The High Water Mark Campaign is sponsored by the Virginia Silver Jackets in partnership with the City of Richmond. The initiative helps raise awareness by installing high water marks memorializing past floods and by continued education regarding residual flood risk, even within protected areas, to increase resilience into the future.

Approximate Elevations:

- Tredegar Street Boat put-in (Brown’s Island): 40 FT NAVD88/ 4FT AG
- Pony Pasture Rapids Park: 113FT NAVD88/ 13FT AG
- Great Shiplock Park: 35.5FT NAVD88/ 17 FT AG

AG = Above the ground at the location of the high water mark.

References:
Photo Credit: Library of Virginia
Activity began early in the 1972 hurricane season with the birth of a disturbance over the Yucatan Peninsula on June 14, 1972. By the time Agnes made landfall in Florida on June 19th, the Category 1 Hurricane was on her way to becoming one of the most devastating storms to strike the United States, spawning tornadoes and sinking vessels. After landfall, Hurricane Agnes quickly lost steam and was downgraded to a tropical storm and then to a tropical depression. The degraded storm was heavy laden with moisture and continued to soak the already waterlogged east coast with heavy rains up to 19 inches.

The threat of flooding can remain after the storm has passed.

Agnes began as a disturbance over the Yucatan Peninsula on June 14, 1972 and became the first named storm of the 1972 hurricane season. Devastating storms can occur early in the hurricane season.

Agnes was considered a tropical storm as it passed Virginia. By the time Agnes fell apart over Pennsylvania, the storm caused flooding and damage from Florida to New York for a total estimated loss of over $2 billion (1972 dollars) making it the costliest storm at the time. More than 60 counties and 23 cities in the Commonwealth were impacted by Agnes for an estimated $222 million in damages. As history has shown, it does not take a major hurricane to cause significant damage.

Historic Flooding crested in Richmond on June 23, 1972. The flooding occurred from rainfall and crested after the storm passed.

While Gathright Dam was under construction at the time of the event, the concentration of rainfall was approximately 50 miles east of the dam. Rainfall and flooding can occur anywhere.

Historic Flooding occurred just three years after Hurricane Camille. Flooding is a natural event and can occur at any time, even if an event occurred last week or over 40 years ago.

16 lives were lost in Virginia. A number of deaths occurred within vehicles. Do not drive through flooded roads. Turn around, don’t drown.

Agnes inundated the Richmond Water Treatment Plant causing a critical water supply situation in Richmond. Even if you are considered outside of the floodplain, critical resources you use may be vulnerable. Be prepared for floods even if you live outside of the floodplain.