

"johnstown flood" by
david mccullough
essay sample



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“ Johnstown flood” is a short story written by David McCullough. This story talks about the miraculous survival of a little girl named Gertrude. Gertrude’s sheer luck got her up the hill safely. Of course, with the help of several people she met along the way. I think that this is an extraordinary act of how worked together and some people put his/her life at risk to save a small child that they didn’t even knew. I fell that this is a great example of how human beings come together in times of need and extreme danger and in the way that we try to protect ourselves from disaster. The author of this non-fiction story frames it in a very or extremely apocalyptic way. However I would have not framed the story that way. The ideal framing for McCullough’s story in my opinion should have been presented as a social matter in that time. I mean how the rich, with their power, stepped all over the poor working class. This exact same problem has perpetuated up to now, but now their crushing the hard working middle class.

And because of three very powerful people, we have very strict anti monopoly laws. These people are Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller and J. P. Morgan. These three dominant individuals had the absolute power of the three most important and meaningful empires. Andrew Carnegie was the king of iron and rail road. John D. Rockefeller ruled the petroleum industry. J. P. Morgan led the electric system. Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller had a personal feud caused by the death of Carnegie’s mentor Thomas A. Scott. Carnegie vowed revenge on Rockefeller by making himself richer than him. This I think is stupid because you cannot do any harm to a person by being richer. My opinion is that he always had a desire to be rich, but he <https://assignbuster.com/johnstown-flood-by-david-mccullough-essay-sample/>

oppressed it and it came out with that death so he could have a meaning for his money. I say "too complicated, just take out a gun and shoot him".

Carnegie hired someone to help him make money. That's where Henry Frick comes in. Frick has the worst choice Carnegie ever made. Henry took control of the company and made drastic measures. Carnegie approved, since it was saving him money.

Frick built an exclusive gentlemen's only lake club in the artificial lake on top of the South Fork dam. To make his exclusive club he lowered the dam making it weaker instead of stronger. That was what led to the disaster of May 31, 1889. Rain started to fall and the water levels of the dam started to rise. The dam could not possibly hold so much water, so it broke. Hundreds of gallons of water rushed down the valley tearing trees, destroying houses and taking lives. After that, the strike of 1892 appeared and the number of deaths were astonishing. The people needed someone to take the fault, they blamed Henry Frick. Returning to the story, David McCullough adds to the story some fictional things, though it is a non-fiction story, like the floating mat and a dead horse smashing against the child. In my opinion, the writer did well in doing that because it made the story a lot more interesting. Not only was the story filled with suspense, but also really funny. Just imagine Juliana, a person that is not taller than 4'7", on top of a mat, half naked and suddenly gets hit by a dead horse that comes out of nowhere.

I mean come on, pretty funny but never in life a mat can hold a person's weight all wet in fast moving water. It's impossible! And how the hell can a horse, that God knows how much that horse weighed, float and hit little <https://assignbuster.com/johnstown-flood-by-david-mccullough-essay-sample/>

Juliana in the face and then it got caught in a tree branch, and disappeared. It's incredible how tiny Juliana was thrown from the mattresses to a roof top. And how magically the guy caught her without slipping. I say to that " DAHM. That girl luck as hell, heaven, and limbo, and if I left out a spiritual category include it." I can compare the story with Noah's Ark from the bible. It is the same tragedy of the world ending with water. The only difference is that in the story it wasn't the world that ended, it was a town and it took lots of innocent lives.

Why? Because of the lack of humanism and empathy that the rich have. Sometimes I would like it if I saw those people in difficult situations and we did what they do, ignore them, just to see how they would feel when people start looking at them over the shoulder. Treating them like dirt, like Henry Frick treated all those poor steel workers. He worked them until exhaustion and, in the strike of 1892, killed some of them. He had no respect for the life of his workers. Maybe that's why they tried to kill him, serves him right. Carnegie got off the hook with all the community work he did to clear his name, but he was just as guilty as Frick. Andrew knew what was happening, but didn't do anything to stop Frick and his reign of terror in the Company's vice-presidency.