



## **The Ohio River Flash Floods of 1888**

*Notes: Bridge Collapse*

### Event Details:

- Date: July 1888
- Flood Type: Summer Thunderstorm
- Fatalities: 20
- Main Impacted Streams: Caldwell Run (George Run), Wheeling Creek, Little Wheeling Creek
- Location: Ohio County, WV (all fatalities occurred here)

### Mitigation Efforts:

- Stream Gauge present on 70% of fatality locations along Ohio River

### **Risk and Impact Analysis:**

- Flood Zone Classification:
  - 81.8% in Zone AE
  - 13.6% Unmapped (including 1 fatality on Washington St. swept away in a car, 2 fatalities in Riverview area above flood zone)
- Cause of Death:
  - 18 by drowning
  - 1 due to pre-existing medical conditions
- Fatality Locations:
  - 11 in structures
  - 2 in water

### Demographics of Victims:

- Age Groups:
  - 5 children (0-12)
  - 3 young adults (19-39)
  - 3 middle-aged adults (40-70)
  - 1 old adult (70+)
- Gender Distribution: Equal, 10 female and 10 male

### **Mass Casualty Events (65% of fatalities):**

- Three houses swept away on Caldwell Run, drowning all residents:



- Hawley Family: 5 victims swept away; father escaped to safety by the bank
- Stenzel/Wingert Household: Included mother, daughter, son, and two nieces. John Homan attempted rescue; flood waters swept the house from its foundation, killing multiple generations

#### Multimedia & Sources:

- Wheeling History: [Ohio County Library](#)
- Historical Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps: [Wheeling](#)
- Primary Newspaper Sources:
  - [Macon Weekly Telegraph, Jul 24, 1888](#)
  - [Wheeling Register, Jul 20, 1888 \(Bridge Collapse\)](#)

