

CAMILLE - The Destruction in Nelson County - by W.C. & Delphia K. Flanik, 9-20-69
(Slide #0 is title slide and can be on screen for audience interest before audio tape is started. There are 115 slides, program is 41.5 minutes long.) ▲ = slide cue.

Tape start & slide 1 - Many times people like Bob Ramsey of Davis Creek, Carl Raines of Massie's Mill, the Zirkle family of Tyro, enjoyed the peaceful Virginia countryside homeward bound from work and evening chores.

However, the night of August 19th 1969 was to be different, a night to remember.

There was no warning, no thought that they, or the land they trod, would not survive the next 18 hours. This country was bountiful, 2 weeks of gentle rain had soaked well, the fertile ground. But on this night, between the hours of 9:30pm and 3:30am ▲ the remnants of Hurricane Camille were to revitalize and grow, to batter and deluge the already soaked mountainsides with a record rainfall of nearly 31 inches in almost 12 hours. So heavy would the deluge fall, that birds would drown in the trees where they had perched for the night.

In Lynchburg there was moderate rain at 8pm. Distant lightning and thunder was heard northward towards Nelson. Nelson County was about to dissolve and disarrange its physical being. Camille was tearing it apart. ▲

Countless mountain avalanches poured millions upon millions of tons of mud, boulders and huge trees down their sides into the gorges, coves and narrow valleys, crushing everything in their path. Torrential rains, tidal-like waves 40 to 50 feet high, battered villages and farms time and again, destroying roadways, 133 bridges, 200 homes and killing 150 people and much live stock. ▲

Communications and power-lines which could let the outside world know what was happening, were snuffed out simultaneously. The large canopy of violence was terrifying and immediate.

(2:07 minutes) (SLIDES SHOULD BE SET IN FEEDER WITH BLUE NUMBERS AWAY FROM SCREEN)
(Reel Tape speed is one & seven-eighths (1 7/8) inches.)

Note: This 40 minute slide show is the original show made and presented to audiences throughout Virginia during 1969 & 1970 by Bill & Kay Flanik who did the photography and compiled the tape from stories told them during talks with people in the flood area. Although the original intent of the authors was to make available without cost, a display and factual account of what occurred on August 19th 1969, the traditional compassion and generosity of fellow Virginians triggered many of the audiences to take up collections to forward to proper channels in Nelson county. We handled 23 shows, total audience 2100 - we have no figures on the charitable effort as we did not involve ourselves with the funds. Largest show was in Roanoke Virginia at Rev. Crumpakers Church of the Brethern, attendance 200. Last show was to the Masonic Lodge Rivermont Avenue Lynchburg Tuesday July 17th 1979.

Those desiring to follow up on the flood story can find much in the book TORN LAND Author P.S. Simpson at the local library. Also Virginia Minerals bulletin, Special Issue dated October 1969.

As of August 1979, of the hundreds of flood victims recovered and identified, there remains, in cremation urns at Richmond Virginia, 8 unclaimed, unidentified victims.