

ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY SEPTEMBER 3



President Lyndon Baines Johnson at the dedication of the Summersville Reservoir

On September 3, 1966, President Lyndon Johnson and Lady Bird Johnson spoke at the dedication of the Summersville Reservoir.

CSO: SS.8.17, S.8.LS.5

Investigate the Document: (*Ms2017-016 Jennings Randolph Collection; Box 29 Folder 628*)

1. The Summersville Dam was part of a three-reservoir system in the Kanawha River Basin, designed to curb the damage that stems from what form of natural disaster?
2. What secondary benefit did the Summersville Dam have?

Think Critically: What type of renewable energy can be harnessed by the output of the Summersville Dam?

PRESIDENT JOHNSON STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF WATER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
IN MAJOR POLICY SPEECH AT DEDICATION OF SUMMERSVILLE (WEST VIRGINIA) DAM
AND PLEDGES U.S. SUPPORT FOR FAR-REACHING INTERNATIONAL "WATER FOR PEACE" PROGRAM

Text of President's Speech Delivered September 3, 1966

We have come here to consummate an act of faith in the future of West Virginia. This is one of the greatest satisfactions that can ever come to a President.

Two and one-half years ago, I flew over the Ohio River Basin. I saw the destruction brought on by one of the worst floods in 20 years. I felt anger and frustration that such tragedies could still occur in the most advanced Nation on earth. I knew that we had both the ability and the resources to harness these wild forces of nature, and I was anxious to get on with the task.

Today, we move one step closer toward that goal. The Summersville Dam completes a three-reservoir system in the Kanawha River Basin. It is a key part of our flood control plans for the Ohio and Mississippi River Basins.

Reservoir will provide recreation for millions of residents, visitors

It will prevent flood damages averaging nearly \$3 million a year. In the dry seasons, water from Summersville Reservoir will be used to reduce pollution and to meet the ever-growing demands of the great industries of Charleston.

The reservoir will also become West Virginia's newest recreation center -- attracting millions of visitors and bringing new prosperity to the region.

I know what a project like this means. For I grew up in a country where water was life itself. It was the most precious resource we possessed, except for the very air we breathed. During most of the year, the land was parched and cracked; live oak and scrub cedar were about all it would support. And when the rains finally came, the rivers flooded. People were drowned and property was destroyed, and our topsoil was carried away to the Gulf of Mexico.

We changed all that, beginning about 30 years ago when I was a young Congressman. In time we built six dams on the Colorado River in central Texas. We stopped the floods and the drownings. We brought electricity to the farms. We created a vast recreation area for hundreds of thousands of families.

History of man is revealed in his quest to make water serve him

That story is not unique. It has happened in California and India, in Kentucky and in Israel. It is the story of man's ageless quest to make the waters of the earth serve him -- to escape the despotism of flood and drought. In a sense, the whole story of man is revealed in his search for dependable water supplies. Where there has been too little, wars have been fought over what there was. Where there has been too much, great cities and flourishing agriculture have been engulfed and destroyed.

Where there was enough -- and where the people could depend upon it and control it -- civilization has blossomed and endured. It is no different today.

Even in the advanced Nations, competition for the use of water is growing -- and the supply of water is diminishing. America, with all its power and wealth,