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Indian Rock Dam—"Boondoggle" That Works

Controversial Issue Of 1940 Stops 1946 Flood

Dam prevented York Sunday from suffering repetition on smaller scale of 1933 flood disaster. Only automatic radio flood warning net-work in world used at Indian Rock.

The man who pressed a button and stopped a flood Sunday was busy preparing for the next rainy day yesterday.

He was standing on the bridge of the control tower at Indian Rock dam, shouting instructions to an assistant working nearly 60 feet below him in the channel of the Codorus. David Young, tender of the dam, was a difficult man to interview as he supervised the work of placing the great structure in position to stop floods. "I'll let ol' Sandy think all I do is sit around here and wait for it to rain," he said to a reporter.

Actually his work is never done. In flood times things really get rough. Constant radio reports of flood stages along the turbulent Codorus, floodgates to be raised and lowered, will always be a spectre of possibility. Never a night goes by that the level of the Codorus creat passerby, watching for drifting trees which might jam his flood gates—all these things keep Young a very busy man.

Yorkers Show Interest

Pleased that Yorkers were beginning to show more interest in the influence U. S. Engineer Indian Rock, Young stated that even now not enough people realize its value.

Interrupting his task of lowering a large tree from the mass of driftwood piled against the dam's floodgates, he declared that but for the dam there would have been a repetition on a smaller scale of 1933's disaster which cost York $4,000,000. As it was, Sunday's flash flood caused little more than lesser hours and extra work for Young and his assistants.

Unique Radio Setup

"We have at this dam," he said, "the only automatic flood warning system in the world. Of course, we don't know that and there are very few other Yorkers who do. This Codorus is licked and unless something in the way of a miracle happens, York will never have another flood while this dam stands."

Pointing to the still incomplete Codorus bridge which will permit traffic to roll on a highway over the dam breast, he said, "Once that bridge is in, perhaps more people will come out and see how this thing works."

Explains Dam's Functions

Aware that he had an interested listener, Young went on to explain how the dam functions, and how the equipment operates. Leaving the task of clearing the huge concrete trash bars which protect the floodgates, he walked into the control tower and pointed out his weather recording instruments, and other vital pieces of machinery which work as a fire engine for a narrator.

The well-tended equipment was a testimony to the pride he feels in the dam. Pointing to the radio antenna which tops his house, he stressed again that the dam's most valuable piece of equipment was his radio transmitter.

He was justifiably proud of the radio warning set. An automatic transmitter on the South branch of the Codorus, another on the North, main, branch, and a third below the confluence of the two branches send in regular reports on the water level to the dam.

When the water level is below five feet, reports are transmitted every six hours; when the water reaches above five feet, reports come hourly, and when the water rises to ten feet and above, reports receive radio transmission every 30 minutes. The transmitters are powered by their battery power for one week, if necessary lines are knocked down, or power fails. Details of transmitters and receiver are secret, but the net-work is unique. No other flood control project in the United States is so equipped. The system was manufactured by the Leeds and Northrup Corporation, Philadelphia.

Indian Rock Not Large

As dams go, Indian Rock is not considered large. Eighty-three feet high, it would require ruins of terrible intensity before the reservoir would overflow its banks. The drainage area above the dam is 93.7 square miles, or 41 per cent of the total drainage above York. The reservoir covers 1,430 acres, extends 6.6 miles upstream at spillway elevation and can store 2,350,000 acre feet of water, or about 2,350,000 gallons.

Because of the temperament and wayward disposition of the Codorus, Young pointed out how terrain has affected the North and South branches of the stream. The South branch originates in more or less gently rolling country, rarely receives a heavy downpour and consequently is the most manageable of the family. The North branch flows through rugged country, usually gets entirely too much drainage entirely too quickly, and causes most of the trouble. Thus the position of the dam, which lies across the North stream above the confluence, is most important.

Codorus Most Polluted

Young, who has served on dams throughout the nation, thinks the Codorus the most polluted stream in the U. S. Also it stinks, a condition which makes the control tower of the dam, on a hot day, fairly unpleasant.

Long Period Of Project

The dam is the culmination of numerous flood control projects started at public demand after 1933's disaster. Largely financed by Federal funds, construction of the various projects were relied to Civic and business organizations collected data on flood damage, a survey was made of the creek, and the problem was eventually placed before State and Federal governments. Various Federal Relief agencies took over; the project became two-fold, to provide employment and to stop the flood menace. As many as 4,000 men were employed, 30 hours weekly at 50 cents an hour.

"Boondoggle" Cry Raised

State and Federal agencies studied the creek, and finally U. S. Army Engineers took charge. Meanwhile there was the usual cry of "boondoggle." Indian Rock was a gigantic "boondoggle," a waste of money. But work continued. The channel of the Codorus was straightened and widened; its banks were strengthened.

Codorus Work Unfinished

Still incomplete, the Codorus project was interrupted by World War II. Work which normally would have been resumed yesterday. The present contractor must, under the terms of his contract, have all necessary equipment in York before June 15.

What the total cost of the several projects has been and will be has not been disclosed and probably never will be made public. But the money was not spent in vain.

York, harassed and wrecked by floods since the first Codorus flood was recorded in 1738, stands today as nearly secure as man can make it. Only a flood greater than 1933's can harm York again. Indian Rock dam, the "boondoggle" of 1940, was York's preserver in 1946.

WHY DAM TENDERS GET GRAY—Flood-borne driftwood piles up against the concrete trash bars of Indian rock dam. When the pile-up is heavy, tenders David Young, Charles Ulrich and the collection of driftwood resulted, ordinarily trash would be swept through by the force of the water. Trash bar function is to stop heavy trees and other drifting objects from damaging the flood gates. Some idea of the dam's size can be gained from the workmen engaged in lowering a rowboat into the channel, and the fact that the water gauge, first figure of which is 70, soars upward for another 40 feet before spillway level is reached. Last Sunday's high waters backed 30 feet of water against the floodgates.

CONTROL TOWER—At Indian Rock dam. The crane is used to lift heavy driftwood which frequently collects against the trash bars of the dam. Several of the large trees washed up by the Codorus after last Sunday's near-flood are shown to the left of the crane. Top of the water gauge can be seen against the wall of the tower; the Codorus would have to rise to that level before Yorkers could expect anything more than a trickle in their taps. Tender for eight is Dan. Tender David Young's residence, and the antenna of the radio receiver which gives Young constant information on water stages in the Codorus.

WHERE THE CODORUS IS TAMED—Dam Tender David Young throws the switch controlling the motors which raise and lower the 30,000-pound floodgates. One hundred men and boys were employed to raise the battleship North Dakota from the bottom of Pearl Harbor. The power which actually works the lift machinery is amazingly, a single five-horsepower electric motor. Power is increased by intricate gearing. In the event of power failure, the dam manufactures its own electric power in an emergency generating plant. If that fails, the huge flood gates can be raised and lowered by hand. Only 36 pounds of pressure are required to turn the cranks which raise the gates, but the pressure is multiplied many times before the gates is be lowered by their own weight. Floodgates are, however, designed to cut through heavy driftwood, but if they fail, the giant crane is available to lever such obstructions away.

CRUCIAL POINT OF YORK'S FLOOD CONTROL PROJECTS—Is the confluence of the North and South Branches of the Codorus. Here the South branch enters the main stream from the right, just beyond Indian Rock dam. Normally well-behaved, the South branch is the troublemaker of the Codorus. Where the greatest volume of the stream can be affected by dam operations. When floodgates are opened, increased flow from the main stream applies pressure on the South branch, more or less cuts it off. When water rises too high in the South branch, floodgates are closed, pressure from the main stream is reduced, and the water level in the South branch is lowered. By opening and closing floodgates, dam attendants can virtually insure the safety of the Codorus at the confluence. The level of water still rises, however, more than 30 feet above the bridge. An automatic radio transmitter on the South branch keeps York's flood warning informed of water levels; floodgates are opened or closed accordingly.

Louise Mae Coble, York Haven, Weds

York Haven—Miss Louise Mae Coble, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Coble, York Haven, and Elias Updegraff, son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Norman Updegraff, Newberrytown, were united in marriage Saturday in the local United Brethren church. The ceremony was performed by the pastor, Rev. John H. Neu, jr.

The bride, who was given in marriage by her father, wore a white gown with a net skirt and taffeta bodice, sweetheart neckline and three-quarter length sleeves. Her fingertip veil of illusion net fell from a heart-shaped crown of white roses, and she carried a cluster of white roses, snapdragons and sweetpeas with white satin streamers of baby breath. Her only jewelry was a string of pearls, a gift of the bridegroom.

Mrs. George Coble, sister-in-law of the bride, was matron of honor. Gene Updegraff, brother of the bridegroom, was best man.

Preceding the ceremony, a 15-minute recital was given by Mrs. Percy Clemens, church organist. Mrs. John H. Neu, jr., sang "Because" and "I Love You Truly." Mrs. Clemens also played the traditional wedding marches.

The newlyweds will reside at the home of the bride's parents.

Gatchelville S. S. Teachers Will Meet Tonight

Gatchelville—The Sunday school teachers of Prospect Methodist church will meet this evening in the Sunday school room. All teachers are urged to be present.

The men of Prospect Methodist church are requested to attend a meeting Thursday evening at 8:30 in the church. The speaker will be Bradley Curry to discuss the organization of a Men's brotherhood.

Rehearsal Thursday For Manchester U. B. Children's Program

Manchester—A rehearsal for the Children's Day program, to be held in St. Paul's United Brethren church Sunday, June 23, will be held in the church Thursday at 6:30 p. m. The committee is composed of Mrs. Lena Eisenhart, Mary Ann Brithey and Ruth Mayer.

To Meet Thursday

The regular meeting of the Ladies' auxiliary of Union Fire company will be held in the social room of the fire engine house Thursday evening at 7:45 o'clock.

Mr. and Mrs. U. W. Bowers and son, Claude, returned to their home on Locust street after spending several days at the home of the former's brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. William Kann, Mt. and Mrs. Ben Bowers, York, and Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Craul and sons, Ed and Phillip, Huntingdon. Mr. Bowers, guests at the home of his sister, Mrs. Crawl, are sons of Mr. Crawl's parents, Mr. and Mrs. William Crawl at this place.

Mr. and Mrs. Rufus Lesman entertained a number of guests at a turkey dinner in honor of the latter's sister and brother, Mrs. Bruce Miller and Elmer Strickler, who celebrated their birthdays.

Attending the dinner were Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Strickler, Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Strickler and sons Garry and Roger and Helen Lehman. Other guests at the Lesman home were Mr. and Mrs. Irvin Funk, North York, and Norman Strickler and son, Eugene.

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