Oct. 4, 2016

National Park Service

Dear Mr. Koozer,

I have made numerous references to David McCullough's book "The Johnstown Flood", I think it is only fair to share with you why I am so indignant when his book is held up as one of the best sources for what took place in the Johnstown Flood**.** I have listed a few snippets of paragraphs and adjectives he used to paint the picture he wanted to portray but with the page numbers where they can be found and fully read. This is not a full review of his book just a sampling to portray his bias, I am not asking his book be banned just comparing it to your analyst of “The Bosses Club” which you and the NPS have blackballed**.**

He starts his story on May 30, 1889 the day before the flood. He never explains how the dam got there -other than maybe a glacier had pushed it there - gives terrible impression of how it was built. Down plays or is derogatory toward Johnstown, Cambria Iron Company & Morrell - gives impression Pittsburgh was where it was at.

**David McCullough writes about - the culture in Johnstown:**

Some examples of his colorful speech to distain Johnstown:

Pg. 29 Harriet Beecher Stowe's little drama had also changed considerably since the war. The Johnstown performance, for example, featured "a pack of genuine bloodhounds; two Topsies; Two Marks, Eva and her Pony 'Prince'; African Mandolin Players; 'Tinker' the famous Trick Donkey."

Pg. 29 The town fathers had gathered at the City Council chambers to settle various matters of the moment the most pressing of which was to amend Section 12 of Chapter XVI of the Codified Ordinance of the Borough of Johnstown. The word “cow” was to be inserted after “goat” in the third line, so that it would from then on read: “Section 12. Any person who shall willfully suffer his horse, mare, gelding, mule, hog, goat, *cow*, or geese to run at large within the Borough shall for each offense forfeit and pay for each of said animals so running at large the sum of one dollar…..”

Pg 105 The Reverend had ignored every warning to leave the **shanty** he lived in on the banks of South Fork Creek

Pg 156 The Hulbert House had been the finest hotel in town….Breakfast was served early, dinner at noon (a custom most big-city hotels had long since abandoned.) Where is this citation?

Pg 109 Mineral Point looked as though it might have been a thousand miles from civilization….Nothing much out of the ordinary had ever happened in Mineral Point. Where is this citation?

Pg 32 Death was always near, there was never telling when it would strike again. Year in, year out men were killed in the mills, or maimed for life.

Pg 83 People who were glad they ‘didn't live downtown’ **began to wish they didn't live in town at all**. Where is this citation?

Pg.82 Joked about their troubles…and whiled away the time shooting at rats… Where is this citation?

Pg 106 … so badly decomposed that it could not be moved. As a result the last remains of the man who would be remembered in the valley as “The first victim” were put into a hole nearby, covered over, and left unmarked.

Pg 116 ….when it broke, as **everybody believed it sometime would**….. Where is this citation?

Pg 86-87 for the people of the **little town** set just back from the yards, the morning was turning into a fine show.

**David McCullough writes about the - Dam:**

Pg 40 Seen from down below, the dam looked like a **tremendous mound of overgrown rubble**, the work of **a glacier perhaps. ….**Its face was very steep and covered with **loose rocks**. There were **deep crevices** between the rocks where as late as May, you could still find winter ice hiding: Where is this citation?

Pg 48 True, the dam needed a great deal of repair work after so many years of neglect, but that could be handled all right and especially since the property could be had for such a good price. Or so must have run the reasoning of the Pittsburgh men (South Fork Fishing & Hunting Club) who bought it in 1879.

Pg 54 And it was only five years (1862) after the state sold it to the Pennsylvania that the dam broke for the first time. **…**The break was caused by a defect in the foundation near the stone culvert. **The accepted theory** locally was that various residents had been stealing lead from the pipe joints during the years the dam had been abandoned, that serious leaks had been the result and that the break had come not long after. Exactly how big the break was is not known, as no records were made and no photographs were taken. The important fact was that though there was much alarm in the valley below the dam, the break caused little damage since the lake was **less than** **half full.** Where is this citation?

Pg 55 (it was also somewhere along about this time that the wooden tower for controlling the discharge pipes "**caught fire**" and burned to the ground**.)….**thelake was no lake at all, but little more than an outsize pond, ten feet deep at its deepest point. Where is this citation?

Pg 63 This time (1881) the Cambria Iron Company sent two of its men to the lake with instructions to make a critical examination. **The dam looked perfectly solid to the Johnstown men** and they returned home with their report in time to make the evening edition of the paper. Where is this citation?

Pg 65 In 1880 again another dam (South Fork) broke; it had been built by Cambria Iron Co. as a feeder for the mills and was about sixteen feet high but it was located below the town, so no damage was caused. Where is this citation?

Pg 76 The third change was probably the most important of all. The **dam sagged slightly in the middle, where the old break had been**. Exactly how bad the sag was no one was able to say later for certain. It may have been only a foot or two, but according to one study, the crest at the center may have been as much as four feet lower than the ends**….** To have seen the sag with a naked eye, and particularly an untrained eye, would have been next to impossible. It is **conceivable therefore that it went unnoticed** by Ruff and the men who did the reconstruction work. Fulton took no note of it apparently;**…** Where is this citation?

Pg 93 On the outer face, near the base of the dam, It looked as though several serious leaks had developed. Where is this citation?

**David McCullough writes about - Pittsburgh people:**

Pg 40 Pittsburg people were coming and going then and they were something to see with their troops of beautiful children, their parasols, and servants. Where is this citation?

Pg 62 That the Pittsburghers with all their money people should think enough of the country around Johnstown to want to summer there was, of course, terribly flattering. Where is this citation?

Pg 43 Some of the people in Johnstown who were, as they said, “privileged” to visit the club on august Sundays brought home vivid descriptions of young (Pittsburgh) people gliding over the water under full sail. It was a picture of a life so removed from Johnstown that it seemed almost like a fantasy**…**  Where is this citation?

Pg 55 **For some reason** or other, intentionally or **otherwise**, the Pittsburgh men kept the correct name of their organization from receiving any kind of public notice.

Pg 46 David McCulloughquotes another author - with exception of Carnegie “**All other Iron and steel magnates, with the exception of Carnegie, lived in Pittsburgh…** What about Morrell?

**David McCullough writes about - Johnstown people:**

Pg 43 There were rowboats on the **old** Suppes ice pond at the edge of Johnstown, and a few men had canoes along the river below the city. But that was about it. Not since the time when Johnstown had been the start of the canal route west had there been boats in any number, and then **they had been only ungainly canal barges**.

Pg 157 James Quinn was **one of the few prominent men in Johnstown** who had been noticeably concerned about the dam**…** Where is this citation?

Pg 64 There it was, In one sentence. In the first place, the dam was probably sound, and even if it did fail not a great deal would happen since the dam was so far away. **It was a strange piece of reasoning to say the least...** Where is this citation?

Pg 66 Some men in Johnstown, **curiously enough**, thought that encroaching on the river channels would simply force the river to dig deeper. Where is this citation?

“Well This is the day the **old** dam is going to break.” It was becoming something of a **local joke**. Where is this citation?

Pg 67 It would appear, in fact, that Johnstown's leading citizens had taken little or **no intelligent** account of the threat the dam posed, were it not for some **highly interesting letters** that changed hands during the year 1880. Where is this citation?

Pg 84 …you have been fearing this for years and it has never yet happened, and **I don't think there is much danger.”**

Pg 87 The message was in regard to the dam; that there was some danger of it breaking. But **it created no alarm in his mind…. The ticket agent, read it and laughed out loud.** Where is this citation?

Pg 93 Boyer and Bidwell, had already told everyone that there was no danger of water running over the top… According to one witness, began telling everyone that there was really **nothing to get excited about**. Where is this citation?

Pg 95 …near the center of the dam a glassy sheet of water, fifty to sixty feet wide, had started over the top. But Siebert **did not seem especially concerned**, over what he had seen. He was, In fact, according one witness, ”**perfectly cool about it**.” Where is this citation?

Pg 117 Charles Haak, another operator said **he did not pay much attention to the warnings** either.

Pg 118 E. Conemaugh yards - Walkinshaw was a 49 years old, a widower with five children… looking rather astonished and **not especially bright.** Where is this citation?

Pg 119 The Reverend Robinson said that no one knew what was going on, but that he remembered telling a woman next to him that he **thought there was no danger**. Where is this citation?

Pg 123 The likeliest explanation seems to be that they, **like so many others,** **had no real fear of anything happening.** Where is this citation?

Pg 156 “**Strange as it may seem**, we were discussing the possibility of the dam breaking only a few hours before it really did”… “**No one had the slightest fear of such a catastrophe.”** Where is this citation?

**David McCullough writes about – Cambria Iron Company:**

Pg 67 The management at that time was a man by the name of Daniel Johnson Morrell**… he looked as though he were of another species**. He was under six feet tall, but with his massive, thick shoulders and ample girth (he weighed well over 200 pounds)…

Pg 77 After that, it seems, **senility closed in hard and fast**… “**Lost in mental darkness**.”

Pg 84 …at the time of **the old Quaker's death**

Pg 68 **Backwoods iron forges** had been in operation in Cambria County for fifty years of more.

Adjectives used by McCullough in describing C.I.Co**. Floundering, repeated failures, Knowing nothing, primitive, backwoods, haphazard research, keep the works from going bankrupt**, **setbacks, disappointments, luck, erratic, liveliest**

Adjectives used by McCullough in describing Henry Bessemer **brilliant English chemist, good-quality**

Pg 70 It would be mistaken, however, to imagine Cambria Iron as an **entirely** **overbearing** or **inhuman**  organization, grinding down on its employees.

**David McCullough writes about – Andrew Carnegie:**

Pg 44 Still, everything considered, in 1889 it looked as though the men who had bought the **old** dam ten years earlier **knew what they were doing**.

The **first** member of the South Fork Fishing & Hunting Club to **take an interest** in the regenerative powers of the Alleghenies was **Andrew Carnegie**.

Pg 49 It was also stated that the club’s place of business was to be Pittsburgh, in Allegheny County, not Cambria County where the property was located….Nor did the sportsmen make any effort to conform to the law. Perhaps it seemed a **minor point** and was overlooked by **mistake**.

**David McCullough writes about – Cause of Flood:**

Pg 81The solution, as they saw it, was to call a meeting to protest the way the Cambria Iron Company had been **filling in the riverbanks** next to the mills below town… Obviously, the rivers were bound to back up when flash floods hit.

Pg 82 …the huge barbed-wire plant stood on fill that had been **dumped** into the old canal basin, and that once upon a time there had been four feet of water right where they were standing.

Pg 88 No worse storm in 40 yrs, 50 yrs, 75 yrs, heard a waterspout, **fields covered in water 4 or 5 feet deep**. . .

Pg 91 Colonel Unger - His experience in hotel management, it would appear, had something to do with his position in the club. At 20 he started with PRR as a brakeman so he got to know Carnegie by 1888 he bought the place on Lake Conemaugh.

Colonel Unger was no Colonel but McCullough repeats saying it at least 15 times without pointing it out once.

Pg 92 There was a man named Bucannon up there, John Bucannon, who lived in South Fork. Well he kept telling Colonel Unger to tear out that **bridge** and pull out that big **iron screen**. “But Colonel Unger wouldn't do it.

Pg 174 Pitcairn had read it and thought little more of it. First of all, he could not quite understand how Colonel Unger could be sending such warnings, since he knew perfectly well that Colonel **Unger had no telegraph wire** at the club and that the telephone line was not open yet. And secondly, as he would say later, he simply “paid little attention to any reports about the South Fork dam, as they had been made perhaps nearly every year.” As if the telegraph would have prevented the dam from breaking.

Pg 95 Robert Pitcairn - (Instead of pointing out that he was a member of the SFF&HC & knew about the lake since 1862) McCullough says; Pitcairn who had a **special interest** in the South Fork Fishing &Hunting Club as well as the Pennsylvania Railroad, was sitting in his private railroad car on his was to Johnstown.

Pg 125 Later the Pennsylvania Railroad, in **an effort to establish exactly what had happened** at East Conemaugh, conducted its own investigation, which **would provide the one full account** of the whereabouts of several dozen employees, the official decisions made before the water struck,..

Pg 175 Pitcairn’s knowledge of the dam went back more than thirty years to the time when the Pennsylvania had first bought it. (1859) His old boyhood friend Andy Carnegie had gotten him a job on the railroad, as a ticket agent at Cresson But his first real interest in the dam began when it broke in 1862 and wreaked a lot a railroad property. Then nearly twenty years later (1882), when the South Fork club finished its restoration and there was talk in the valley about leaks at the base of the dam, Pitcairn had gone up to see for himself, taking along several of his own people from South Fork. Where is this citation? You wouldn’t know he was a member of the SFF&HC.

Pg 173 Talking about the fire at the Stone Bridge and how many Johnstowners died there. “That there looked to be thousands of them and that they seemed **insect like** is understandable enough, but evidence is that at most, perhaps 500 or 600 people were driven into the burning heap, and though exact figures were never settled on, it is likely that all but about 80 of them managed to escape.

Pg 262 So while there is no question that an “**act of God**” (the storm of the night of May 30-31) brought on the disaster, there is also no question that it was, in the last analysis, **mortal man who was truly to blame.**

Has anyone ever looked into David McCullough’s possible connection to Byers & McCullough (lower mills Pittsburgh) in 1875? This may explain his bias and a conflict of interest.

**David McCullough’s “The Johnstown Flood” isn’t listed as fiction or history or a novel. It has zero footnotes and zero citations but yet is credited with the best account of the flood by the National Park Service and others. Is it because he is a great author and wonderful wordsmith and holds a Pulitzer Prize. It can’t be because he dug for the truth of what really caused the dam to fail?**

Or, is it because it falls in line with the National Park Service rendition? His story starts just one day before the dam failed and he concludes it was **“no question an act of God”** but **“in the last analysis, mortal man who was truly to blame.”** **Which is it?**

So why is David McCullough’s book "The Johnstown Flood" featured in the National Park book stores and listed as the best available, by the National Park Service?

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New Information

And Questions

This completes my rebuttal and answers to the NPS analysis, and my comments on David McCullough’s book, but I must provide one additional thing, my theory about what happened to the pipes after the break of 1862 because it’s NOT spelled out as part of “The Bosses Club”.

I believe the removal of the cast iron sluice pipes is key as to whether Andrew Carnegie was involved in the alterations to the dam. Total weight of the cast iron pipes and apparatus was 150,495 pounds (75.25 tons) and 12,440 pounds (6.22 tons) of wrought iron, enough to build 2 iron railroad bridges. They were installed in 1840-1841 using 40 to 80 men, **the pipes alone cost $7,000,** the cost of laying the pipes $4,950, cement $2,200, stop cocks, lead for joints and testing $2,800. This work was itemized in a contract that totaled $80,000.

They were removed: sometime between 1862 and 1879 and where did they go? Pig iron from blast furnaces, during 1862-1865 periods was in very short supply and the Civil War was raging, further increasing that shortage. And Carnegie Bridge Co. (Keystone) was just getting started and had a critical need for iron, because they didn’t have their own blast furnaces. Carnegie first blast furnace (Lucy) was started in 1871 and had its first blow in 1872. My theory is that he needed iron and he controlled the Western Division or the Pennsylvania railroad, which included the dam up until 1865; and he took the iron pipes to start his bridge company. He justified this because the railroad was never going to refill the dam and the iron was available, just like the wrecked railroad cars. He had set them on fire and burnt off the wood so the iron would be available for recycling.

If my theory is correct, shortly after reporting the “break” of 1862, the pipes were removed and the control tower was burned down so the iron could be salvaged. Now you can’t remove the pipes without disturbing the dam, up to the culvert on the upstream side, where they were laid in masonry at the foot of the dam, then pressure tested equal to 300’ head of water. To remove them, this would take a major effort to dig out 81.47 tons of iron, load the pipes on wagons haul them to South Fork railroad station, place them on flat cars and transport them to a mill that could recycle them. But being in charge of the Western Division, he could have sent a team of railroad men to do this all at no cost to himself. This action would leave a trapezoidal shaped hole in the breast of the dam. Erosion would increase the size of this hole over the next 17 years. John Reilly bought the property in 1875 with the idea of developing the property while he was in Congress. When he was not re-elected in 1875, he goes back to the railroad in his supervisory role and pitches the development idea to Ruff, Frick and Carnegie. He just wants to get his money back (that he paid for it - $2,500).

Sometime around 1879 a scheme is developed to form a Club for Pittsburgh industrialists to preserve nature and to refill the dam. The club would be called the South Fork Fishing & Hunting Club and they would pay $2,000 for all the grounds. Carnegie, possibly, feeling guilty for taking the pipes, at no cost, chips in $500 from his Keystone Bridge Company; so Reilly gets all of his money back. All the Club needs to do, now that they bought the dam and property for just $2,000, is plug the hole.

At this point the plan is pretty solid, but where it goes wrong is the job to plug the hole is given to Ruff, a man without engineering skills. The borrow site where the material came from, for the plugging, was from the top of the dam. When it was lowered it eliminated the emergency spillway.

How large was the hole? This hole was described as 200 feet across the top and at least 40 feet deep. The South Fork branch of the Conemaugh River would continue to run through the remaining culvert for the next 17 years. I estimate the culvert itself could have been as large as 25 feet wide and about 15 feet high. But, in any case, more than large enough to carry this stream. Over the years, I’m sure this hole would gather debris, logs, and stones and backup, but would clear itself when pressure became great enough and then would erode the bank, resulting in an increase in the size of the hole into the culvert.

Some historians claim this break in 1862 was at the top of the breast of the dam. Using the dimensions stated in historic records of 200 feet wide and 40 feet deep for the breech. If measured from the top of the dam it could look as described on page 7 of the Kaktins & Heliyon report. It shows a dashed line superimposed on the breast were this breech could have been. But, for this to have occurred, the dam would have had to be full to have washed the breast away, similar to what happened in 1889. But the records show that the dam was only half full and therefore resulting in little damage to Johnstown. How is this possible? I don’t think that this could have occurred without a catastrophic collapse. And in addition the emergency spillway at this time was still functional and water would have begun to flow over it before causing a breach in the breast.

The dimensions are “facts” (200’ wide x 40’ deep), but historians are measuring from the top of the breast, instead of from the bottom. This area in front of the culvert and directly above it would have been 40’ deep (where the pipes once were) and would have gradually widened as this trench eroded its banks, over 17 years, until it had eroded 200 feet wide and 40’ deep above the culvert. **(Though I’m no artist I’ve tried to draw what this would have looked like.)** Besides, human nature would have discouraged Reilly or Ruff from attempting to make a repair to a 200’ x 40’ deep gap in the top of the breast of dam. But, it would appear very feasible for Pennsylvania Railroad men to repair the dam by just plugging up the culvert that carried the stream (tunneled) under the breast. The dam, repaired in this manner, was still pretty much water tight because the puddled clay had not been disturbed, except the area (40 feet) above the entrance to the culvert. The leaks that made it through the repairs leaked through the culvert. They (SFF&HC) would just dump more leaves and debris over the repairs to clog this persistent leaking.

Some scholars say that the dip (low spot) in the road (top of breast) was caused by compaction after rebuilding the entire breast. My theory is that Mr. Ruff just scrapped material off the top of the breast, but unevenly. Some claims assert that this dip was as much as 4 feet deep, but I believe that it was only a few inches. But never the less, it quickly (in 1 to 2 hours) eroded the breast when it overflowed at the middle of dam in 1889.

The National Park Service version would have you believe that the culvert collapsed and the puddled, water tight clay ran out like sand in an hour glass until there was a depression in the top of dam itself (200’ x 40’) - the size of the depression as shown in Kaktins report referenced previously. And you are to believe Mr. Ruff filled this gap with hay, leaves and dirt loosely packed material, not puddled or compacted. Then after several wash outs, he repeated the process until he had restored the dam. I think this version would have even turned off Mr. Ruff. He could not have restored the dam in this way, nor would he have even attempted to do it. But, it was viable if all he had to do was plug the 200’ by 40’ hole. Even if it did leak a little through the culvert; the rest of the breast was water tight. Planks were placed across the exit side of the culvert after they he got most of the leaks stopped, hoping that this would further block the leaks and eventually stop them altogether.

Accepted history has it that Congressman John Reilly, a supervisor on the PRR, bought the dam and grounds just when he ran for congress, from the railroad for $2,500. He is credited with removing the pipes and selling them for scrap, receiving $500 for them. He then sells the property for $2,000 to the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club. Now, why would anyone buy a dam that you could market as a resort and then destroy it by digging out the pipes to recover 20% of the cost with the sale of the pipes for scrap, but lowering the value of the property by 20% to only $2,000? As a congressman, Reilly didn’t have the equipment, men or horses to dig out the pipes and then transport them to wherever. But, in 1862 – 1865 Andrew Carnegie had all of this at his disposal as supervisor in charge of the western division of the PRR. And he had Edgar Thomson’s blessings as a partner in Carnegie’s Bridge Co. also known as the Piper & Shiffler and Keystone Bridge Company. By the way John Piper and Aaron Shiffler both were employees of the PRR at the time they formed the bridge company.

The amount paid and received by John Reilly for the dam doesn’t make sense, but then a lot of other transactions at that time didn’t add up either. For instance Carnegie never paid a dime for his share of the Bridge Company. He received his 1/5 share (equivalent to $1,250) for services rendered. Possibly the iron pipes were more valuable than money during that period.

*THE INSDE HISTORY OF THE CARNEGIE STEEL COMPANY*

*by James Howard Bridge, Published, July 1903, Starting on Page 48*

*Thus, so far from being the pioneer in the iron railroad bridge business, Mr. Carnegie occupied a position a long way down the list. When he finally did become interested with Piper and Shiffler it was not, as he alleges, in “cast-iron bridges.”*

*When cast iron was in vogue for bridge structures in England, wood was used in America; and when wood was replaced with iron it was wrought iron, and later Bessemer steel, that was used. The only parts of Piper & Shiffler’s bridges that were of cast iron were Piper’s patent posts; and these were a very small part of the whole, which, of course, was of wrought iron.*

*It is also worth (SIC) of mention that Andrew Carnegie’s principal interest in the Keystone Bridge Company was given to him in return for services rendered in its promotion. He paid no cash for any of his shares; but desiring to have a larger holding than that gratuitously assigned to him, he gave his note to the company in payment of the increased interest, and the first four dividends sufficed to liquidate the debt.*

*It is possible that the standards of commercial morality were as high forty years ago as they are to-day. Business men of that period aver that they were higher. It is none the less certain that the ethics of railroad management in early days were formed after other standards than those of modern times; else had there been more general condemnation of the fault which Andrew Carnegie discovered in Miller’s “clandestine arrangement with Kloman while acting as agent of the Fort Wayne Road.” Such arrangements, not always clandestine, seen to have been the rule in those days, and the early history of the Carnegie enterprises affords many examples. Despite the fact that the principal business of the most important of these enterprises was the manufacture of rails, railway structures, and railway material of various kinds, it was from the salaried officials of railways that much of their first financial support was received. Miller did not sever his connection with the Fort Wayne road when he built the Cyclops Mill; nor did Andrew Carnegie resign from the Pennsylvania when he joined him. Indeed, it was not an uncommon thing for the president and vice-president of a railroad to own shares in a corporation which obtained most of its business from such road. No doubt the business was contracted for by faithful subordinates, and was honestly and properly carried out by the contracting companies; and while it is possible that no question of morals is involved in the dual allegiance of such important officials, modern opinion would unhesitatingly condemn it as a breach of propriety and good taste.*

*In the formation of the Keystone Bridge Company this infraction of modern standards was especially conspicuous; although the matter-of-fact way in which Mr. Carnegie speaks of organizing a company “principally from railroad men” shows that he, at least, had no idea that the propriety of such a proceeding might be questioned. President J. Edgar Thomson, however, had his interest appear on the company’s books in the name of his wife. Besides Colonel Scott, vice-president, the Pennsylvania Railroad officials who became stockholders in the Keystone Bridge Company included the chief engineer, the assistant general superintendent, the superintendent of motive power and machinery, and Andrew Carnegie, the superintendent of the Pittsburg division of the line. There were also the president of another road, two chief engineers, and a general superintendent. Carnegie says he did not resign his position on the Pennsylvania Railroad until 1867, two years after the formation of the Keystone Bridge Company; \* and Mr. Pitcairn, his successor on the railway, afterwards joined the Keystone board of directors.*

*Footnote \*Another error. He left the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1865, in his thirtieth year.*

Could John Reilly have received some stock in the Carnegie’s Bridge Company for compensation for the part he played in the transfer of the South Fork Dam property? He got promoted to Supervisor of Transportation of the Pennsylvania Railroad on April 1, 1865. He served as congressman between 1875 – 1877, and at the same time he bought the dam from the railroad in 1875 for $2,500 and sold it in 1879 to Ruff who represented the SFF&HC for $2,000, but was given $500 for the sluice pipes that he is credited with digging out of the breast and transporting 81 ½ tons of iron to a location not identified. Or was the $500 compensation to Reilly for pipes that were already missing? Taken previously in 1862-65 and made into bridge components?

Andrew Carnegie had a unique need for iron in 1862 and a distinctive opportunity as superintendent of the Pennsylvania Railroad in charge of their useless dam, but it contained enough iron to build two railroad bridges. The facts are the pipes were taken out, by someone.

Regardless of who took the pipes he had a fiduciary responsibility to tell the members of the SFF&HC Club, to stop them from lowering the breast of the dam, thereby, eliminating the emergency spillway. The only other way the dam had to rid itself of excess water. But instead he presumably stood silently by and allowed them to create a condition that was dangerous. The margin of safety was so close to failure that the dam lasted less than a decade before it failed. Considering how many lives were lost, it’s a crime of such magnitude that it ranks among the worst. The other members were not in a position to know what had transpired in the years prior to 1879 except for maybe Pitcairn, Ruff and Frick. All subordinate to Carnegie. It’s hard to deny Carnegie had knowledge of how the dam had been originally built, with sluice pipes and an emergency overflow spillway. Or how the dam had been altered by taking out the pipes and now the club, in which he was a member, was lowering the breast. It’s also hard to deny that if Cambria Iron Company lost any production, Carnegie’s Steel Company stood to benefit, which might explain his lack of compassion. Like kicking the water buckets out of his way in Dunfermline, Scotland.

The SFF&HC had many engineers available and learned people who could have stopped the flood by intervening before the dam was refilled with water. Who where the members at the time the dam was refilled? After it was filled new members would not have known what had transpired in previous years at the dam. But that can’t be an excuse for their behavior, especially after Cambria Iron engineers pointed out that it was not safe as is. Even common sense should have prevailed. I’m sure that if their families had lived in the valley, their attitudes would have been different.

If Andrew Carnegie was involved in any way with removing the pipes, as I suspect, he should be placed at the head of the list for suspects responsible for the failure of the dam and the cause of the Johnstown Flood.

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