



Upper Hocking Watershed Work Plan as implemented by local sponsors: Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District and the Hunter's Run Conservancy District

Spurred by the flood of 1948, the citizens of the watershed petitioned the Courts to create the Hunter's Run Conservancy District to focus on flooding impacts on Hunter's Run and then the petition grew to include the entire Upper Hocking Watershed.





Columbus Sunday Dispatch. 6-29-1952



Penn. RR at Hunter's Run. 7-22-1948



US 22 Bridge over Hunter's Run. 7-27-1948

The Community was literally cut-off following the flood because bridges were destroyed and railroads were unpassable.



This daylight view, looking south on George-st from Wheeling-st, shows four parked automobiles half-submerged. At 3 a. m. the water was over their tops

Lancaster's westside neighborhoods flooded over their car tops at 3AM and basement walls collapsed.



80 a. m. Mrs. William Pence, dazed by the sudden flood, was removed by volunteer rescue party. A boat was sent to her home on George-st, north of Wheeling-st. They also rescued her husband.

WEATHER:

Mostly cloudy, with scattered showers and thunderstorms today and tonight. Somewhat cooler tonight. Friday, considerable cloudiness and cooler.

ESTABLISHED 1809—No. 84

Lancaster Eagle-Gazette

YOUR NEWSPAPER SINCE 1809

LANCASTER, OHIO, THURSDAY, JULY 22, 1948

Price Five Cents

Saving Fat?
Are you saving your used fat? Industry needs fat and oils today as much as they did during the war. Salvage that household fat and grease to the bottom of the frying pan.
Fat Salvage Helps Industry
Almost every U. S. industry uses fat and oils in production of goods. Your salvaged kitchen fat will help meet fat scarcities at home and abroad.

FAST FLOOD WREAKS VAST DAMAGE

Killings Can't Be Connected To Any Definite Suspects

MANSFIELD, O.—(AP)—Police studied autopsy reports and fingerprint gleanings today in a search for clues to the brutal kidnap-killings of a Mansfield Reformatory executive and his family.

(See pictures on Page 1, Section 2.)

Bodies of the three, John Nibel, 36, superintendent of the reformatory farm for 20 years; his wife, 35, and their daughter, Phyllis, were found yesterday in a cornfield, eight hours after they were kidnaped.

Richland Co. Prosecuting Attorney Theodore Lutz said this morning that as yet, he had "no information to connect the crime to any definite suspects."

Richland Co. commissioners today posted a reward of \$5,000 for information leading to the identity of the killers.

Enforcement authorities concentrated on Corner D. C. Lavender's autopsy reports, and those of fingerprint experts who spent hours at the Nibel home and the spot where the bodies were found.

Sheriff Frank Robinson said experts from the London prison farm's mobile crime laboratory had uncovered some finger prints in the home where the Nibels apparently had been routed from their beds by the kidnapers.

Corner Lavender reported Nibel had been hit with a blunt instrument, but that the blow was not hard enough to kill. He had been shot thru the top of the head.

The daughter had been shot thru the top of the head on the left side, and the bullet lodged under her right eye.

Mrs. Nibel had been shot thru the head and in the abdomen.

Corner Lavender said "we are investigating the possibility that the daughter had been criminally attacked."

Ford Strike Threat Ends

DETROIT—(AP)—A 15-cent an hour wage increase for 116,000 CIO production workers today erased a national strike threat against The Ford Motor Co.

Clivings more than 21 hours of nearly continuous negotiation, the CIO United Auto Workers also won increases in premium pay, vacation improvements, and a group insurance plan revision.

The union estimated these "fringe" benefits would total an additional 2 1/2 to 4 cents an hour.

The UAW-CIO also estimated the annual increase would be the first since 1945.

The firm made no estimate of the revised contract, which expires July 15, 1949, were revealed jointly by the union and the company.

Last Among Big Three

Final agreement with the UAW-CIO was the last among the auto industries "big three."

It set a powerful stage for the country's major producers to maintain high production at least until the summer of 1949.

Late in May General Motors Corp. and Chrysler Corp. granted the UAW-CIO increases.

GM signed in a sliding increase that raised pay of its workers by 11 cents an hour and granted future adjustments in the cost of living index issued by the government's Bureau of Standards.

Chrysler Corp. a few days later ended a 17-day strike by giving the auto workers a flat 10-cent hourly rate. About 75,000 benefited by the Chrysler contract.

Same as Rejected Offer

Vice President John Bogert of the Ford Company said the new agreement included the same wage offer that the union turned down a week ago. "But a few additional fringe adjustments worked out in our negotiating sessions."

The 15-cent an hour increase during the Ford average hourly production wage rate to between \$1.65 and \$1.66.

Paradox: Too Much Water, No Swimming

Water, water everywhere and no place to swim! That's the paradox today at Lancaster's municipal swimming pool in Miller Park, closed to the public because of a water-filled basement.

The water in the pool tank was not affected by the Hocking River overflow, but the basement flood water which filled the 10-foot high basement submerged the electric motor that runs the filter system, so Manager Burns McCaskey decided to close the pool until normal operations could be resumed.

President Thinks Chances For World Peace Excellent

WASHINGTON — (AP)—President Truman said today he thinks the chances for world peace are excellent.



Fireman Don Durig shoves away debris pushing against Lincoln av bridge over flooded Hocking River. Note floodplain along bridge railing. At one time the water was three feet higher than the bridge floor.



Two prefabricated houses at the intersection of West Main and George-sts were swept from their moorings by the flood. The high water mark may be seen about halfway up on the nearest house.

Emergency Here Met In Heroic Style

Local agencies and individuals rose to the occasion with speed and dispatch when last night's disaster struck here so suddenly. Only heroic measures prevented greater tragedy in Lancaster's worst flood since the 1915 inundation.

All night long Lancaster police and firemen, supervised by Service-Safety Director Dave J. Grove, Police Chief Sam Hutley, and Police Capt. Lawrence J. Bauer, worked in the flood-stricken district, removing families from homes, taking them to temporary refuge at Red Cross Disaster Shelter, Salvation Army and other places.

The work of the police, firemen and their supervisors, under the difficult circumstances was highly commendable. The police and firemen met the quick emergency of the flood flood and utilized every available man and piece of equipment to save lives and property.

The 15-cent an hour increase during the Ford average hourly production wage rate to between \$1.65 and \$1.66.

This daylight view, looking south on George-st from Wheeling-st, shows four parked automobiles half-submerged. At 2 a. m. the water was over their tops.

helped his neighbor during the ed great loss of life and injury in disaster. West Side flash flood the sudden disaster."

A group of American Red Cross officers was on the scene early today surveying the flood flood seen in Lancaster and an area representative is to arrive some time to assist in rehabilitation of displaced families.

Early today Edgar Zimmerman, field director of the Red Cross at Lockbourne Air Base, came to Lancaster, and later, Roy Hervey of the Red Cross state relations office and Robert O'Brien, chairman of the Red Cross state committees in Franklin County, came to Lancaster to help the local officials.

O'Brien is on a routing assignment.

Lloyd Morris, disaster representative of the Red Cross Area

No Life Lost; Million Dollar Damage; 2000 Homes Flooded

Lancaster's West Side experienced the worst flash flood in city history early today as the Hocking River burst up causing an overflow of Hunter's Run, affecting 2,000 homes and inflicting damage which will exceed a million dollars, it was estimated.

No drownings were reported.

Hundreds of families were evacuated from their homes by a fleet of eight boats, manned by police, firemen and volunteers.

More extensive in scope than the July, 1935, flash flood which deluged the West Side, today's disaster spread devastation over a three-mile area here, and at noon some 500 homes were still isolated.

A veritable cloudburst struck the municipality at 11 p. m., and continued for



At 2:28 a. m. Mrs. William Pence, dazed by the sudden flood, was removed by volunteer rescue party. A boat was sent to her home on George-st, north of Wheeling-st. They also rescued her husband.

more than an hour, the flash flood engulfing most of the West Side within 20 minutes after the downpour let up. More than three inches of rain fell within an hour's time.

Hundreds of automobiles were covered by water eight and 10 feet deep on various streets.

Scores of Lancastrians were trapped for a time in their homes, many of them asleep, nearly all unaware of the suddenness of the force of the swirling flood waters, which ripped some houses from their foundations.

County Engineer Leon Wolford reported at 1 p. m. today, after making a survey several hours this morning, that at least 40 county and township roads are impassable and will be closed because of the widespread flood waters.

The flood damaged most of these roads, and vehicular traffic cannot be maintained until roads are fixed.

Engineer Wolford reported at least 18 bridges in the county—most of them sizeable spans—were washed out completely.

The engineer said the flood damage was the worst in at least 20 years.

The village of Leverage in southeastern Fairfield county was practically isolated, and families in that area could not get in any direction. The covered bridge at Leverage, and the iron bridge nearby both were washed away, Wolford reported.

Sleeping Lancastrian residents were startled to realize, some when water poured into their ground floor bedrooms, after flooding entire homes.

The police switchboard was crowded with calls for help from Lancastrians isolated in homes in the lower areas of town, mostly on the West Side. Cruisers rushed all available safety lanterns, w dangerous regions then stood by for emergency.

WARNING ON WATER
Dr. Clifford B. Snyder, city health commissioner, today warned all residents of the flooded area NOT to use any water from wells for drinking or cooking purposes and to use bottled water for drinking. He said that the water in the flooded areas was contaminated and that it was dangerous to drink it.

Mrs. Alice Thimmes who awoke at 2:30 a. m. to find her home surrounded by flood water, said that she tried to call various emergency units but was unable to reach them because of crowded telephone lines. Both Mrs. and Mr. Thimmes set out to help as many victims as possible. As late as this morning hurried residents were dashing in and out of their homes with clothes and valuables that they had left there during the flood.

Residents in the lower part of Georgetown found that water was

WEATHER:

Partly cloudy and somewhat warmer this afternoon. Fair tonight. Thursday increasing cloudiness and somewhat warmer.

Lancaster Eagle-Gazette

YOUR NEWSPAPER SINCE 1809

ESTABLISHED 1809—NO. 149

LANCASTER, OHIO, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1948

Price Five Cents

Dams Would End Flash Flood Threat, Investigation Committee

Lancaster could spare itself a repetition of the "flash flood" disaster of last July 22 by building dams on Hocking River and Hunter Run, in the opinion of a citizens' committee named by city council to investigate the causes of the flood and possible preventive measures.

The committee also reported that "we believe the damages were more than double the amount of \$917,470.85 reported and listed by residents and businesses of the flooded area."

The committee, composed of Mrs. Fran Taylor, Ollie Smith, Jr., Homer Clapper, Orlo Leohner, and Tom Taylor, all of whom suffered flood loss to homes or businesses, held a dinner meeting at Hotel Lancaster to give farmers whose properties abut Hunters Run an opportunity to air their opinions and suggestions.

The committee also suggested to the State Department of Highways that the bridges on Route 22 in Rosebank, and in Lincoln-av, just west of Cedar Hill-rd, be increased in width, also made longer

and higher to prevent recurrence of debris wrecking the spans. The cement bridge in Rosebank was washed out last July by the force of the debris.

Mr. Taylor summarized for the farmers the flood's effects on Lancaster proper and asked their assistance and cooperation in finding a remedy.

Round table discussion produced the following agreement: "The damage caused by Hunter Run was due to a heavy rainfall that was held in abeyance by debris, trees and wheat that lodged against a bridge, causing a natural dam. Lancaster was safe as long as that dam held—proving that if we did have a dam that held and water was gradually released when the danger was past, we would avoid this threat to Lancaster".

The farmers voted full cooperation with any preventive measures devised by Army engineers that would definitely provide protection for their crops and for Lancaster proper. They said they

wanted the advice of experts to avoid bringing flood water into Lancaster but to concentrate on holding it back and getting it out of town by dredging out of town. Army engineers are expected to come here for a resurvey in several weeks, city council learned at its September 27 meeting.

The townspeople agreed that expert advice was needed—but fast! They termed flood protection a "must" with cost consideration incidental. They declared cost of protection would be more than paid for by saving crops and buildings from just one such flood as last July's and warned that the potential threat to Lancaster's chief industrial section.

Another point made was the threat to lives. It was stressed that "Lancaster is not a safe place to live until something is done. This last flood was worse than the one in 1935. The next one may be even more disastrous. It can happen in a minute. Let's do something now!"

To substantiate their estimate a survey made by the local Real buildings effected in the flood at houses with one-half to two feet to 12 feet of water; 35 foundation pletely off foundations.

The committee arrived at a damage, based on the Board's sur will be worth only 50c on the de move the flood menace, the com

Admitting they are not "exp men declared that they had acco figures compiled." They propos the Chamber of Commerce elect to "carry the ball from here on and Fairfield County."

spread, say Ohio State University Extension specialists.

later back of Rock Mill, use."

Fierce Flood Of 1948 Awoke Citizenry To Course Of Action

Storm or no storm, most people around Lancaster and western Fairfield County were getting ready for bed or were already asleep at 11 p.m. on the night of July 21, 1948.

LIGHTNING FLASHED, the thunder rolled menacingly across

the dams and other structures to prevent future disasters.

Big dams were discussed, but this would not work since it would involve countless acres under water, but, a watershed plan would work, the people learned.

When properly applied the farmers out in the watershed would

Upper Hocking. They often worked together as they had on July 21, 1948.

WHILE ALL this was going on, the Soil Conservation Service was not idle. Topographical maps had been lifted from the files and exact watershed boundaries drawn. Around that 49-square mile area they drew a red line. Within the

Run Conservancy District Receives Court's Approval

The Hunter's Run Conservancy District now exists — in theory and on paper at any rate.

With no dissenters appearing during a public hearing in Common Pleas Court this morning, Judge Harry Kilburger approved a petition asking for the creation of the District. Five hundred persons had signed the petition.

About 20 persons attended the hearing today. A number of witnesses were called to give technical information relative to creating the district. Atty. James S. Peterson represented the petitioners.

Purpose of the newly-created district is to harness Hunter's Run waters during flood seasons. In 1948, rampaging waters from the creek wreaked havoc on the city's West Side and in Hocking Township.

J. Walter Oberdorfer and George Kunesh, West Side business men, appeared as witnesses during this morning's hearing and gave accounts of damage during the 1948 flood to the West Side Lumber Co. and Gay Fad Studio.

Pearl L. Fogle, U.S. Conservancy Service agent for a number of central Ohio counties, including Fairfield, said the 1948 flash flood resulted in a total of \$587,000 damage.

Fogle outlined steps to be taken in the practical aspect of getting the District established. He said four dams would probably have to be built in the Hunter's Run watershed to control the stream.

Fogle stated that a survey conducted in 1949 revealed that approximately \$338,000 would have to be expended for building the four dams. The figure represents the 1949 costs, however, which probably would be considerably higher today.

Several soil conservation agents from local areas, along with several from other states, testified during the hearing.



Farmers in the Hunter's Run watershed near Lancaster study a contour strip pattern, designed to hold

Fairfield's Flood-Fightin



Another conservation measure was building diversion ditches, such as one which protects Charles Kilburger's barnyard from water damage.



Frank Carr explains map to Fairfield Soil Conservation District Supervisors D. Leith, F. Bates, K. McCleery, J. Johnson and I. Peters (l. to r.).

District Conservationist,

Dispe

PHOTOGRAPH

SKIES darkened over highlands to the west of Lancaster on a summer day in July, 1948. Scarcely before the families who tend the land could reach their houses and barns, low clouds let go the first drops of a long, hard rain.

Tons of water heaped on tilled and untilled hillides formed a continuous sheet, which turned into torrents when gullies were encountered. The brimming freshets emptied into Hunter's Run, and the creek in turn shed its full load of water, silt and soil into the Hocking River inside Lancaster's west corporation limits.

Flood had come to Lancaster before. But people said the July, 1948, inundation of the city's west side was the "worst." They said more. They said the Hocking ought to be dredged. They wanted help from the Army Engineers, and they urged writing to congressmen.

While townspeople lamented losses amounting to more than a million dollars, farmers in what since has come to be known as the Hunter's Run watershed were thinking about losing topsoil, and having roads and bridges washed away. Crops were frequently ruined while growing. And bottom land was left littered with ruinous trash by surging flood waters.

The farmers decided to try to do something about the problem of town and country-devastating floods at the source—on their land.

THE COLUMBUS SUNDAY DI

The Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District Board and Hunter's Run Conservancy Board combined forces with Federal Conservation teams from USDA.

- Reduction of peak run-off
- Conservation and tillage practice changes for 50% of farms
- Silt and sediment control
- Channel improvements
- Construction of sediment retarding structures and "gully stopper" basins
- Major flood retarding structures
- Dams 4 and 9 are just two of the eight major flood retarding structures still in use today.

