



1972 image: Lewisburg Borough

A car is stranded in the rising floodwaters of Bull Run, near the intersection of Market and 6th Streets. Lewisburg, like many river towns in the middle Susquehanna River Valley, experiences multiple kinds of flooding. Flash flooding, from creeks and streams that course through town, flood first. During Agnes, a torrent of water surged over the banks of Bull Run between June 22 and June 23, while the flooding on the main stem of the river – another kind of flooding – worsened later, with the river cresting on June 24.

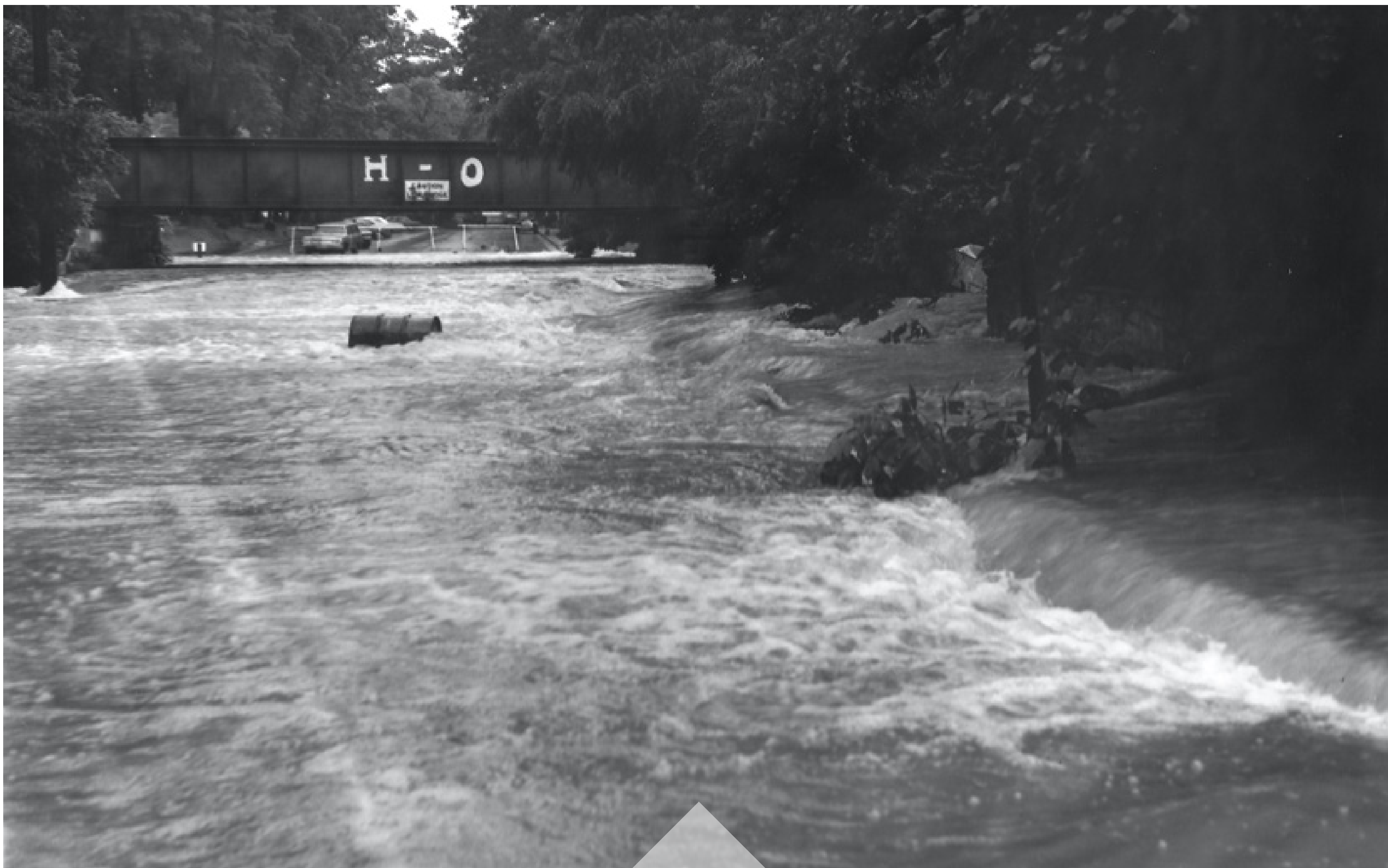
# AGNES, REVISITED —

## A RE-PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT FOR THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF TROPICAL STORM AGNES (1972)

June 2022 marks the 50th anniversary of “Agnes.” In this exhibit, you’ll find five pairs of photos. Each pair of photos depicts a single location in Lewisburg at two moments in time — June, 1972 and the spring of 2022. As seen in the above picture, Agnes spawned destructive river heights that inundated large portions of Lewisburg. This photo series, then, helps visualize the threat of flooding in Lewisburg, as well as the damages and recovery efforts spawned by Agnes.

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1972 photo: Owen Mahon

The severity of the flooding is encapsulated in these images of the railroad bridge located on St. George Street. The bridge, which stands many feet above the ground, is nearly overrun by floodwater during Agnes. Agnes was responsible for a significant amount of damage to transportation infrastructure, especially the dozens of bridges that crossed sections of the Susquehanna river basin. Due to the widespread damage, many regional freight operators decided it was not economically feasible to repair the infrastructure. In the wake of Agnes, President Nixon set in motion the creation of a government funded private railroad company ConRail.



Photo: Alex Haylock

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1972 photo: William Weist, Bucknell Special Collections

A visualization of the flooding on South 7th Street. These houses ultimately survived Agnes, which was a fortunate turn of events considering the floods caused the destruction of 68,000 homes and left 220,000 people homeless across Pennsylvania. In Lewisburg, Agnes was responsible for nearly \$6 million (in 1972 dollars) in damages to homes and \$12.5 million in total damages. Besides Milton, Lewisburg had the most residential damage from Agnes of any river town in the middle Susquehanna River valley.



Photo: Alex Haylock

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1972 photo: William Weist, Bucknell Special Collections

Here, both S. Third Street and University Avenue are completely covered in water. In the center of the photo, you can see the Union County Civil War Memorial. The nearby West Branch of the Susquehanna crested at 34 feet on June 24, 1972, causing damage to and forcing people from many homes in the area. The Agnes flood was and remains the highest water level on record for Lewisburg.



Photo: Alex Haylock

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1972 photo: William Weist, Bucknell Special Collections

Hunt Hall, a female residence hall at Bucknell, was also damaged by the effects of Agnes. While many Bucknell buildings were flooded, no campus buildings were lost. In fact, Bucknell actually played a crucial role in the relief and recovery efforts, as some undamaged buildings were used to accommodate flood victims. Davis Gym initially housed residents of Lewisburg who were displaced, before encroaching waters forced evacuees to relocate to Swartz Hall, an uphill residence hall. In addition to Lewisburg residents, passing motorists were forced to take shelter on Bucknell's campus, as the floods made nearby roads and highways impassable. Dining services provided hundreds of meals to these displaced people as they awaited safe return to their homes.



Photo: Alex Haylock

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During Agnes, Bull Run and the immediate surrounding areas suffered intense flooding and immense damage to life and property. Immediately after the flood, concerned residents and Borough officials formed the Bull Run Task Force to survey the destruction and plan long-term redevelopment. The Task Force won a grant from the Soil Conservation Service that allowed the Borough to purchase 11 parcels along Bull Run and convert the land to public space. Several businesses were built over the waterway prior to 1972; these were torn down. In the 1980s, following continued efforts of Borough residents, land along Bull Run became Hufnagle Park, named after Officer Gordon Hufnagle who died trying to rescue residents from the raging Bull Run. Over the first two decades of the 21st century, a host of Lewisburg residents, local and state officials, planners, and landscape architects continued the vision of the Task Force. In 2022, with a \$1.4 million grant, Bull Run was widened to decrease flood risk and other improvements for recreation and aesthetics were made.



Photo: Alex Haylock