

Cudahy, Jean Morton
April 6, 1948

Mrs. Joseph M. Cudahy
c/o Miss Mary Cudahy
834 Fifth Avenue
New York 21, New York

Dear Mrs. Cudahy:

I received Mr. Hoy's letter which you sent me and was amused to think he feels the dam is the cause of the excess high water both above and below it. True enough, the water in Lisle was 20-24 inches higher than any peak height before and was about 20 inches higher above the dam than it ever had been since I came here. Had Mr. Hoy complained about the dam so far as his own farm is concerned which is about four miles north of the Arboretum there would at least have been a little bit more logic to his complaint, but even then I feel certain that our dam had nothing to do with the flooding of his farm for there is approximately 10 feet difference in the elevation between the dam and his land.

I will give you a complete picture of the situation from the beginning. The rain started about nine or ten o'clock on Thursday evening March 18, and it poured all night. There was still frost in the ground so that very little water could get away. To give you an idea of how fast the water rose in Lisle, Mr. Landorf's mother-in-law called him about three o'clock in the morning and said that the water was coming in her basement windows and wanted to know if he would come down and disconnect several motors she had in the basement. He put on knee boots as soon as he could get dressed and went to her place in Lisle but before he could disconnect the motors in the basement the water was above his boots.

On Friday morning when I awoke it was still raining and as I looked out of our bedroom window to the southwest I could see the water backed up to the Arboretum from Lisle along the river, something I had never seen before since I have lived here. When I went over to the office I noticed that Route 53 south of the river bridge was under water for about a distance of a city block, another sight which I had never seen before. I immediately got in my car and started driving around to see what conditions were in the Arboretum and found when I drove through the water on Route 53 it was about 15 inches deep. It was backed up in the meadow north of the Administration Building to the Administration Building parking lot where the picnic tables are. The water was about 20 inches above

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the openings of the cement bridge on Route 53 so that the bridge itself was acting like a dam, and in my opinion was doing more to back up the water north than anything else. Even then I do not believe that the dam and bridge could back water up as far as Mr. Hoy's place. It would have to be ten feet deep down here in order to back water on to his property. I described to you in my previous letter about the water at Lake Marmo so that I will not go into those details now.

The water increased in height about an inch or an inch and a half during the day on Friday and on Saturday began to recede slowly, due to the fact that the rain had stopped and the frost was going out of the ground so that much of the water could seep away. The dam in the river was surrounded by water so that it was impossible to get out to it, in fact, the water west of the dam was 200 to 300 feet wide and about 18 inches to 2 feet deep, flowing right across the fields. East of the dam it was about 30-35 feet wide and much deeper.

Saturday noon I met Mr. Hoy out here on the highway and he asked me if the gates were open and I told him they were because my instructions had been to Johnson to have them open all during the spring season. Later I put on hip boots and went down to see if I could get on the bridge which goes over the top of the dam and investigate how the dam was standing the flood. I found that the gates were partly closed and questioned Johnson about it and he said that they had been opened but must have been partly closed by some of the youngsters who come up from Lisle along the river. Mr. Hoy came down to the river while I was out on the bridge and saw the gates partly closed and of course felt immediately that that was the cause of the flood. However, from where he stood he could not see that there was a foot bridge about 14 feet long and 3 feet wide standing up on edge crossways of the dam against which considerable brush and twigs had been lodged, thus holding back considerable water. The foot bridge had been carried from the golf course on Roosevelt Road by the flood. I asked Johnson to have two men go down that afternoon and try to get the bridge away from the dam so that the water could go through a little faster. Due to the pressure it was impossible to remove it. When I think back now I am glad they couldn't remove it because it would have allowed that much more water to go into Lisle.

On Sunday two state waterway inspectors were here and Gust took them down to the dam. They told Gust that the bridge being against the dam really saved Lisle from having more water than they actually did have. On Monday the water had gone down enough that we could take the tractor down and pull the bridge away from the dam, and the gates were nailed open. Tuesday the state inspectors were here again and this time I happened to see them and took them down to the dam myself. I tried to get them to state whether or not they felt that the dam was responsible for any of the flooding up as far as Mr. Hoy's farm or for any of the flooding in Lisle, and they said that they certainly thought that it was a benefit to the people in Lisle and could not see how it could do any particular damage to Mr. Hoy as far north as his farm is, but at the same time would not want to commit themselves without further study. They made some checks on the amount of water flowing through the gates at the dam,

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and the approximate amount of water in the river at that time and said that when they got back to their office they would make a more complete study and then issue a report on the situation. I told them that I felt that the trustees would certainly not want to continue having the dam in the river if it could be proved by competent engineers such as themselves that the dam was responsible for flooding either land above or below it. The only reason for the dam is to hold enough water in the river during the summer to fill the river so that we would not have exposed muddy banks which give off disagreeable odors due to the sludge from the septic tanks of Glen Ellyn and Lombard. I told the engineers that Mr. Hoy had always been against the dam and every year since it has been put in has tried to blame it for the flooding of his farm, and I personally would not want to see the dam taken out unless it could be proven that it would be of some benefit to Mr. Hoy, as he seems to be the main one complaining. I have instructed Johnson to lock the gates open or else take the gates off entirely so that it will never happen again that Mr. Hoy can come down here during high water and see the gates partly closed.

I am awfully sorry that Mr. Hoy wrote to you and I hope it hasn't given you too much concern. Mr. Hoy doubtless had plenty of water on his farm due to the heavy rain and regardless of whether our dam had anything to do with it or not I personally think the people in Lisle benefited by the fact that the bridge lodged against the dam and held back some of the water in the early stages to give them more time to be prepared for the real flood that came on Friday. Certainly contrary to Mr. Hoy's letter the Coast Guard and Red Cross weren't brought to Lisle because of our dam. Naperville, Downers Grove and all the towns around here had record high water and our dam had nothing to do with them.

I would like to tell Mr. Hoy that we will gladly remove the dam with an agreement in writing that if at the next time we have high water if his place has not been helped he will stand the cost of replacing the dam. However, I shall not do anything until we have the engineer's report and you have returned.

Sincerely,

CEG:ER