department solution in a flood situation is to form a fire team in boats that can reach the fire site. The two college boats functioned as a team for most of the period of the flood and many photos in this publication show these "teams" of firefighters.

Page 46 shows a rare photo of one of the Kozemchak Family photographers who took the photo in this publication. Rarely does the "photographer" get his picture taken but apparently Jim suffered some injury and the camera found him on the other end outside the Paramount studios.

Pg's 58 to 64 show various street scenes in communities during the floods of 1902 and 1936 which were the two major flood events experienced prior to Agnes in 1972.

Page 61 has a fascinating photo taken during the 1902 flood showing many mansions that later became the heart of the Wilkes campus. The building first on the left is the Conyngham family home that housed the Chemistry department when I first arrived at Wilkes in 1955. The carriage house behind this home had been converted to serve the Biology department and had a large lecture room on the first floor that accommodated the entire faculty for faculty meetings conducted by President Farley.

The second floor conversion housed the laboratories for all of the Biology courses offered at that time. By 1957 the new science building, Stark Hall, was completed and had state of the art biology laboratories and classrooms fully equipped with monocular and binocular microscopes with the Chemistry and Physics departments similarly equipped to meet every research and teaching need for their course offerings. Out of this picture view at the far end of the block were Chase and Kirby homes later acquired by the College.

Page 68 has photos of the Wilkes campus during the cleanup process. Two of my daughters are in the group photo that was checking in at Weckesser Annex.

Students would arrive early to help in clean up and attend classes which began at 4 p.m. and end before the city closed down for the night. I have not yet worked out identities for all of the staff in these photos but remember them well.

Page 69 shows the kind of mess the National Guardsmen faced. Basement mud cleanup is indescribable. Soaked carpeting and office files were totally immersed and water soaked and despite the best efforts to salvage critical records, much was lost. Also see page 110 for National Guard at work.

Page 77 shows groups of Mennonite and Amish who were experienced and available for disaster relief anywhere they could be of help to others. Before Agnes I did not know that only three organizations were federally recognized and pre -approved for disaster relief work; the American Red Cross; the Salvation Army; and the Mennonite Disaster Relief Service. They were truly amazing and would just knock on a door, come in, and do whatever they could to clean up and get families back in their homes. The roles of the Red Cross and Salvation Army dealt with the people problems and provided the organizational skills to house and feed both victims and workers engaged in the recovery itself.

Pages 89 to 108 show a number of street scenes from areas of the city, and Pages 109 to 118 show street scenes from Kingston.

Page 119 has a memorable photo for me in the lower right corner. I made general trips around the campus and around town and on one of my trips around Public Square I saw a Beer truck unloading cases of beer, (or so I thought). I quickly drove up to the truck and asked if I could load up the Jeep to take some back to campus for the National Guard guys working so hard in what was by then a very hot, dry, and dusty Wilkes-Barre. When I got back to campus the cases of beer disappeared rapidly until we came to realize that these cases had been filled with clean WATER by the breweries and sent to Wilkes Barre where clean water was badly needed. That experience quickly led to a visit to the Stegmaier Brewery and when I described the plight of our national guardsmen working under these conditions they promised a keg of beer to be picked up before noon every other day, shared alternately with the Gibbons Brewery. This provided for a daily "Beer Run" by Dr. Mike who would have a cold keg placed in the trunk of his 1964 Ford Falcon Convertible. I tried to make that beer run personally just to see these troops lined up with their canteen cups waiting for that refreshing pick me up. Other college personnel kept up that tradition until the troops stay in Wilkes-Barre ended. The Falcon survived as a pretty beat up rusted "old" car and much to my surprise Anne Marie agreed to me

WILKES-BARRE-WILKES COLLEGE

replacing that car with a one year old 1971 Chevrolet Malibu 350 convertible that now has over 250,000 miles on it and resides on my nephew's home in Berwick. My girls used that car through high school and college years and it was always a reminder of the flood experience.

There are a number of pages repeating some numbering but the last few pages return to Wilkes Barre streets and to medical services at College Misericordia with a final page photo of Wilkes President Francis Michelini with Frank Carlucci, President Nixon's designated representative to oversee the entire flood recovery effort. He was a remarkable man and brought order out of the initial sometimes chaotic recovery leadership.

Francis J. Michelini - May 21, 2017

What's going on? people asked each other. "Who

WILKES-BARRE—WILKES COLLEGE



What's going on? people asked each other. "Who is it?" "Who's involved?" "Who's in charge?"

A PORTRAIT OF AGNES - PART THREE

In completing as much as I can of my personal involvement in flood events before a meeting scheduled for tomorrow at the University to review a file of 35 mm flood slides, I am trying to finish up some of the individual reports of events reported in the various publications of flood photos from 1972. This particular photo is from The Portrait of Agnes publication from the Kozemchak Photographers.

This particular photo of the fire burning in the buildings on Northampton Street is one that I was personally involved in. In some earlier writing I noted the use of two boats from Wilkes College. One was the environmental science boat and its partner was my own boat. Both were purchased from Woolbert's in Kingston at the same time. They were Glassmaster tri-hull catamarans with 55 hp Evinrude outboard motors. The green college boat was for the new environmental science program use in various lake and river analysis research and the yellow hull boat was bought by me personally for use in family vacations at the New Jersey shore.

These two boats were under the direction of the fire department personnel and generally utilized as a working pair for rescue and other purposes. Assignments ranged all over the map as needed but the primary function was to be prepared to deal with any actual fires in buildings. That is especially dangerous and frustrating to firemen since although surrounded by water, fire hydrants are inaccessible and equipment to fight fires was constantly rotated between pairs of boats that would transfer the necessary equipment between fire crews who spent an hour or two resting but available for any fire emergency. There were actually three fires during the Saturday/Sunday period of June 23/24 but by far the worst was the fire in the industrial section of buildings on Northampton Street that started in a warehouse at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue.

A report came in late in the day to check out a report of a small fire in a building at the corner. Both boats proceeded to that area and night had fallen so we could see the glow reflected off the water through the windows in the building. The water level was about eight or nine feet and there was about a foot or two of air space below the second floor. It appeared to be an electrical short with ignition of the wood plank flooring of the second floor imminent. The fire fighting procedure was to start up the gasoline powered pump engine located in one boat and pump water into the hose and fire nozzles located in the second boat that would then get water on the fire before it spread. There were firemen in both boats and I was piloting the boat with the hose that would get water on the fire before it spread. That was the operational procedure and after getting in position the firemen in boat one with the pump engine started the engine up. It fired and began to pump water into the hose line and the fireman in my boat took a boat hook to break the window so they could float the nozzle through and get at the fire.

"What's going on?" people asked each other. "Who is there?"

WORLD WIDE TOBACCO CO. © 1984



What's going on? people asked each other. "Who is that?"

FIRE WILKES BARRE DISTRICT



Everything went well and I break the glass to get the hose window broke the water pump station.

The unintended result was to be sucked into the building and with dense smoke now pouring out direction and the current pushed us clear air. In just a few minutes the fire apparent that now the entire block also catch fire and put the entire city.

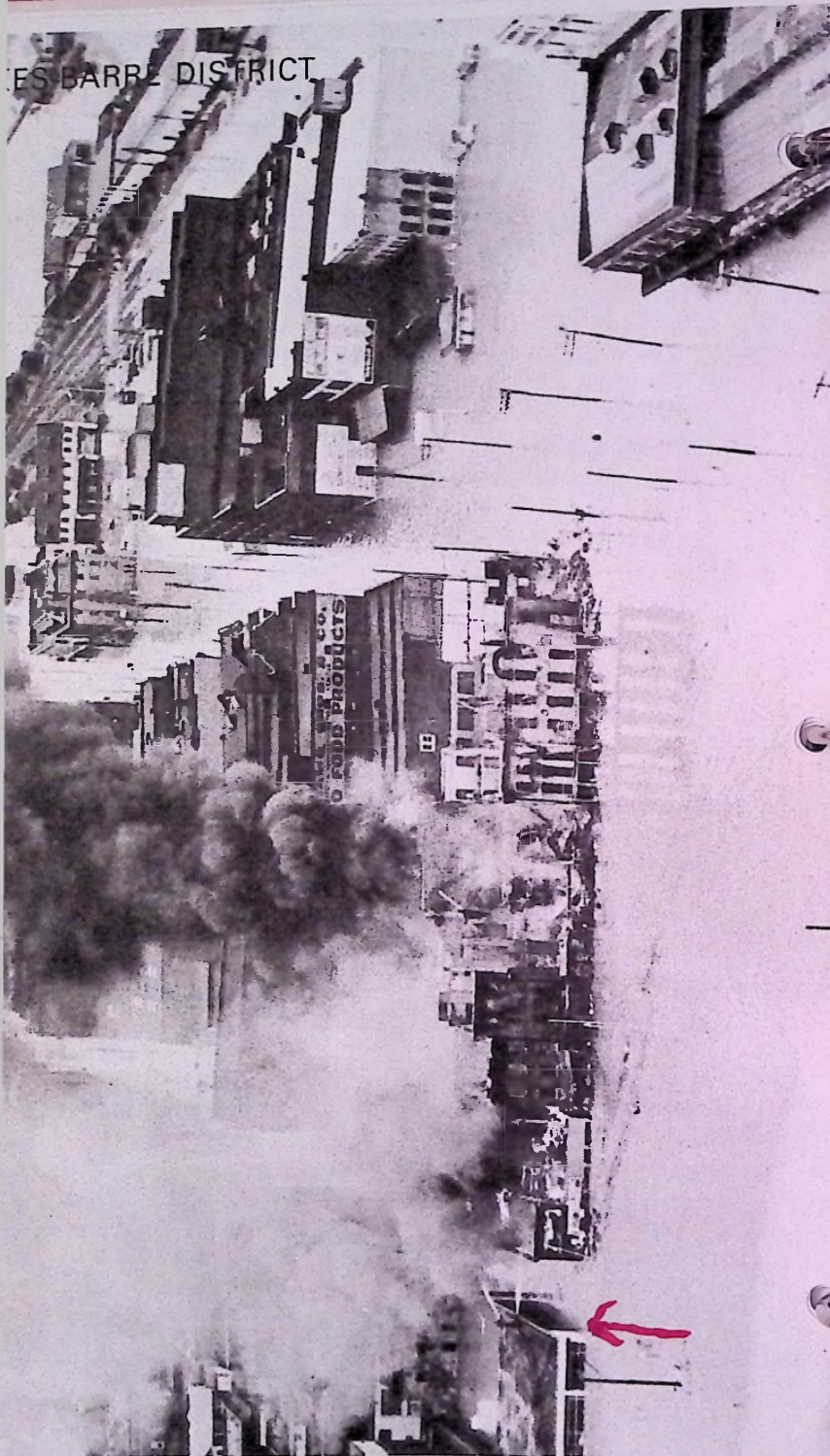
The hose guys in my boat at Northampton Street boat ramp area line to try to drag out into the water and land hooked up hoses to the fire plus hose line to the water ski hooks on the dragged the hose through the river to remember making out the power in the fire. It was very tough going but we finally the Briar Birch apartments.

IN THIS PHOTO IN THE LOW YOU CAN SEE TWO FIREMEN ON ALLEY FROM THE BURNING BLOCK. Notice that there is a telephone booth those two firemen shinned up a splittled adapter up onto the water on the fire that had all of the street.

Once I got those men and the roof of the entrance of the apartments fire jumped the alley and the firemen they stopped that fire fire downtown Wilkes Barre was a Post script: When the flood walk trailer and towed it back to River Street went to do a TV interview and when I re the boat and trailer were but the college boat lives on!

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ECON



Everything went well and after the pump started my boat crew proceeded to break the glass to get the hose water on the fire. To everyone's dismay, just as the window broke the water pump stalled and desperate efforts to start it were to no avail.

The unintended result was that the breaking of the window allowed fresh air to be sucked into the building and the small red fire suddenly flashed into a major fire with dense smoke now pouring out of the window. Both boats lost all sense of direction and the current pushed us both away from the burning building and out into clear air. In just a few minutes the fire spread throughout the building and it was apparent that now the entire block of buildings leading up to South Main street would also catch fire and put the entire center city at risk. Things really looked desperate.

The hose guys in my boat came up with the idea of going back to the Northampton Street boat ramp area and looking for a fire plug and hooking up hose line to try to drag out into the water to try to stop that growing fire. Fire Trucks on dry land hooked up hoses to the fire plug and their pumper truck and we hooked the hose line to the water ski hooks on the back of the boat with some strong rope and dragged the hose through the river water. It was a hard pull against the current and I remember maxing out the power in the engine as we started up Northampton to the fire. It was very tough going but we finally made it to a narrow alley way across from the B'nai B'rith apartments.

IN THIS PHOTO IN THE LOWER LEFT HAND CORNER OF THE PICTURE YOU CAN SEE TWO FIREMEN ON THE ROOF OF THE BUILDING ACROSS THE ALLEY FROM THE BURNING BLOCK.

Notice that there is a telephone pole along the side of the building. THOSE TWO FIREMEN SHINNIED UP THE POLE AND PULLED THE HOSE WITH A SPLITTED ADAPTER UP ONTO THAT ROOF AND GOT TWO STREAMS OF WATER ON THE FIRE THAT HAD ALREADY CONSUMED THE ENTIRE BLOCK OF THE STREET.

Once I got those men and the hose on that roof I backed off and tied up to the roof of the entrance of the apartments and just sat and watched for hours in case the fire jumped the alley and the firemen had to be removed.

THEY STOPPED THAT FIRE FROM JUMPING THE ALLEY AND DOWNTOWN WILKES BARRE WAS SAVED. UNSUNG HEROES INDEED!

Post script: When the flood water finally receded I got my boat back on its trailer and towed it back to River Street and parked it on the lawn by the theater. I went to do a TV interview and when I returned later that night it was gone!

THE BOAT AND TRAILER WERE STOLEN! GONE! NEVER SAW IT AGAIN. BUT THE COLLEGE BOAT LIVES ON IN A GARAGE AT THE ATHLETIC FIELDS.

This report from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
is a good authoritative description of flooding:
Interesting statistics and narrative of events in
the Watershed.

TROPICAL STORM



1972



UNITED STATES ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Area Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Upper Susquehanna
Area Office
240 Johnston Street
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania 18701

"What's going on?" people asked each other. "Who
is that?" a lady inquired of a friend.

The Birth of Agnes

Tourists who were taking pictures of the Mayan pyramids and temples at Chichen Itza in Yucatan held their light meters high in the pouring rain. After all, they had come a long way to see these treasures of a civilization that had disappeared long ago when the conquistadors conquered Mexico. Others took a quick look and returned to the Mayaland Hotel where they drank Mexican beer until the cars could take them on the long wet drive back to the ship which was scheduled to sail from Progreso that evening of June 14, 1972.

The following day, reports of a weather disturbance over Yucatan seemed to be sufficiently suspicious to the National Hurricane Center in Miami, Fla., to warrant dispatching a plane to look it over. The disturbance increased in intensity and Hurricane Hunters were directed to keep a plane in the rainstorm at all times until further notice. The planes, with their intricate electronic equipment, kept the Hurricane Center informed of the conditions and changes of the tropical depression that seemed to be building up.

June 16 was another of those depressing rainy days in Sunbury, Pa. The woman in the white house rocked and complained to her neighbor, as usual, about the Government.

"We used to be able to sit out on the porch and watch our beautiful Susquehanna River. And then those Government people came along and cut off our view with that big pile of dirt and, as if that wasn't bad enough, they put that big concrete wall on top of all that. Can't see a thing any more. When I wrote to Harrisburg about it they told me to tell the Army Engineers. Now if they don't come along and take it down, I'll go to the President himself. 'Flood control' they call it! Why, the biggest flood we've ever had here was almost a quarter of a century ago and even then the water never came anywhere near this house!"

At about the same time, the husband of a reporter in Wellsville, N.Y., grumbled to his wife. "Now here's an absurd editorial in your paper. It tells about hurricane preparations. Everybody knows things like that don't happen here."

"Tell you what," a young Government economist said to his wife. "Next Wednesday I'll take you out to Olney. We'll have dinner at

"What's going on?" people asked each other. "Who is that?" a lady inquired of a Capital man.

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BELL OF PENNSYLVANIA
DIAMOND STATE TELEPHONE
EMPLOYEE INFORMATION
466-4870, ONE PARKWAY

THE RAIN DIDN'T STOP

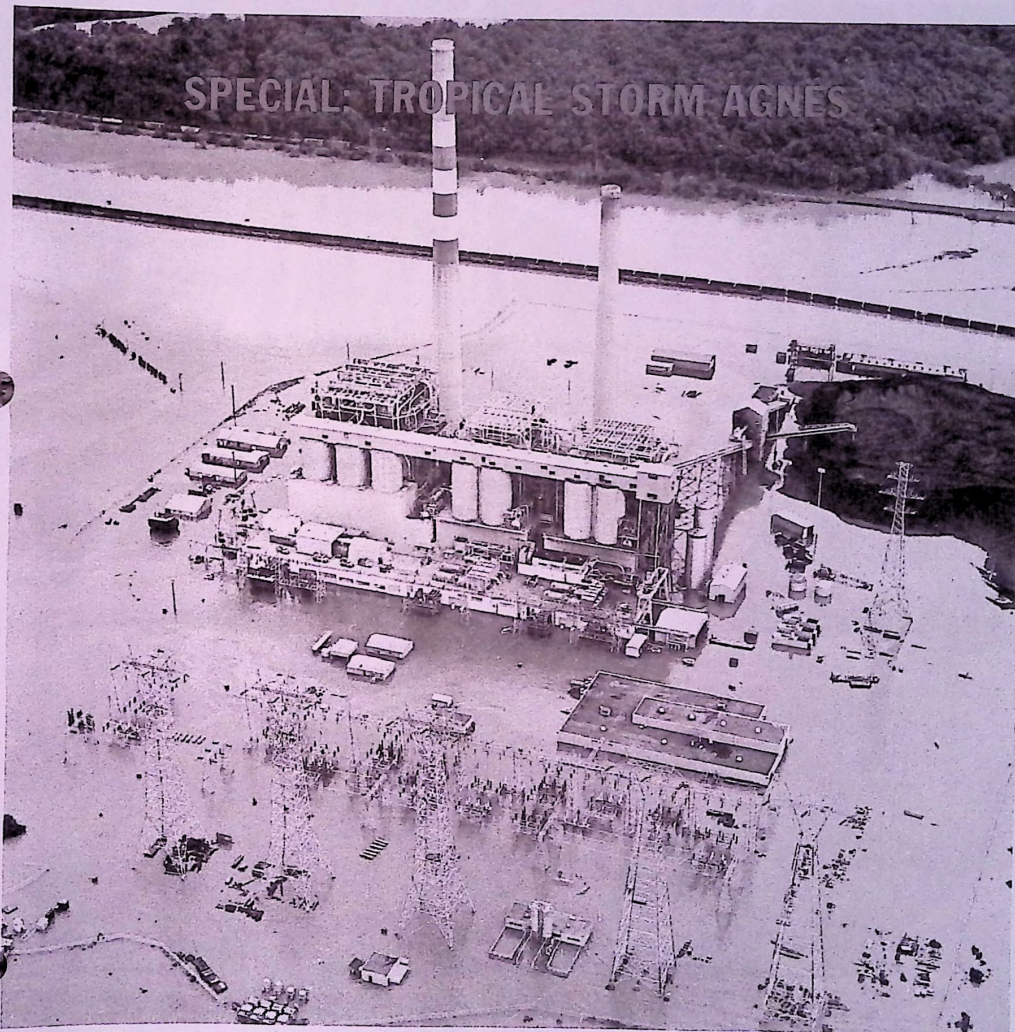


"What's going on?" people asked each other. "Who is that?" a lady inquired of a Capital...

P&L Reporter

PENNSYLVANIA POWER & LIGHT COMPANY

July 1972



Brunner Island Plant at Flood's Height

What's going on? people asked each other. "Who's in charge?"

Flood Control Report

TROPICAL STORM AGNES • WYOMING VALLEY, PENNSYLVANIA



WILBUR SMITH AND ASSOCIATES

"What's going on?" people asked each other. "Who is the for the flood control?"

TITLE: Flood Control Report Tropical Storm Agnes,
Wyoming Valley, Pennsylvania

AUTHOR: Wilbur Smith and Associates,
Consulting Planners and Engineers
Planning Division
Columbia, South Carolina

SUBJECT: An analysis of the Effect of Tropical Storm
Agnes on the Wyoming Valley, Pennsylvania

DATE: December 8, 1973

PLANNING AGENCIES: Economic Development Council of Northeastern
Pennsylvania
Luzerne County Planning Commission

SOURCE OF COPIES: Economic Development Council of Northeastern
Pennsylvania
P. O. Box 777
Avoca, Pennsylvania 18641

Luzerne County Planning Commission
Luzerne County Courthouse
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

HUD Regional Office Library
Region II
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

HUD PROJECT NUMBER: CPA-PA-03-26-1048/ARC-73-84

SERIES NUMBER: 2 (of 3)

NUMBER OF PAGES: 26

ABSTRACT: The flood control report investigates the level
and degree of damage of past floods and relates
the causes for the extensive flooding during
Tropical Storm Agnes. Recommendations are
given for future prevention of flooding during
a 100-year flood. An analysis of work performed
by the Army Corps of Engineers and their future
proposals was also prepared.

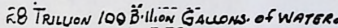
"We're going out" people asked each other. "Who
is it?"

[illegible]

Units from all over the state were called to help. Engineer units from Philadelphia moved north and put their sophisticated training to good use; medical and supply units saw that the human needs were taken care of; and infantrymen provided the back-breaking labor which became a necessity as residents went back to their homes only to find them in ruins.

"What's going on?" people asked each other. "Who is that?" a lady inquired of a Capitol guard.

Rainfall June 21 to June 23

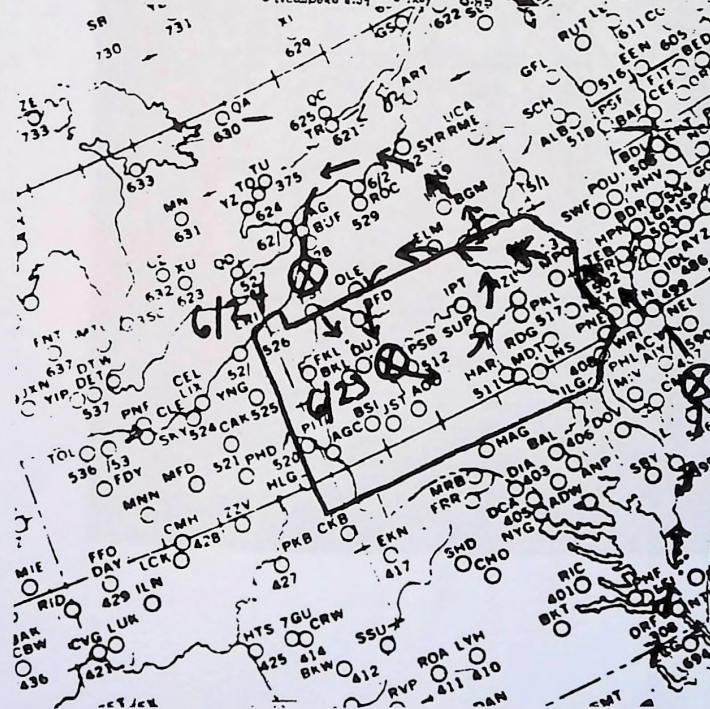


LOCATIONS

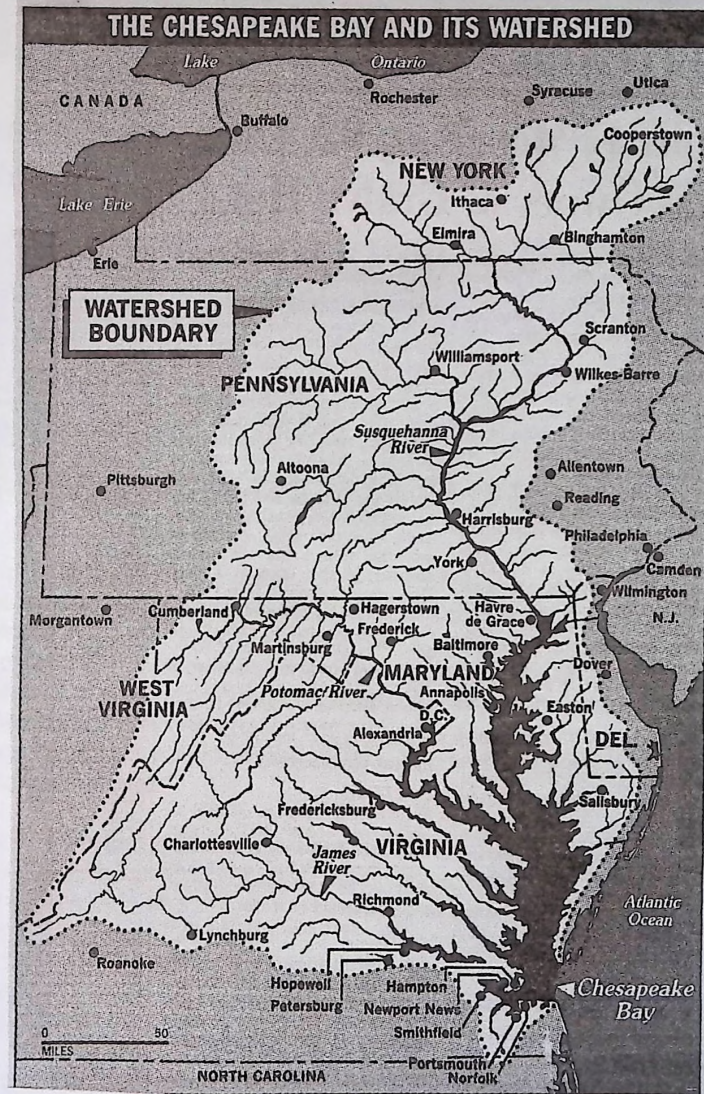
ISSUED 6/22

1865 FLOOD	33.1
1893 FLOOD	28.7
1901 FLOOD	27.0
1902 FLOOD	31.4
1936 FLOOD	33.1
1972 FLOOD	40.6

"What's going on?" people asked each other. "Who is this?"



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1987 C5

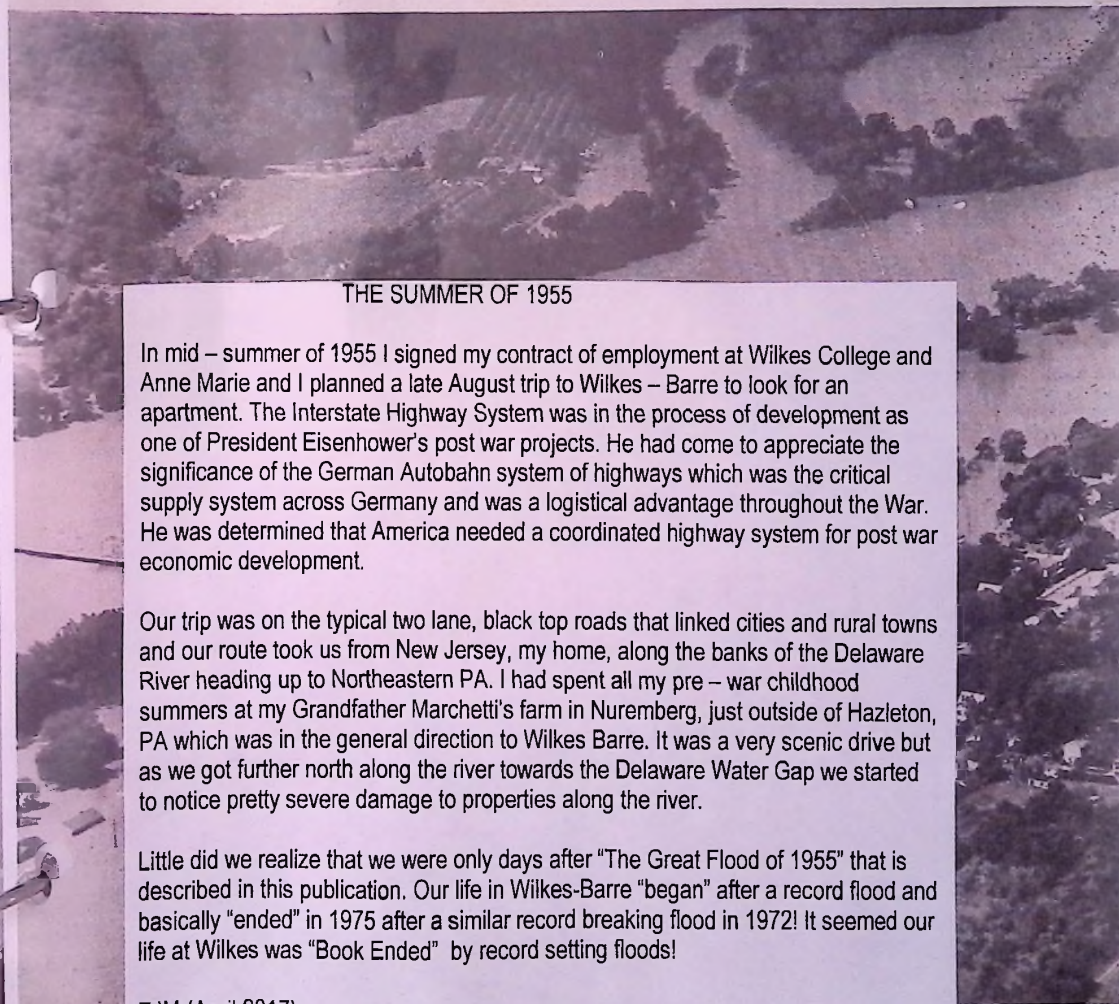


What's going on? people asked each other. "Who

\$1.00 per copy

THE GREAT FLOOD DISASTER of 1955

*Picture Story of Greatest Catastrophe in the
History of Hunterdon and Bucks Counties*



THE SUMMER OF 1955

In mid – summer of 1955 I signed my contract of employment at Wilkes College and Anne Marie and I planned a late August trip to Wilkes – Barre to look for an apartment. The Interstate Highway System was in the process of development as one of President Eisenhower's post war projects. He had come to appreciate the significance of the German Autobahn system of highways which was the critical supply system across Germany and was a logistical advantage throughout the War. He was determined that America needed a coordinated highway system for post war economic development.

Our trip was on the typical two lane, black top roads that linked cities and rural towns and our route took us from New Jersey, my home, along the banks of the Delaware River heading up to Northeastern PA. I had spent all my pre – war childhood summers at my Grandfather Marchetti's farm in Nuremberg, just outside of Hazleton, PA which was in the general direction to Wilkes Barre. It was a very scenic drive but as we got further north along the river towards the Delaware Water Gap we started to notice pretty severe damage to properties along the river.

Little did we realize that we were only days after "The Great Flood of 1955" that is described in this publication. Our life in Wilkes-Barre "began" after a record flood and basically "ended" in 1975 after a similar record breaking flood in 1972! It seemed our life at Wilkes was "Book Ended" by record setting floods!

FJM (April 2017)

"What's going on?" people asked each other. "Who is that?" Under the hood of a car.

'Ah think the Senate is determined
to recover some of its powers'

Constitutional Ervin

By James M. Naughton

WASHINGTON. Tourists peered, like innocent cherubim placed there for effect, over the edge of the circular second-floor railing and down on the human fresco in the well of the Senate rotunda of the United States Capitol. Portable floodlights. Three television cameras. A dozen microphones. A rackety pack of the nation's premier investigative reporters. And, at the center, a broad-shouldered, white-haired, 76-year-old oracle who alternately listened to questions with an amused smile creasing his McIntosh apple face or gargled answers in a cornmeal-mush dialect of the Appalachian South.

Once, maybe twice, the word "Watergate" seemed to rise rancidly from the fresco, rebound off the nearby stone wall—where a plaque noted that Samuel F. B. Morse had, 129 years earlier, telegraphed "What hath God wrought!" to Baltimore—and lodge in the ears of curious bystanders. "What's going on?" people asked each other. "Who is that?" a lady inquired of a Capitol guard.

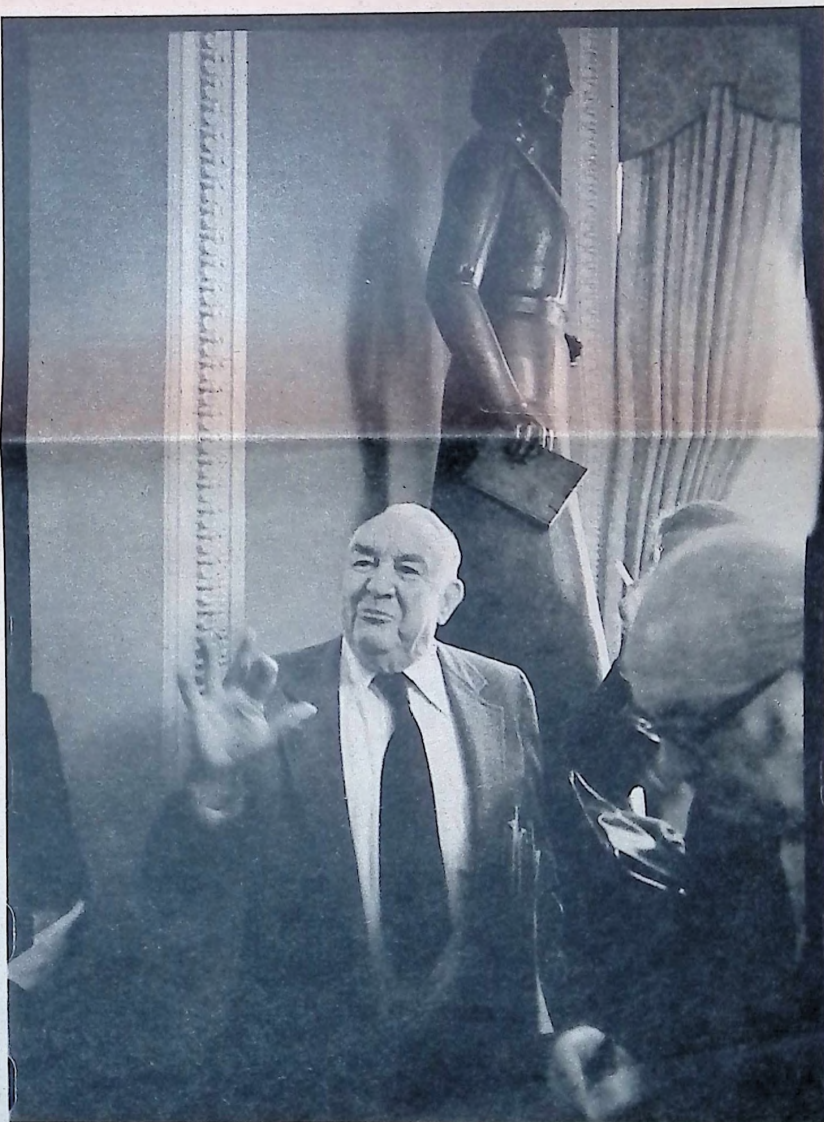
"That's Senator Ervin of the Watergate committee," the guard replied.

"Oh, yes," said the lady, excitedly, repeating the bulletin to an elderly companion. "That's Senator Ervin."

They may not know how to pronounce his name, these visitors from Nebraska or Texas or New Hampshire or Georgia who outnumber the springtime crocuses in the capital. But they know who Sam J. Ervin Jr. is.

He is the investigator who was not indulging in hyperbole when he threatened to send the Senate Sergeant-at-Arms to arrest any White House aide refusing to testify about political espionage and sabotage before the Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities. He is the constitutional lawyer who dismissed President Nixon's interpretation of executive privilege as so much "executive poppycock." He is the legislator who drafted a measure to demand that the White House follow Congressional instructions on how to spend Federal money. He is the storyteller who seems to have committed to memory the Bible, the Constitution, the words of Shakespeare, the rulings of the Supreme Court, the advice of Thomas Hobbes, James Madison, W. C. Fields and, of course, Tarheel philosopher Lum Garrison. He is the Democratic senior Senator from North Carolina and, after 18 years in the Senate and five decades in public life, he has amassed enough influence, authority and seniority to chair—besides the Watergate inquiry—the Government Operations Committee and three Judiciary subcommittees, enabling him to preside over more than 60 Con-

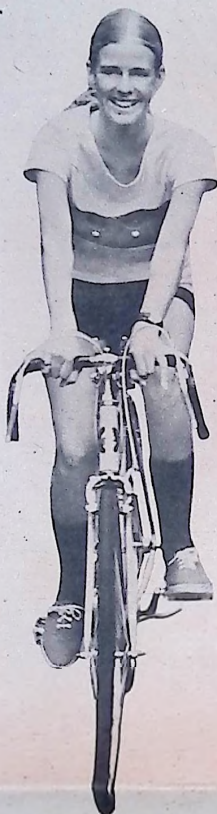
(Continued on Page 78)



James M. Naughton is a Congressional correspondent of *The Times*.

New star of the Senate: Senator Sam Ervin Jr. with reporters in the Judiciary Committee hearing room. To tourists in Washington, he's the man who threatened to arrest White House aides.





A BORN LEADER

It's self-confidence that puts you out front, leading the way. And that's what makes your friends look up to you.

And to make sure your confidence doesn't sag during your period, rely on the dependable protection of Tampax tampons. They're worn internally, which is why more girls are using them when they want to stay comfortable and self-assured. When they refuse to let menstrual worries interfere with their good times.

Everyone knows you're a born leader. And you know that Tampax tampons help keep you one step ahead of the crowd.

The internal protection more women trust



DEVELOPED BY A DOCTOR
NOW USED BY MILLIONS OF WOMEN
MADE ONLY BY TAMPAX INCORPORATED, PALMER, MASS.

Ervin

(Continued from Page 13)

gressional employees with an annual payroll exceeding \$1-million.

And he is the closest thing the United States Congress has to a symbolic leader in its bitter dispute with President Nixon over constitutional powers.

Congress sorely needs a symbol. Pierre L'Enfant designed the District of Columbia to resemble a big wheel, with the Capitol at its hub, but the power and visibility have shifted to the White House. Congress must struggle ritually to overcome political, philosophical and sectional differences among 435 Representatives and 100 Senators on the most mundane matters. The President can act with solitary dispatch. Members of Congress may get 30 seconds of time on a newscast for each ton of paper they distribute with their press statements. The President can monopolize 30 minutes of prime time on every television network, simultaneously, merely by suggesting he has something on his mind.

Congress had plenty on its mind when it convened for the 93d time in January. Since its members had gone off last year to get elected or re-elected, the President had dismissed Watergate, through his spokesmen, as a third-rate burglary attempt unconnected to the White House. He had declared peace to be at hand in Indochina just before the election and then unleashed aerial devastation on Hanoi just before Christmas. He had impounded—withheld, that is—more than \$12-billion allocated by Congress for a variety of spending programs, in effect unilaterally resetting the nation's spending priorities. The Senate and House of Representatives might have been able to live with all that, but Mr. Nixon had not even troubled to go through the motions of advising their leaders. At least, grumbled some of them, Lyndon Johnson had flown committee chairmen down to the Pedernales to tell them when they were about to be disregarded. As Ralph Nader put it, the President's great contribution to the Congress was that he had offended its sensibilities.

Almost by accident—Ervin, a Presbyterian elder, might

say by predestination—the senior Senator from North Carolina has become the symbol of the wounded institution trying to recover its strength and its self-respect. After two decades as hardly more than a caricature of the Southern wing, Sam Ervin at the twilight of his career has become the graven image of Congress. Nothing that he is doing or saying today is much different from what he did or said as a freshman Senator in 1954, but suddenly people are watching and listening with the avidity of voyeurs. His long love affair with the original version of the Constitution has propelled Ervin into the role of architect of Congressional efforts to regain constitutional prerogatives. His reputation for fairness and his experience as a justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court have cast him in a leading role in the Watergate morality play. His native wit and accumulated hill-country charm have captivated the media, helped turn Ervin into a campus folk figure and caused all of Washington to listen for his antiphons every time the White House sings a new tune. In the next few days, as the Watergate committee begins its public exploration of a scandal that has raised doubts about the integrity of the 1972 Presidential election and of the national political system itself, it will be Sam Ervin, manipulating the gavel and guiding the inquiry, who will be the dominant political figure in Washington.

THE snow tires sang and windshield wipers clacked as the Chrysler New Yorker bearing United States Senator license plates swished through Cornelius and turned right onto North Carolina 73, tunneled into the wet dark night at 60 m.p.h. and headed home to Morganton.

"Oh, ah can see fahn," said Sam Ervin as he squinted toward the ends of the headlamp beams. "Ah just hope it isn't too bad through Hickory."

"Do y'all have your seat belts on?" inquired Miz Margaret, crunched hospitably into a corner of the rear seat alongside the clothes hamper, hatbox and overnight case so that her husband and

their guest could talk up front. "Is the air-conditioner on?"

The previous day, a radio newscaster had told Sam Ervin that Richard Nixon had caved in on executive privilege. "Major developments" in the Watergate case had suddenly come to his attention, the President had announced. After weeks of insisting on the right of his White House aides to decline to appear before the Ervin committee, after Ervin had threatened their arrest if necessary, after the Attorney General had claimed executive privilege cloaked all 2.5-million Government employees in Presidential secrecy, after Ervin had rejected an offer of written answers or informal closed-door White House testimony, the President had reversed himself and ordered his aides to cooperate with the Senate investigation.

"Ah got to a motel and there were two newsmen there," Mr. Ervin recalled as the Chrysler neared Lowesville. "Ah must enunciate very poorly, 'cause ah never say anything to belittle people, and ah told them ah was glad the President's aides were gonna come down and testifiah, and they misunderstood mah Southern accent. Ah was saying a-i-d-e-s, ah thought plainly. Gol darn if they didn't both write me up saying ah was glad the eggs were gonna come down and testifiah. . ."

"Can you imagine?" Miz Margaret intervened.

"... which is contrary to mah whole history. It was just in the two North Carolina papers, so ah hope it'll stay there. Ah said before, ah'm charged with bein' judge and jury and ah don't like to say anything—ah don't say anything—that's attacks on people or anything to indicate ah can't base mah decisions solely on what evidence we bring in. Now if that'd been some of you Nawtheners, ah could understand it. You couldn't understand the dialect. But how these Southerners couldn't understand the difference between aides and eggs. . ."

SENATOR Barry Goldwater, the conscience of the conservatives, the 1964 Republican nominee for President, came out the other day in favor of an independent, impartial investigation of the Watergate conspiracy by a prominent individual outside both the Ad-

Thom McAn

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ministration and the Congress.
"But I have complete faith in Ervin," he hastily noted. "I'd trust him with my wife's back teeth."

That attitude is more prevalent than bunkum in the United States Senate. It explains why Ervin was press-ganged into the chairmanship of the Watergate probe and why the White House has the jitters about the Senate investigation.

Ervin was snowbound in Morganton last January when Mike Mansfield, the Senate Democratic leader, persuaded the Democratic Policy Committee to initiate a full-scale inquisition into every allegation of wrongdoing by the Republican Presidential campaign organization in 1972—the bugging of the Democrats' Watergate offices, the sabotage of Democratic candidacies, the laundering of hundred-dollar bills to support these efforts, White House attempts to cover it all up. Mansfield's first rule was that the committee's Democrats could not be past or potential Presidential candidates, a stipulation that seemed to rule out nearly every Democrat in the Senate. Mansfield also wanted as chairman an experienced lawyer, preferably one with investigative or judicial experience.

The logical, perhaps the lone, prospect was Samuel James Ervin Jr. He had supported the President on Vietnam and voted to sustain some Nixon vetoes. He was not, clearly, a partisan Democrat. He had practiced law since 1922, served at every level of the criminal and appellate court system in North Carolina, sat on the Senate committees that censured Joseph McCarthy in 1954 and investigated labor racketeering from 1957 to 1960. Above all, as Mansfield put it, he "was the only man we could have picked on either side of the aisle who'd have the respect of the Senate as a whole. We could've got the fist-pounding, free-wheeling boys out there. I don't know what that would have accomplished. We're not looking for a TV melodrama. We're looking for a good, fair, impartial investigation."

But Sam Ervin wasn't looking for its chairmanship. He was enmeshed in constitutional scraps over the impoundment of appropriated funds by the President and secrecy in the executive branch. And, despite the fact that he will be 78 years old when his

Sam and 'Miz Margaret'



The Senator and his wife stroll the Chapel Hill campus of the University of North Carolina, his home state.

Senate term expires in 1974, Ervin has not yet decided to retire. He didn't relish taking on another, potentially political clash with a President who had just produced a landslide victory that in North Carolina also swept out of the Senate Ervin's friend, B. Everett Jordan and installed as the junior Senator from North Carolina a conservative Republican, Jesse Helms.

It snowed in North Carolina. Ervin could not get to Washington for the January meeting of the Democratic caucus. Mansfield hustled the 14-member Policy Committee and then the 57-member caucus, minus Ervin, to unanimously endorse Ervin for the Watergate chairmanship.

"**M**IKE didn't leave me much choice. Ah sorta felt like, under the circumstances, it was mah duty to go ahead and do the best ah could," Ervin said. He slowed the big Chrysler at a dark bend in North Carolina 16, outside Triangle. "Careful," cautioned Miz Margaret.

"Mah good wife says if ah see anythin' controversial comin' from far off, ah run as fast as ah can to jump right in the middle of it. Which is, ah think, an error on her part. But it does seem like ah get a lot of assignments like that."

His willingness to accept them is conditioned in part by the offensive attitude of the White House, the arrogance with which it has refused to give explanations for its war policies or peace hopes, to provide witnesses when Congressional committees request them, to acknowledge the constitutional power of the purse that Congress has been impotent to retain.

"Ah think after the election Nixon got such a tremendous vote, why he thought he had a great mandate from the people. In mah judgment, he overlooked the fact it was not because they loved Caesar more but Brutus less."

The stop sign loomed up suddenly. The Senator tromped hard on the brake. The Chrysler slid to a halt with its nose poking into the

crossroad. Miz Margaret kept her own counsel.

"Ah think the Senate is determined to recover some of its powers. The thing that concerns me is whether the House has the will to do so. It's sorta hard work to sit down and study, for example, this impoundment bill, which the Senate passed as an amendment. The evolution of that bill required a whole lot of work 'cause it was a very weak bill when it started out. It had no means of enforcement. And then we conducted hearings and witnesses came along. Many of them made valuable suggestions and it's a pretty good bill now, ah think. The Administration doesn't want the bill. It might be vetoed, and then it comes to a question of whether or not it can be passed over a veto—in the first place, how much the House is gonna be interested, 'cause they've got a bill over there that's almost a verbatim copy of a bill ah introduced two years ago, that ah came to the conclusion was worthless. They've got a bill over there that's not any good at all. Ah can say that 'cause about 95 per cent of it's what ah wrote out of the Senate version."

CONGRESS already has enough power to force the White House to yield documents and supply witnesses. The question is whether Congress has the nerve to use it, Professor Raoul Berger, a senior fellow at Harvard Law School, admonished at a Senate hearing last month.

Under old English law, which the framers of the United States Constitution had in mind as precedent when they created the system of checks and balances, Professor Berger said, anyone refusing a subpoena from Parliament would be tossed into the Tower of London.

"Hear that, Senator Ervin?" chortled Senator Muskie.

"If I had six Senator Ervins, old as I am, I'd storm the White House," the Harvard professor said.

It is a suggestion not taken lightly some places. Like the White House.

"I worry about him," confessed one Presidential aide. "Ervin's fair. He commands a lot of respect. He's got a following. He has earthy charm. He's going to give us trouble."

Ervin has been trying to do just that—to Supreme Court Justice as well as to Presi-

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dents—during his entire Senate career.

In 1954, departing Senator Guy Gillette of Iowa urged freshman Senator Sam Ervin to assume the lead in trying to curtail the encroachment by the executive and judicial branches on the legislative power of Congress. The courts were writing law and the Administration was disregarding law, they agreed. Ervin mentioned the matter to Senator Mansfield and to Senator Everett M. Dirksen, the influential Illinois Republican, and the two leaders introduced a resolution that led to creation of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Separation of Powers. Ervin has been its only chairman.

From that forum—and later from the Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights, the Subcommittee on Revision and Codification of Law, and the full Committee on Government Operations, all of which Ervin also chairs—he has conducted seemingly contradictory crusades. He led Southern filibusters against civil rights laws but initiated civil liberties measures. He voted against Federal housing subsidies but challenged President Nixon's right to withhold the housing funds. He consistently supported the American military involvement in Indochina but fought bitterly against military surveillance of antiwar dissidents. He opposed court rulings that freed criminal suspects on technical procedural grounds but fought with equal fervor against adoption of the "preventive detention" law that permits the jailing of defendants before trial on the grounds they might commit another offense.

The consistency that Ervin sees throughout such positions is that he bases them all on his reading of the United States Constitution.

He is a fundamentalist, a strict constructionist, a constitutional conservative who abhors increases of power, however minimal, in the central government as threats to individual liberty. He grew up immersed in, and consequently still reflects, the old-fashioned Southern fidelity to the Constitution in its original form.

Even when Ervin served as the legal adviser to the civil rights filibusters he sought, not always with success, to limit the debate to questions of constitutionality rather than of prej-

udice. He cautioned against considering Governors Ross Barnett of Mississippi and George Wallace of Alabama to be embodiments of the Southern view. Once he summed up his own civil rights position this way:

"My stand is unequivocal. No man should be denied the right to vote on account of race; no man should be denied the right to seek and hold any job, the right to live by the sweat of his own brow; no man should be denied the right to have a fair and impartial trial by a jury of his peers; no man should be denied the right to a decent education or to enjoy any other basic human right. . . .

"But we will not fool history as we fool ourselves when we steal freedom from one man to confer it on another. When freedom for one citizen is diminished it is in the end diminished for all. Nor can we preserve liberty by making one branch of Government its protector, for, though defense of liberty be the purpose, the perversion of it will be the effect. The whole fabric of our Constitution—the Federal system and the separation of powers doctrine—is designed to protect us against such centralization; but even the language and lessons of the Constitution cannot stop a people who are hell-bent on twisting the document to the will of a temporary majority."

Congressional doves have argued that the United States slipped into Vietnam with little regard for the constitutional requirement of a declaration of war. But Ervin has supported—until, significantly, the last few weeks—the American involvement in Southeast Asian combat. He considered the Tonkin Gulf resolution to be "tantamount to a declaration of war" and voted against its repeal. When it was repealed, he continued to support the Nixon Administration on the grounds that the President had, as Commander in Chief, the authority to protect American troops being withdrawn from the combat zone.

But now that the troops have been withdrawn, Ervin is seriously considering a shift that could have important ramifications in a Senate whose conservatives often follow his lead. "I am frank to state," he told a questioner who wondered the other day about the President's authority to bomb in Cambodia, "that I am somewhat at a loss to understand

what authority we have."

Ervin's stewardship of the Senate's effort to enact a law shielding journalists from interrogation by legal officials or subpoena by grand juries is grounded in his interpretation of the First Amendment. He would except newsmen from giving testimony on anything other than first-hand observation of a crime and would stipulate, in the legislation he has prepared, that sources of all other information given to journalists are to remain private and that any unpublished data is immune from examination.

The most difficult of Ervin's positions to rationalize, however, is his adamant opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution, which would grant legal parity to women. Ervin's attitude seems less judicial than biological when he explains that "you have got to admit that there are physiological differences between men and women. I stick to my guns that I do not want to see women drafted in this country to serve in the armed forces just as men do."

When Ervin is introduced to an audience in his home state, inevitably he is described as a "champion of individual liberty," which causes him to break out in blushes and grins.

"Our greatest possession," he has told the students and faculty of Davidson College in North Carolina, "is not the vast domain; it's not our beautiful mountains, or our fertile prairies, or our magnificent coastline. It's not our great productive capacity. It is not the might of our Army or Navy. These things are of great importance. But in my judgment the greatest and most precious possession of the American people is the Constitution."

That is why, he said, he initiated legislation this year to compel the President to follow Congressional instructions on spending. "This is not a confrontation that's primarily concerned with money," insisted Ervin.

Mr. Nixon has contended that he was forced to cut back on some spending programs and eliminate others—despite Congressional appropriations—in order to avoid a deficit that would exceed the national debt ceiling or the tax increase that an "irresponsible" Congress would force with profligate spending. But Ervin, who has voted against every increase in the national debt and many

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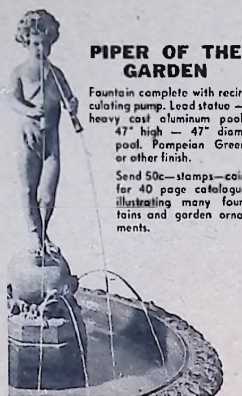
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of the Democratic-sponsored social spending proposals of the last decade, insists that the President simply does not have the constitutional right to refuse to spend as Congress directs.

Even the Nixon public relations apparatus, which came up with "battle of the budget" information kits advising Administration officials on tactics for attacking Congressional spending habits, is hard-pressed to paint Ervin as a fiscal libertine.

Ervin himself complains that both Presidents and Congresses have been too loose with the public's money, as in the foreign aid program, for example. "If an individual were to borrow money to give it away," he notes wryly, "his friends and family would institute an inquisition in lunacy against him and have a guardian appointed on the grounds that he's not capable of managing his own affairs. But in the last 40 years, if a politician advocated the country borrowing money to give it away, he would likely be elected President or Senator or Congressman or wind up as Secretary of State." His most telling punch line, however, may be his assertion that "the most reckless spending man that's ever been in the White House since I've been in Congress is the present occupant. The national debt has increased \$110-billion since he took his oath of office a little over four years ago."

Small wonder that even before Ervin got under way with the Watergate investigation, the White House was fretful over the Senator's potential to shape the public perception of the clash between the President and the Congress. A political associate of Ervin's in Charlotte, N.C., a contributor who had also supported President Nixon's candidacy for re-election, tells of receiving "a call from Washington" to inquire if there wasn't some way that he and "other Nixon friends" could persuade Ervin to back off a bit. Instead, the Charlotte man passed the information on to Ervin.

"MAH father was a lawyer, too, and when ah first started practicin' with him, we used to go to some of the mountain towns, and most of them were hard to get into before the roads were very good. And you got over there, you had to stay all week, 'cause

it was just too much trouble getting in and out. So at night the judge and the lawyers would sit around and tell stowries. And so ah just heard a lot of these old stowries then, and mah father was pretty much of a stowry-teller."

The Chrysler swept easily along U.S. 64 and 70. Whoosh. Clumps of trees. Whoosh. A darkened clapboard house. Whoosh. Whoosh. Two mobile homes, no longer mobile, their occupants camped permanently along the highway.

"Mah wife, of course, says ah haven't heard a new stowry in ages, and she's gettin' tired of laughin' at these old ones."

It is an exaggeration. Most of the stories are old, but what about the Senator's response to the question at the news conference a few hours earlier in Davidson College's elegant old Philanthropic Society Hall? (And was it really coincidental that Ervin had sat a few feet away from a Bible opened to the Book of Solomon?) The question was whether Ervin would take Martha Mitchell up on her publicly expressed wish to testify on behalf of the former Attorney General at the Watergate hearings.

"Ah'd have to meditate a long time on a voluntary witness," he'd answered. "The only other voluntary witness ah've had was a man who calls me several times a week to tell me the Lord has communicated with him on Watergate." His face had become red with suppressed delight. "Ah told him ah'd be awful glad to have the Lord come and testify, but if ah let him come and tell us what the Lord had told him about Watergate, people might criticize us on the grounds the testimony is hearsay." He had let the delight burst forth in glee. It had been communicable.

"Ah have always found if you got a good stowry that sort of fits things, a good stowry is worth an hour of argument."

There are many styles in the United States Senate, but few of its members are stylish. Ed Muskie glowers and pounds his fist in righteous indignation nearly every time he confronts an Administration witness who disagrees with him. Hugh Scott, the Republican leader, prefers such rhetorical curlicues as this comment a few days ago on the Watergate conspirators: "This rotten vine of

Watergate has produced poisoned fruit, and all who have been nourished by it ought to be cast out of the Garden of Eden."

Sam Ervin smiles, grins, chortles, guffaws and harpoons witnesses with barbed anecdotes. He is not above using the same one three times in a single day to make three separate, distinct points. But when Ervin is at his best, which he has been frequently this year, his style can be devastating.

He was dumbfounded, almost, on the day that Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst testified that the President had a constitutional right to control the testimony of every single employee of the executive branch, from janitor to letter carrier to national security consultant.

"Your position," asked Ervin, "is that the President has implied power under the Constitution to deny to the Congress the testimony of any person working for the executive branch of the Government or any document in the possession of anybody working for the Government?"

"Yes, sir," said the then-Attorney General, "and you have a remedy, all kinds of remedies—cut off appropriations. Impeach the President."

That seemed a mite extreme to Mr. Ervin. He brooded a while. Then, in a comment to the next witness, he sought to make the point that any official of the Government should have no reluctance to at least appear as a Congressional witness before deciding if he could answer a question without violating a Presidential confidence.

"One time," said the Senator, "I was holding court and a man wanted to be excused from the jury panel on the grounds he was deaf in one ear. And I said, 'We will wait to see whether you will be selected to be on a grand jury, because a grand jury only hears one side of a case.'" Ervin's only regret seemed to be that he had not remembered the anecdote before Kleindienst had departed.

Inevitably, when Ervin quizzes a witness, the discussion gets down to basics: the Constitution of the United States. The Senator is never without at least one blue paperbound copy and frequently has enough extras to pass out to any witness who might dispute his interpretation of the contents. "I would suggest," he remarked one day at a hearing on the impoundment of

appropriated funds, "there are two books that should be in the White House to read. One is the Constitution of the United States and the other is Dale Carnegie's book on 'How to Win Friends and Influence People.'"

A few days later, at a subsequent impoundment hearing, the new Deputy Attorney General, Joseph T. Sneed—fresh from the post of Dean of Law at Duke University, where Richard Nixon studied law and in Sam Ervin's home state—made it a point to say he had brought along his own copy of the Constitution. He needed it.

SENATOR ERVIN: Now, is not the veto the only provision in the Constitution which gives the President the power to disapprove, constitutionally, an appropriation bill or any other bill passed by Congress?

MR. SNEED: Senator, if you mean by that that the power to veto is exclusive and this excludes the impoundment authority, we do not see it that way.

SENATOR ERVIN: Well, is that not the only expressed authority conferred on the President to not carry out any act of Congress? It is his right to veto if he thinks it is improper.

MR. SNEED: This is specifically conferred.

SENATOR ERVIN: And is it not a rule of construction of statutory and constitutional provisions that the suppression of one is the exclusion of another?

MR. SNEED: Well, it is a canon of interpretation, and frequently followed.

SENATOR ERVIN: You mean that the President can refuse to execute an act of Congress without vetoing it?

MR. SNEED: Senator, what I have really said is [that] the President, we believe, has the power by virtue of all the acts that have been enacted by Congress to which I have made reference [on the national debt limitation, the mandate to seek full employment and the requirements to curtail inflation] to impound funds in the manner in which he has done.

SENATOR ERVIN: Well, I am talking about the Constitution now, not the statutes.

MR. SNEED: Well, as I say, when we get down to, as I mention in my formal statement, situations in which all of the statutory justifications for impounding were stripped away and we have simply a question of whether there is any constitutional power of

States. He is a strict constructionist. He is a... But now that the President has said you must spend, it is our contention that he may refuse to spend and that the collision in that case between the Congress and the President is a political question that is not justiciable.

SENATOR ERVIN: I am reminded of the story of the deacon who desired to preach. The deacon went to the board of deacons and wanted to know why they fired him, and he asked the chairman, "Don't I argue?" He said, "Yes, you argue, yes." He said, "Don't I sputify?" The chairman said, "Yes, you sure do sputify." He said, "What's the trouble with my preaching?" The chairman said, "You don't show wherein there is any provision other than the veto power that the President has the right to ignore any provision of Congress."

MR. SNEED: There is no explicit power of impoundment.

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the President to impound and Congress has said you must spend, it is our contention that he may refuse to spend and that the collision in that case between the Congress and the President is a political question that is not justiciable.

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THE Chrysler made it through Hickory all right. The strip of truck terminals and furniture factories and discount stores and gas stations along the highway was still ablaze with light, but it was nearly midnight and there was little traffic.

"Ah think the President made a great mistake in his approach," said Ervin. "Cause ah have no doubt—in fact there's a good many people in Congress concerned about financial matters, the balance of payments, deficit

spendin'—and ah think that if the President had called a group like that and approached them and asked them for he'd have made much better progress. But apparently he has a feeling he has a great mandate and the Congress is just sort of a useless body standin' in his way."

Sam Ervin feels far from useless now. He is on top of his own world. Virtually every issue he has fretted about, almost alone, for 18 years is at the head of the Congressional agenda now.

The car slowed and crept through the edge of Morganton and turned left into the circular drive in front of a low-slung red brick house with a big white portico. Senator Sam and Miz Margaret stepped wearily out and trod into the entrance hall. It was cloaked in books from floor to ceiling. So was the big den just off the hall. And the little hallway between the den and the bedroom. Copies of the United States Code. Journals of Congress. Treatises on the Constitution. Big Bibles, small Bibles, stacks of theological and merely inspirational volumes. And the papers of the Presidents.

The Senator got out the bourbon and the box of potato chips and anticipated a few days of relaxation. The phone rang. It was C.B.S. In New York. Did the Senator have any comment on the latest newspaper accounts about the Watergate case? No, he'd have to refrain from comment and remain an impartial judge of the facts.

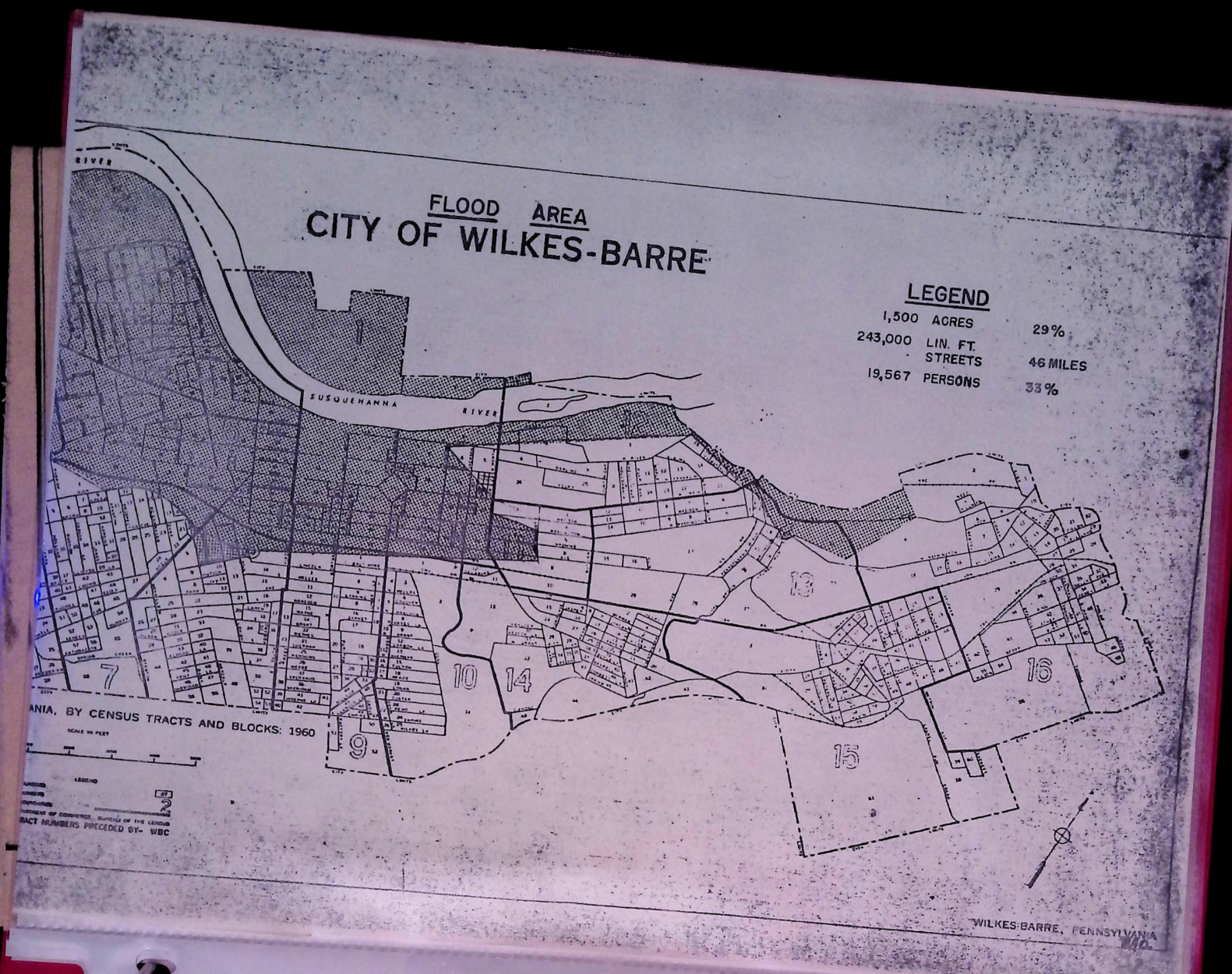
He sipped at the bourbon and tried to stay away, unsuccessfully from the potato chips. There is the Senate election to think about in North Carolina in 1974.

"It depends on three things. What mah doctor says, whether the people want me and the family dictator."

"The time to quit," said Miz Margaret, "is when people want you to stay."

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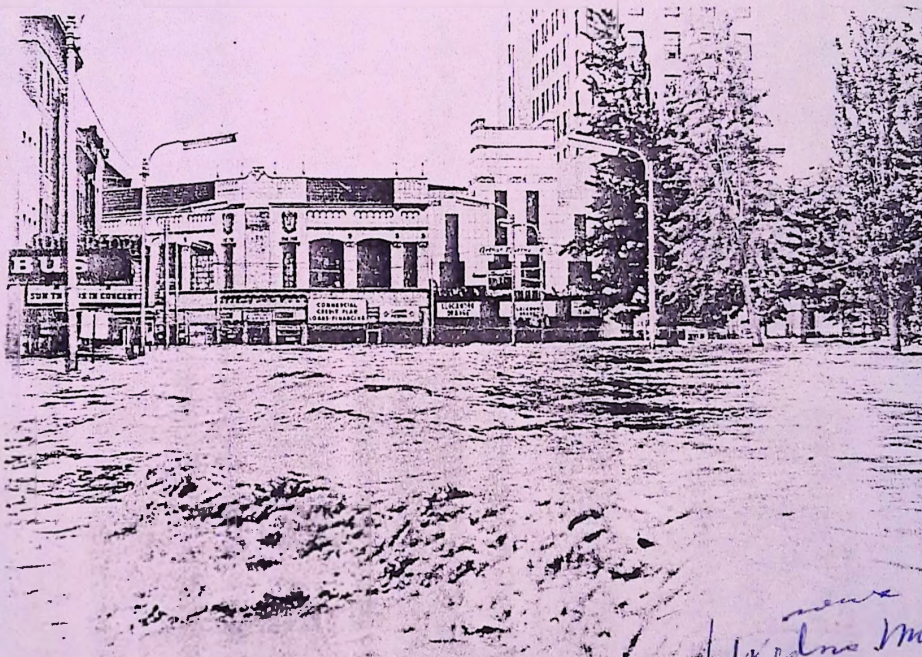
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Agnes visits Wyoming Valley



Public Square resembles seashore beach

THE ANTHRACITE REGION IS GUTTED

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Some 24,000 damaged homes, business places and other type buildings.

More than 80,000 homeless.

Total damages exceeding \$2,000,000,000.

Ruined shopping centers and downtown businesses.

Run down utilities with about a total of \$20,000,000 damages.

Idled 50,000 workers.

A zany, but workable, improvised communications system.

Several dead.

Immeasurable grief and horror.

Threats of sickness.

Mud and dirty water.

No power.

Contaminated drinking water.

More than 1,000,000 tons of debris.

Wrecked churches, synagogues, convents.

30,000 persons in evacuation centers.

50,000 persons at homes of relatives and friends.

14 trillion gallons of water nobody wanted.

Ripped up roads and highways.

Subsidence and cave-ins.

Tears.

Looting, yeggs and scavengers.

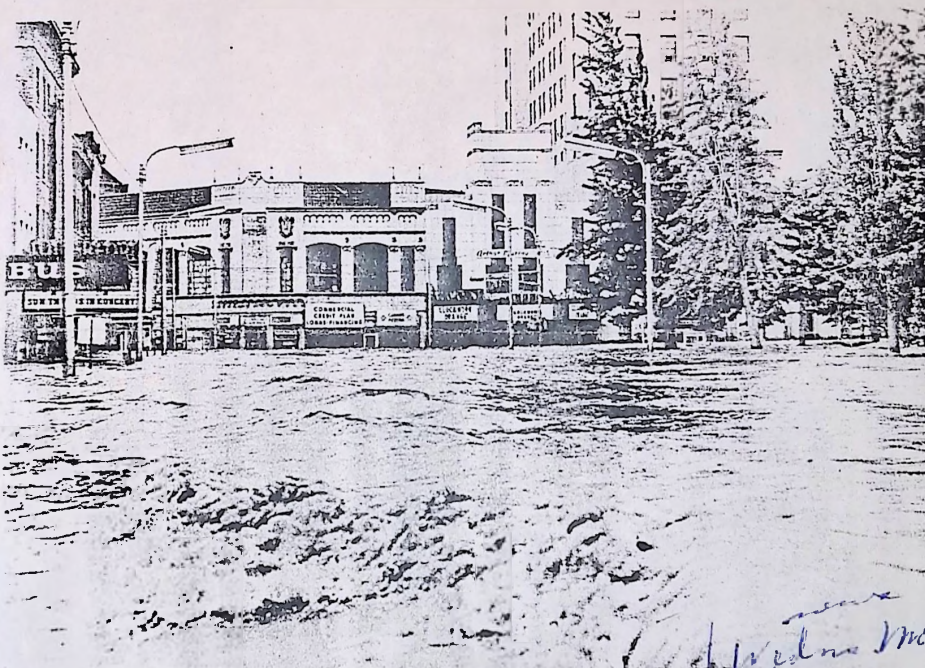
Damaged railroads.

A tremendous task for the people of Wyoming Valley.

Briefly, that about sums up the ravage wracked upon Wyoming Valley by Hurricane Agnes who visited this area the night of June 22, 1972, went into the tier counties of Pennsylvania and the lower counties of

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10,000,000

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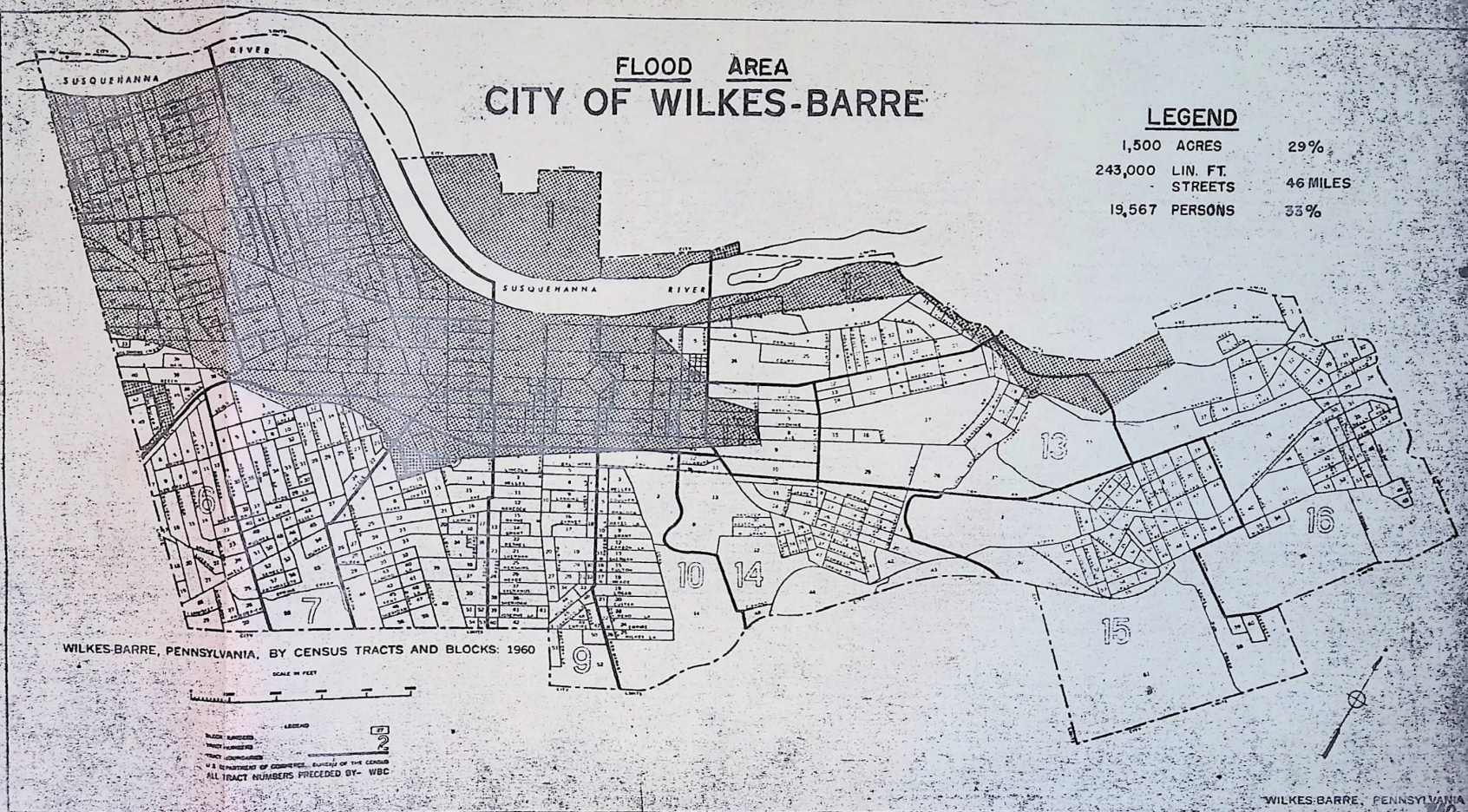
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*Wed. Mar. 26
Rockford, Ill.
250,000 people
\$10,000,000*

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magazine June 2012
40 yrs!

Awesome force of 'Agnes' unforgettable even after 40 years

Wilkes campus community rose to biggest challenge of its young life

By Helen Kaiser

No one who experienced 1972's Tropical Storm Agnes will likely ever forget it. Described then as the nation's worst natural disaster, more than a hundred people were killed; and at least 387,000 people were evacuated. Property damage was estimated at more than \$3 billion—\$16.3 billion in today's dollars.

By far, the worst damage occurred in Pennsylvania, with more than \$2 billion in losses occurring in the Susquehanna River basin. Wilkes-Barre took the worst beating of any community in the state, then-Governor Milton Shapp said at the time.

While the June 19-24 event was devastating—and its aftermath a monumental challenge—those who experienced it witnessed a triumph of human spirit.

Dealing with the crisis "was a situation where you just rose to the occasion," recalled Francis J. Michelini, Ph.D., president of Wilkes College at the time. "You did a lot of things instinctively. There was no preparation for such a crisis."

Now a resident of Mechanicsburg, Pa., Michelini, 87, has vivid recollections of those high-water days. He was able to assist with dramatic rescues and help firefighters and utility workers by piloting through flood waters in a 60-horsepower motorboat the college owned for its environmental sciences program.

Students on campus for the summer session first were evacuated to the nearby Hotel Sterling because of power failures. The normally scenic Susquehanna River, however, was threatening; and the Wilkes evacuees soon had to be rescued from the River Street location. Hedy Wrightson Rittenmeyer '72, of Plano, Tex., remembers being plucked from atop the marquee of the hotel along with several other students.

At 6:15 a.m. Saturday, June 24, the river crested in Wilkes-Barre at 40.9 feet, about 5 feet higher than protection levels.

City streets resembled the canals in Venice. Fires burned out of control. In nearby Forty Fort Cemetery, gravestones were tossed about, and coffins and vaults were uprooted when an adjacent river dike gave way.

According to the National Weather Service, Agnes "re-wrote the book on inland flooding and the impact a tropical storm can have hundreds of miles from the coast."

Wilkes College faced an ordeal like none other in its 25 years as an independent, four-year institution. It suffered flood damage to all but one of its more than 50 campus buildings, and losses totaled more than \$10 million.

Severely impacted were: the library, where 53,000 volumes were destroyed; Stark Hall, the science building, which sustained \$500,000 in damages to delicate scientific equipment and tools; and the Dorothy Dickson Darte Music Hall where at least \$100,000 in musical instruments were lost.

"Do you stay in business? Or close up shop?" Michelini said he and other officials privately weighed the alternatives. They concluded that none of the buildings had damage to upper floors. They believed that academic programs were shaped by dedicated faculty and exchanges with students in the classroom—not by muddy bricks and mortar.

"We had the sense that we're all in this boat together. Let's get back on our feet and keep going," Michelini said.

An all-out recovery effort, dubbed Operation Snap Back, was launched.

The local newspaper reported: "Students and college personnel . . . responded to a plea for 'manpower and elbow grease' from the college president in an effort to overcome what had at first appeared to be an almost fatal blow."

Some of it was common sense, Michelini said: "You had to get the basics restored, like electricity. Then you had to get the mud out.

"The banks in town were underwater," he related. "We had salvaged a \$25,000 fundraising check we'd received, and I remember telling someone to take it up to Hazleton to cash and use some of it to buy as many hoses and brooms and cleaning supplies as you could find!"

Summer classes re-convened within a week. Students helped with mud cleanup during the day and attended classes beginning at 3 or 4 in the afternoon.

Diana Gregory Finstad '73, of Prospect Heights, Ill., did her share of scrubbing.

"Those who worked tirelessly during the cleanup months truly understand the challenges and heartbreak faced during that time," she said. "The flood of Agnes is a distant memory that I won't forget. It ravaged the campus and left its mark, but it didn't destroy the Wilkes spirit or my spirit."

Michelini wrote many letters to prospective freshmen assuring them that classes would be held in the fall. Indeed, that semester began just one or two weeks later than originally planned, he recalled.

The college received about \$12 million in federal disaster aid, and restoration efforts continued at a busy pace into the October, November and December of that year. By the time spring semester ended, campus life was approaching normal.

"We had a first year anniversary party and told everyone to wear their flood clothes," Michelini said. Looking back, the former president credits the institutional culture at Wilkes for the successful recovery. As a small, cohesive community, communication throughout the campus and the administrative unit was effective.

"You only had to say something was needed, and it would get done. There was a hard-core group of wonderful people—many of whom had attended Wilkes themselves and came back to teach there. They did the job that was necessary to make sure we survived.

"No one person could do everything."

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Oldest Daily Newspaper in the United States—Founded 1771

When Disaster Strikes

A reprint of The Inquirer's series of Nov. 10 to Nov. 14, 1974



Philadelphia Inquirer / D. GORTON

Flood victims Lester and Jean Hauck walk along rebuilt dike, which is 2 feet lower than '72 flood crest

Several times each decade, natural disasters—hurricanes, floods, tornadoes—devastate entire areas of the United States. And the nation watches and reads in dismay. Then, the President declares a national emergency and rushes in massive aid and the nation turns its attention elsewhere—assured that all will be set right. The Inquirer went back to Wilkes-Barre, Pa., two years after the worst natural disaster, in terms of property damage, in the nation's history. There it found that very little had been set right and that the nation's confidence in its disaster relief programs is largely without foundation.

By SUSAN Q. STRANAHAN
and WENDELL RAWLS JR.
Inquirer Staff Writers

WILKES-BARRE—It is difficult to imagine, as you wander through the streets of Wilkes-Barre, that more than two years and \$2 billion have passed since this city was smashed to splinters by Tropical Storm Agnes in what was the worst natural disaster in the nation's history.

It is true that the debris that then clogged the streets is gone. It is true that few families are liv-

ing in emergency housing any more. And it is true that the massive federal recovery teams have come and gone, leaving only a skeleton force behind.

But large parts of this battered city remain ripped apart, like some sort of abandoned war zone; and a sense of shock and dismay hangs over this town like a fog.

It is not the shock left by the flood. It is the shock left by the recovery effort that was supposed, but failed, to restore this city to its former self.

Part 1 Continued

That effort, flood victims say over and over again, was botched, monumentally and from the start.

Here is what that effort has left behind:

- A large portion of the populace is hopelessly in debt to the federal government and the contractors it brought in to rebuild Wilkes-Barre.

- Many of those so in debt are too old to outlive their loans. When they die, the Small Business Administration (SBA) may find itself owning much of Wilkes-Barre and the surrounding area.

- Flood victims, encouraged by the federal government, have returned en masse to build anew on the plain where, in 1972, the raging waters rose and where, someday, the waters will rise again.

- In response to the flood, the government has raised the river dikes — to a height two feet lower than the 1972 river crest.

- Not one of the dozen or so federal or local agencies set up to deal with initial recovery appears to have known what the others were doing. Not one appears even to have known what it was doing itself.

- Hundreds of fast-buck artists poured into town as fast as the floodwaters receded. Federal and local bureaucrats greeted them with millions of dollars in grants and contracts.

- Consequently, mobile-home sites were built on land that flooded even with slight rainfall. Mobile homes were delivered for which there were no sites. Home repairs were made under one federal program and ripped out under another. Homeowners now live in dwellings whose repair cost three times their original cost. Some houses worth \$20,000 have had \$50,000 or more in repairs made to them.

- Crime, fires, death and bankruptcies have all become commonplace in Wilkes-Barre, along with a stunned feeling that "things will never be the same here again," and another feeling that "no one is in charge."

Things won't, and no one is.

Nothing Learned

The \$2 billion spent to date on recovery in Wilkes-Barre has, in short, purchased waste, duplication, inequities and a series of mistakes it may take decades to correct.

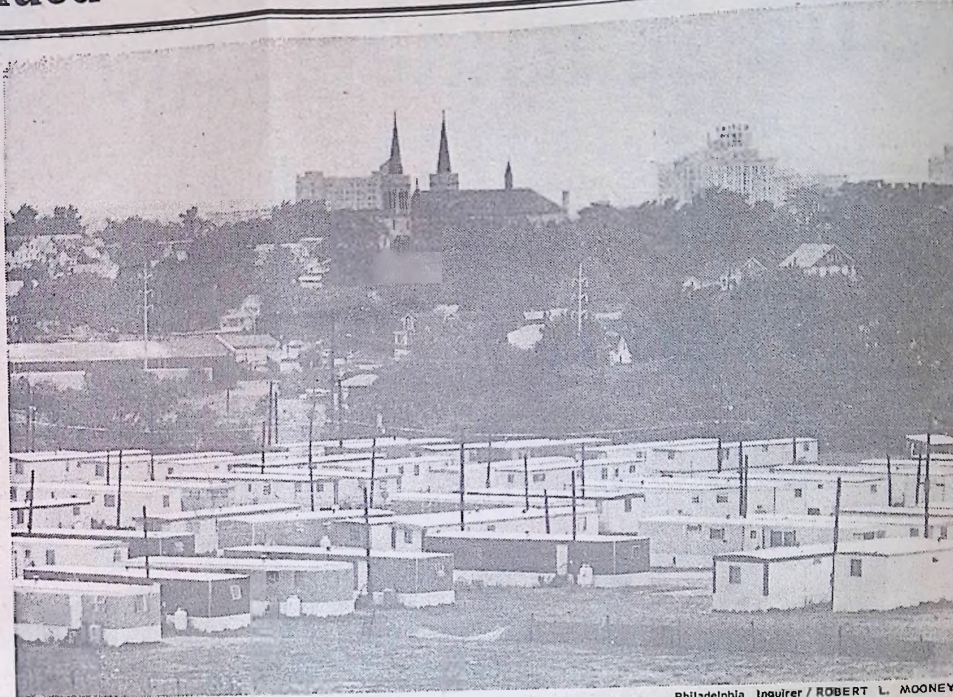
From initial emergency housing to debris removal to home repair and replacement to business redevelopment to planning for future catastrophes, the federal recovery effort here is a study in chaos and ineptitude.

Talks with flood victims and with local, state and federal officials, along with a study of recovery records, make two things starkly clear:

When the river rises again, as it most certainly will, Wilkes-Barre will not be ready. And when the next great natural disaster strikes this country, whether it be in Oregon or Texas, Maine or Minnesota, the federal government will not be ready.

For the truth of the matter is that the nation has no disaster recovery policy or plans. The paramount lesson to be learned from the Wilkes-Barre fiasco is that no lessons have been learned.

No one, anywhere, is ready for the next time.



Philadelphia Inquirer / ROBERT L. MOONEY

Trailer parks like this one on Mundy Street in Wilkes-Barre were built; some were used, some weren't

Like most disasters, damage statistics from Wilkes-Barre and the scenic Wyoming Valley which surrounds the city are so large they lose meaning: 70,000 forced to flee the rising water, 25,000 homes damaged or destroyed, 2,700 businesses flooded.

Wobbly Forest

But the story of flood recovery at Wilkes-Barre goes far beyond statistics.

It is the story of people who believe they have been victimized twice — first by the flood and then by their government.

Wilkes-Barre two years later is the story of pharmacist James Giunta, 50, who knows it will be March 5, 2003, before he pays back the \$119,000 he owes the federal government. He also knows his next door neighbor got about \$60,000 in an outright grant by the same government.

It is the story of Mrs. Roslyn Kleinman, mother of three, who waited in four lines for several hours to fill out forms to obtain a trailer to house her family — and then was told to return to the first line because the forms had just been changed.

It is the story of Mrs. Nellie Thomas, 61, who has a "forest" of metal supports in the basement of her wobbly, visibly sagging duplex and can't get any more than the \$12,500 she has already borrowed to repair the modest frame house.

Wilkes-Barre's citizens are frustrated, disillusioned, angry and, finally, afraid.

They are afraid they have been forgotten.

"We would have been better off if we had declared war on the United States, lost and become eligible for foreign aid," says Andrew Shaw Jr., former executive director of the Flood Recovery Task Force, Inc., a private group that was formed by community leaders.

"That's a cynical remark," he adds, "but it's true."

Fear to Decide

Says Mrs. Dorothy Davis, 39, a widow with three children who owes the federal government \$51,000 because of the flood:

"Every problem I've had has been produced by the people I trusted. Every time they knocked you down, you came back up; and they knocked you down again."

Confronting the flood victim in the weeks after the disaster was the sometimes overwhelming fear that he would make the wrong decision.

Should he rapidly pull together his distraught family, go heavily into debt and restore his flood-wrecked house, or should he wait, perhaps for months, for a new federal program that might help him?

If he borrowed money, would that make him ineligible for other aid?

Many made the wrong decisions — decisions they will pay for until the day they die. And then their children will go on paying.

"It took someone with a Ph.D. in finance to find the way through the thickets," recalls Dr. Joseph D. Vinso, a professor at the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce in Philadelphia, whose parents were flood victims.

No Overall Plan

"For financial information they were forced to rely on people without the foggiest idea of what was going on."

Compounding the problem were promises made by federal officials, including the President himself, that Wilkes-Barre's citizens had nothing to worry about. Federal aid would be made available immediately and red tape would be cut, Richard M. Nixon told discouraged flood victims on the

very day the rains stopped. That caused spirits to soar and the recovery effort to gain momentum. But the mood of elation and cooperation was short-lived.

With the promised aid came bureaucrats to administer the programs. Wilkes-Barre residents, who had always taken a patriotic if somewhat skeptical view of government, found themselves in the midst of another flood—this one of red tape. Some it saved. Some it strangled.

Part of the trouble was due to the fact that none of the federal agencies operating in the Wyoming Valley had a disaster plan to cope with the devastation they found.

12 Sets of Rules

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Army Corps of Engineers approached the nation's worst natural disaster with non-disaster programs, such as urban renewal and home-repair loans.

Chaos was also bred by a high turnover of federal employees, which meant that flood victims were forced to detail their plights to new faces on each visit to a HUD or SBA office.

Interpretations of rules often changed with each new employee.

"New people came into the bureaucracy and forgot the promises made earlier," recalls Andrew Shaw, head of the now-disbanded Flood Recovery Task Force. "They didn't put their signatures on those promises. If I were a bureaucrat, I wouldn't (have) either."

At the SBA office in Wilkes-Barre, which granted more than \$550 million in low-interest disaster loans, 12 persons occupied the job of administrator in the first 12 months after Agnes.

Part 1 Continued

Each interpreted the regulations differently, SBA officials now admit. That was to the great fortune of some victims, to the great sorrow of others.

HUD, which had offices in three Pennsylvania disaster locations, recorded a turnover of about 2,100 employees in the two years after the disaster. Most of them passed through the Wilkes-Barre office.

Most of the HUD employees, particularly those who dealt directly with flood victims, were hired on a temporary basis. In fact, all but two of the 282 employees still working in Wilkes-Barre are only temporary workers.

"These people know the sooner they do the job and the better they do the job, the faster they'll be out of a job," says the current HUD administrator in Wilkes-Barre, Jerome E. Parker, who is one of the two permanent employees.

Wilkes-Barre, a city of 58,000 people in Pennsylvania's northeast corner, was and is a city less capable of recovering from either a natural disaster or a federal bureaucracy than most communities.

It is a poor, crowded old town, in a poor, crowded old region raped by coal companies, yet still beautiful. Efforts at image-boosting have not succeeded.

Squeezed between the levee bank of the Susquehanna on its northwestern flank and the steep hills of the Appalachians on the southeast, Wilkes-Barre has little undeveloped land. Even before the flood, the valley had a serious housing shortage.

The only large, undeveloped piece of land now remaining in the city is a 43-acre farm that runs along the river in south Wilkes-Barre — the section of the city hardest hit by the flood and the section where, one might presume, building has now been banned.

But in October 1973 the Wilkes-Barre Redevelopment Authority paid \$185,500 for the farm, which soon will be developed with 305 townhouses.

When engineers arrived to survey the farm after the flood, they found it covered with an eight-inch layer of sediment, left by the river which had inundated the entire area.

So the government has not only encouraged and funded rebuilding on the



Mrs. Allan Strassman and son on front steps

flood plain; it has encouraged and funded new development as well.

The age of residents of Wilkes-Barre and the other communities that make up the Wyoming Valley also posed a problem for recovery. The average age is 36, while the U. S. average is 28.

Household incomes in the valley are about \$1,500 less per year than the Pennsylvania average of \$9,558.

Although few industries were hit by the flood, the region always has had high unemployment and a difficult time attracting new industry.

Before the flood, many homeowners in the valley — particularly those nearing middle age — proudly owned their homes free and clear as the result of years of saving and hard work to pay off mortgages early.

No longer. "No one in this valley has equity any more," says flood victim Allan Strassman, an accountant who is \$45,000 in debt to the SBA. "You can't decide to sell your house and move out."

Local governments — there are 74 in Luzerne County including Wilkes-Barre, the county seat — also have discouraged massive relocation away from the river. If the homeowners

flee, tax and political bases disintegrate.

Strangely enough, however, some homeowners — even those who suffered tremendous flood losses — would live no other place than near the river.

"People tend to deny an event (such as a disaster) recurring in their lifetimes," says Gilbert F. White, of the University of Colorado, who has studied the effects of disasters on behavior.

The attitude that "it won't happen again" is perhaps most obvious in the sales of federally subsidized flood insurance.

In the Wilkes-Barre area, which experienced serious floods in 1936 and 1910, plus minor flooding in other years, only two persons had purchased flood insurance before the 1972 disaster.

Today, there are fewer than 6,000 such policies in effect among the 70,000 persons forced to flee the flood.

Some residents have been lulled into a sense of security by the newly raised dikes that are still about two feet lower than the June 23, 1972, record river crest of 40.6 feet.

But relying on dikes for flood protection is futile. Levees only magnify the devastation when flood waters spill over, because they have allowed more water to build up.

"No matter how high we build the levees or the dams," admits Army Corps of Engineers spokesman Richard Whittaker, "there will always be a flood."

"The greatest flood protection," he said, "is not dams or levees but land use."

New disaster legislation approved by Congress last spring but not yet funded would prohibit federal funds for development in areas specially designated as 100-year flood plains.

A 100-year flood plain is an area where it is anticipated that there will, on the average, be one severe flood each 100 years. But of course there can be no guarantee that several "100-year floods" will not occur in a decade, let alone a century.

The 1972 disaster that struck Wilkes-Barre and nearby towns has been described as a 350-year or a 450-year flood.

South Wilkes-Barre and the downtown portion of the city, both of which were inundated by as much as 10 feet of water in 1972, are considered suitable for development. Much of that development has been financed with federal money.

The people of Wilkes-Barre know there will be another flood. Easing that fear somewhat is the belief that they will not be around when the next disaster strikes, or that the next disaster will wipe out everything.

Such thoughts dominate the daily life of people like widowed Dorothy Davis, who harbors the desperate and unlikely hope that, somehow, some day, her \$23,000 house that sits near the river will appreciate enough so she can sell it and repay the federal government the \$51,000 she has borrowed to repair it.

After a few minutes' conversation, Mrs. Davis' words belie her dream that such a thing will ever happen. It is also apparent that, for her, the horror of the flood has been blotted out by the horror of recovery.

"The flood was easy to go through," declares the blonde widow. "Coming back has been the hard part. Knowing (that) if there was another flood you wouldn't have to come back is what keeps you going."

Emotions Deteriorate in the Decay

The damage wrought to the city of Wilkes-Barre at the hands of Tropical Storm Agnes and the resulting two-year recovery effort can't be measured just in dollars spent or property destroyed. Those are the things most readily apparent, but the disaster struck far deeper.

"This appears to be a real-estate disaster, but it's more than that," says Paul Kanjorski, a 37-year-old Wilkes-Barre lawyer. "It is the things that are life." Things like being free from debt, possessing emotional stability and having one's family intact. These are rare things in Wilkes-Barre now.

Indeed, there is little of daily life in the Wyoming Valley that has not been touched directly or indirectly by the disaster.

Although official statistics show only four deaths as a result of the flood, most people in Wilkes-Barre blame the trauma of disaster for the death of at least one friend, neighbor or relative.

"Bitterness, resignation—that's what killed my father," says Wharton professor Joseph Vinso, a native of the Wyoming Valley, whose father was due to retire in 1975 and saw his life's worth washed away by the flood.

Death also has touched the elderly women who, until the flood, lived at the Home for Homeless Ladies in Wilkes-Barre and who were moved to Hazleton, where they remain today.

Fourteen of them have died in the past two years, compared to two deaths a year before the flood. Officials attribute this to insecurity among the aged women.

Fires in Wilkes-Barre jumped from 145 in 1971 to 255 in 1972 and then dropped to 194 last year. Many fires are blamed on vandals occupying the vacant homes that dot neighborhoods almost like trademarks.

In the 30 days after the flood, property losses from burglary, larceny and auto theft in Wilkes-Barre jumped 381 percent. In the next 30 days, they

jumped another 134 percent. Between June and August 1972, losses rose from \$17,516 to \$89,768, according to police statistics.

City police were at a loss how to verify if property actually was stolen from flood-damaged homes—and therefore covered by homeowners insurance—or merely washed away by the flood and not insured.

"If people said they lost \$10,000, we had to take their word for it," says a police statistician.

In what may be a delayed reaction to the disaster, compounded by worsening economic conditions, the number of bankruptcies filed has sharply increased this year.

By early August, 54 individual and corporate bankruptcies had been recorded at the federal courthouse in Scranton, which covers the disaster area. In both 1971 and 1972, 32 bankruptcies were filed. Last year, filings totaled 22.

That increase becomes even more

significant when the financial conservatism of Wyoming Valley residents is taken into consideration.

"Bankruptcy is something that never entered their minds," says economist Joseph Vinso, who is studying the financial impact the disaster had on the valley.

"To them bankruptcy was something companies do. It was immoral. Maybe now they are reassessing their situations."

School taxes, already raised five and a quarter mills last year, will go up 15 and three-quarter mills this year.

Inside the school, teachers are still encountering some flood-caused problems with students.

Concerned that the disaster would have considerable emotional effects on the youngsters, administrators in 1972 decided to ease rules and academic pressures. Two years later, discipline has become a problem. In a town where children were previously well-behaved, there are now trouble-makers.

Part 2

Rebuilding Money Was Wasted

WILKES-BARRE—On the hot, humid morning of June 27, 1972, thousands of Wilkes-Barre residents waited to cross National Guard barricades to learn if any of their worldly goods had been spared from the ravage of Tropical Storm Agnes.

What awaited them were remnants of the worst natural disaster — in terms of property loss—ever to strike the United States.

Quiet streets that people had spent their lives on were unrecognizable. Wrecked homes, swept from their foundations, had landed in the middle of littered intersections. Houses, torn in two, spilled the clutter of a lifetime — the belongings that families had abandoned four days earlier as they fled the oncoming water.

Lung-clogging dust and slimy mud colored the disaster area a bizarre monochrome of gray from street-level to tree tops.

Many of those standing behind the barriers were about to walk into the worst day of their lives.

James Junta, who had been told that only the tip of the chimney on his ranch-style house had been visible in the flood, would pick his way into his nearby pharmacy and find the merchandise spilled out onto the street, the windows shattered and a massive railroad tie balancing on his prescription counter like a see-saw.

The Rev. William W. Reid, pastor of the large stone Methodist church several blocks from the river, would return to find the church and its attached parsonage waist-deep in oily mud.

Allan Strassman, who had sneaked around the barricades earlier with his son, knew his house was one of the few in his neighborhood next to the river still standing.

This day marked the beginning of the massive, government-sponsored flood recovery. Two years and four months later, many of those who suffered losses say, almost disbelievingly, that recovery has been as devastating to Wilkes-Barre and the surrounding Wyoming Valley as the flood itself.

Three months of examining disaster recovery records as well as talking with victims and government officials shows that:

- In the Wyoming Valley alone, the federal government constructed more than 1,000 too many mobile home sites at a cost of \$3.1 million. These sites, complete with all utilities and roadways, but never used, are now being sold to private developers at a fraction of their cost to the government.

- In at least 30 instances, property owners who acted quickly to have their damaged homes demolished after the flood have been denied compensation from the federal government — because they did so before Congress

authorized appropriate aid legislation.

- A \$1.1-million mobile-home park, which housed 372 flood victims, was constructed in an area so low that it still floods even with a small amount of rainfall. The park was planned by the Army Corps of Engineers, which five years earlier had classified the land as a "ponding area" and ordered no future construction there of any kind.

- Red tape and construction blunders — such as sewer lines being laid uphill — delayed completion of some of the mobile-home sites until five months after the flood. By then, many victims had found other housing, so the mobile homes stood empty. They still do.

First Need

In any kind of disaster situation, returning the victims to some sort of individual housing should take top priority, according to those who have studied disaster recovery, including Gilbert F. White of the University of Colorado.

Mass shelters can provide temporary housing for brief periods, but full recovery cannot proceed until individuals resume some sort of normal lifestyle.

In recent years, the federal government has relied on mobile homes to provide individual housing for disaster victims. Although officials consider the trailers "less than satisfactory," research into other forms of housing has not received high priority.

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) bought 12,900 mobile homes at a cost of \$95 million for the Pennsylvania victims of Tropical Storm Agnes. About half went to the Wilkes-Barre area.

There, some of the problems of mobile homes as temporary disaster shelters became graphically clear:

- Mobile homes today are built to be transported only once — from the factory to the homesite. Any further moves, according to the Mobile Homes Manufacturers Association, result in structural damage to 90 percent of the trailers.

- Mobile homes are expensive, and cheaper alternatives have never been seriously considered. The average cost for trailers purchased for Wilkes-Barre was \$7,800. Construction of sites to put them on ran about \$4,350 for group sites and \$2,210 for those installed beside individual homes.

- Mobile homes were slow to arrive. Not until a citizens action group angrily confronted George Romney, former HUD secretary, when he showed up here two months after the flood, did adequate numbers of trailers arrive in the Wyoming Valley.

- Hundreds of mobile homes arrived in Wilkes-Barre before sites were ready, due to a lack of coordination between the Corps of Engineers — constructing the sites — and HUD. The sight of mobile homes sitting empty in "staging areas" angered homeless flood victims.

- There were other problems. The immediate demand for thousands of mobile homes in a short time — at the peak of the summer sales season — meant that trailers had to be transported from the Deep South, where they had been built with no mind to northern winters.

- A HUD official said many of the mobile homes were bought simply by telling the Mobile Homes Manufacturers Association to "start 'em going to-



Mrs. Matheson: Pushed demands

wards Wilkes-Barre and we'll tell 'em when to stop."

Others were bought by HUD employees on a weekend, right off dealers' lots.

HUD hopes to recoup some of its \$95-million investment in trailers by stockpiling some of them in regional centers for future disaster use. It hopes to sell others to other federal agencies for use as temporary office or storage space.

'Caged Animals'

Many flood victims viewed the trailer parks as "concentration camps" where they were being confined and forgotten.

"It was like being a caged animal," recalls Jim Junta, the pharmacist.

"Moving into a trailer just put the tin hat on everything," says Mrs. Min Matheson, an early spokesman for flood victims and founder of the Flood Victims Action Council.

It was Mrs. Matheson and the council who squared off against HUD secretary Romney to demand mobile homes for the homeless.

Despite plans to be out of the mobile-home park management business within a year after the flood, HUD is still providing such housing for about 1,200 people. Of that number, according to HUD, about 1,000 are members of low-income families.

"These people have become federal wards," says Paul Cain, regional director of the new Federal Disaster Assistance Administration, formed last year to administer federal aid at future disasters but still as yet sparsely funded.

Efforts of HUD to find suitable housing for those still in trailers have been frustrated by the general housing shortage in the Wyoming Valley and the nationwide cutback of HUD funds for low-income housing.

The whole chaotic federal recovery process, which includes HUD, the Corps of Engineers, the Small Business Administration (SBA) and about 50 other federal agencies, begins when the president declares the affected region a disaster area.

In 1972, the Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP) was charged by the President with coordinating Agnes disaster programs.

OEP, now known as the Office of Preparedness in the General Services Administration, was at the same time also responsible for selecting materials

for stockpiling during wartime, stabilizing the civilian economy and advising the President on oil imports. Given cosmic tasks like those, OEP officials tended to let lesser matters, like reviving Wilkes-Barre, slip through the cracks.

Although new legislation has been passed by Congress and approved by the President to deal with disaster relief, only minor changes have been made in the programs which caused the most problems at Wilkes-Barre — housing and debris removal.

On June 23, 1972, the same day Agnes struck much of the East Coast, former President Nixon declared Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, Virginia and Florida disaster areas, putting into motion the federal government's loosely organized disaster response.

As soon as waters had receded from low-lying sections of the Wyoming Valley — including most of downtown and South Wilkes-Barre — the Corps of Engineers slogged in and began cleaning up the devastated city.

Because of limited manpower, the Corps of Engineers contracted with private firms to do much of its work in Wilkes-Barre and surrounding communities.

At the peak of Corps activity in the valley, 1,380 workers were under contract, while Corps personnel totaled only 50 members of the military and 115 civilians on temporary duty.

The job of supervising these workers at times overwhelmed Corps personnel. In addition to sheer numbers, they were plagued by unskilled tradesmen, contractors who often abandoned one unfinished job to work on another, and a costly lack of organization.

Before anything else could be done, tons of flood-soaked debris had to be removed. Streets littered with broken glass, furniture, fallen trees and sections of houses made cleanup an incredibly monumental task.

Opportunity Strikes

For some, it also became an incredibly lucrative opportunity.

One contractor, the Sordoni Construction Co. of nearby Forty Fort, was initially awarded 12 debris-removal contracts totaling \$688,341. Each contract was for one day's work. It worked out to about \$55,000 a day.

The dozen separate, one-day contracts were awarded without competitive bidding—a procedure that became almost standard on many federal projects after the disaster.

Despite the almost \$55,000 a day paid to Sordoni to clear debris, the company's performance was considered unsatisfactory by the Corps of Engineers.

"Sordoni (sic) is running a highly inefficient operation," wrote a Corps inspector at the scene. "Also one of his loaders has been down with a flat for three days, a second one for one day, and the grader supposed to be at the dump yesterday was taken in for repairs."

Reports like that did not stop the flow of dollars.

By the end of October 1972, Sordoni had been awarded 26 contracts totaling more than \$1 million.

Criticism from the Corps for the job done at Wilkes-Barre came as a surprise to Sordoni vice-president Stuart Graham.

"The Corps never told us this,"

Part 2 Continued

said Graham recently. "All we ever got was a slap on the back from them. We got paid every Friday, and a couple of our people even got commendations for the good job they did."

Meanwhile, in the days immediately after the flood, residents were urged to empty their homes of everything that had been touched by water. For many, that meant stripping their houses down to studs and bare floorboards.

In the press of cleanup deadlines and the emotional stress of the first weeks, flood victims often found themselves throwing out possessions that might have been salvaged, or, conversely, carefully preserving now-worthless items.

"People were sick," recalls Min Matheson, who eventually organized the flood victims into a citizens group. "They weren't able to consider what they should do."

"I told my husband: 'We read about displaced persons. Now we know what it's like.'"

"I talked to a woman who was lugging a huge rug out of her house. She said they had saved for two years to buy that rug and laid it the night before the flood."

"Now she was determined to save that horrible, ruined rug. She just refused to throw it away."

While victims were told to hurry up, the official rescue effort never did. Debris removal moved in stops and starts. Trash filled the streets as the Corps of Engineers struggled to get the program in hand.

Corps supervisors, who filed written daily reports on debris clearance, complained frequently about the lack of organization.

Waste Noted

"The worst (problem) that we have encountered is having too many contractors for the amount of debris to remove," notes one report from early in the debris-removal project. "Equipment hours were wasted by this, and money."

Debris-removal contractors were let go just as many flood victims returned to empty their houses of tons of ruined belongings.

"As people returned to their homes," continued the report, "debris began to appear in monumental proportions, and it appeared the equipment on contract would not be able to remove it within an acceptable time frame."

Among the debris-removal contractors was the City of Philadelphia, which was paid \$27,889 for supplying Wilkes-Barre with 13 trucks, a grader and two employees for 11 days.

A Corps report entitled "Lessons Learned" recommends that, in future disasters, estimates be made of the size of the area to be cleared and how much debris will result before contractors are hired.

But the problems the Corps experienced in debris removal paled once it moved on to mobile-home site construction.

The exasperation of Corpsmen assigned to oversee the hasty construction of 5,456 mobile home "pads" (concrete foundations and utility connections), in 28 parks scattered throughout the Wyoming Valley, is evident in daily reports they filed.

At what was known as the Mike Kester mobile-home site in Kingston Township, across the river from Wilkes-Barre, an unidentified Army



Charles Rupert is still repairing his property in the flood area

construction supervisor grew increasingly irritated as work at the park bogged down repeatedly.

Excerpts from his daily reports on work performed by Ronca Utilities Construction Co. of Bethlehem—a major contractor for the Corps in the Wyoming Valley—portray his frustration:

Aug. 7 (first day of construction): A tractor operator was discovered excavating up to 10 feet too deep for sewer lines.

Aug. 8: "Upon talking to contractors and from our observations it was apparent (sic) that contractor had his own idea about the entire layout."

Aug. 15: "Twenty-one trailers are placed on the site but have to be

moved immediately because they are located under high-tension wires." (As a result 19 of them were removed from the park entirely.)

Aug. 25 (scheduled completion date, according to the contract): Construction crew has moved on to another Ronca mobile-home site, leaving water, electrical and landscaping work unfinished.

Aug. 26: "I think I'm going to be sick! They have destroyed some of their own work or just made more work for themselves . . . No foreman or super on the job both yesterday and today . . . The workers are continuing to work with very little supervision and Ronca's irreplaceable coordination"

Aug. 28: "I personally think that Ronca got involved in so much which spread his forces so thin. Also, to go along with this, the men were, and still are, just plain ole (sic) tired, which results in a drop in efficiency."

By Nov. 21, almost three months after the contract completion date, only 110 of the planned 141 trailer sites had been completed and the trailers occupied.

Ronca was paid its full contract price of \$472,110 for the Kester mobile-home project by the federal government.

Donald Ronca, secretary of the company, said delays occurred because of Corps of Engineers mistakes such as a

Part 2 Continued

lack of supplies and design errors.

"If the things weren't there, we couldn't work," Ronca said. "If they want to throw stones (about mistakes), I've got truckloads of stones."

At the Moon Lake mobile-home site in Plymouth township, northwest of Wilkes-Barre, the situation was about the same. The 181-pad site, which was completed but never used, cost \$662,960.

According to daily logs maintained by a Corps inspector, the following events happened at Moon Lake:

Aug. 28: "Contractor has evidently

over-extended his labor force to such a point that the laborers are not doing what they were trained for. Example (1) Before the project started, surveyor's assistant was baker for 15 years ... and (2) Certified blaster — thank God for that, at least — is laying the pipe. In short, constant reminders on how to do the job correctly should not be necessary."

Aug. 30: "Superintendent's pickup was run over by a scraper and totally demolished. No injuries."

Sept. 9 (11 days after the contract completion date): "... The organiza-

tion (at the site) is a disaster looking for a place to happen."

The list of costly and time-consuming problems fills pages of Corps notes.

Although the average cost to construct a mobile home "pad" was well under \$1,000 before the flood, costs to the government for the sites quickly increased to three and four times that.

A sewer line installed to run uphill was discovered at the Scanlon Field mobile-home site in nearby Kingston and had to be replaced.

Inspectors found that fire hydrants installed by Ronca Utilities at the Rutledge mobile home site in Pittston, across the river from Wilkes-Barre, were unusable because thread sizes on the hydrants did not fit fire department hoses.

When was the mistake apparently discovered? After a fire in late 1972 at the 116-unit mobile-home park.

But it could have been worse. In this case, one snafu canceled another. Rutledge was one of four completed parks, costing a total of \$3.1 million, which were never used.

Problems Pile Up at the HUD Office

When Jerome E. "Jerry" Parker was offered the job of director of HUD's housing management recovery office in Wilkes-Barre, he recalls thinking: "Not only am I going home, but I am going home on the payroll."

For the 62-year-old Parker, who earns \$33,915 a year, this is the last stop in his career with the federal government. In another three years he can retire, with a nice pension, to his native Scranton.

A cigar-smoking lawyer who wears snappy two-tone shoes and has a miniature basketball net attached to his wastebasket, Parker boasts that his office has become the example for HUD operations in other disaster areas.

By the time Parker arrived to head what had once been the largest HUD office in the United States outside of Washington (with a staff of 1,179), the number of employees had shrunk to 392. All but Parker and a staff attorney are

considered temporary help.

More than two years after Tropical Storm Agnes devastated the Wyoming Valley, HUD has yet to resolve a number of recovery problems.

HUD still maintains about 20 emergency mobile home parks, although it is working to reduce that number to five.

About 1,200 people still live in eight of the parks. A housing shortage in the valley has delayed moving these disaster victims out of mobile homes and into other residences.

"I don't know what the hell we're going to do with them," Parker says bluntly.

HUD provided temporary housing rent-free for a year after the disaster to flood victims. Since then, rents — based on a tenant's ability to pay — have been charged.

If a tenant refuses suitable permanent housing found by HUD or if he

falls behind in his rent or utility payments, HUD has a right to evict him.

"They have become litigation wise," says Parker about some tenants, whom he describes as "nitty-gritty, hard-core, low-income families."

Parker has urged the U.S. attorney in Scranton to institute eviction proceedings against them.

"Psychologically, that will help our mission to get people out," explains Parker.

HUD's direct involvement with the flood was not authorized by the President until Aug. 20 — almost two months after the disaster. At the peak of its activity, HUD provided housing for 6,100 people in the Wyoming Valley.

Victims of the flood angrily criticize the job HUD did. Lines were long, staff members were unfamiliar with

programs, and assistance was difficult to obtain.

HUD-financed urban renewal projects in the disaster area have encountered problems. Flood victims are bitter over HUD-financed acquisition of some damaged homes in the valley, at the same time that HUD has refused to acquire others.

Most of the long lines are gone now. But the foot-stained trail in the carpet that leads to HUD's new basement offices in downtown Wilkes-Barre proves that all flood problems have yet to be resolved.

That doesn't faze Parker.

"The fruit of your labors — you can see it pretty fast," he says about his job.

Asked how much longer HUD will have to remain active in the valley, he pauses and then answers: "I guess nobody knows how much longer this will take."

Part 3

Builders Clean Up On Repairs

WILKES-BARRE — By the time workmen sent by the federal government showed up at the riverfront house of Lester W. Hauck, four months had passed since Tropical Storm Agnes. The gray stone house was in a shambles, but at last help had arrived and architect Hauck breathed a sigh of relief.

Then Hauck, who is a wealthy man, heard some of the estimates for interim repairs to his house, and his jaw dropped. The going rate for hanging a new door, a simple carpentry job: \$400. The price for converting a flooded coal furnace to oil: \$2,000.

Those were astonishing prices, but the government was picking up the tab, so Hauck agreed, on condition that he, the homeowner, be allowed to supervise the workmanship and have a say in choice of materials.

That demand so confounded the people at the Wilkes-Barre Redevelop-

ment Authority that Hauck never heard from them again. So, he shrugged his shoulders, found his own repairmen and paid the cost of fixing up his house himself. (The "\$2,000" furnace conversion cost him \$300.)

Lester Hauck could afford to tell the federal government to shove off and to have his house repaired right. But most victims of the flood here couldn't.

They took what they could get, and now, two years and \$2 billion later, it is clear that what many got was swindled.

It is equally clear that the greatest beneficiaries of the recovery effort were the contractors who flowed into Wilkes-Barre almost as soon as the flood waters flowed out.

They came from as far away as Texas and Idaho, and it was they, not the citizenry, who reaped a bonanza.

The victims of the Wilkes-Barre flood are to this day obsessed with the worry that, somehow, the outside world thinks all has been set right here.

"People remember all the money that was spent here on housing and they figure we ought to be better off than we ever were," says one flood victim. "The truth is, we can never again be well off."

To be sure, millions of federal tax dollars did aid flood victims. But three months of talking with flood victims, local, state and federal officials and examining hundreds of documents show that more millions were wasted through mismanagement and disorganization.

Now that the dust has cleared and the contractors have left town, "we don't have the slightest idea how much we spent," says one federal official who, "for obvious reasons," asks to remain anonymous.

"And we bet no one else knows how much they spent."

Work Done in Vain

From all indications, the federal government will make the same costly mistakes when the next disaster occurs.

Of the 70,000 people who fled the raging waters of the Susquehanna River on the morning of June 23, 1972, more than 25,000 returned to find their homes split in two, crumpled, tilted askew or, in some cases, simply swept away.

Housing then became the top priority of the massive federal recovery effort. And the money earmarked for it attracted scavengers in droves.

Tragically, housing is where the federal government made its most serious — and costly — mistakes.

- No organized housing plan existed. Property owners who spent their savings to restore their properties later learned that they could have qualified for loans — or even more tragically, that their newly repaired homes or businesses were to be acquired for urban renewal and demolished.

- Other homeowners, encouraged by the government, speedily tore down their damaged houses — only to be told that they could not be reimbursed for the razed homes.

- Standard urban-renewal programs, which have often proven unsuccessful even in areas not ravaged by disaster, were stretched to cope with the chaos after the flood.

- Temporary housing did not become available until mid-August, two months after the flood, and then only after victims angrily confronted an unwary Cabinet official who happened upon the scene.

- The continuing demands of flood victims, in spite of the millions of dollars being spent on recovery, caused growing bitterness between government officials and victims.

Part 3 Continued

The federal government at first provided dazed flood victims with two housing options: temporary shelter outside their homes or temporary repairs to make their damaged homes livable.

Because of a housing shortage in the Wyoming Valley, the bulk of temporary shelters were mobile homes, located in large, costly-to-construct mobile-home parks. Some mobile homes and small camper trailers were installed alongside residences.

The home-repair program became known as "Mini-Repair."

Supervised by the Army Corps of Engineers, Mini-Repair provided only repairs that would make a flood-damaged home habitable. These repairs, handled by private contractors, included replacement of doors, windows, stairs and electrical, plumbing and heating systems.

In all, 2,778 homes in the Wyoming Valley were repaired under the program, at a cost of \$8,949,094 or about \$3,200 per home.

On paper, Mini-Repair, which had never been tried before, looked workable. Flood victims could return to their homes and neighborhoods quickly, lessening the disruption of normal life — a problem in the 28 emergency mobile-home parks scattered throughout the valley.

But in actuality, Mini-Repair, and a later home-repair program known as Interim Assistance, made some contractors wealthy and left hundreds of homeowners with doors that didn't close, plumbing that leaked, and furnaces that belched black smoke when they worked at all.

\$3.9-Million Case

Repairs in many instances were so shoddy that they had to be made again. By the second time around, the cost of simple jobs had soared. In some cases, home owners relate, it cost as much as \$300 to get the glass in a broken window replaced.

"Hundreds of men came into the valley and picked up a hammer on the way in," says Luzerne County District Attorney Patrick J. Toole Jr., who says he has prosecuted only "about a dozen" fraud cases growing out of the flood because of a lack of staff help.

A federal grand jury in Scranton last May indicted a Wyoming Valley contractor for fraudulently collecting \$3.9 million for nonexistent flood repairs made on two schools and a public housing project.

The contractor, Raymon R. Hedden, president of Raymon R. Hedden & Co., died of a heart attack shortly after being indicted on 14 counts of fraud.

U. S. Attorney John S. Cottone says his office will sue the Hedden estate for reimbursement of the federal funds.

Hedden's company was awarded "cost plus" contracts — used frequently by the government following the flood — to repair damages to 21 buildings in the Wyoming Valley West School District, the O'Karma Terrace housing complex and Meyers High School in Wilkes-Barre.

Other Charges

According to the indictment, Hedden billed the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the Office of Emergency Preparedness



Flood victim Bernard Kleinman and wife: he found repairs shoddy

through architectural firms for labor costs that never were incurred.

The federal grand jury also indicted a Wilkes-Barre man and a Beaumont, Tex., used-car dealer for making false statements to HUD about expenses incurred by Texas Mobile Home Service and Maintenance for simple repairs, such as changing fuses, in occupied mobile homes.

The owner of Texas Mobile Home Service, Hillard E. Austin of Beaumont, was convicted by a jury in August and awaits sentencing. Joseph J. Miscavage of Wilkes-Barre, a subcontractor of Austin, pleaded guilty to one count. He was sentenced Sept. 4 to serve six months in jail and fined \$10,000.

Cottone says his office is investigating other contractor-fraud cases growing out of the disaster and false claims submitted by flood victims for Small Business Administration (SBA) loans.

About 25 persons have been placed on probation after admitting that they made inflated damage claims to the SBA to obtain larger loans, according to Cottone.

Most federal agencies acknowledge that the frenzied pressure to get recovery under way caused them to consciously close their eyes to abuses of regulations.

Rated A Success

"There was always some fly-by-night outfit or another coming in just looking for the money," says an Army Corps of Engineers spokesman about the contractors employed in the Mini-Repair program. "As a result, a lot of the work had to be redone."

Nonetheless, he rates Mini-Repair as "successful."

"It needed a lot of refining," he adds after a moment's pause.

Flood victims, at first heartened by the one-to-one, government-to-victim nature of Mini-Repair, soon became disillusioned and then embittered by the waste evident around them.

In the Wyoming Valley, where some people at first believed they

didn't qualify for Red Cross aid because "that was for poor people," there gradually occurred a perceptible change in attitude.

That attitude has been described by some as expectation, by others as greed. Victims, promised help by the government, began to demand it when it wasn't forthcoming.

Those demands aroused the ire of federal employees. A Corps of Engineers supervisor, inspecting work at a mobile-home site, attached a hand-lettered notice about a public meeting of flood victims to his daily report.

The meeting notice exhorted victims to rally in protest of "broken promises" for garbage collection, school buses, a fire truck and mail delivery. Across the bottom of the notice the angry inspector had written: "What do they want for free?"

But victims of the disaster soon learned that citizen participation was their best weapon against the immense bureaucracy dominating their lives.

"After weeks and weeks of asking, there were no answers," says Mrs. Min Matheson, who could mobilize flood victims with a single phone call. "When people are homeless, there shouldn't be delays."

Paul Cain, currently regional director of the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration (FDAA) in Philadelphia, worked in Wilkes-Barre in 1972 for the Office of Economic Opportunity. He concedes that the federal government, from the President down to minor officials, was at fault for building up victims' hopes with promises of quick, easy recovery.

"The expectations were very high in Wilkes-Barre and we couldn't do everything that was expected of us," he recalls.

"Now, we're almost in a position that we have to defend the fact that we had a hurricane," says Cain. "The federal government didn't bring Agnes into Pennsylvania."

But it did bring the blunders that followed and from which the area still hasn't recovered.

The Army Corps of Engineers, charged with supervising the repair work done by private contractors, quickly found itself unprepared for the myriad problems that arose.

Building supplies were rapidly depleted in warehouses as far away as Philadelphia, causing delays. Laborers often were unskilled, expensive and undependable. A \$3,000 cost ceiling on repairs per house was found to be unrealistic, in some homes, only after work was well under way.

By mid-September, the 15 local contractors hired to handle the repairs had become so overloaded with work on about 800 homes that the Corps of Engineers was forced to contract with four outside companies to complete the remaining 2,000 homes before winter.

One company hired was Morrison-Knudsen Co., Inc., of Boise, Ida., among the nation's largest construction companies.

Morrison-Knudsen had often worked for the federal government before. It was one of the companies that built Boulder Dam.

In 1965, a combine of firms headed by Morrison-Knudsen was the largest employer in South Vietnam building ports and airfields on a cost-plus basis that by the end of the year had reached \$15 million a month.

A 2d Vietnam

A General Accounting Office audit of the Morrison-Knudsen group, conducted in 1971, charged that because of a "virtual abandonment" of normal management controls between 1965 and 1967, as much as \$120 million out of \$646 million in construction supplies in South Vietnam was unaccounted for.

In Wilkes-Barre, contractors like Morrison-Knudsen found another Vietnam.

Morrison-Knudsen agreed to repair 1,000 flood-damaged homes in the Wyoming Valley. The Corps of Engineers estimated that the repairs would cost a total of \$1.4 million. The company, which repaired only 808 homes, ultimately charged the federal government \$3,515,694.

A spokesman for Morrison-Knudsen blamed the increased costs of the project on the unforeseen prices of supplies and labor, much of which was handled by local subcontractors.

When a disaster is declared by the President, a number of federal regulations are suspended — including requirements that contracts be advertised and awarded to the lowest bidder.

The procedure was adopted in some cases to cut delays caused by bidding and to speed relief to disaster victims.

Much of the work done in the Agnes recovery, including contracts for the Wyoming Valley's \$8.9-million Mini-Repair program, was handled through letter contracts.

Letter contracts require only estimates of "reasonable costs," subject to changes when the work is completed.

Salaries Doubled

Because of a general laxness in cost control — due in part to disorganization and in part to the pressures of time — the actual cost of recovery may never be known.

Even the expenses that were itemized sometimes raised questions.

Among the expenses that Morrison-Knudsen claimed were \$401,654 in "mobilization" costs, which included flying in personnel from Montana, Idaho,

Part 3 Continued

California and North Dakota, as well as living expenses and purchases of equipment.

In November 1972, the Corps of Engineers audited expenses submitted by Morrison-Knudsen and found, among other things:

- Salaries of some supervisory and administrative personnel had "more than doubled" between August (a month before the company arrived in Wilkes-Barre) and October. The company attributed the increases to additional responsibilities.

- The company claimed \$850 for the salary of a secretary who had quit earlier.

- Records of work performed by an electrical contractor failed to support the claim for expenses submitted by Morrison-Knudsen. The company, in the midst of the audit, reduced its claim by \$141,177.

Despite the discrepancies, the government agreed to pay Morrison-Knudsen \$3.5 million.

"Because of the rapidity with which the work had to be accomplished, it was not possible to negotiate until the work was essentially complete and actual costs were available for audit," wrote accountants. "The audit indicated that the contractors had incurred the costs they claimed."

'Dirty Dozen' File

After Mini-Repairs were completed in individual homes, Army Corps personnel made inspections. Their reports attest vividly to the poor quality of workmanship:

329 Carey Ave.: Kitchen door hung so it won't lock properly, coal furnace doesn't work — mud in duct, front door not replaced.

31 Carey Ave.: Gas water heater vented to oil burner stack, registers on first floor missing, water leak in basement.

227 N. Washington St.: Toilet leaks,

electrical receptacles not grounded, oil burner makes noise when starting.

Other inspections included reports of the theft of privately purchased building supplies stored in a flood victim's basement and the use of wood braces rather than metal jacks to correct a sagging floor.

Work done by some contractors was so shoddy that they became known among Corps inspectors as the "Dirty Dozen" and a special file was kept on their projects.

One of the "Dirty Dozen," Safeway Construction Co. of Wyoming, Pa. — which has since ceased to exist — bid on so many Mini-Repair contracts that the company fell weeks behind its scheduled completion dates.

The Corps contracting officer agreed to let the firm out of its obligations. As a result, nine of the 13 contracts awarded the company were given to other firms, causing further delays and increased costs.

Sequel Program

By the beginning of winter, the Mini-Repair program was being phased out by the Corps of Engineers, although complaints about the workmanship were still being received in March 1973.

About the same time, a new program of home repairs, known as Interim Assistance, got under way. Financed with federal funds, Interim Assistance was administered by the Wilkes-Barre Redevelopment Authority.

Created during the riot years of the 1960s, Interim Assistance initially was designed to provide federally financed repairs to private homes damaged by rioters. Like many other programs that came to Wilkes-Barre, it had never before been applied to natural disaster damage.

Ten million dollars of such funds

were spent in Wilkes-Barre to restore 3,100 homes damaged by the flood — including 200 already repaired under Mini-Repair.

As in the Mini-Repair program, the work was done by private contractors. Also as in the Mini-Repair program, high costs and shoddy workmanship also plagued Interim Assistance.

"I'm not saying some of our jobs weren't lousy, too," says Wilkes-Barre Redevelopment Authority Director Leon Case about Interim Assistance. "It may not have been perfect, but it got people back into their homes."

They Won't Forget

It was the Interim Assistance program that caused architect Lester Hauck to turn down federal help and pay for the repair of his house himself.

Others didn't have that choice, and they quickly found themselves up to their ears in free, but shoddy, government repairs.

The Bernard Kleinman family, whose modest home on Susquehanna Street in South Wilkes-Barre was inundated, went through both Mini-Repair and Interim Assistance.

It was an experience they are not likely to forget.

Kleinman, a builder who recently obtained his contractor's license, claims it took him five days to rip out the shoddy repairs in his home completed under Mini-Repair and redo the work to his own standards.

The Interim Assistance program provided him with a brand-new furnace — despite the fact that he had restored his old furnace to working order.

"As long as those crazy bastards were going to give us a furnace, I was going to take it," says Kleinman about the furnace, which sat crated in his basement for three months. "I was hoping they wouldn't come back because I was going to sell it."

Interim Assistance also gave him a first-floor powder room where none had existed before the flood. Through some mixup in plans which Kleinman still doesn't understand, a contractor with floor diagrams arrived to install a bathroom on what had been Kleinman's back porch.

New Philosophy

"I told him to leave the toilet, I'd install it myself," he says.

"If the fruit is fallin' off the tree, you'd be a damn fool not to pick it up," Kleinman says bitterly.

Interim Assistance carpenters spent time removing the basement stairs in the Kleinman home — the very stairs Mini-Repair carpenters had installed just a few weeks earlier.

"The next flood, you know what I'll do?" Kleinman asks facetiously. "I'll kick out all the windows and all the doors, because they (the federal government) give you beautiful windows and doors."

In the conservative Wyoming Valley, where government aid programs were once greeted with suspicion, the philosophy voiced by Bernard Kleinman and shared by many others reflects the tremendous emotional changes brought about by the federal recovery effort.

The people of the valley know they have received much from the government. They are concerned that outsiders will consider them ungrateful for complaining.

But they know they deserved better.

"Too many people outside this area think that recovery has been a hand-out to the Wyoming Valley," says Andrew Shaw Jr., director of the now-disbanded Flood Recovery Task Force, made up of community leaders.

"Nothing could be further from the truth."

A Widow Has Nothing More to Lose

WILKES-BARRE — Mrs. Dorothy Davis clearly remembers trudging through the soggy devastation of Tropical Storm Agnes to the misshapen muddle of her life's possessions. It is equally clear to her that she will never do it again.

The roadblocks to recovery for her and some 20,000 other families since the flood more than two years ago are obstacles too severe to hurdle a second time.

"The flood was easy to go through," she said recently in the family room of her ranch-style home, still incomplete in the rebuilding attempt. "The recovery has been much worse than the flood."

"I feel like a child's plastic clown punching bag — every time they knock me down, I bounce back up just to get knocked over again."

Mrs. Davis, whose husband — an Air Force pilot — was killed in an auto accident in England 10 years ago, paid \$23,000 for her home in the flood-smashed Riverside Park area of South Wilkes-Barre.

In order to recover, she had to borrow \$16,000 to pay off the mortgage,

\$25,000 to have the house rehabilitated and \$10,000 for such furnishings as furniture, appliances and clothing for her and her three teen-aged children. She owes the \$51,000 total to the Small Business Administration (SBA).

But paying back the one-percent loan pales as a problem compared to the difficulty she had in returning to a livable home. Her problems, unfortunately, were not unique here.

First, under Interim Assistance — a program sponsored by the Federal Government and administered by the Wilkes-Barre Redevelopment Authority — an out-of-town contractor installed electrical wiring, a furnace and baseboard heating panels.

The wiring failed to pass the city's inspection; it had to be ripped out and replaced. The furnace was too small to heat the entire house and the thermostats were incorrectly installed so that the temperature in one section climbed almost immediately to 90 degrees while another section of the house was heated barely enough to surpass the outside temperature.

A second contractor discovered that although the cover for the baseboard heating panels ran the full length of

the downstairs family room, there was only one four-foot length of heating unit underneath.

When she sought a contractor to finish the work that Interim Assistance had only begun, she went to a state advisory group, believing that it would recommend a competent contractor. The state consumer protection group recommended a company from Erie.

The contractor estimated repair at \$17,900. Mrs. Davis made two payments of \$5,900 each. The contractor left Wilkes-Barre, with Mrs. Davis' home far from repaired.

Mrs. Davis says she paid the builder more than \$800 for plumbing, which he had subcontracted. But the builder failed to pay the plumber, according to Mrs. Davis, so she had to pay the plumber to induce him to return to finish his work.

(Efforts to reach the contractor in Erie failed. The company is reachable only through a mobile telephone, which is answered by a recorded message saying the phone currently is "out of service or out of range.")

The third contractor discovered that the force of the flood water had knocked the house about an inch off its

foundation and that all the center joists had become loosened. The discovery came so late after the Redevelopment Authority's inspection and decision not to claim and raze the house as structurally unsound, that Mrs. Davis could not take advantage of the Authority's policy of paying pre-flood value for such structurally damaged homes, plus up to \$15,000 in relocation expenses.

Then the third contractor ordered 30-inch windows for the 32-inch openings. But rather than re-order, he pieced together the siding and promised he would provide shutters to cover the mistakes.

The contractor never provided the shutters, so Mrs. Davis had to buy them herself.

"I could have spent all day, every day, on the telephone trying to get people to come out here and do their work," she said.

"Knowing that if there was another flood you wouldn't have to come back is what keeps you going. I lost everything that meant anything in this flood, so I wouldn't even have to come look for anything if there was another one."

Part 4 Continued

the federal government. The hitch there is the phrase "as defined by the federal government."

Wilkes-Barre's floodplain, for example, has been defined just recently by the Army Corps of Engineers as the Susquehanna River inside the river levees.

None of south Wilkes-Barre, where flood waters reached 10 feet in 1972, is considered flood prone. Therefore, incredible as it seems, the federal government is in the position of refusing to insure only buildings built in the river.

Asked about the sensibility of considering only the river as the floodplain, Paul Cain, the regional director of the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration, sits back in his chair and chuckles. "That's a sore point," he admits.

Meantime, officials involved in the initial resettling of the flooded areas offer as a defense for that policy only a reminder that things were hectic in the early days.

"It's easy to look back now and see our mistakes," says a spokesman for the Army Corps of Engineers, which spent almost \$50 million for flood repairs in Pennsylvania, including raising dikes to encourage resettlement along the river. "But remember, all of these decisions were made around a table as things were happening there. We decided the hell with the paperwork, we'll worry about it afterwards."

"There was no systematic planning," says an official of HUD, which spent several hundred million dollars for disaster recovery in Pennsylvania. "Everything was out of our back pocket."

It doesn't have to be that way, of course. In Rapid City, S.D., when the Rapid Creek flooded — the same month as the Wilkes-Barre flood — the city chose to keep people from living on the floodplain forever. It is clearing out a five-mile strip through the city and creating a floodway containing parks.

Rapid City has some advantages that Wilkes-Barre lacks, however. For one thing, it has undeveloped land on which to resettle flood refugees. Wilkes-Barre did not. For another, the appropriate legislation to clear out the Rapid City floodway had to go through only one government — the city council — whereas there are dozens of tiny local governments that would have had to approve clearance laws in the Wyoming Valley, including some whose villages would be abolished altogether by creating a floodway.

Indeed, local governments that scorn each other are commonplace in the area. James E. Price, executive director of the Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority, across the river from Wilkes-Barre, sneers at the Barney's Farm development.

"All you have to do is spit in the Susquehanna and you have a flood in some of those new areas," he says.

Yet Price himself is in charge of a

project to build 320 homes and 60 apartment units on 35 acres abutting the river in the county. That project was in planning before the flood; it still is. Price proudly says he has 100 letters from people who want to build homes on that tract.

So it is that the building continues apace on both sides of the Susquehanna River.

A few public officials protest, but they are in the minority. One such is the Rev. William Reid, a Wilkes-Barre city councilman who voted unsuccessfully against the rezoning of Barney's Farm.

Mr. Reid sees a tragic irony in the council's demands that dams be built somewhere upstream on the Susquehanna to protect Wilkes-Barre.

"Here we are demanding that the federal government build those dams and at the same time we are advertising a choice piece of real estate right on the floodplain," he says.

"Maybe we're cutting off our noses to spite our faces."

Part 5

The Flood's Tragic Twilight

WILKES-BARRE — When the victims of this nation's worst natural disaster talk, sooner or later they start prefacing their comments with a despairing: "If only we could have..."

"If only we could have had one more hour," says certified public accountant Allan J. Strassman, who fled before he could save a photograph of his grandmother and his wife's grandmother walking arm in arm down the aisle at the Strassmans' wedding.

"If only we could have things back to normal," says Mrs. Dorothy Davis, who borrowed \$51,000 to repair her house which now is falling apart as she watches.

"If only we could have learned something from this," says the Rev. William W. Reid, who missed conducting the wedding of his daughter because he was in a rescue boat looking for other disaster victims.

More than two years after Tropical Storm Agnes wreaked about \$2 billion in damage on northeastern Pennsylvania's Wyoming Valley, the wounds have yet to heal.

"People here measure all time now by the flood," says Mr. Reid, who serves on the Wilkes-Barre City Council as well as in the pulpit of Central United Methodist Church.

"People are realizing that this is something that won't be over soon. This will be with folks for the rest of their lives."

In the time that has passed since June 23, 1972 — the day the Susquehanna River crested four feet above the levee in Wilkes-Barre — flood victims have seen their hopes recede like

the muddy waters which inundated their homes and lives.

To assess how this nation aids victims of a natural disaster like the one that struck Wilkes-Barre, The Inquirer spent three months talking with government officials and victims, as well as examining hundreds of documents.

The study shows that while millions of federal tax dollars have been spent in the Wyoming Valley in the past two years, much of the money has been wasted.

Counter Programs

Tropical Storm Agnes, which blew out its final fury over Wilkes-Barre, ranks as the worst natural disaster to strike the United States. Worst in the minds of record keepers because it struck such a compact area and destroyed so much property.

Worst in the minds of many here because now the government owns much of this valley.

Worst in the minds of those affected because their government proved so utterly incapable of helping them recover.

No coordinated recovery plan existed or exists today. Aid programs often counteract each other. The federal government satisfies itself with confronting short-term problems, ignoring the long-term ones.

Victims are caught in a tragic twilight between promises and projects.

"The government says it was never confronted with a problem of this sort," says Anthony J. Mussari, a 32-year-old Wilkes-Barre college professor, school board member and historian of the flood.

"But that," he quickly adds, "is what they say every time."

The sad epilogue of the Wilkes-Barre disaster is: No lessons have been learned.

"We should have learned a lot," says Andrew Shaw, director of the now-disbanded Flood Recovery Task Force. "But I think we've learned very little."

New legislation has been approved



The Rev. Reid: Reflective

and signed by the President, but the programs which proved the most costly and unsuccessful in Wilkes-Barre have been retained. No funds have been appropriated to implement what few changes there are in the new laws.

A new agency has been created — the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration (FDAA). But its staff of 130 is so small and its duties so unclear that its role in recovery is questionable.

"We assume we won't be given (responsibility for) long-term recovery," says Paul Cain, FDAA regional director in Philadelphia. "Maybe it will go to HUD (the Department of Housing and Urban Development, of which FDAA is a sub agency) or Commerce."

Low Priority

FDAA's responsibilities also include coordinating state and local disaster-response plans to enable these two levels of government to assume a larger role in recovery, something the federal government has sought for a decade.

This responsibility has been stalled because of a lack of funds and a lack of interest among federal, state and local officials who rank disaster planning as a low priority for spending.

"We're almost like firemen in a firehouse," says Cain about the role FDAA has been relegated to. At best, the agency could move to a disaster scene and approach short-term problems, which is only what the government has done in the past.

Regulations for flood insurance and land management — the two interrelated programs that could substantially reduce federal financial involvement in future disasters — have been drawn so loosely in the new legislation that development continues to occur in flood-prone areas.

The burden of responsibility for recovery assistance has fallen to the federal government over the years because of its financial resources and manpower.

In a disaster such as the one that occurred in the Wyoming Valley, local governments are inoperative for weeks. State governments do not have the financial resources available to aid victims.

In Pennsylvania, for example, \$150 million was appropriated by the General Assembly to aid in recovery. That total was spent within days. Another \$100 million, in the form of a 1972 statewide bond issue, was used as matching grant money to obtain federal urban renewal funds for the disaster area.

Flood victims speak highly of the role played by the state in recovery. They believe the state, unlike the federal government, had their best interests at heart.

Victims were told that they could appeal to Harrisburg for help and get it. Sometimes the help amounted only to advice.

"The governor's office was always a phone call away," says Mrs. Roslyn Kleinman, who says she called Governor Milton J. Shapp for help when the federal government threatened to reclaim a camper trailer that her family

Part 5 Continued

had been provided while repairing their home.

"Someone there told me to take the wheels off the camper and just let them try to take it," she recalls.

Although federal officials were at the Wilkes-Barre disaster scene almost immediately, they were there as representatives of the Corps of Engineers, HUD or SBA. They had been activated, but were unsupervised, by the Office of Emergency Preparedness, a federal office also charged with advising the President on imports, prices and nuclear attacks.

Each agency had its own set of regulations and procedures, but few, if any, were designed to cover disaster situations. Each guarded its own function jealously. Rivalries abounded.

The programs put into use were merely "gerrymandered" versions of existing programs such as urban renewal and home loans, according to the FDAA's Cain.

As weeks went by and recovery stalled in red tape and confusion, flood victims took the offensive.

Citizen groups were formed—including the sometimes militant Flood Victims Action Council—and public meetings were held. Yet victims were still unable to cut through the layers of bureaucracy to obtain the help they had been promised by the federal government.

"It was like a battleground here," recalls Howard Grossman, executive director of the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania, a regional planning agency.

By August 1972 tensions had peaked.

President Nixon sent HUD Secretary George Romney to Wilkes-Barre to assess recovery.

Romney walked into an angry city. "Romney told us to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps," recounts Mrs. Min Matheson, a gray-haired grand-

mother, former union organizer and head of the Flood Victims Action Council who gained national press coverage when she angrily confronted the secretary over the lack of housing for victims.

"How the hell can you pull yourself up by the bootstraps when your boots floated down the Susquehanna?"

In response to the demands of flood victims to speed recovery and to the furor the Romney incident had provoked, President Nixon took some action in mid-August.

HUD, which had been channeling money for temporary housing through the overburdened Wilkes-Barre Redevelopment Authority, took over the job directly. HUD ordered 12,000 mobile homes for Pennsylvania disaster victims at a cost of \$95 million.

Nixon also named a "personal representative" to Wilkes-Barre, directing him to "cut through red tape and get the job done."

Frank C. Carlucci, deputy director of the Office of Management and Budget and a native of the Wilkes-Barre area, arrived at the scene with aides and a mission to boost the federal government's image in the Wyoming Valley.

Tensions cooled somewhat as flood victims were relieved to see some progress.

The presence of the "President's personal representative to the Wyoming Valley," as Carlucci was invariably described, was well publicized.

Press releases filled the newspapers, prompting one local official to describe Carlucci and his staff as "a frightening public relations machine."

A trailer was set up to make Carlucci's presence visible. From there emanated what became known as "Carlucci Specials"—orders for repair jobs or other matters that got federal employees' personal attention and took precedence over all other duties.

HUD even had its own trailer and

maintenance staff. The staff members were dispatched for "Carlucci Specials" and nothing else.

Carlucci, who became an undersecretary of health, education and welfare, left Wilkes-Barre in December—a month after the presidential election.

Despite the enmity heaped on Carlucci by some victims of the disaster, they believe the concept of his job is the only answer to successful disaster recovery.

"The most important fact was that Nixon did appoint someone, irrespective of how he worked out," says regional planner Howard Grossman. "We needed a czar."

If the authority for flood-recovery programs had been vested in one person from the beginning, much of the chaos in the Wyoming Valley after the disaster would not have occurred, flood victims believe. Instead, there were many individuals with limited authority.

"Someone should have taken a 'damn the torpedoes' attitude," says architect Lester W. Hauck.

But that role might not be sought after.

"I'm afraid of that (attitude) for the Orwellian overtones," says Hauck. "The person who did that would pay the price for the rest of his life."

Under new legislation, known as Disaster Relief Act Amendments of 1974, supervision of federal disaster activities will be handled by a federal coordinating officer, two assistants and a planning council made up of local, state and federal officials.

In the case of disasters in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia or the District of Columbia—one of 10 federal disaster regions—the coordinating officer will be the FDAA's Paul Cain.

Cain is a former school teacher from Pittsburgh who worked for the

Internal Revenue Service, the Office of Economic Opportunity and HUD before joining the FDAA last February.

Cain would be assisted by two aides, specialists in recovery. However, at present these positions and the people to fill them do not exist in the FDAA, according to Cain.

Despite more than two years of having their hopes built up and then deflated by various false promises of help, the homeowners of Wilkes-Barre still cling to the dream that the federal government ultimately will buy their wrecked houses and cancel their debts.

"Some people believe that if the Democrats elect a President, all our SBA loans will be forgiven," says flood victim Bernie Kleinman, who doesn't subscribe to that theory.

"The only thing that could get us out of this is a good depression," he says grimly.

Bewildered flood victims reason that any government which can plan and finance a multibillion-dollar space-exploration program or aid countless foreign governments, can also spend a few dollars more to help its own citizens recover.

Such an attitude, according to Dr. Joseph D. Vinso, an economist at the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce in Philadelphia who has studied the financial plight of flood victims, is unrealistic.

"Hoping for that," he says, "is reaching for the moon."

But perhaps, someday, the government will cancel the debts here or buy the ruined houses that still dot the city. Then, the flood victims can repair their homes or build new ones and resume their lives in the scenic Wyoming Valley, on the banks of the Susquehanna River.

And then, the long wait will begin. Because someday—no one knows when—the Susquehanna River will rise over the levees again and descend upon the people and the city of Wilkes-Barre.

In Reply

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to learn any lessons from the 1972 disaster.

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"What has happened is that the entire problem has been laid at the feet of the Federal Government when it's impossible to do that," said Jack Flynn, a HUD spokesman and one of three HUD officials who, with Robb, attended an hour-long meeting with *Inquirer* staff members.

Flynn challenged as "half-truths" portions of the series which deal with HUD's failure to deal successfully with the situation found in Wilkes-Barre two years ago.

"Of course there wasn't a plan for the disaster," Flynn

said. "The Wilkes-Barre disaster was of a magnitude that no one, nowhere had been prepared to handle."

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"It's impossible to plan for anything of such a gigantic magnitude that federal, state and local officials are stunned to look at it. Even if they had a plan, it could only have involved bringing in the Army and setting up tents."

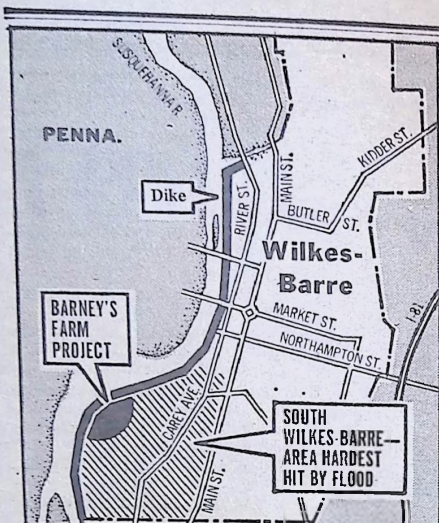
Flynn denied that federal policies gave flood victims little choice but to return to the floodplain.

The Inquirer has reported that loans from the Small Business Administration (SBA) were made available only to repair flood-damaged homes, thereby making it financially impossible for many to relocate off the flood plain.

"The people weren't forced to take SBA loans," Flynn said. "The people wanted to move back to the floodplain."

Indeed, Flynn said, many flood victims borrowed from the SBA to their own advantage.

"People made their homes beautiful beyond their expectations," he said. "People incurred the (home repair) debt because they wanted to incur it." *The Inquirer* has reported that many Wilkes-Barre citizens will be in debt to the federal government for as long as they live.



IN 1972, residents fled when the levee broke at Barney's Farm. Now the area is scheduled for redevelopment.



The Victims Lured Back To Floodplain

WILKES-BARRE — When south Wilkes-Barre was flooded in 1936, the 800 acres of the city that residents had to flee contained 5,000 buildings.

Thirty-six years later, in June 1972, the floodwaters came again. This time, the same 800 acres contained 25,000 buildings.

Today, two years later, neighborhoods that were 10 feet under water when Tropical Storm Agnes struck this city are dense with people and alive with the sound of hammers and buzzsaws.

The Wilkes-Barre floodplain has been resettled and is being rebuilt. And it seems certain that the next time the waters of the Susquehanna rise, there will be even more than 25,000 dwellings waiting to be inundated.

Millions of dollars have been spent to get people back in the flood area — \$30 million alone in a federal urban renewal grant is flowing into south Wilkes-Barre.

Hundreds of families have returned to repair homes on the bottomlands that were damaged by the flood.

Others have returned to build new homes on the foundations where their old houses used to sit before being swept away by the flood.

And on a previously unoccupied 43-acre patch of land called Barney's Farm, which floods even when it rains, the city, in concert with an out-of-town developer, is planning a development of 305 townhouses.

And in every step of this lemming-like march back to the floodplain, government, federal and local, has been at hand — coaxing, urging, luring the people back to the land that geographers, Army Engineers and the residents themselves say will someday flood again.

That march began in the weeks immediately after the disaster, when money was made available to homeowners to rebuild in flooded areas even before funds were released to buy damaged houses. And it continued when government aid programs were rigged — sometimes knowingly, sometimes not — to make it financially impossible for most homeowners to do anything but return to the danger area to start anew.

Flood victims in the weeks and months immediately after the disaster were offered low-interest loans from the Small Business Administration (SBA) to rehabilitate their homes. This money was plentiful and easy to obtain, and it proved a powerful lure for families eager to go home and return their lives to a semblance of normalcy.

Some 35,000 families who lived in Wilkes-Barre and the nearby Wyoming Valley did so, many of them to their houses on the floodplain. They borrowed \$550 million, and what they have today is what they had before the flood — a house next to the river.

Then, months later, a new program was announced — the Wilkes-Barre Redevelopment Authority, with funds from HUD, would acquire structurally damaged homes at pre-flood value and throw in as much as \$15,000 in relocation expenses to boot.

The Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority went its counterpart in Wilkes-Barre one better, announcing that it would acquire all homes "economically unfeasible" to rehabilitate.

By that time, there were fewer than 3,000 families in the whole valley who held back in hopes of just such a bonanza coming along. Those people are in the chips today — shed of their homes near the river and possessed of fat grants from the government.

But the rest, the majority who felt pressured into the earlier program, are back on the floodplain and staggering under a mountain of debt that will follow many of them to the grave. Bernie and Roz Kleinman bought a

tiny, dilapidated home on Susquehanna Avenue, near the river, 11 years ago for \$2,300. Bernie, a building contractor himself, renovated the home and improved it enough to bring its pre-flood value to about \$18,000.

After the flood, Kleinman, 50, borrowed \$18,000 of the "easy" SBA money to pay off his existing mortgage of \$7,900 and rehabilitate his flood-soaked home. He took a year — working on his own to cut costs — to repair his home.

But the prices of materials rose so fast that his loan, based on 1972 costs, was not sufficient to pay for repairs. He had to borrow \$5,000 more from SBA.

Net effect: Kleinman is nearly \$23,000 in debt, will be in debt until 1998, and for all that he owns just what he owned before — a house on the Wilkes-Barre floodplain.

He is paying \$68 a month for his home-repair loan, \$146 a year for flood insurance, and \$48 a year for insurance to cover possible damage from nine cave-in — all made payable to SBA. It is an enormous financial burden for a man who prided himself before the flood on paying cash for everything and being all but debt free.

Still a Shanty

"Remember," says Kleinman, looking around the tiny home near the river that is costing him \$292 a month, month in and month out: "It's still a shanty, and it's still on the floodplain. If the flood comes tomorrow, how am I going to get out of this?"

The Kleinmans, like most of the people of modest means who live in the flood basin, entertain visitors to their house in their kitchens. Because of the flood, there are few — if any — old kitchens in south Wilkes-Barre.

After awkward formalities in their living rooms, these flood victims usually lead guests to seats around the new dinette which matches the new Formica kitchen cabinets.

That is where the tears begin. And the anger.

Roz Kleinman is a large, pudgy woman who favors sleeveless house dresses and tennis shoes, and she grows

angry and defensive when asked why she came back to her house on the floodplain.

"How can you ask me why did I relocate here when I didn't have any choice?" she asks heatedly, rising from her chair. "How can you ask me that?"

Her husband chimes in: "My daughter is crying, 'Daddy, I want to go home.' What am I going to say to her? We're going somewhere else?"

To the Kleinmans, there is yet a further irony. Under the Wilkes-Barre Redevelopment Authority rules, they would not have been eligible to have had their house acquired at pre-flood value even if they had waited. It was not "structurally unsound." Across the river, the Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority used another criterion — it paid cash to acquire all homes "not economically feasible to rehabilitate."

To this day, no one has explained to the Kleinmans or to the thousands of other flood victims in Wilkes-Barre why the side of the river they live on determined whether they could start life anew or begin again on the flood plain and under a murderous debt.

But the Kleinmans and others think they know why. They are convinced that the leaders of the city government wanted most residents to move back into the flooded areas and rehabilitate their homes so that south Wilkes-Barre would not become a "deserted wasteland" providing no property-tax base.

Pre-flood Value

"If everyone could have had their homes acquired at pre-flood value," Kleinman says, "great numbers of them would have relocated out of the flood area."

Since there are few areas inside the Wilkes-Barre city limits available for relocation, the flood victims would have had to relocate outside the city and their property taxes would have gone to another municipality.

That seems a harsh theory, but city officials in fact freely confirm it.

"If the people had not moved back into the flooded areas, one-third of the city would have been eliminated,"

Part 4 Continued

says Leon E. Case Jr., director of the Redevelopment Authority. "That's something that can't be done."

Case confirms that his authority's use of a more stringent home-acquisition criterion than the one used across the river was meant to serve that end.

"Our acquisition posture was that this was not going to be a bail-out program," he says. "We felt that most of the money should go into restoring the neighborhoods."

How did Case get away with following different guidelines than the redevelopment authority across the river did, given that both were funded by HUD? Federal guidelines, says Case, are as "broad as they should be" to enable local governments to act with flexibility. He says his organization was told by HUD to "ignore" some parts of the HUD handbook.

Besides, he says, the people wanted to relocate on the plain: "You can't keep people away. It was the desire of the majority. It was very, very obvious they wanted to return. We followed the wishes of the people."

Regular Floods

To Case's mind, redevelopment and renewal is "not a disaster-recovery

program" anyway. Disaster-recovery would mean removing people from the site of the disaster—the flood plain. Redevelopment, he says, means just the opposite—redeveloping the plain.

So redevelopment it is, with a vengeance. Take the case of Barney's Farm.

Barney's Farm is 43 acres of farmland in the heart of the Wilkes-Barre flood basin — one of the few patches of land not built up before the flood. It lies along the river levee and floods regularly.

One look at a map of the area encourages the belief that the river at some time did not make a bend around Barney's Farm, but instead flowed straight through it. In fact, the first levee to break on June 23, 1972, was the one alongside the farm. The flood left the acreage under as much as two feet of mud and silt.

And now, the city Redevelopment Authority has acquired Barney's Farm for \$485,000 and contracted with a private developer — Jack Blumenfeld of Philadelphia — to build upon that land 305 townhouses to be sold for \$30,000 to \$40,000. The plans call for raising the level of the property, which was 10 feet under water at the height of the flood, four to five feet.

Redevelopment Authority director Case says as long as "the developers aren't scared," he isn't scared either.

But some Wilkes-Barre residents, such as Mrs. Min Matheson, a leader of the Flood Victims Action Council, thinks the project is "lunacy."

"Not only are the powers-that-be pushing people back to the floodplain," she says, "they are encouraging people to move into it. The city is shaped like a saucer, but instead of moving the city up the edges of the saucer, they are encouraging development in the lowest point of it."

"It makes no sense, unless you are more concerned about the tax base than about the people."

In truth, Wilkes-Barre property taxes have risen, because there are fewer people living in the flooded area while the cost of government has spiraled.

Perhaps that is what makes such south Wilkes-Barre residents as Allan and Sue Strassman favor the Barney's Farm project.

The Strassmans owe \$15,000 to the SBA on a loan they used to repair their house and replace their furniture. Before the flood, they were paying off a \$13,000 mortgage. They desperately

want new people to move into the area to help shoulder the tax load and to drive home prices up.

Developments like Barney's Farm "will encourage people to move into this area," says Mrs. Strassman, "and maybe it will keep taxes from going up and up and keep those of us who went so deeply in debt to rebuild from thinking we have sunk all this money into nothing."

There are many Sue Strassmans in Wilkes-Barre. Indeed, there is no denying the people here and in other disaster areas are partly at fault themselves for inhabiting disaster sites.

According to a survey made several years ago by the University of Colorado, the addition of protective devices such as the new river levees here only encourages an attitude of "it won't happen again here."

And in Wilkes-Barre, the community response to federal flood insurance indicates that a lot of people have convinced themselves it won't happen here.

Before the flood, only two people in town carried such insurance, which costs a little over \$1 per \$1,000 of coverage annually.

Even now, after the disaster that destroyed or heavily damaged 25,000 homes, only 5,829 flood-insurance policies have been purchased in Wilkes-Barre and nearby communities.

Flood insurance has not caught on for two reasons, according to Richard Krimm of the Federal Insurance Administration in Washington.

People believe that, first, there will not be another disaster and that, second, if there should be, the federal government will rush in with massive amounts of money as it has in the past, according to Krimm.

The federal government has been criticized for not publicizing the existence of flood insurance. Last November, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania sued the federal government and private insurers for \$1 billion, charging them with negligence for not promoting the insurance before the Agnes disaster.

The federal government called the suit a "political stunt" of former State Insurance Commissioner Herbert S. Denenberg, then seeking a U.S. Senate seat. A federal judge dismissed the suit.

"Flooding is the most serious natural disaster we face in the United States," says Krimm. Between 1961 and 1972, there were 17 disasters with damages in excess of \$1 billion. Thirteen of them were floods.

Guts of the Program

At the heart of the flood-insurance concept is land management—something local officials, like those in Wilkes-Barre, have refused to enforce on their own.

Once a community is enrolled in the flood-insurance program, there are restrictions on development in flood-prone areas.

"Land use is a quid pro quo for our insurance program," Krimm says. "It's really the guts of the program. Without it, flood insurance is a giveaway."

Once communities begin participating in the program, no federal funds are available for acquisition of property or construction of new buildings in the flood plain as defined by

SBA Creates Resentment

WILKES-BARRE — Jim Giunta stood on his basement steps that morning of June 23, 1972, and heard the crash of water pouring in. The water was rising so fast that it forced air like a brisk wind past his alarmed face.

By the time he reached his living room, the air pushing out of the basement through the cracks in the floorboards caused the carpet to rise in billows. He felt he was walking on a cloud — except that the cloud had begun to "squish" underfoot. The water already had reached the top of the basement and was following the air through the floor.

Giunta had gone to bed the night before — indeed, all the nights before for five years — secure as few men are in the knowledge that both his ranch-style brick home and his thriving pharmacy were free of debt. In fact, he recently had paid cash for the \$28,000 remodeling of his pharmacy.

Today the short, bespectacled, wide-eyed, 50-year-old former Army paratrooper captain owes \$119,000 to the government. To the Small Business Administration, to be more precise. That's what it cost him to rehabilitate his home and restore his business in the wake of Tropical Storm Agnes.

Giunta, of course, is not alone in post-flood indebtedness. The difference between his situation and that of others is mostly a matter of degree. His 81-year-old father and 78-year-old mother had to borrow \$17,000 in order to spend their remaining days in their own home. In all, more than 15,000 other families had to take the same course.

"March 5, 2003," Giunta repeats a number of times during separate interviews at his drug store in south Wilkes-Barre. "That's when my obligation ends. I'll be 80 years old and have my home and business paid for — again."

Giunta is a bitter man. Many, if not

most, of the other 15,000 or so in debt to the SBA are equally bitter. They are especially resentful of the federal government and, more recently, of some of their neighbors.

"If a foreign government had dropped a bomb on Wilkes-Barre — and the results of that could not have differed very much with the result of the flood — our government would have come in and rebuilt everything without anybody having to pay back the cost," Giunta says.

"We have no more control over a flood than we have over a bomb."

Giunta, and many others, feel they are not asking more from their government than they have, in a sense, already prepaid.

"I have paid a helluva lot of taxes to my government," Giunta says. "More, I would safely guess, than the loan I must repay. I've been paying them for 30 years."

"The United States has billions of dollars for people in other countries, but nothing for its own people. That's a helluva note."

But the bitterness doesn't stop there.

Giunta has had to take out another \$50,000 life-insurance policy so that his SBA obligation would not fall onto his family should he die. The fire insurance on his business is made payable to the SBA. The SBA required him to buy flood insurance, payable to the SBA. And the SBA holds the mortgage on the lot he has for hunting in the Pocono Mountains.

"The SBA owns me, lock, stock and barrel," he says.

"If all 70,000 of us affected by the flood were in the same boat that would be one thing, but we're not in the same boat."

And the fact that some of those displaced by the flood are now in far better circumstances has caused even more bitterness.

Two doors away from Giunta's

house is the lot where once stood the home of John Serhan, a home for which Serhan paid about \$22,000.

After the flood, the Wilkes-Barre Redevelopment Authority determined that Serhan's home was among 920 in south Wilkes-Barre that had been sufficiently "structurally damaged" to make it unfit for rehabilitation.

The redevelopment authority acquired the house from Serhan and razed it. Serhan was compensated for the "pre-flood value" of \$16,985 for the home and was allowed to draw up to \$15,000 for such "relocation expenses" as new furnishings and clothing.

The swimming pool behind the razed house, and the shrubbery, were untouched by the demolition of the house; and Serhan is free to "relocate" in the same place with a new home by buying back the lot for \$2,000.

What irritates those who live near the Serhan property is that, unlike him, they had to go into debt to SBA for such relocation expenses as furniture, appliances and clothing, even though their possessions were washed away by the same water that swamped Serhan's house. The only difference was that not every house was "structurally unsound" enough to qualify for redevelopment authority acquisition.

Those who obtained SBA loans also are angered by the fact that the federal government has taxed as income the forgiveness from repayment of the first \$5,000 of each loan, as well as the \$3,000 grant most families received from the state. And to compound woes, the state has questioned casualty deductions that some victims claimed on their state income tax returns.

During the flood, Giunta recalls, "a motorboat went by my chimney and left propeller marks on my roof. And now the state questions whether my house was flooded."

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It is a poor, crowded old town, in a poor, crowded old region raped by coal companies, yet still beautiful. Efforts at image-boosting have not succeeded.

Squeezed between the leveed bank of the Susquehanna on its northwest flank and the steep hills of the Appalachians on the southeast, Wilkes-Barre has little undeveloped land. Even before the flood, the valley had a serious housing shortage.

The only large, undeveloped piece of land now remaining in the city is a 42-acre farm that runs along the river

The age of residents of Wilkes-Barre and the other communities that make up the Wyoming Valley also posed a problem for recovery. The average age is 36, while the U. S. average is 28.

Household incomes in the valley are about \$1,500 less per year than the Pennsylvania average of \$9,558.

Although few industries were hit by the flood, the region always has had high unemployment and a difficult time attracting new industry.

Before the flood, many homeowners in the valley — particularly those nearing middle age — proudly owned their homes free and clear as the re-

homeowners' losses — would live no other place near the river.

"People tend to see an event (such as a disaster) as a turning point in their lifetimes," says Gilbert P. White, of the University of Colorado, who has studied the effects of disaster on behavior.

The attitude that "it won't happen again" is perhaps most obvious in the sales of federally subsidized flood insurance.

In the Wilkes-Barre area, which experienced serious floods in 1936 and 1954, the attitude is that "it won't happen again."

development has been financed with federal money.

The people of Wilkes-Barre know there will be another flood. Easing that fear somewhat is the belief that they will not be around when the next disaster strikes, or that the next disaster will wipe out everything.

Such thoughts dominate the daily life of people like widowed Dorothy Davis, who harbors the desperate and unlikely hope that, somehow, some day, her \$23,000 house that sits near the river will appreciate enough to be sold.

By August 1972 tensions had peaked. President Nixon sent HUD Secretary George Romney to Wilkes-Barre to assess recovery.

Romney walked into an angry city. "Romney told us to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps," recounts Mrs. Min Matheson, a gray-haired grand-

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"These people know the better they do the job, the faster they'll be out of a job," says the current HUD administrator in Wilkes-Barre, Jerome E. Parker, who is one of the two permanent employees. Wilkes-Barre, a city of 58,000 people in Pennsylvania's northeast corner, was and is a city less capable of recovering from either a natural disaster or a federal bureaucracy than most communities.

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flood plain; it has encouraged and funded new development as well.

The age of residents of Wilkes-Barre and the other communities that make up the Wyoming Valley also posed a problem for recovery. The average age is 36, while the U. S. average is 28.

Household incomes in the valley are about \$1,500 less per year than the Pennsylvania average of \$9,558.

Although few industries were hit by the flood, the region always has had high unemployment and a difficult time attracting new industry.

Before the flood, many homeowners in the valley — particularly those nearing middle age — proudly owned their homes free and clear as the re-

Philadelphia Inquirer ROBERT L. MOONEY
Mrs. Allan Strassman and son on first steps

flee; tax and political bases to integrate.

Strangely enough, however, some homeowners — even those who suffered tremendous losses — would live no other place than on the river.

"People tend to live on an event (such as a disaster) rather than in their lifetimes," says Gilbert White, of the University of Colorado, who has studied the effects of disasters on behavior.

The attitude that "it won't happen again" is perhaps most obvious in the sales of federally subsidized flood insurance.

In the Wilkes-Barre area, which experienced serious floods in 1936 and 1940, after which flooding is rather

1972 disaster that struck Wilkes-Barre and nearby towns has been described as a 50-year or a 450-

year event. Wilkes-Barre and the down- town portion of the city, both of which were inundated by as much as 10 feet of water in 1972, are considered suitable for development. Much of that development has been financed with federal money.

The people of Wilkes-Barre know there will be another flood. Easing that fear somewhat is the belief that they will not be around when the next disaster strikes, or that the next disaster will wipe out everything.

Such thoughts dominate the daily life of people like widowed Dorothy Davis, who harbors the desperate and unlikely hope that, somehow, some day, her \$23,000 house that sits near the river will appreciate enough so the

By August 1972 tensions had peaked.

President Nixon sent HUD Secretary George Romney to Wilkes-Barre to assess recovery.

Romney walked into an angry city. "Romney told us to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps," recounts Mrs. Min Matheson, a gray-haired grand-

describe Carlucci and his staff as "a frightening public relations machine."

A trailer was set up to make Carlucci's presence visible. From there emanated what became known as "Carlucci Specials" — orders for repair jobs or other matters that got federal employees' personal attention and took precedent over all other duties.

HUD even had its own trailer and

and a planning center made up of local, state and federal officials.

In the case of disasters in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia or the District of Columbia — one of 10 federal disaster regions — the coordinating officer will be the FDAA's Paul Cain.

Cain is a former school teacher from Pittsburgh who worked for the

pair their homes or build new ones and resume their lives in the scenic Wyoming Valley, on the banks of the Susquehanna River.

And then, the long wait will begin. Because someday — no one knows when — the Susquehanna River will rise over the levees again and descend upon the people and the city of Wilkes-Barre.

In Reply

The man who directed the multimillion-dollar flood recovery effort in Wilkes-Barre charged that The Inquirer's current series of articles do not contain "the truth as it actually happened."

Theodore R. Robb, regional administrator of the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in Philadelphia, defended HUD's performance, saying:

"I wonder what it is that people propose can be done better. I have yet to read an article on how (disaster recovery) could be handled better."

However, Robb conceded: "We've still got a lot to go to be superstars."

Robb challenged portions of the series reporting the federal government's failure

to learn any lessons from the 1972 disaster.

"Practically everything we've learned in national disaster recovery is from Wilkes-Barre," Robb said, calling the effort there "the ultimate in on-the-job training."

Robb challenged reports that lack of planning at the disaster scene caused lengthy delays and added millions of dollars to the cost.

He admitted that relief was slower than it should have been, but he blamed that on the refusal of state government to operate recovery programs, even if they were subsidized by Washington.

State officials could better understand and deal with the needs of local residents, Robb said.

Also retarding the recovery effort, according to Robb, was the fact that various federal agencies, including HUD, operated programs "totally independent" of one another, and sometimes in competition.

"What has happened is that the entire problem has been laid at the feet of the Federal Government when it's impossible to do that," said Jack Flynn, a HUD spokesman and one of three HUD officials who, with Robb, attended an hour-long meeting with Inquirer staff members.

Flynn challenged as "half-truths" portions of the series which deal with HUD's failure to deal successfully with the situation found in Wilkes-Barre two years ago.

"Of course there wasn't a plan for the disaster," Flynn

said. "The Wilkes-Barre disaster was of a magnitude that no one, nowhere had been prepared to handle."

"Up until then (June 23, 1972) people thought a big disaster would be (like) Camille," he added, referring to the 1969 hurricane which killed nearly 200 people and destroyed about \$1 billion in property. "Plans are based on what was the biggest (disaster) at that time."

"It's impossible to plan for anything of such a gigantic magnitude that federal, state and local officials are stunned to look at it. Even if they had a plan, it could only have involved bringing in the Army and setting up tents."

Flynn denied that federal policies gave flood victims little choice but to return to the floodplain.

The Inquirer has reported that loans from the Small Business Administration (SBA) were made available only to repair flood-damaged homes, thereby making it financially impossible for many to relocate off the flood plain.

"The people weren't forced to take SBA loans," Flynn said. "The people wanted to move back to the floodplain." Indeed, Flynn said, many flood victims borrowed from the SBA to their own advantage.

"People made their homes beautiful beyond their expectations," he said. "People incurred the (home repair) debt because they wanted to incur it." The Inquirer has reported that many Wilkes-Barre citizens will be in debt to the federal government for as long as they live.

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