

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

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## **Anniversary of 1889 Great Johnstown Flood approaches**

***Commemorative events to include luminaria,  
Presentation of Rev. David Beale collection***

The 1889 Johnstown Flood was a defining event in the history of this region – and for our entire nation. Once again, the Johnstown Area Heritage Association (JAHA) and the National Park Service are preparing a full slate of events to mark the anniversary of this disaster, which occurred on May 31, 1889. In chronological order, events include:

**Saturday, May 26 and Sunday, May 27**

**Interpretive Hikes**

**Start location: South Abutment of the South Fork Dam, at the Johnstown Flood National Memorial**

**Start time: 2:00 p.m. (both days)**

**Sponsor: National Park Service**

**Reservations requested: Call (814) 495-4643**

**FREE and open to the public**

A National Park Service ranger will lead a hike into the historic lakebed of the South Fork Dam, the dam that failed on May 31, 1889. The walk will begin at the south abutment of the dam, and last about an hour. Visitors are encouraged to wear sturdy shoes. The group will also visit the clubhouse that belonged to the South Fork Fishing & Hunting Club. Reservations are encouraged for this program.

The Saturday hike is titled, "Path of the Flood," while the Sunday hike is "Into the Lakebed and Through the Breach."

**Thursday, May 31 (PHOTO OPPORTUNITY)**  
Children from Northern Bedford Elementary School will set luminaries at the Johnstown Flood National Memorial in preparation for the evening's luminaria. Information: (814) 495-4643

**Thursday, May 31**  
**Special Interpretive Program at the Dam**  
**Start time: 3:00 p.m.**  
**Place: Johnstown Flood National Memorial**  
**Sponsor: The National Park Service**  
**For more information: Call (814) 495-4643**  
**FREE and open to the public**

This special interpretive program will take place at the South Abutment of the remains of the South Fork Dam, and will be presented by costumed park staff members.

The program, "Into the Lakebed and Through the Breach," will focus on the doomed efforts of Colonel Unger, the president of the South Fork Fishing & Hunting Club, and his crew to relieve the pressure on the dam before it ultimately broke on May 31, 1889. The drama of the repeated attempts to warn Johnstown by telegraph will also be featured.

**Thursday, May 31**  
**Presentation of "Black Friday" silent movie**  
**Place: Johnstown Flood National Memorial**  
**Times: 6:15, 7:15, 8:15, 9:15 pm**  
**Sponsor: National Park Service**

National Park Service staff and volunteers will narrate the movie "Black Friday," which is normally shown at the memorial's visitor center with a soundtrack.

**Thursday, May 31**  
**"Through the Johnstown Flood": The Collection of the Rev. David Beale**  
**Time: 7:00 p.m., Thursday, May 31**  
**Place: Frank & Sylvia Pasquerilla Heritage Discovery Center**  
**Sponsor: JAHA**  
**FREE and open to the public; reservations encouraged**  
**Call (814) 539-1889**

The Rev. David Beale was one of the most famous survivors of the 1889 flood, and is the author of "Through the Johnstown Flood," the best memoir of the flood. His personal letters, diaries, documents, photographs and other memorabilia were recently discovered in a trunk in Philadelphia, and the Johnstown Area Heritage Association has acquired this collection. To commemorate the anniversary of the flood, AmeriCorps member Nathan Koozer will present highlights from the Beale collection, providing a fascinating insight into the flood, Johnstown in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and one of its most interesting personalities. Light refreshments will be served. (See enclosed release for more about Beale and the collection).

**Thursday, May 31**

**The Luminaria**

**Time: 8:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m.**

**Place: The Johnstown Flood National Memorial**

**Sponsor: The National Park Service**

**FREE and open to the public**

**Call (814) 495-4643**

Every year, the luminaria serves as a moving tribute to the victims of the flood. More than 2,209 candles are lit on the ruins of the South Fork Dam. The candles will be lit at 7:30 p.m. and will burn for several hours, with the peak time estimated to be about 9:30 p.m. In addition, the visitors center will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

**Thursday, May 31**

**Open House at Flood Sites**

To mark this highly significant date in Johnstown's history, three flood-related sites host open houses.

- **Johnstown Flood Museum**  
Downtown Johnstown, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.  
No admission fee charged on May 31
- **Johnstown Flood National Memorial and South Fork Fishing & Hunting Clubhouse**  
St. Michael, Pennsylvania, 9:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.  
No admission fee charged on May 31  
Morgue book from the Rev. David Beale collection will be on display for one day only at the JOFL visitor center

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