



## **“Gentle River Goes Mad”: The Republican River Flood of 1935 and Its New Deal Legacy**

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# “GENTLE RIVER GOES MAD:”

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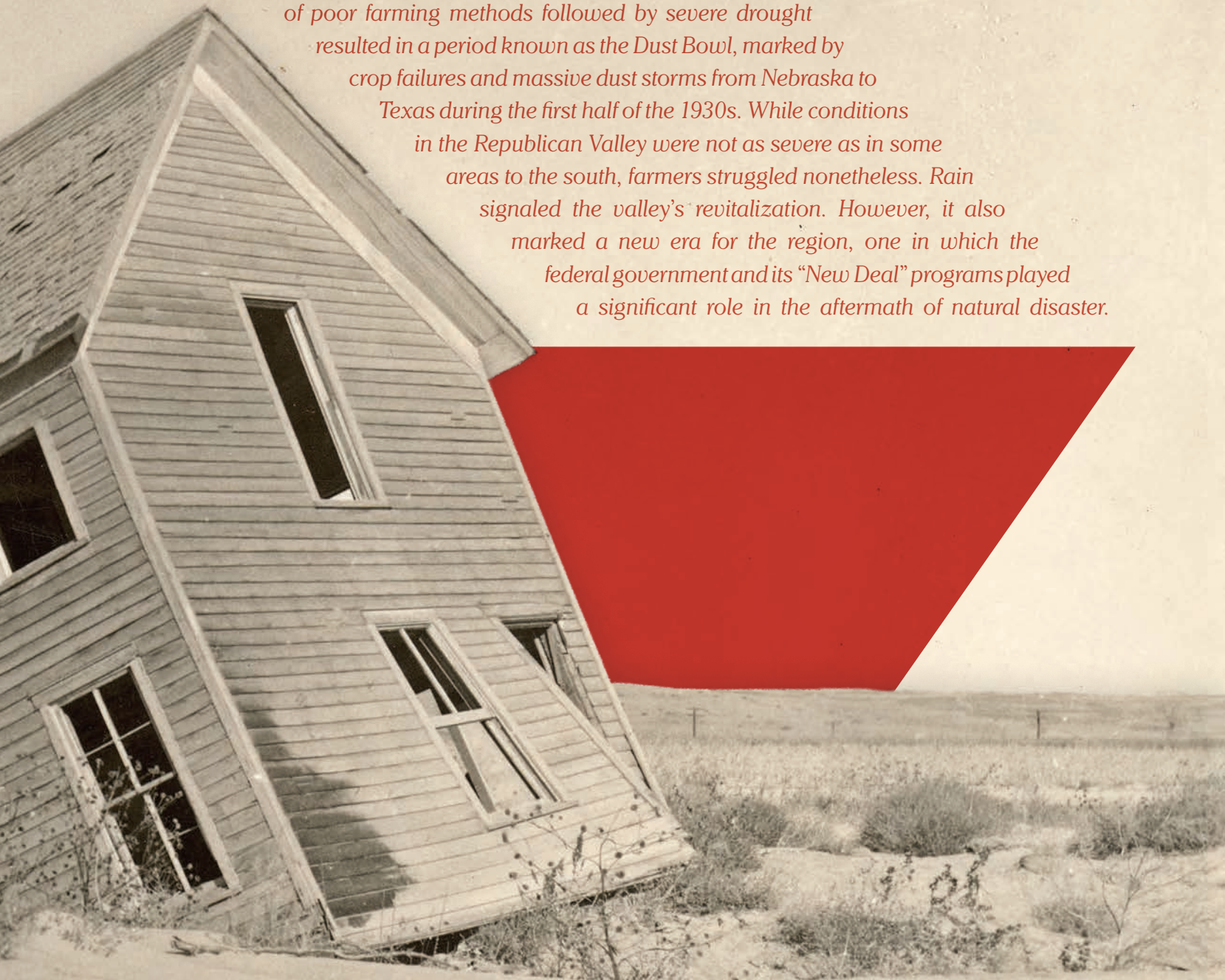
THE REPUBLICAN RIVER  
FLOOD OF 1935 AND ITS  
NEW DEAL LEGACY

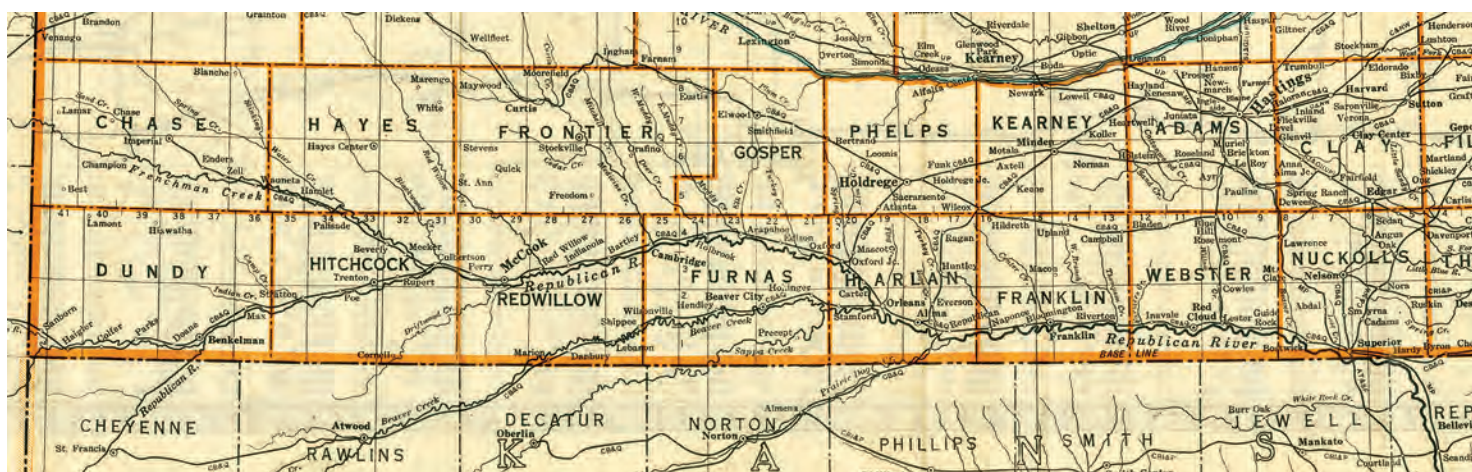


BY STACEY STUBBS

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**A**fter years of drought, the arrival of rain at the end of May 1935 at first seemed a blessing to the residents of the Republican River Valley. Years of poor farming methods followed by severe drought resulted in a period known as the Dust Bowl, marked by crop failures and massive dust storms from Nebraska to Texas during the first half of the 1930s. While conditions in the Republican Valley were not as severe as in some areas to the south, farmers struggled nonetheless. Rain signaled the valley's revitalization. However, it also marked a new era for the region, one in which the federal government and its "New Deal" programs played a significant role in the aftermath of natural disaster.





**Detail from 1935 Rand McNally Standard Map of Nebraska, showing counties affected by the flood.** NSHS M782 1935 R186r

The change to the usually gentle Republican River came with little warning. In their survey for the Department of the Interior, Robert Follansbee and J. B. Spiegel stated that the Dust Bowl, ironically, created conditions ripe for flooding. The dry ground proved incapable of absorbing large amounts of precipitation. Several days of rain, along with a cloudburst over Colorado, quickly saturated the ground. The runoff rolled into the Republican River and its tributaries, all of which overtopped their banks. The result was “the greatest flood of record.”<sup>1</sup> Normally 300 to 400 feet wide, the river spread a mile wide in most places, and up to four miles wide in several areas of Nebraska and Kansas. The *Omaha World-Herald* described the resulting trail of disaster under the headline, “Gentle River Goes Mad.”<sup>2</sup>

The Republican River’s drainage basin covers 22,400 square miles and stretches across Colorado, Kansas, and Nebraska. Its flooding, therefore, affected a wide area. Although reports vary, an estimated 113 people perished in the flooding. Most families recovered the bodies of their lost loved ones, but the remains of several victims eluded search efforts. Most of the flooded ground was farmland, and property losses, including livestock and machinery, came to approximately \$26 million. An estimated 341 miles of highway, 307 bridges, and 74,500 acres of farmland were damaged, along with the many homes and buildings of those living near the river.<sup>3</sup>

As the waters receded, residents across the valley began the recovery process. “But it has been a hard fight,” wrote H. H. McCoy, publisher for the *Orleans Chronicle*, “and however brave these men may be, they alone cannot forever play the role of Hercules.”<sup>4</sup> Many disaster victims relied on the assistance of family and friends, but

residents needed outside help in their rebuilding efforts. Private organizations such as the American Red Cross aided the valley’s recovery. But just as important, the federal government began taking a larger role, and like other regions of the country, the Republican River Valley would benefit from the work of government officials, the armed forces, and federal agencies such as the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

The National Guard was one of the first government entities involved in the relief efforts. With Nebraska Governor Robert L. Cochran in Washington, D.C., when the disaster occurred, Lieutenant Governor Walter Jurgensen took charge and declared a state emergency. Citing the need to “provide the necessary protection for the citizens of this state,” Jurgensen mobilized the Nebraska National Guard, something the state had not done for twenty years.<sup>5</sup> By June 6 several guard companies arrived to help with efforts in the region, much to the relief of local residents.<sup>6</sup> According to the *Biennial Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Nebraska*, 21 officers and 237 enlisted men came to the Republican Valley for a four-day tour. During that time they rescued 78 flood victims, recovered “numerous bodies,” and spent \$4,848.38 on relief efforts, including food and medical supplies for those affected by the disaster.<sup>7</sup>

The work of the government continued through the efforts of various officials. Nebraska U.S. Senator George Norris lived in McCook, one of the region’s hardest hit towns. Besides contributing \$100 of his own to help flood victims, his Washington, D.C., office became a meeting place for federal officials involved in the relief efforts, including President Franklin Roosevelt, FERA director Harry Hopkins, and, while he was

in the capital, Governor Cochran.<sup>8</sup> For Cochran, restoration of the valley to pre-flood conditions became a top priority. He began making plans while still in Washington.<sup>9</sup> The June 6 edition of the *Omaha World-Herald* reported a meeting between the governor, President Roosevelt, Hopkins, and other officials, at which they discussed the release of aid to flood victims.<sup>10</sup> While Nebraska's state government provided relief funds to the Republican Valley, federal funding was crucial to the recovery process. In an August 1 radio broadcast, Cochran said that Nebraska received access to "\$250,000 of federal funds" within three days of the disaster.<sup>11</sup> While he did not specify the source of the funding, the governor added that funds spent on the National Guard's tour and for CCC camps in the region were not included in this amount.<sup>12</sup> More than likely, the FERA—created under President Roosevelt's Federal Emergency Relief Act, passed on May 12, 1933—was a key contributor. Upon receiving assurances of help from the Roosevelt administration, Cochran flew to North Platte and then headed south to McCook in order to tour the devastated valley with State Engineer A. C. Tilley.<sup>13</sup>

While in McCook, on June 6 the governor held a conference at the Keystone Hotel with representatives from across the flood-stricken region.<sup>14</sup> More than a hundred representatives from eleven Nebraska counties attended the

meeting. Cochran explained his goals and plans for rebuilding, the foremost being a permanent program for the valley's rehabilitation. Other attendees included Albert Evans, a relief director for the Red Cross, and Rowland Haynes, director of the Nebraska Emergency Relief Administration (NERA). Both Evans and Haynes helped create recovery plans. Haynes coordinated the state's relief efforts, including Red Cross work along with "permanent rehabilitating . . . and engineering projects."<sup>15</sup>

On June 20, *The Culbertson Progress* reported that Haynes had received \$434,000 in federal funding for relief efforts. This amount included "\$194,000 of general relief funds; \$190,000 for rural rehabilitation funds, and \$50,000 diverted from the soil erosion fund previously available."<sup>16</sup> The program spent \$337,769 on recovery efforts from June to October 1935, providing food and supplies for flood victims, along with funding for various jobs.<sup>17</sup>

Besides financial support, Haynes also brought in workers to aid in the rebuilding process. During the McCook meeting, representatives learned that FERA workers were scheduled to arrive in the area.<sup>18</sup> By June 13, CCC and NERA both established emergency camps which allowed for the placement of relief workers in the Republican Valley.<sup>19</sup> Follansbee and Spiegel's report for the

**Aerial view of the  
Republican River west of  
Franklin, Nebraska, June 1,  
1935. NSHS RG3367-9-11**



**Aerial View of Republican River West of Franklin Nebraska  
after the Flood 6-1-35  
Bates Photo # 30**



**Lieutenant Governor Walter H. Jurgensen, circa 1934.**  
NSHS RG2411-2806

**Flood-damaged bridge over the Republican River south of Holbrook, Nebraska.**  
NSHS RG4290-739

Department of the Interior confirmed that the CCC brought 1,000 men to the region and that FERA camps employed 600 men.<sup>20</sup> NERA, which placed camps in Benkelman, Trenton, McCook, Cambridge, Oxford, and Alma, brought in many of their workers from eastern Nebraska.<sup>21</sup> Local residents found various ways to house these men; the town of Benkelman, for example, used its school to house FERA men from Omaha.<sup>22</sup> In June 1935, Trenton received seventy-one men from Lincoln, who camped on the Legion grounds.<sup>23</sup> When the Republican River flooded again towards the end of June, FERA camp residents moved to Trenton's Congregational Church.<sup>24</sup>

Not all towns received their requested workers immediately after the flood. Culbertson, Nebraska, attempted to establish a FERA camp with little success. Instead, the plan for recovery involved men from the McCook and Trenton camps working towards the town, located halfway between the two camps. This meant that for the time being, Culbertson residents rather than government workers carried out local relief efforts. As one writer put it, the town "received a half way promise that possibly something could be done."<sup>25</sup> Culbertson residents recognized the need for government assistance. By the end of June, Carl H. Swanson, part of the Culbertson committee for recovery, reported the imminent arrival of men from the Trenton and McCook camps.

The same article in *The Culbertson Progress* outlined the work for the arriving men, including cleaning and restoration projects. Local residents, upon completing an application to the American Red Cross, also hired these men for work on private property.<sup>26</sup>

The disaster created ample employment in the region as a number of projects needed to be completed, such as clearing transportation routes. Local men found jobs with organizations such as the State Highway Department. Even with the new jobs for local workers, however, the arrival of relief workers caused concern among residents regarding which jobs the FERA men would take. They felt local men should have hiring priority over outside labor. This proved to be a justifiable concern after the release of local men employed in highway repair near Culbertson in anticipation of incoming FERA workers. Although these men soon went back to work, the misunderstanding led to a desire for clarification. As outlined in the local newspaper, work on highways and for "private individuals" went first to local workers, whereas the FERA laborers focused on "public works projects and in a general clean up work of the whole valley."<sup>27</sup>

The article did not specify whether or not this issue was related to funding from the federal and state governments, but the fact that both groups soon found work indicated that the problem had been a lack of coordination rather than a lack of



**Damaged fields in the flood zone.** NSHS RG4290-751

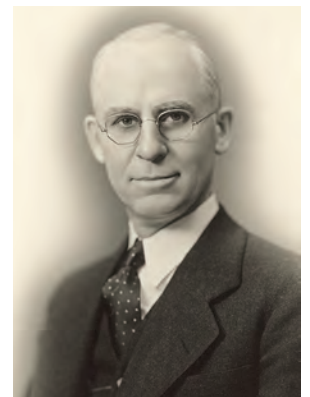


funds. Despite initial concerns and confusion, Republican Valley residents appreciated FERA's help. The *Franklin County Sentinel* reported on their work, saying the men did a "good job of cleaning up houses" and handling the carcasses of animals that perished in the flood.<sup>28</sup>

The June 6 edition of the *Omaha World-Herald* reported that the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) had begun to move into the Republican Valley. Col. S. J. Sutherland, commanding the state unit, worked quickly to establish camps across the region.<sup>29</sup> Twenty-five CCC camps already existed in Nebraska at the time of the flood, creating employment for 6,100 men. One of these camps was located in Franklin, Nebraska, a town heavily affected by the flooding.<sup>30</sup> Shortly after the disaster, the program added nine temporary camps in McCook, Superior, Franklin, Trenton, Cambridge, Arapahoe, Alma, Benkelman, and Red Cloud.<sup>31</sup> To help with the new need, the CCC brought in men from previously established camps, such as fifty workers from Atwood, Kansas, that came to Trenton.<sup>32</sup> Some of the men from the previously established Camp Franklin helped fill the Alma camp, referred to in newspapers as a "side camp," and men from Camp Nelson filled a side camp at Red Cloud.<sup>33</sup> The program also recruited local workers to fill camp quotas. With a camp quota of twelve, the town of Franklin offered positions to applicants between the ages of 18 to 28.<sup>34</sup> The CCC accepted more applications as the program expanded to meet the new demand.

As a result of new jobs from private individuals and organizations such as the State Highway Department, some camps struggled to meet their quotas. From June 15 to July 5, the CCC set Hitchcock County's quota at nine. *The Culbertson Progress* thought it unlikely that the county would meet its quota.<sup>35</sup> *The Franklin County Sentinel* also reported an inability to reach their local quota of twelve men by June 20; the county hired only nine local men for the program.<sup>36</sup> The corps brought in workers from other areas of the country. For example, eighty men from CCC Camp Sarpy at Fort Crook, Nebraska, came to Benkelman and Parks.<sup>37</sup> The men accomplished important projects. In Trenton, considered "to be the lodging place for considerable silt during the floods," CCC men helped to rid the town of debris.<sup>38</sup> *The Republican Leader* reported on the removal of mud from the town, which included more than "two thousand wagon and truck loads."<sup>39</sup> Local farmers who applied with the agricultural agent also received help from the workers, as the floodwaters had washed out many crops and damaged farmland. CCC men helped repair the damage and replant the crops.<sup>40</sup> In Franklin County, workers disposed of animal remains and cleaned mud out of homes from Naponee to Riverton.<sup>41</sup>

As previously noted, aid was slow to reach many areas. *The Culbertson Progress* complained that the "federal government for the past two years has installed CCC camps in various sections of the country, building lakes, parks, and recreation



**Governor Robert L. Cochran.**  
NSHS RG3378-1-34



**Relief workers lived in military-style encampments.**  
NSHS RG4290-722

grounds—all of which are no doubt worthy projects. But where can the federal government place these men today that their work will render greater benefit to mankind than in the flood area of the Republican valley?<sup>42</sup> Once corps members arrived, their work was similar to that of the FERA men. Local newspapers often used phrases such as “C.C.C. and F.E.R.A. men are in charge of this work.”<sup>43</sup> Amongst their projects involving “public works [and] general cleanup,” the corps removed debris from a Riverton hotel and cleaned up around the Republican River near Naponee and Alma.<sup>44</sup>

Among the most difficult projects was the recovery of human remains. Local residents and the National Guard recovered many of the bodies before the program established its temporary camps. The corps continued the process and operated the only organized search parties, finding the remains of several flood victims.<sup>45</sup> Near Culbertson, for example, a Mrs. Culver and her six-year-old son had been caught in the rising water. Culver held onto the boy as long as possible, but the current washed him out of her arms. CCC workers found his body southwest of Trenton on June 3.<sup>46</sup>

The CCC’s role in restoring the Republican Valley ranged from “cleaning away debris and salvaging personal property” to searching for bodies.<sup>47</sup> Bernice Haskins Post of Naponee, Nebraska, listed the work the corps completed in her area, which included removal of trees, restoration of fields, and removal of trash from the buildings and land. Post expressed gratitude, saying the men “did much to make our place livable after the flood.”<sup>48</sup>

The CCC ended its work in many areas of the Republican Valley by July.<sup>49</sup> Governor Cochran, along with other Nebraska representatives, tried to prolong corps’ efforts in the region by writing to U.S. senators and CCC leaders.<sup>50</sup> This demonstrated their reliance on federal and state aid, although aid also came from private organizations, including the American Red Cross.

Prior to the New Deal, Congress had made only isolated attempts to aid disaster victims. A federal disaster relief agency did not

exist for much of American history. Established in 1881, the American Red Cross collaborated with the government to fill this role, becoming an “unofficial extension of the federal government.”<sup>51</sup> The ARC continued to play an important role in recovery efforts during the 1930s, providing survivors with food, clothing, and bedding, while government aid provided employment for infrastructure restoration and other services. Governor Cochran expressed his support to Albert Evans, the Red Cross district director, stressing his desire to cooperate with the organization.<sup>52</sup> In a report on the activities of the Flood Area Restoration Office, the Red Cross stood at the top of the list of agencies involved in restoration work.<sup>53</sup> The same report also listed the members of locally appointed restoration committees for each affected town. Many of these committees included at least one Red Cross member.<sup>54</sup>

The Red Cross distributed many different forms of aid, working closely with the FERA and the CCC. In Cambridge, Nebraska, it established kitchens for “mass feeding” in collaboration with the FERA.<sup>55</sup> The June 13 edition of the *Franklin County Sentinel* reported that FERA nurse Winnie Garrelts had set up several immunization clinics for people at risk of typhoid fever due to prolonged exposure to river water. The Red Cross provided the vaccinations and other supplies for the clinics.<sup>56</sup> In another example of collaboration, the CCC and the FERA worked at “salvaging personal property”; the Red Cross supervised the work and returned the property to its owners.<sup>57</sup> While each agency proved successful on its own, working together led to further success.

Flood survivors could also apply to the Red Cross for direct aid. Hitchcock County Director Jessie Clark served towns such as Culbertson and Trenton. She reviewed applications, traveled to homes of applicants, and issued aid to those who qualified.<sup>58</sup> By June 28, seventy-one families in Hitchcock County applied, including several farmers—the hardest hit by the disaster.<sup>59</sup> Bernice Haskins Post from Franklin County said that she and her husband received food and clothing from the organization, which later also funded repairs to their house and furniture. Thanks to Red Cross efforts, Post and her family returned to their home just two weeks after the disaster.<sup>60</sup>

According to the American Red Cross's *Official Report on Relief Activities*, the organization and its donors contributed \$167,411 for food, clothing, medical supplies, and farming equipment.<sup>61</sup> Despite their best efforts, however, many residents did not recover from their losses. Over 1,200 families registered for the Red Cross and some managed to restore their livelihoods, but 790 families were unable to do so.<sup>62</sup> Although Post and her family

returned home, several neighbors left for good. "We felt sort of alone without our old neighbors," she recalled.<sup>63</sup> But for many families who did return to homes and livelihoods, assistance from the Red Cross and the various government relief agencies made the difference. On September 15, 1949, *The Trenton Register* looked back at the flood of 1935, saying, "We will never forget the Red Cross."<sup>64</sup>

Residents continued to pick up the pieces after the initial restoration ended. The McNeice family of Culbertson, Nebraska, lived on a farm just south of town, but flood damage led to their move into town. A carpenter, Joseph McNeice built the family a new home in Culbertson on land given to him by his father. His wife, Rena, helped local residents with various household tasks, such as washing and ironing. The family also took in country kids during the school year. The youngest daughter, Jesslyn, later wrote: "Life went on and we knew we were so lucky to be alive that we could take a lot of hard work. People were good to us."<sup>65</sup>

The Republican Valley celebrated a "Reconstruction Jubilee" in McCook on October

**Relief workers gather in Omaha, July 5, 1935.**  
NSHS RG4290-710



MEN from HOMELESS MEN'S BUREAU GOING to McCOOK FLOOD AREA - 12th & PACIFIC ST. OMAHA, NEBR.  
S-C5-51  
7-5-35

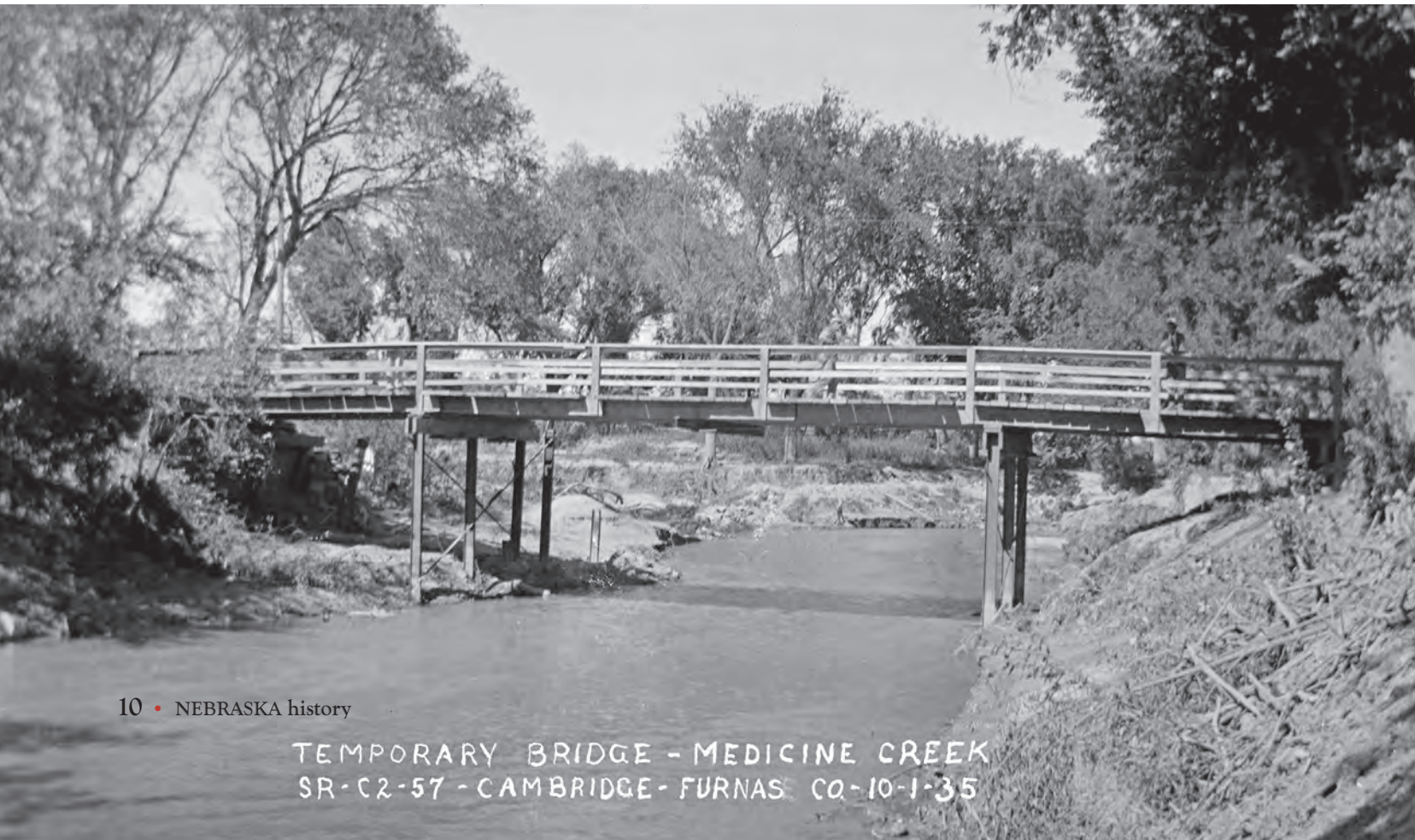
23-25, 1935. The program included rides on the new Mark Twain Zephyr train and exhibition drills from the Seventeenth Infantry of the United States Army.<sup>66</sup> Several notable persons received invitations, including the governors of Nebraska, Kansas, and Colorado. Governor Cochran invited Henry Ford, with the hope that his presence would bring “added encouragement to these people,” and perhaps that he would make a financial contribution.<sup>67</sup> While Ford declined the offer to attend, his invitation highlights the importance that organizers placed on the event. Reconstruction continued throughout the summer and the accomplishments left the area with much to celebrate, although jubilee organizers kept another goal in mind: flood control.<sup>68</sup> This became a pressing concern in the following years and eventually led to further government intervention.

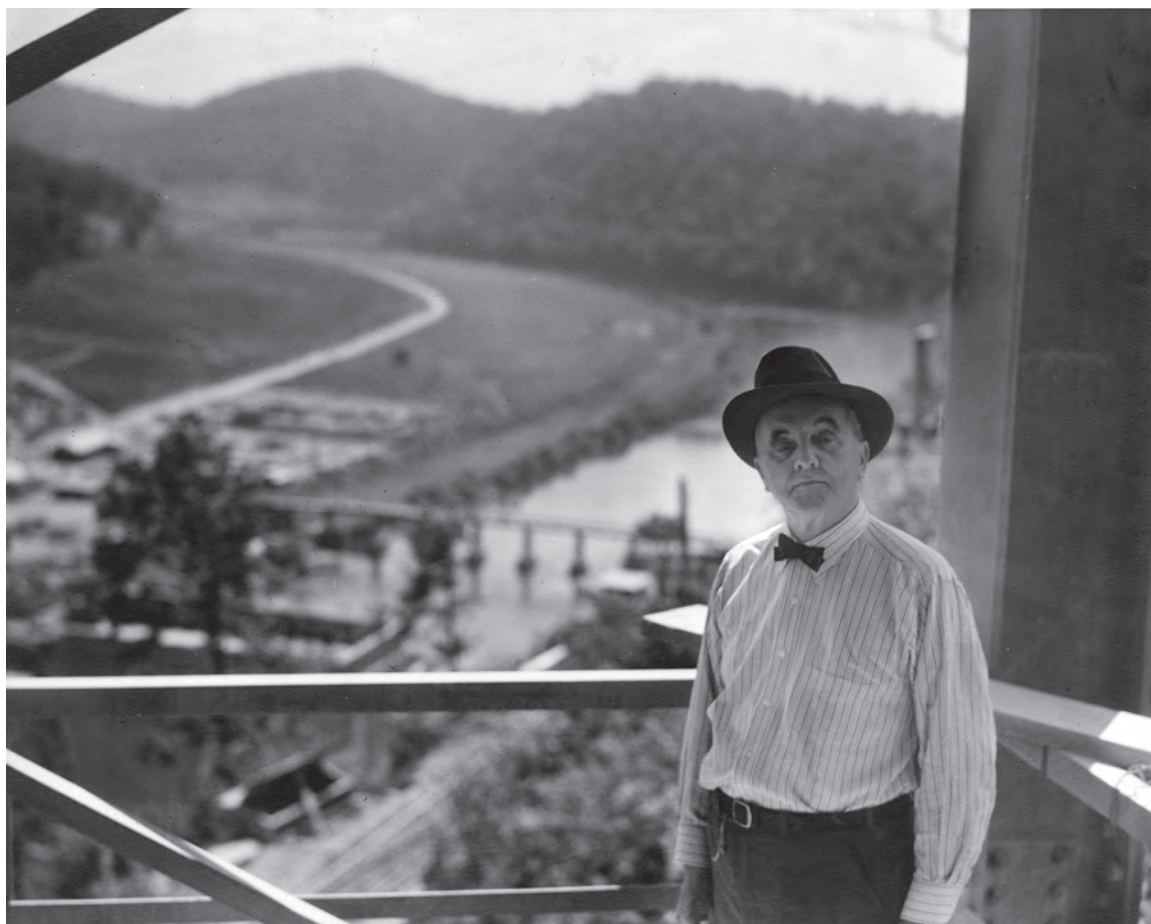
The next three decades saw the passage of various flood control acts, including the influential Flood Control Act of 1936, and construction of several dams—but not until the region suffered more flooding in 1936. That year David Weber, president of the Benkelman Chamber of Commerce, sent Governor Cochran a telegram lamenting the loss of various bridges and roads that the county could not afford to rebuild. He insisted that their “only immediate hope is thru government assistance.”<sup>69</sup> Although

not as devastating as the 1935 flood, this new disaster renewed the call for flood control efforts. Organizations such as the Republican Valley Association worked to gain recognition for their concerns. Governor Cochran and other government officials petitioned for flood control. Senator George Norris pushed for government involvement “to prevent the recurrence” of the 1935 disaster, including a regional survey by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.<sup>70</sup>

On June 3, 1935, the Committee on Flood Control presented Secretary of War Harry H. Woodring with a report that called for a survey of the Republican and Smoky Hill Rivers, along with several tributaries, to assess the need for flood control measures. Woodring accepted the proposal, and the report eventually became the basis of H.R. 8030, passed by the House of Representatives on February 17, 1936.<sup>71</sup> The bill retained the report’s main provisions, including the plan to survey the flood-stricken region under the direction of the Secretary of War. The main addition involved the mention of previous legislation, the Flood Control Act of 1917, which gave the government the power to look into flood control methods.<sup>72</sup> Of existing laws pertaining to flooding, the 1917 act was the most influential. Originally designed to mitigate flooding of the Mississippi River and Sacramento River, the act

**Temporary bridge erected by NERA workers.**  
NSHS RG4290-736





Senator George W. Norris  
circa 1935, with one of the  
Tennessee Valley Authority  
dam projects in the  
background.  
NSHS RG3298-38-1

included several provisions now relevant to the Republican Valley—especially Section 3, which allowed for “examinations and surveys and to works of improvement relating to flood control.”<sup>73</sup>

However, aside from the 1917 Flood Control Act, the federal government in the early twentieth century was reluctant to involve itself in disaster intervention. The New Deal showed a changing mindset. While a national flood control program took time to develop, the Roosevelt administration began taking important steps from the beginning of his presidency. The “First Hundred Days” saw the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority to provide electricity and flood control to that region. The idea of a federal agency dedicated to river management and improvement was a new concept for the country, and the TVA’s early days proved chaotic in terms of legislation. Eventually the president authorized the TVA to begin construction projects such as the Norris and Wheeler Dams.<sup>74</sup> These dams are among the New Deal’s most important legacies, for although the focus of the TVA was the Tennessee River, the program changed public expectations for flood control. This

in turn affected the steps taken after the Republican River Flood.

Nebraska’s Senator Norris, dubbed the “daddy of the dams” by the *Montgomery* (Alabama) *Journal*, became one of the most notable figures in the flood control debates. He pushed for flood control in eight different river basins besides the Tennessee Valley.<sup>75</sup> His efforts, aided by his friendship with President Roosevelt, helped create the TVA and various flood control policies.<sup>76</sup>

Another three years passed, however, before more uniform flood control policies came together with the creation of the Flood Control Act of 1936.

This act represented an expansion of the federal role in efforts to prevent future disasters. Section One affirmed “that flood control on navigational waters or their tributaries is a proper activity of the Federal Government in cooperation with the States.”<sup>77</sup> The act also recognized floods as “a menace to national welfare” and that Congress was prepared to act accordingly.<sup>78</sup> This included the power to authorize surveys which eventually helped to establish plans for flood control in the Republican River Valley.

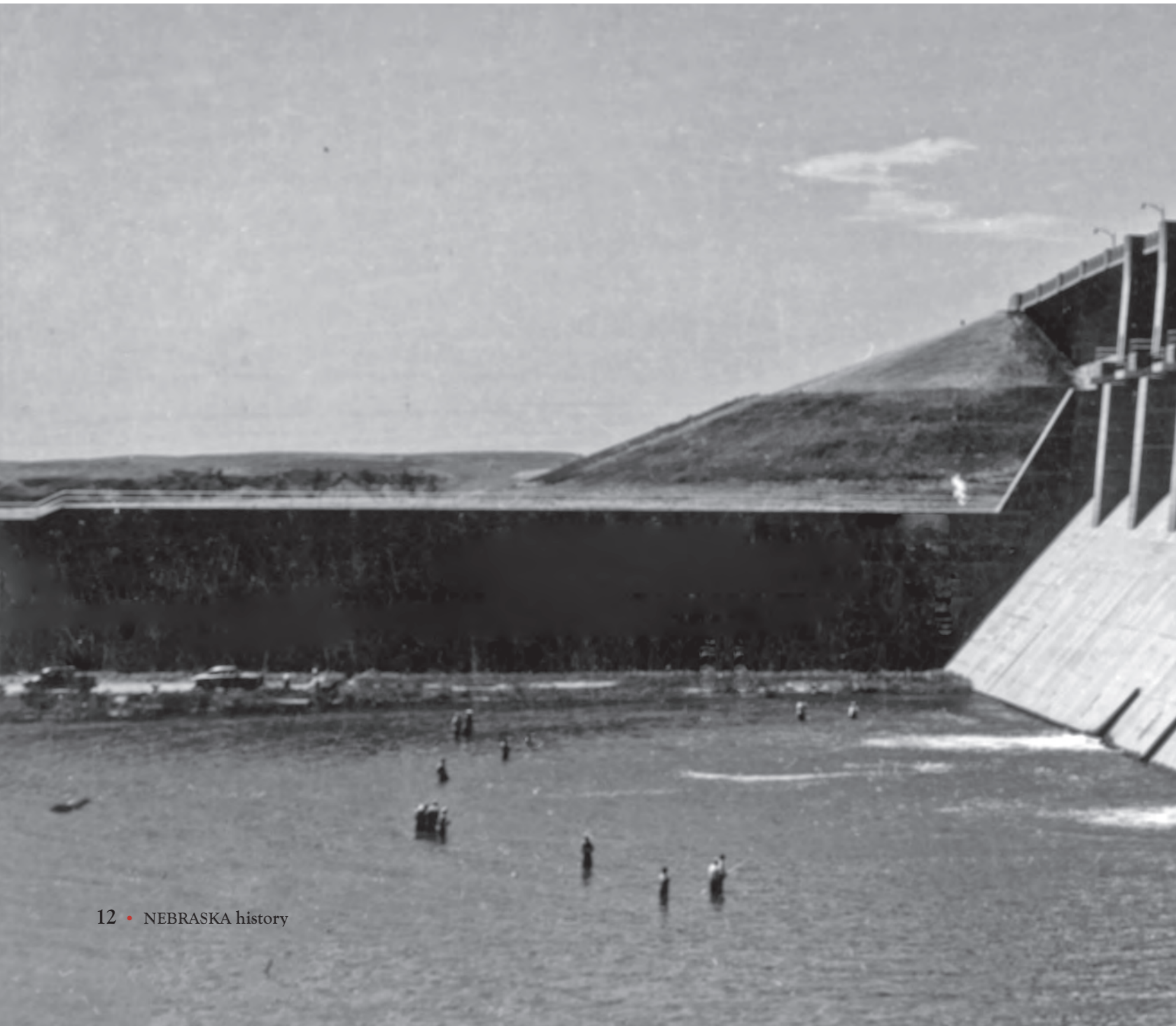
On April 10, 1940, U.S. Army Chief of Engineers J. L. Schley presented the Secretary of War with findings from the Republican River basin survey authorized by H.R. 8030.<sup>79</sup> Both the Secretary of War and the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors supported the findings.<sup>80</sup> The survey report stated that although flooding was “infrequent,” the region served as a major agricultural center and that the government should protect the farmers’ interests.<sup>81</sup> Schley noted the ineffectiveness of many proposals, such as building levees or the idea of building the Milford Reservoir at the head of the river. Instead, Schley suggested that a reservoir be located in Harlan

County, approximately 236 miles above the river’s mouth.<sup>82</sup> This was eventually done, and Harlan County Reservoir is operated by the Corps of Engineers to this day.

The report also called for reservoirs in five other locations: Medicine Creek, Red Willow Creek, Frenchman Creek, the South Fork of the Republican River, and the Arikaree River. These structures would protect approximately 287,500 acres of the Republican River Basin.<sup>83</sup> Including Harlan County, the valley saw the completion of seven reservoirs across the Republican River and its tributaries.

In *Building New Deal Liberalism: The Political Economy of Public Works, 1933-1956*,


**Fishing at Harlan County  
Dam, Alma, Nebraska.  
Undated postcard.**  
NSHS RG3831-1-33



Jason Scott Smith looks at the impact of these structures and the “new role of the state in American life.”<sup>84</sup> While many previous presidents did not endorse the use of government funds for public works, Roosevelt’s administration embraced the concept to stimulate the economy.<sup>85</sup> World War II delayed projects, but many of the planned reservoirs were underway by 1949.

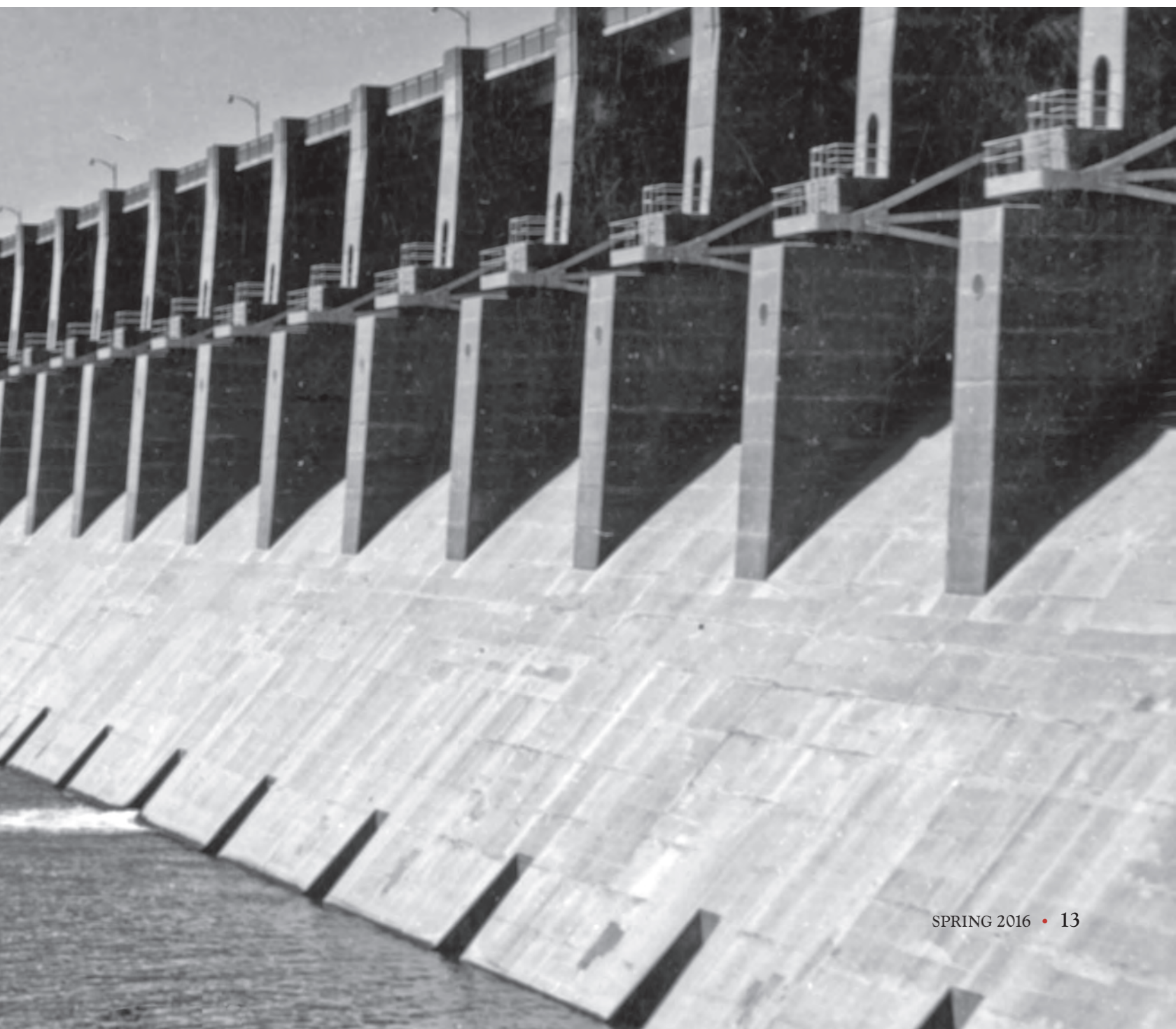
Commenting on the construction of Trenton Dam, *The Trenton Register* said it “is more than a reservoir for irrigation, it is a monument to those people who died in this area during the flood . . . whose lives were lost to help to bring

to light, with tragic realization, the need for flood control along the Republican River.”<sup>86</sup>

Though the discussion of flood control had begun almost immediately after the 1935 flood, nearly fourteen years passed before the completion of the first dam. During that time government officials and local residents alike strove to recover from the disaster and prevent its recurrence, working under new assumptions about the role of the federal government, assumptions that came out of the New Deal and its work in the Republican Valley. 

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, *Flood on Republican and Kansas Rivers May and June 1935*, by Robert Follansbee and J. B. Spiegel (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1937), 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Omaha World-Herald*, June 1, 1935.

<sup>3</sup> “Republican Flood of 1935: Nebraska’s Deadliest Flood,” *Department of Natural Resources*, accessed Feb. 13, 2013, <http://www.dnr.state.ne.us/floodplain/mitigation/1935flood.html>.

<sup>4</sup> *Orleans Chronicle*, June 20, 1935.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, June 4, 1935; *The Culbertson Progress*, June 13, 1935.

<sup>6</sup> *Culbertson Progress*, June 6, 1935.

<sup>7</sup> *Biennial Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Nebraska, 1935-1936*, (Lincoln: The Adjutant General, 1936), 6, <http://nepubdocs.unl.edu>

<sup>8</sup> Richard Lowitt, *George Norris: The Triumph of a Progressive, 1933-1944* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 96.

<sup>9</sup> *Culbertson Progress*, June 13, 1935.

<sup>10</sup> *Omaha World-Herald*, June 6, 1935.

<sup>11</sup> Robert L. Cochran, “Axtell Address,” August 1, 1935, Robert L. Cochran Papers, Nebraska State Historical Society, RG1, SG031, S. 6, B. 67, F. 1 (hereafter, Cochran Papers).

<sup>12</sup> “Axtell Address.”

<sup>13</sup> *Omaha World-Herald*, June 6, 1935.

<sup>14</sup> *McCook Republican*, June 7, 1935.

<sup>15</sup> Raymond Borchers, *High Water Mark: A Collection of Photographs and Stories about the Great Republican River Flood of May 31-June 1, 1935* (Lincoln: Accent Printing, 1983), 167.

<sup>16</sup> *Culbertson Progress*, June 20, 1935.

<sup>17</sup> Nebraska Emergency Relief Administration, *Report of the Nebraska Emergency Relief Administration, June 1, 1933-January 1, 1938, to R. L. Cochran, Governor* (Aurora-Lincoln: Burr Publishing Co., 1938), 157.

<sup>18</sup> *Trenton Republican Leader*, June 7, 1935.

<sup>19</sup> W. H. Lawrence, public relations counsel, Nebraska Works Progress Administration, Division of Information, June 1, 1936, 74<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., *Congressional Record* 80, pt. 7-8: 8485.

<sup>20</sup> Follansbee and Spiegel, *Flood on Republican and Kansas Rivers*, 43.

<sup>21</sup> Lawrence, *Congressional Record*, 8485.

<sup>22</sup> Mary L. Sherk, *Swept Away!* (Broomfield, Colo.: Prairie Print, 1989), 24.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 84-85. The Legion grounds were also known as the Pow-wow grounds.

<sup>24</sup> *Trenton Republican Leader*, June 21, 1935.

<sup>25</sup> *Culbertson Progress*, June 13, 1935.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, June 20, 1935.

<sup>28</sup> *Franklin County Sentinel*, June 13, 1935.

<sup>29</sup> *Omaha World-Herald*, June 6, 1935.

<sup>30</sup> Heather M. Wilson, *A Brief History of the Civilian Conservation Corps in Nebraska* (n.p., 1985), 3.

<sup>31</sup> Lawrence, *Congressional Record*, 8485.

<sup>32</sup> *Culbertson Progress*, June 6, 1935.

<sup>33</sup> *Franklin County Sentinel*, June 13, 1935.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, June 6, 1935.

<sup>35</sup> *Culbertson Progress*, June 6, 1935.

<sup>36</sup> *Franklin County Sentinel*, June 20, 1935.

<sup>37</sup> Sherk, *Swept Away*, 134.

<sup>38</sup> *Culbertson Progress*, July 4, 1935.

<sup>39</sup> *Trenton Republican Leader*, June 28, 1935.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Franklin County Sentinel*, June 13, 1935.

<sup>42</sup> *Culbertson Progress*, June 20, 1935.

<sup>43</sup> *Republican City Ranger*, June 13, 1935.

<sup>44</sup> *Culbertson Progress*, June 20, 1935; *Franklin County Sentinel*, June 13, 1935.

<sup>45</sup> Sherk, *Swept Away*, 83.

<sup>46</sup> *Culbertson Progress*, June 6, 1935.

<sup>47</sup> Sherk, *Swept Away*, 132.

<sup>48</sup> Bernice Haskins Post, “Reminiscence of the Republican River Flood of June 1, 1935,” *NEGen Web*, accessed February 19, 2013, <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nefrankl/flood/html>.

<sup>49</sup> *Culbertson Progress*, July 4, 1935.

<sup>50</sup> Robert L. Cochran to S. R. Florence, vice president of Peoples-Webster County Bank, Red Cloud, NE, Sept. 10, 1935, Cochran Papers, S. 1, B. 7, F. 90.

<sup>51</sup> Marion Mosier Jones, *The American Red Cross: From Clara Barton to the New Deal* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2012), ix-x, 203.

<sup>52</sup> *Omaha World-Herald*, June 6, 1935.

<sup>53</sup> “Summary of the activities of the Flood Area Restoration Office,” McCook, Nebraska, Aug. 30, 1935, Cochran Papers, S. 1, B. 7, F. 90.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Sherk, *Swept Away*, 132.

<sup>56</sup> *Franklin County Sentinel*, June 13, 1935.

<sup>57</sup> American Red Cross, *The Republican River Valley Flood of 1935: Official Report on Relief Activities* (Washington, D.C.), 6.

<sup>58</sup> Trenton *Republican Leader*, June 14, 1935.

<sup>59</sup> Sherk, *Swept Away*, 92.

<sup>60</sup> Post, "Reminiscence."

<sup>61</sup> American Red Cross, *Republican River Valley Flood of 1935*, 9.

<sup>62</sup> Sherk, *Swept Away*, 133.

<sup>63</sup> Post, "Reminiscence."

<sup>64</sup> *Trenton Register*, Sept. 15, 1949.

<sup>65</sup> Marlene Harvey Wilmot, *Bluff-To-Bluff: The 1935 Republican Valley Flood* (Greeley, Colo.: Wilmot Ventures, Inc., 1995), 120.

<sup>66</sup> "Program of the Republican Valley Reconstruction Jubilee," Oct. 23-25, 1935, National Weather Service Forecast Office, accessed Dec. 24, 2013, <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/images/gld/docs2web/pdf/RepublicanValleyReconstructionJubilee.pdf>.

<sup>67</sup> Robert L. Cochran to Henry Ford, Detroit, Michigan, Sept. 13, 1935, Cochran Papers, S. 1, B. 7, F. 98.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> David Weber, president Chamber of Commerce, to Roy L. Cochran, Governor of Nebraska, June 2, 1936, Cochran Papers, S. 1, B. 10, F. 208.

<sup>70</sup> Lowitt, *George Norris*, 96.

<sup>71</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, 74<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> Sess., *Preliminary Examination of Republican River, Smoky Hill River, and Minor Tributaries of Kansas River, Kans.* (Report No. 1088).

<sup>72</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, 74<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sess., *H.R. 8030* (Report No. 1594) (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1936).

<sup>73</sup> U.S. House of Representatives and Senate, 64<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sess., *Ransdell-Humphreys Flood Control Act of 1917* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1937).

<sup>74</sup> William Droze, *High Dams and Slack Waters: TVA Rebuilds a River* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), 21.

<sup>75</sup> *Montgomery (Alabama) Journal*, Sept. 17, 1935, Richard Lowitt Papers, Nebraska State Historical Society, MS0112, S. F. 214 and 135.

<sup>76</sup> Joseph L. Arnold, *The Evolution of the 1936 Flood Control Act* (Fort Belvoir, Va: Office of History, United States Army Corps of Engineers, 1988), 29-30.

<sup>77</sup> U.S. House of Representatives and Senate, 74<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sess., *Flood Control Act, 1936* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1936).

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> While H.R. 8030 passed Congress before the 1936 Flood Control Act, the act helped ensure the completion of the survey.

<sup>80</sup> "Historical Vignette 052-Congress Created the Board of Engineers," *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*, accessed Jan. 9, 2014, <http://www.usace.army.mil/About/History/>

HistoricalVignettes/CivilEngineering/052BoardofEngineers.aspx. The board, which operated from 1902 to 1992, played an important role in Corps of Engineers projects involving water resources. This included approving projects in regions whose needs justified the construction.

<sup>81</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, 76<sup>th</sup> Cong., 3<sup>rd</sup> Sess., *Letter from the Secretary of War* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1940), 2.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 3-4.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>84</sup> Jason Scott Smith, *Building New Deal Liberalism: The Political Economy of Public Works, 1933-1956* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 3.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>86</sup> *Trenton Register*, Sept. 15, 1949.

