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Recovers From Flood:

Estral Beach Normal Now

By Robert J. Murphy

A little over two years ago a powerful northeast wind whipped the waters of Lake Erie into sea-like waves and sent them hurtling over neglected dikes into the almost forgotten village of Estral Beach.

Some folks said it was the end of the village.

Half the homes were under water.

Practically all the homes were damaged in one form or another.

Three feet of muddy lake made it impossible to move about the village except in boats.

Even the army engineers who came out to look, suggested the best thing the families in Estral Beach could do would be to salvage what they could—and move away.

The End? Not Yet!

It should have meant the end of Estral Beach, a one-time popular resort, forgotten during the war and never rejuvenated.

Two families sold their waterlogged land and gave up.

But the other 170 families decided to fight for their homes—and today they reached a milestone that shows the kind of fight they put up.

They started while the waters were pouring over the dikes and people were being rescued.

They begged and borrowed pumps from industries in the Monroe area. They took the last nickle out of the village treasury and spent it for a dredge to deepen the canal surrounding the village.

And then, when it looked like they at least would have the water pumped out, along came another storm and filled the canal again.

Not Worth 5 Cents

Village President Joseph Vasiček attempted to borrow money to continue working. Nobody would loan it to him because the village wasn't worth a nickel the way it was.

Morale reached its lowest ebb. About this time some of the families with houses on higher ground started to go out to their homes in rowboats. They began repairing the storm damage, even painting and decorating.

It was a shot in the arm to families with homes under water. They fought that much harder.

Two months later the last of the water was pumped out.

The villagers never had let up with pleas to Washington for aid.

Engineers Begin

In the fall of the year the army engineers went to work on the dikes.

Using tons of slag, and \$189,000 of federal funds, they built a dike completely around the village—a dike that would withstand any foreseeable storm.

Leonard Schink, village councilman, said:

"We've accomplished more in the last two years than was ever accomplished in the village's history. When you look back on it—you wonder how it ever was done."

Sinks That Shovel

"You can't point to one person and say he did it—it was all the people—helping each other."

"I guess this is proof enough!"

Then Schink sunk a shovel into a field.

It marked the ground-breaking ceremony of the village's new City Hall.

The old one had been damaged in the flood.

The portion of the building they are putting up now will cost \$8,000. They raised the money by giving dances in nearby Rockwood.

Mrs. Stefani Mondro said:

"When people hear about our new hall I guess they'll know what we think about living in Estral Beach—and they thought we were going to give up."

"I don't know how it was done, but there's something about fighting for your home that makes you fight harder than you ever fought before."

And Councilman James Carey predicted:

"Estral Beach has no past—just a future—a big future."