
**THE BUFFALO CREEK
DISASTER: The Story of the
Survivors' Unprecedented
Lawsuit**

By Gerald Stern
Random House, 1976
274 pp. \$8.95
L of C 75-40554
ISBN 0-394-40390-8

Courtroom drama seldom reveals the tedious drudgery of workaday lawyering. Remarkably, Washington attorney Gerald M. Stern manages in this book to wring suspense from a case that never came to trial but is significant for demonstrating beyond question the capacity of the U.S. legal system "to respond, to create new precedent," to provide recompense for those who survive another's reckless act "physically unharmed but mentally scarred." Stern shared—and shares with his readers—the anguish of those who survived the much publicized 1972 Buffalo Creek (W.Va.) dam-break disaster. The case consumed his energies and passion for almost three years before the Pittston Company ultimately settled for \$13.5 million, out of court, rather than risk further adverse publicity and greater financial loss in a jury trial.

History

ATLAS OF EARLY AMERICAN HISTORY: The Revolutionary Era 1760-1790

Edited by Lester J. Cappon,
et al. Princeton, 1976
157 pp. \$100 to Dec. 31,
1976, \$125 thereafter
L of C 75-2982
ISBN 0-691-04634-4

Maps will speak only when questioned, as historian Marc Bloch once said about archaeological documents. The makers of this atlas (editors and scholars associated with the Newberry Library, the Institute of Early American History and Culture, and Princeton University Press) did ask questions—about population figures, roads, customs districts, the location of taverns, academies, printers, and so on, through a wealth of statistics and specific detail. The result of their 15 years of effort is a sweeping political, religious, cultural, economic, military, racial, and social history of the three decades when the American colonies became a nation. Two hundred eighty-six newly drawn maps prod the reader in his turn to raise questions about early America he had never thought to ask before; the accompanying text provides most of the answers. Bibliographic material, in part critical, is included in the text. There is appropriate emphasis on an area largely overlooked in this Bicentennial year—the West Indies, an integral part of Britain's American empire where many of the naval battles of the War of Independence were fought.