



Devastation on the Delaware: Stories and Images of the Deadly Flood of 1955

Mary A. Shafer

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The first definitive documentary of this tragic event along one of the country's most beautiful rivers.

August 18-20, 1955: Three terrifying days and nights still remembered with awe in the Delaware River valley. Record-breaking rainfall from hurricanes Connie and Diane abruptly ended a withering drought, but the relief was short-lived. It was soon overshadowed by terror and destruction that tore away bridges and ripped houses from their foundations.

From the river's headwaters in the Catskills and through the Poconos, excessive runoff surged down steep slopes and through valleys on both sides of the river. Tributaries swelled unbelievably, some rising thirty feet in fifteen minutes. Eventually, they all poured into the Delaware, transforming the usually placid waters into a raging, uncontrollable beast.

Mountain resorts were inundated, leaving cars upended in swimming pools. Entire summer camps were washed away. More than 400 children were evacuated by helicopter from island camps in a tense, unprecedented operation.

In the end, nearly a hundred people were dead and hundreds more homeless. Dozens were missing, some ripped--still sleeping--from their beds in the middle of the night. Victims' bodies were still being recovered thirty years later -- some were never found.

Devastation on the Delaware follows the true stories of survivors and eyewitnesses to bring these events to chilling life. More than 100 historical photos and a dozen maps illustrate this narrative nonfiction account of a tragic event that changed life in the Delaware Valley forever.

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