

## CHAPTER 1

Springtime in the mountains. Graceful slopes and frowning Nothing in the history of the United States in time of peace has ever approached the appalling catastrophe, which has spread such awful havoc through the thriving valley of the Conemaugh on the afternoon of Friday the 31st day of May, 1889, and has left such terrible horror and devastation. It only can be compared to the terrible devastation and loss of life caused by the earthquake at Lisbon or the breaking of the dam of the Yellow River (Ho-ang-Ho) in China and the returning of its waters to its old bed, then one of the richest districts of that rich part of China. Before this terrible catastrophe the valley of the Conemaugh was perhaps one of the happiest in the great State of Pennsylvania.

## THE CAUSE OF THE CALAMITY.

The cause of the fearful calamity was the breaking of the reservoir or dam, known as Conemaugh Lake, a body of water about three and a half miles long, one and a quarter miles in width, and in some places 100 feet in depth. It was located on the mountain some three or four hundred feet above the level of Johnstown, and was of course a constant menace to that town, as it was said to hold more water than any reservoir in the United States. It is the property of a number of wealthy gentlemen of Pittsburg, members of the South Fork Hunting And Fishing Club, and was given its late immense proportions in order to fit it for hunting and fishing purposes.

It appears that every possible precaution had been regularly taken to insure the safety of the reservoir, an inspection of it being made by a Pennsylvania railroad engineer once a month, these examinations showing that nothing less than some extraordinary convulsion of nature could destroy the barrier that held the great body of water within its prescribed bounds. We are confronted with the appalling fact that the waters were too strong for the barrier, and that tearing it away they swept down with relentless and resistless fury upon the town below, carrying death and destruction with them to an unparalleled extent.

## THE LARGEST RESERVOIR IN THE WORLD.

In order to understand the nature of this calamity it is necessary to describe the respective locations of the reservoir at Johnstown. The reservoir lies about 12 and a half miles northeast of Johnstown, and is the site of the old reservoir, which was one of the feeders of the Pennsylvania canal. It is the property of a number of wealthy gentlemen in Pittsburg, who formed themselves into the corporation, the title of which is the South Fork Fishing And Hunting Club.

This sheet of water was formerly known as Conemaugh Lake. It is from 300 to 400 feet above the level of Johnstown, being in the mountains. It is about three and a half miles long and from a mile to one and a quarter miles in width, and in some places it is 100 feet in depth. It holds more water than any other reservoir, natural or artificial, in the United States. The lake has been quadrupled in size by artificial means and was held in check by a dam from 700 to 1,000 feet wide.

It is 90 feet in thickness at the base and the height is 110 feet. The top has a breadth of over 20 feet. Recognizing the menace which the lake has to the region below, the South Fork Club had the dam inspected once a month by the Pennsylvania railroad engineers, and their investigation showed that nothing less than some convulsion of nature would tear the barrier away and loosen the weapon of death. The steady rain of the past forty-eight hours increased the volume of water in all the small mountain streams, which were already swelled by the lesser rains earlier in the week.

## THE UNSAFE CONDITION OF THE DAM.

Engineering experts have fairly swarmed to this locality to examine the broken dam and the conditions which produced the catastrophe and conducted to making it such a gigantic, appalling calamity.

Among them were A.M. Wellington and L.P. Burt, of the New York *Engineering News*.

A reporter has had a long talk with these latter gentlemen, and from them has received a full description of the dam, its faults of construction and the probably reason for the breaking away of the water of the Conemaugh Lake.

The reports rendered by these experts substantially confirm *The Evening World's* dispatches regarding the insecurity of the dam structure.

Says Mr. Wellington: "No engineer of known and good standing could possibly have been engaged in the reconstruction of the old dam after it had been neglected in disuse for twenty odd years, and the old dam was a very inferior piece of work, and of a kind wholly unwarranted by good engineering practices of its day, thirty years ago.

"Both the original dam and the reconstructed one were built of earth only, with no heart wall and rip-rapped only, on the slopes. True, the earth is of a sticky, clayey quality; the best of earth for adhesiveness, and the old dam was made in watered layers, well rammed down, as is still shown in the wrecked dam. But the new end was probably not rammed down at all; the earth was simply dumped in like an ordinary railway filling. Much of the old dam still stands, while the new work contiguous to it was carried away.

"It has been an acknowledged principle of dam building for forty years, and the invariable practice to build a central wall either of puddle or solid masonry, but there was neither in the old nor in the new dam. It is doubtful if there is another dam of the height of fifty feet in the United States which lacks this central wall.

"*Ignorance or carelessness* is shown in the reconstruction, for the middle of the new dam was nearly two feet lower in the middle than at the ends. It should have been crowned in the middle by all the rules and practise of engineering.

"Had the break begun at the ends, the cut of the water would have been gradual and little or no harm would have resulted. And had the dam been cut at once at the ends when the water began running over the centre, the suddenness of the break might have been checked, the wall crumbling away at least more slowly and gradually an possibly prolonged so that little harm would have been done.

"There was an overflow through the rocks in the old dam, which, provided that the water must rise seven feet above the ordinary level before it would pass over the crest of the dam. But, owing to the raising of the ends of the dam in 1881, without raising the crest, only five and a half feet of water was necessary to run over the middle of the dam. And this spillway, narrow at best, had been further contracted by a close, grating to prevent the fish from escaping from the lake, while the original discharge pipe at the foot of the dam was permanently closed when the dam was constructed. Indeed, the maximum discharge was reduced in all directions. The safety valve to that dangerous dam was almost screwed down tight.

"There seems to have been no leakage through the dam, its destruction resulting from its running over at the top. The estimates for the original dam call for half earth and rock, but there is no indication of it in the broken dam. The riprap was merely a skin on each face, with loose spawls mixed with the earth. The dam was 72 feet high, 2 inches slope to a foot inside, 1 1/2 inches to a foot outside slope and 20 feet thick at the top. The fact that the dam was a reconstructed one, after twenty years disuse, made it especially hard on the old dam to withstand the pressure of the water."

Cyrus Elder, general counsel for the Cambria Iron Company, related some curious incidents as indictive of the distrust of the dam on all sides.

Mr. Elder is the father of George Elder, the engineer of the Cyclone Pulverizer Company of New York, and lost his wife and only daughter in the flood.

"When the South Fork Fishing And Hunting Club, of Pittsburg, leased the lake of the Pennsylvania

Railroad Company, in 1881, and proposed to rebuild the old dam," says Mr. Elder, "the Cambria Iron Company was considerably exercised, and a competent engineer was employed to inspect the old dam and the plans for the reconstruction. He condemned several matters in the way of construction and the plans were changed to meet his view, whereupon he reported that the new dam would be perfectly safe.

"My son, George R. Elder, was at the Troy Polytechnic Institute at the time, and he sent me a copy of a problem submitted to his class by the Professor. It was, of course, a hypothetical case, but it was quite evidently based on the plans and specifications for the South Fork dam. The class decided that the dam was safe.

"But the President of my Company was still anxious, and, thinking that it would be a good idea to have some member of the Company inside the South Fork Fishing Club, set aside funds of the Company for the purchase of two shares in the Club. They were in the name of D.J. Morrell, and after his death were transferred to my name. They are still held by me, but are the property of the Cambria Iron Company."

#### THE CORONER'S JURY BLAMES THE CLUB.

Those who have always stood as members of the Club now declare that it is a thing of the past and no one will admit his membership.

Even the owners of cottages on the banks of the little lake deny any interest in the Club. They are waiting legal action which will probably be taken against them, and the cottages are unoccupied.

Coroner Hammer, of Westmoreland County, sitting in inquest upon the bodies found at Nineveh, took the jury to the dam, and a verdict is being prepared for the signatures of the jurymen, and it will throw the burden of blame upon the South Fork Fishing And Hunting Club.

It throws the blame on the Club because of the "gross, if not criminal, negligence and carelessness in making repairs from time to time."

It has been a question before the Coroner if the Pennsylvania Railroad Company should not be held jointly responsible with the Club, for the Company leased and abandoned the dam and permitted it to fall out of repair.

#### THE LOCATION OF JOHNSTOWN.

Johnstown's geographical situation is one that renders it peculiarly liable to terrible loss of life in the event of such a casualty as that reported. It is a town built in a basin of the mountains and girt about by streams, all of which finally find their way into the Allegheny river, and thence into the Ohio. On one side of the town flows the Conemaugh river, a stream which during the dry periods of the summer drought can be readily crossed in many places by stepping from stone to stone, but which speedily becomes a raging mountain torrent, when swollen by the spring freshets or heavy summer rains.

On the other side of the town is the Stony creek, which gathers up its own share of the mountain rains and whirls them along toward Pittsburg. The awful flood caused by the sudden outpouring of the contents of the reservoir, together with the torrents of rain that had already swollen these streams to triple their usual violence, is supposed to be the cause of the sudden submersion of Johnstown and the drowning of so many of its citizens. The water, unable to find its way rapidly enough through its usual channels, piled up in overwhelming masses, carrying before it everything that obstructed its onward rush upon the town.

Johnstown had a national bank, several savings institutions, printing offices which issue several daily and weekly papers, sixteen churches, several tanneries, flour, planing and woolen mills. The manufacture of wire, cement, fire-brick and leather is also carried on. The town also had a convent

and an academy.

### ITS INDUSTRIAL IMPORTANCE.

Johnstown, the centre of the great disaster, is one the main line of the Pennsylvania Railroad, 276 miles from Philadelphia and 78 from Pittsburg. It is the headquarters of the great Cambria Iron Company, and its acres of iron works fill the narrow basin in which the city is situated. The rolling mill and Bessemer steel works employ 6,000 men. The mountains rise quite abruptly almost on all sides, and the railroad track, which follows the turbulent course of the Conemaugh river, is above the level of the iron works, which must have been inundated by the flood. The summit of the Allegheny mountains is reached at Gallitzin, about 24 miles east of Johnstown.

The people of Johnstown had been warned of the impending flood as early as 1 o'clock in the afternoon, but not a person living near the reservoir knew that the dam had given way until the flood swept the houses off their foundations and tore the timbers apart. Escape from the torrent was impossible. The Pennsylvania Railroad hastily made up trains to get as many people away as possible, and thus saved many lives.

### THE LOWER TOWNS.

Four miles below the dam lay the town of South Fork, where the South Fork itself empties into the Conemaugh river. The town continued about 2,000 inhabitants. It has not been hear from, but it is said that four-fifths of it has been swept away.

Four miles further down, on the Conemaugh river, which runs parallel with the main line of the Pennsylvania railroad, was the town of Mineral Point. It had 800 inhabitants, 90 per cent. of the houses being on a flat and close to the river. It seems impossible to hope that any of them have escaped.

Six miles further down was the town of Conemaugh and here alone was there a topographical possibility of the spreading of the flood and the breaking of its force. It contained 2,500 inhabitants and must be almost wholly devastated.

Woodvale, with 2,000 people, lay a mile below Conemaugh, in the flat, and one mile further down were Johnstown and its cluster of sister towns, Cambria City, Conemaugh Borough, with a total population of 30,000.

On made ground, and stretching along right at the river verge, were the immense iron works of the Cambria Iron And Steel Company, who have \$5,000,000 invested in their plant.

Besides this there are many other industrial establishments on the bank of the river.

(Compiled from [The Johnstown Flood](#) by Herman Dieck, A.M.)

## CHAPTER 2

The correspondents, who were dispatched to the Conemaugh Valley, as soon as the news of the terrible disaster horrified the public, found it impossible to gather a clear and intelligible description of the catastrophe from eye witnesses. They all agree, that they heard a terrible crashing sound and then all of a sudden they saw a wall of water seventy feet high rushing with lightning speed down the valley, destroying everything in its trail.

The great damage to Johnstown was largely due to the rebound of the flood after it swept across. The wave spread against the stream of Stony creek and passed over Kernsville to a depth of 30 feet in some places. It was related that the lumber boom had broken on Stony creek, and the rush of tide down stream, coming in contact with the spreading wave, increased the extent of the disaster in this section. In Kernsville, as well as in Hornerstown across the river, the opinion was expressed that so many lives would not have been lost had the people not believed from their experience with former floods that there was positively no danger beyond the filling of cellars or the overflow of the shores of the river. After rushing down the mountains from the South Fork dam, the pressure of water was so great that it forced its way against the natural channel not only over Kernsville and Hornerstown, but all the way up to Grubbtown, on Stony creek.

By the terrible flood the communications by rail and wire were nearly all cut off and many citizens, who on Saturday, June 1st. read about the terrible disaster first believed, that the reports about the destruction of life and property were greatly exaggerated either through the excitement bordering on insanity, engendered by this appalling calamity, or by the desire to be sensational, a thing, which we often find in newspaper reports. In this case though there was not the least exaggeration; on the contrary, the facts, substantiated later on by responsible men, and by the different aid committees, sent there by charitable and benevolent organizations from neighboring cities, fully justified these reports, and in most cases were much more distressing and appalling than according to the first reports. The first reports gave the number of lives lost at 10,000 to 12,000, and if all the missing are supposed to be dead this number will be correct, although it can fairly be assumed that many of the people saved, in their consternation and fright, which bordered on the unsettling of their reasons, have strayed away and will turn up at some other place. The exact number of victims of this dreadful disaster probably will never be known. Bodies have been found beyond Pittsburg, which in all probability were carried to that place from Johnstown and its suburbs. The terrible holocaust at the barricade of wrecks at the bridge of the Pennsylvania Railroad below Johnstown, where hundreds of men, women and children, who were saved from the waves were burned to death, caused a terrible loss of life. The loss of property was first guessed at 25 to 30 millions of dollars, to-day it is estimated at double of that amount.

#### ANOTHER ACCOUNT OF THE DAM THAT BROKE.

On the Monday after the catastrophe there came to Johnstown a man, who had scarcely more than a dozen rags to cover his nakedness. His name is Herbert Webber, and he was employed by the South Fork Club as a sort of guard. He supported himself mostly by hunting and fishing on the Club's preserves. By almost superhuman efforts he succeeded in working his way through the forest and across flood, in order to ascertain for himself the terrible results of the deluge which he saw start from the Sportsman's Club's lake. Webber said that he had been employed in various capacities about the preserve for a considerable time.

He had repeatedly, he declared, called the attention of the members of the Club to the various leakages at the dam but he received the stereotyped reply that the masonry was all right; that it had been "built to stand for centuries," and that such a thing as its giving way was among the impossibilities. But Webber did not hesitate to continue his warnings. Finally, according to his own statement, he was instructed to "shut up or he would be bounced." He was given to understand that the officers of the Club were tired of his croakings and that the less he said about the dam from thence on the better it would be for him.

Webber then laid his complaint before the Mayor of Johnstown, not more than a month ago. He told him that the spring freshets were due, and that, if they should be very heavy, the dam would certainly give way. Webber says that the Mayor promised to send an expert to examine the dam then, and if necessary to appeal to the State. Somehow the expert was not chosen, the appeal was not made at Harrisburg, and the catastrophe ensued.

For three days previous to the final outburst, Webber says, the water of the lake forced itself through the interstices of the masonry, so that the front of the dam resembled a large watering pot. The force of the water was so great that one of these jets squirted full thirty feet horizontally from the stone wall. All this time, too, the feeders of the lake, particularly three of them, more nearly resembled torrents than mountain streams and were supplying the dammed up body of water with quite 3,000,000 gallons of water hourly.

At 11 o'clock last Friday morning, Webber says, he was attending to a camp about a mile back from the dam, when he noticed that the surface of the lake seemed to be lowering. He doubted his eyes, and made a mark on the shore, and then found that his suspicions were undoubtedly well founded. He ran across the country to the dam, and there he saw, he declares, the water of the lake welling out from beneath the foundation stones of the dam. Absolutely helpless, he was compelled to stand there and watch the gradual development of what was to be the most disastrous flood of this continent.

#### THE DAM COMMENCES TO BREAK.

According to his reckoning it was 12.45 when the stones in the centre of the dam began to sink because of the undermining, and within eight minutes a gap of twenty feet was made in the lower half of the wall face, through which the water poured as though forced by machinery of stupendous power. By one o'clock the toppling masonry, which before had partaken somewhat of the form of an arch, fell in, and then the remainder of the wall opened outward like twin-gates, and the great storage lake was foaming and thundering down the valley of the Conemaugh.

Webber became so awestruck at the catastrophe that he declares he was unable to leave the spot until the lake had fallen so low that it showed bottom fifty feet below him. How long a time elapsed he says he does not know before he recovered sufficient power of observation to notice this, but he does not think that more than five minutes passed. Webber says that had the dam been repaired after the spring freshet of 1888, the disaster would not have occurred. Had it been given ordinary attention in the spring of 1887, the probabilities are that thousands of lives would not have been lost. To have put the dam in excellent condition would not have cost \$5,000. Carelessness - which, in the minds of an intelligent coroner's jury might be termed criminal - was the sole cause of the deluge.

(Compiled from The Johnstown Flood by Herman Dieck, A.M.)

## CHAPTER 3

The New York *Sun* of June 4th, contained a very interesting and truthful graphic dispatched from its reporters at Johnstown. They were among the first to enter Johnstown after the catastrophe. To do so they had to travel in a roundabout way fully a thousand miles, and finally reached their destination by chartering a special train. One of the correspondents telegraphed as follows:

"The time has not yet come to write the story of the disaster that has turned the sparkling Conemaugh that rippled to pleasantly through the beautiful valley into a river of horror in a valley of death.

"No man, nor any corps of men, with every facility that can be devised, will ever be able to write a story that shall fully tell of the awful visitation that has made the valley one vast charnel house, twenty miles lone and half a mile wide, and that has stained the bright mountain stream a color that not all the water that can flow between now and eternity can ever wash out.

"With the facilities for obtaining information, and for sending it after it is obtained, that are the best that can be had here now, it is impossible to give more than a vague idea of the awful desolation that is universal from Conemaugh dam to far below Johnstown. To write a column is but to glance at the subject. To write a page would be but to skirt lightly over its points, and a whole issue of the *Sun* would not contain a summary of all there is to tell.

"This much alone is certain, that, whatever has been written is too weak to adequately convey an idea of the extent of the disaster, and that the horror of the calamity is bound to increase daily for some time yet. Exploration of the valley beyond Johnstown has but just begun. On this account not even a good estimate of the total number of lives lost can be made.

#### THE LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY.

"Adjutant General Hastings, whose bureau here is endeavoring to make something like a complete record of the number of bodies found, sent to Governor Beaver to-day his official estimate that at least 5,000 deaths would be absolutely proven. This does not include the large number of deaths that will never be known of positively, and General Hastings' own estimate of the total is 8,000.

"Nobody thinks this is too small. Nobody who has been about here an hour would think anything too awful to be possible. Just now there was a report that 1,000 bodies had been found this afternoon at Kernsville, a suburb of Johnstown. Nobody questioned it, although it subsequently proved to be untrue.

"The loss of property will be far up into the millions, but no one thinks of that. The tale of the dead is bad, but the tale of the living is bad, too, and it must have attention. There are as many of them as of the dead, and they are hard pressed for food, clothing and all the necessaries of life. Their necessity will continue, not for a day, not for a week, but for months.

"They are as destitute of all that goes to support life, except the bare breath in their bodies, as are the very dead whose half nude bodies line the banks of the Conemaugh for miles. Their ordinary means of earning a livelihood are gone, with the rest of the town, but there is abundant work for every one. But there must be money to pay the workmen. Food for the immediate necessity of the people in Johnstown itself is coming in from every side, and there is enough to relieve their wants.

"What the situation is for people further up the valley is unknown here, but their plight must be serious. Clothing enough for the absolute necessity of the time is also coming in, but the people cannot be maintained in idleness so long, and money to set them at work and keep them at work is absolutely necessary. The committee in charge has concluded, at the very outset, to give the least possible amount of charity and the most work. They ask for money first and most, and their character is such that there need be no hesitation about sending it in generous abundance.

"There is work in cleaning up and rebuilding to last every able-bodied man here for six months, and it will be at least a month before any considerable amount of money can be realized from their labor. The generous heart of the country is depended upon to furnish the means of keeping these men at work for at least that long, and perhaps for twice or three times as long, for no one can tell yet how great will be the task of recreating the town.

"I have visited Johnstown a dozen times a year for a long time," said a business man, "and I know it thoroughly, but I haven't the least idea now of what part of it this is. I can't even tell the direction the streets used to run."

"His bewilderment is hardly greater than that of the citizens themselves. They wander about in the mud for hours trying to find the spot where the house of some friend or relative used to stand. It takes a whole family to locate the site of their friends' house with any reasonable certainty.

#### SIXTY ACRES OF BURNING DEBRIS.

"Wandering over this muddy plain one can realize something of what must have been the gigantic force of the vast whirlpool. It pressed upon the town like some huge millstone, weighing tens of thousands of tons and revolving with awful velocity, pounding to powder everything beneath. But the conception of the power of that horrible eddy of the flood must remain feeble until that sixty acres of burning debris is inspected.

"It seems from a little distance like any other mass of wreckage, though vastly longer than any every before seen in this country. It must have been many times higher over its whole area and before the five levelled it off. But neither then nor now can the full terror of the flood that piled it there be adequately realized until a trip across parts where the fire has been extinguished shows the manner in which the stuff composing it is packed together. It is not a heap of broken timber lying loosely thrown together in all directions. It is a solid mass.

"The boards and timbers which made up the frame buildings are laid together as closely as sticks of wood in a pile - more closely, for they are welded into one another until each stick is as solidly fixed in place as though all were one. A curious thing is that wherever there are a few boards together they are edge up, and never standing on end or flat.

"The terrible force of the whirlpool that ground four square miles into this sixty acres of wreckage left no opportunity for gaps or holes between pieces in the river. Everything was packed together as solidly as though by sledge-hammer blows.

"But the boards and timber of four square miles of buildings are not all that is in that sixty-acre mass. An immense amount of debris from further up the valley lies there. Twenty-seven locomotives, several Pullman cars, and probably a hundred other cars, or all that is left of them, are in that mass. Fragments of iron bridges can be seen sticking out occasionally above the wreckage.

"They are about the only things the fire has not levelled, except the curious hillock spoken of an eighth of a mile back from the bridge, where the flames apparently raged less fiercely. Scattered over the area also are many blackened logs that were too big to be entirely burned, and stick up now like spar buoys in a sea of ruin. Little jets of flame, almost unseen by daylight, but appearing as evening falls, are scattered thickly over the surface of the wreckage.

#### HUMAN BODIES BURNING IN THE WRECKAGE.

"All this is horrible to see, more horrible than it can possibly be thought of; but the worst is untold. The smoke that hovers over the wreckage by the bridge, and floats in light blue clouds above the town, is heavy with an odor rarely smelled. People in New York who remember the smell of the ruins of the Belt Line stables, after their destructions by fire, when 1,200 horses had perished, know what the odor is. But it is the flesh of human beings, not of horses, that cause the odors at which every

newcomer here shivers with horror.

"Those who have been here long don't mind it; they are used to it, and there are more matters than smells to attend to. The cruel whirlpool that pounded four square miles of buildings into dust and splinters did not spare the people. Their bodies were grounded beneath the pressure of the awful millstone of the flood, as were the brick and mortar of the buildings. They were torn limb from limb, heaped together, torn apart, scattered and mingled in the mass as were the timbers and boards of the pine buildings.

"Finally they were lodged in that solid mass of sixty acres of debris along with the ruins of their home, wedged in as tightly as though human flesh was no more than broken wood and iron. There they are, those that have not been burned in the fire that levelled the whole mass, or that were not carried above the top of the bridge in the first rush of the flood. How many there were cannot be told. There were, perhaps, as many as there were horses in the Belt Line stables. Scores of bodies have already been removed from along the edges of the area of wreckage, but that is only the beginning.

"The fire has kept men off, and now that the rain and the Pittsburg firemen are subduing the flames it is found that the debris is packed so closely that it is hopeless to attempt to penetrate it except by beginning at the edges and working into it. That work will take weeks. A few bodies have been pulled out where they were on the surface, but even these cannot all be gotten out. The body of a boy has lain all day beside the iron frame of a locomotive tender near the bridge in plain sight, but beyond reach.

"A most serious feature of the lodging of this mass of stuff against the bridge is that all the water of the Conemaugh and Stony creek has to pass through it on its way to the Allegheny and to the water supply source of Pittsburg. The bodies in the mass are already beginning to emit an odor more offensive than that of their roasting, and the danger to the health of localities further down stream is believed to be immediate and serious.

"Of the rest of Johnstown, and the collection of towns within sight of the bridge, not much is to be said. They are, to a greater or less extent, gone, as Johnstown is gone. Far up the gap through which came the flood a large brick building remains standing, but ruined. It is all that is left of one of the biggest wire mills and steel works in the country. Turning around below the bridge are the works of the Cambria Iron Company.

"The buildings are still standing, but they are pretty well ruined, and the machinery, with which they were filled, is either totally destroyed or damaged almost beyond repair. High up on the hill at the left and scattered up on other hills in sight are many dwellings, neat, well kept, and attractive places apparently, and looking as bright and fresh now as before the awful torrent wiped out of existence everything in the valley below.

"This is Johnstown and its immediate vicinity as nearly as words can paint it. It is a single feature, one section out of fifteen miles of horror that stretches through this once lovely valley of the Allegheny. What is true of Johnstown is true of every town for miles up and down. The desolation of one town may differ from the desolation in others as one death may differ from another; but it is desolation and death everywhere - desolation so complete, so relentless, so dreadful that it is absolutely beyond the conception of men who have not seen it - death in forms more varied, more painful and more horrible than ever were devised by the most atrocious torturer of the Inquisition. Many have been burned to death and many have been drowned, but few have been called upon to die with the water surging about their faces while fire burned their limbs, a death that scores suffered after the flood heaped them up against the bridge here.

"There is one thing even those who have been longest here and who have plunged deepest into the horrors that fill the valley as completely as did the flood have not yet forgotten, and that they say they never can forget - that is, the shrieks of the victims whose fate it was to die by fire and water at once.

"The pitiful sound filled the valley at this point for hours above the roar of the flames and the din and smash of the debris-laden torrent. Hundreds were reached and rescued. Hundreds dies within sight of men who would almost have given their own lives to save them.

THE NUMBER OF VICTIMS MAY NEVER BE KNOWN.

"The scene in Johnstown simply beggars description. All that has been printed and told about it falls short of the reality. The worst about the disaster will probably never be known, for the reason that the flood and fire have so scattered the victims through such a wide extent of territory that no record can be made and only a list made of a few thousand missing.

"Many people, too, have left Johnstown never to return, their all having been destroyed. It would require a census taker six months to complete anything approaching a detailed statement of the dead, and no tabulation has been attempted yet. Burned and ground to pieces at the great dam of debris at the Pennsylvania Railroad bridge are the remains of hundreds of people.

"Underneath the ruins of the town are many more. Swept along down the river, lodged in driftwood on the banks, caught in dams and lodged in trees and houses at the bottom are still more.

"'Where were most of the bodies found?' asked a young man who came here.

"'Everywhere,' was the answer.

"Johnstown has been well described as a scooped hollow between the hills, made on a pattern of a hollow in a man's hand when he holds his palm upward until the fingers are raised. The hills, of course, take the place of the fingers of the hands. They are covered with forests that have never been cut off, and which loom up gloomy and solemn. On the sides of some of the hills cuts have been made for the railroads and their sidings.

"Together the location is that which is invariably described as a beautiful one. The main portion of the town was on the flats and hollow between Stony creek and Conemaugh river, and the mistake has been made by the majority of the people in thinking of the accident that most of these houses were wooden ones and of rather a poor character.

A special reporter of teh *Public Ledger*, the great newspaper of George W. Childs, telegraphed on the 2d day of June as follows:

"I have just come from Johnstown proper, over a rope bridge which was completed this afternoon. I reached there at 5 o'clock last night, and tell only what I did see and do know.

"The mighty wave that rushed through the Conemaugh Valley on Friday evening cut a swath of death 13 miles long. In this way lay one of the most thickly populated centres of the Keystone State, and within a few minutes from the time the dam at Lake Conemaugh broke houses were rolling over one another in a mad whirl, as they were carried by the seething waters down the gorge between the endless hills.

"At Johnstown the whole centre of the city was cut, as if a mammoth scythe had passed over the land. At that place was a large stone bridge of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, one of the strongest that the company owns. The Conemaugh river is crossed by it at an angle. Into this angle houses, trees and fences that came down the left side of the river rushed, and were piled one on top of another until the arches under the bridge were closed, the current of the Conemaugh was changed and the wreckage began to pile on high until rafters and timbers projected above the stone. Then the houses, nearly all crowded with people, crashed, one after another, until the terrible wreckage extended a half mile up the stream. No pen can tell the horror or the shrieks of the thousands who were in the mass of floating ruins.

AN ADDED HORROR OF FIRE.

"Shortly after the blockade had formed the dry timbers of the houses caught fire, and the mass nearest the railroad bridge became a glowing furnace. Hundreds of people, who had not been drowned or crushed to death in the mad rush down stream, were burned alive. Their shrieks as the flames reached them made the most stout-hearted wring their hands in agony at their inability to render assistance. The wind blew from up stream. The air became filled with the gruesome odors, until at last the horrors to sight, hearing and smell became so great that persons in the vicinity were forced to leave the place. Meanwhile the greater bulk of the houses had gone down along the right bank. One mad rush carried away a portion of the stone bridge, and then the flood bore down upon the thousands of homes and floated them further westward in the Conemaugh. It was only a little after 5 o'clock Friday afternoon when the first warning came, and as it had been raining heavily all day the citizens of Johnstown and the neighboring hamlets thought that the slowly rising waters only meant a light flood.

"Thus the inhabitants were either grouped in windows or in the open doors watching what was expected would be an imposing spectacle, but nothing more. No one seemed to think it necessary that they should take to the hills, and so all were caught in the fearful rush.

#### BODIES ALONG THE RIVER BANKS.

"I walked late yesterday afternoon from New Florence to a place opposite Johnstown, a distance of four miles. I describe what I actually saw. All along the way bodies were seen lying on the river banks. In one place a woman was half buried in the mud, only a limb showing. In another was a mother with her babe clasped to her breast.

"Further along lay a husband and wife, their arms wound around each other's necks. Probably 50 bodies were seen on that one side of the river, and it must be remembered that here the current was the swiftest and consequently fewer of the dead bodies were landed among the bushes. On the opposite side bodies could also be seen, but they were all covered with mud.

"As I neared Johnstown the wreckage became grand in its massive proportions. In order to show the force of the current I will say that three miles below Johnstown I saw a grand piano lying on the bank, and not a board or key was broken. It must have been lifted on the crest of the wave and laid gently on the bank. In another place were two large iron boilers. They had evidently been treated by the torrent much the same as the piano had been.

#### HEARTRENDING SCENES.

"The scenes as I neared Johnstown were the most heart-rending that man was ever called on to look upon. Probably 3000 people were scattered in groups along the Pennsylvania Railroad track, and every one of them had a relative lying dead either in the wreckage above, in the river below or in the still burning furnace. Not a house that was left standing was plumb. Hundreds of them were burned on their sides, and in some cases three or four stood one on top of the other.

#### THE CAMBRIA IRON WORKS.

"Two miles from Johnstown, on the opposite side of the river from where I walked, stood one-half of the water works of the Cambria Iron Company, a structure that had been built of massive stone. It was filled with planks from houses and a large abutment of wreckage was piled up of fully 50 feet in front of it. A little above, on the same side, could be seen what was left of the Cambria Iron Works, which was one of the finest plants in the world.

"Some of the walls are still standing, it is true, but not a vestige of the valuable machinery remained in sight. The two upper portions of the works were swept away almost entirely, and under the pieces of fallen iron and wood could be seen the bodies of 40 workmen.

"At this point there was a bend in the river, and the fiery furnace, blazing for a quarter of a mile

square above the stone bridge, came into view. 'My God!' screamed a woman, who was hastening up the track, 'can it be that any are in there?' 'Yes, over a thousand,' replied a man, who had just come from the neighborhood, and it is now learned that he estimated one thousand too few. The scenes of misery and suffering and agony and despair can hardly be chronicled.

"One man, a clerk named Woodruff, was reeling along intoxicated. Suddenly, with a frantic shout, he threw himself over the bank into the flood, and would have been carried to his death had he not been caught by some persons below. 'Let me die,' he exclaimed, when they rescued him. 'My wife and children are gone; I have no use for my life.' An hour later I saw Woodruff lying on the ground entirely overcome by liquor.

"Intemperance was a merciful boon in his case. Persons who knew him said that he had never tasted liquor before. Probably 50 barrels of whisky were washed ashore just below Johnstown, and those men who had lost everything in this world sought solace in the fiery liquid, so it was that as early as 6 o'clock last night the shrieks and cries of women were intermingled with drunken howls and curses.

#### RUFFIANISM RAMPANT.

"What was worse than anything, however, was the fact that incoming trains from Pittsburg brought hundreds of toughs who joined with the Slavs and Bohemians in rifling the bodies, stealing furniture, insulting women and endeavoring control of any rescuing parties that tried to seek the bodies under the bushes and in the limbs of trees. There was no one in authority, no one to take command of even a citizens' posse could it have been organized. A lawless mob seemed to control this narrow neck of land that was the only approach to the city of Johnstown.

"I saw persons take watches from dead men's pockets and brutally tear finger rings from their hands. The ruffians also climbed into the overturned houses and ransacked the rooms, taking whatever they thought valuable. No one dared check them in this work and consequently the scene was not as riotous as it would have been, for the troops had not had sway. In fact, they became beastly drunk after a time and were seen lying around in a stupor. Unless the military are on hand early to-morrow there may be serious trouble, for each train pours loads of people of every description into the vicinity, and Slavs are flocking like birds of prey from the surrounding country.

#### A FRIGHTFUL ESTIMATE.

"Here I will give the latest a conservative estimate of the dead: It is between seven and eight thousand drowned and two thousand burned.

"The committee of Johnstown, in their bulletin, placed the number of lives lost at 8000. In doing so they are figuring the inhabitants of their own city and the towns immediately adjoining. But it must be remembered that the flood swept ten miles through a populous district before it even reached the locality over which this committee had supervision. It devastated a tract the size and shape of Manhattan Island. Here are a few facts that will show the geographic outlines of the terrible disaster. The Hotel Hurburt, of Johnstown, a massive three-story building of 100 rooms, has vanished. There were in it 75 guests at the time of the flood. Two only are known to be alive. The Merchants' Hotel is levelled. How many were inside it is not known, but as yet no one has been seen who came from there or heard of an inmate escaping. At the Conemaugh Round House forty-one locomotives were swept down the stream and before they reached the stone bridge all the iron and steel work had been torn from their boilers.

#### THE SCENE AT THE STONE BRIDGE.

"It is almost impossible in this great catastrophe to go more into details. I stood on the stone bridge at 6 o'clock, and looked into the seething mass of ruin below me. At one place the blackened body of a babe was scene; in another 14 skulls could be counted. Further along the bones became thicker and thicker, until at last at one place it seemed as if a concourse of people, who had been at a ball or entertainment, had been carried in a bunch and incinerated. At this time the smoke was still rising to

the height of 50 feet, and it is expected when it does down the charred bodies will be seen dotting the entire mass of burned debris. A cable has been run last night from the end of the stone bridge to the nearest point across - a distance of 300 feet. Over this cable was run a trolley and a swing was fastened under it.

#### IN JOHNSTOWN.

"A man went over, and he was the first one who visited Johnstown since the awful disaster. I followed him to-day. I walked along the hillside and saw hundreds of persons lying on the wet grass, wrapped in blankets or quilts. It was growing cold, and a misty rain had set in. Shelter was not to be had, and houses on the hillside that had not been swept away were literally packed from top to bottom. The bare necessities of life were soon at a premium, and loaves of bread sold at fifty cents.

"Fortunately, however, the relief train from Pittsburg arrived at 7 o'clock. Otherwise the horrors of starvation would have been added. All provisions, however, had to be carried over a rough, rocky road a distance of four miles (as I know, who had been compelled to walk it,) and in many cases they were seized by the toughs, and the people who were in need of food did not get it.

#### THE SUFFERINGS OF THE SURVIVORS.

"It may sound strange to say much about the damage to property, but it must be remembered that the living are those who now suffer, and aid is asked for the thousands who are left homeless and without a change of clothing. I learned in Johnstown that the great Chartiers Steel Works are swept away, with all its valuable machinery. This alone entails a loss of \$2,000,000. One million will not make the Cambria Iron Works whole.

"Rich and poor were served alike by this terrible disaster. I saw a girl standing in her bare feet on the river bank, clad in a loose petticoat and with a shawl overhead. At first, I thought she was an Italian woman, but her face showed that I was mistaken. She was the belle of the town - the daughter of a wealthy Johnstown banker - and this single petticoat and shawl were not only all that were left her, but all that were saved from the magnificent residence of her father. She had escaped to the hills not an instant too soon. The Solicitor of Johnstown, Mr. George Martin, said to me to-day: 'All my money went away in the flood. My house is gone. So are all my clothes, but, thank God, my family is safe.'"

On the following day this correspondent wrote as follows:

#### THE LOSS OF LIFE.

The developments of every hour make it more and more apparent that the exact number of lives lost in the Johnstown horror will never be known. All estimates that have been made up to this time are conservative, and, when all is known, will doubtless be found to have been too small. Over 1000 bodies have been found since sunrise to-day, and the most skeptical concede that the remains of thousands more rest beneath the debris above Johnstown bridge.

"The population of Johnstown, the surrounding suburbs and the portion of the valley affected by the flood is, or was, 50,000 to 55,000. Associated Press representatives to-day interviewed numerous leading citizens of Johnstown who survived the flood, and then consensus of opinion was that fully 30 per cent. of the residents of Johnstown and Cambria had been victims of the continued disasters of fire and water. If this be true the total loss of life in the entire valley cannot be less than 7000 or 8000, and possible much greater.

"Of the thousands who were devoured by the flames, and whose ashes rest beneath the smoking debris above Johnstown bridge, no definite information can ever be obtained. As little will be learned of the hundreds who sank beneath the current and were borne swiftly down the Conemaugh, only to be deposited hundreds of miles below on the banks and in the driftwood of the raging Ohio. Probably one-third of the dead will never be recovered, and it will take a list of the missing weeks hence to enable even a close estimate to be made of the number of bodies that were to be seen floating in the

river in the brief hour. That this estimate can never be accurate is understood when it is remembered that, in many instances, whole families and their relatives were swept away and found a common grave beneath the wild waste of waters. The total destruction of the city leaves no data to even demonstrate that the names of these unfortunates ever found place on the pages of eternity's history."

(Compiled from [The Johnstown Flood](#) by Herman Dieck, A.M.)

## CHAPTER 4

On the 5th day of June, five days of the disaster, the people had fairly recovered from their stupor, brought on by this terrible disaster and an earnest effort was made to get some definite information as to the total number of persons whose lives were lost in the recent flood and its attendant horror of fire at the Pennsylvania Railroad bridge. The further the inquiry was presented, however, the more uncertain the ascertainment of any authentic figures became. There had up to that time been no general system of keeping records, and when it is remembered that the loss of life began six miles above Johnstown, and extended 20 miles below in a path ranging from 100 feet to a mile in width, it will be seen how difficult it would have been to adopt any such system in so sudden an emergency. Dead bodies have been found floating in the rivers into which the Conemaugh empties as far west at Pittsburg, and without doubt many of them still lie buried in the stream or are lodged under the debris and sand.

The whole territory in which these dead bodies have been located is of so vast an extent, coming under the notice of so many different authorities, that no complete record could have been kept, especially in view of the fact that it was deemed expedient in many places to remove the remains from sight forever as quickly as possible.

An actual count of the dead is absolutely impossible. The streets of Johnstown to-day are covered in many places houses high with sand and rubbish and building material and household utensils, in the midst of which human remains are being constantly discovered.

#### A VISIT TO THE CAUSE OF THE DISASTER.

A correspondent of the *New York Sun*, who visited the South Fork Fishing Club's dam on the fourth of June, thus telegraphed his observations:

"The investigations of your reporter show clearly that the major part of whatever responsibility may belong to the human agencies for the calamity that has desolated the Conemaugh valley must be placed upon the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club, the association of wealthy Pittsburg gentlemen that has for four or five years past been endeavoring to establish a sportsman's paradise at Conemaugh Lake. When they leased the lake they closed the water gates, through which all the water that had ever before accumulated in Conemaugh Lake had found a safe and speedy exit. It is measurably certain that had the waste gates been maintained the dam would never have given way.

"They were removed, it is said, because whenever they were opened the game fish with which the lake was being stocked would escape. The fish have escaped all the same, and the lives of 8000 human beings have gone with them. These statements are made after a visit to the spot by a *Sun* correspondent and an inspection of the remains of the dam, and after listening to the accounts of the residents in the neighborhood as to what was the condition of the dam before the disaster. The visit to the spot was not easily made. No one had attempted it from this side until this morning, although news of various sorts about it had been brought down by a few people living near it, or who had been caught near it when the flood came.

"At 6 o'clock this morning a *Sun* man set out for the lake by way of Conemaugh, and thence nine miles up into the mountains over the summits of some of the highest parts of the Alleghenies, and then down as near the dam as the road leads. The shorter and more direct route up the river was impracticable, the flood having washed out impartially the railroad on one side and the wagon road on the other, and the river having cut out new channels so winding and crooked that they would have to be crossed a dozen times in every mile of the way. The stream is still so swollen that it cannot be forded.

"After reaching the vicinity of the dam, two miles more of tramping over a mass of rocks and gravel, from ten to twenty feet deep, was necessary to reach and get around the dam. As to the dam itself, no description yet printed gives any hint as to its character. There was no massive masonry, nor any

tremendous exhibition of engineering skill in designing the structure or putting it up. There was no masonry at all in fact, nor any engineering worthy of the name. The dam was simply a gigantic heap of earth dumped across the course of a mountain stream between two hills. It was faced on each side with a layer of heavy rough stone, loosely thrown together and uncemented. This pile of earth was, as has been stated, about 75 feet high and 90 feet thick at the base. At the summit it was levelled off so as to be about 20 feet wide, and a wagon road crossed it. It was an ordinary dirt road, and there was no rock or masonry beneath it. The width of the stream at the bottom of the dam was about 40 feet. At the top of the dam was about 400 feet long. It was built straight across the gap, and neither face nor back was curved. The slopes were about the same on both face and back.

"The dam was built many years ago to create a reservoir for use as a feeder to the Pennsylvania Canal. The builders placed in the forty-foot space at the bottom, where the creek ran, five huge pipes, each as large as a hogshead. These were covered by an arch of massive masonry, and were arranged to be opened or closed by levers in a tower that was built in the centre of the dam. These five big pipes were calculated to be large enough to carry off all surplus water that could ever be poured into the lake above and which could not escape by the regular exit, which was a sluiceway around one corner of the dam at a level of eight or ten feet below the top. This sluiceway was really a new stream, the water passing off through it finding its picturesquely winding course down the hillside, and running with the stream again some distance below the dam. The sluiceway and waste gates never failed to do the work for which they were designed, and there is no reason to suppose that they would have failed to do so at the present time and for the future had they been maintained as the builders contemplated.

"When the Pennsylvania Canal was abandoned the dam became useless, and was neglected. The tower in which the machinery for managing the waste gates was located is said to have fallen into ruin a few years ago. The lake was leased by the Pittsburg Sportsman's Association. Engineer Fulton, of the Cambria Iron Company, made an inspection of it and pronounced it dangerous. The association set out, they declared, to improve and strengthen it. They did cut off two feet from the top of the dam, and may have strengthened it in some respects; but either because the waste gates were so damaged that to repair them would have been an expensive job, or, for the other reason mentioned, the fear that the fish would escape by the waste gates, every one who lives near says the gates were permanently stopped up. The present appearance of the wreck of the dam indicates the truthfulness of the story. There are remnants of the waste gate masonry, but there is no indication that they have been of any practical use for a long time.

"Whatever may have been the indirect cause of the giving way of the heap of dirt that dammed upper Conemaugh, the fearful power of the mass of water which was the direct cause of its yielding is evident all about the place. In the centre of the dam is a gap clear down to bed rock in the old bed of the stream, and sloping raggedly upon each side to the top, where it is at least 200 feet wide. Through this huge gap can be seen a vast area of yellowish gravel and mud - a very deep basin in the centre back of the dam, rising at each side in bluffs thirty feet high, and sloping more gradually backward away off until it curves to the left and is cut off from view by a point of land. At the further end of the curve are the big club house and a number of cottages erected for members of the club, gay bits of color in the midst of masses of green trees. This mud valley is not less than a quarter of a mile wide at its narrowest point. It is generally much wider, and is said to average a mile and a quarter.

"There would seem to have been enough water to wash away Johnstown in the parts of the huge basin that can be seen through the gap in the dam, but the whole length of that basin, as it winds irregularly back among the hills, is three miles, and all the water in that area of three miles by a mile and a quarter passed out through the gap in the dam and poured itself upon the devoted valley below in a torrent 75 feet deep and 200 feet wide. Rushing through with a velocity almost inconceivable for so vast a mass, it took a full hour to exhaust the reservoir, the tremendous pressure from behind urging the flood on to its most disastrous work. Something of the awful force of the torrent can be seen on the land below the dam. Formerly it was a densely wooded little valley, nearly straightaway for half a mile, where it turned so abruptly to the right as to make almost a right angle.

"The creek, coming down through sluiceway and down the mountain side, wandered in a crooked course through the bottom of the valley. Just before the turn it swept out a good way toward the left and made on the right bank a long point of land. This point was very heavily wooded. On the opposite bank was a high bluff, covered with forest down to the water's edge. For three quarters of the distance from the dam to the curve the formerly wooded flats are low, covered with gravel, coarse stone and big rocks, twenty feet deep at the upper end and not less than ten at any point. The creek runs through the forty-foot gap where the waste gates used to be, and through a deep gully in the mass of gravel and stone. There is not vestige of trees or underbrush. Just before the long curve begins, where formerly there was a bridge, the deposit of gravel is thin, but the heavily wooded point on the other side has disappeared, and gravel ten feet deep covers the spot.

"On the opposite bluff the trees have been stripped away and the side of the hill torn out for forty feet up, a clear evidence of the terrible force of the torrent as it whirled about the right-angled turn. The surface of the little half-mile valley suggests nothing more forcibly than that the system of hydraulic mining used in the gold regions had been worked for a long time. The debris is still of heavy rock and gravel. There is no dirt in it. The rush of waters carried with it every thing but the heaviest that it picked up. Many of what have evidently been the largest and heaviest rocks in the fact of the dam lie broken in fragments against some other rock upon which they were hurled. There were two houses on the flats of the half-mile valley. George Fisher and his family lived in the first, right in sight of the dam. He had been warned that the dam was going to go, and he moved out in time and saved the lives of his family, but little else besides the clothes they wore.

"George Lamb, with his wife and children and two pigs, lived just by the bridge further down the valley. He also was afraid of the dam, but he stayed in his house until he heard the thunder of the waters pouring through the first breach in the dam. Then he shouted to neighbors who had come running down the hill to rescue his wife and children, while he ran himself to save the pigs. He didn't get the pigs. If the neighbors hadn't helped him out along with his family he would have been caught in the first rush of the torrent. The flood, he says, seemed to follow almost instantly after the thunder of the water through the breach. He got back to high ground in time to see his home climb the fact of the great wall of water, 60 feet high. He saw it roll and toss for an instant with Fisher's house, and then they were flung against the bluff with a force that dashed them into splinters. Not a fragment of them was found after the water had subsided, and Mr. Lamb can scarcely tell where his house stood.

"'It's all changed here,' he said to-day. 'I can't tell half the time where I really am.'

"Mr. Lamb's two pigs were the only lives lost while the flood remained in sight of its starting point. Not until it had gone half a mile down the narrow gulch did it strike any settlement and begin, in the outskirts of South Fork, its fifteen mile course of ruin and death.

"W.H. Pickerell, operator at Mineral Point tower, and one and a quarter miles west of Mineral Point station, two miles this side of South Fork, was at his post when the flood came.

"The tower is quite a distance above the head of the stream. His family live at Mineral Point and he had been very anxious about the condition of the South Fork dam. At about 10 A.M. on May 31 he sent a special message to his family to warn them not to remain in the house. He also sent several messages in the forenoon to Dougherty, the operator at South Fork, asking about the condition of the dam.

"The replies were to the effect that their watchman, Adam, said there was great danger, but that the operator's opinion was that there was not much danger. At about 1 P.M. Pickerell received a message from the South Fork operator that the dam was in bad condition. At 1.52 P.M. he received this message from South Fork:

"'The water is running over the breast of Lake dam, in centre, and west side is becoming dangerous.  
- DOUGHERTY'

"The last message received from South Fork, and, in fact, the last message received at Mineral Point

from any one up to the present time, was received at 2.25 P.M.:

"The dam is getting worse, and may possibly go.  
- J.P. WILSON."

"Mr. Wilson is superintendent of the Argyle Coal Company. Pickerell sent this message to East Conemaugh as soon as he received it, together with instructions to have it circulated among the people there at once. The operator at East Conemaugh wired back at 2.25 P.M., 'J.O.' these being the letters used to denote the name of the East Conemaugh operator, Mr. Montgomery.

(Compiled from The Johnstown Flood by Herman Dieck, A.M.)

## CHAPTER 5

A CORRESPONDENT of the Philadelphia *Times*, writes about the break of the dam as follows:

"Standing on what still remains of the embankment, one can see from the marks all around him how tremendous was the force of the shock when the break occurred. All that remains is seamed from side to side so that it is unsafe to go near the edge of the break. When it is remembered that the break was almost instantaneous, the dam giving way with two loud reports in rapid succession, some idea may be formed of the force with which the rush of the flood began. The experience of Mr. Joab Salkeld, who lives on the hillside more than a mile below the breast of the dam, will still further illustrate the momentum of the water. He was lying down at the time. When she heard the first report his wife roused him, telling him the dam had broken. He had scarcely time to get to the window to see the flood coming. An instant later it had rolled past, leaving a succession of surging and angry tides behind. Houses came down with the flood and were dashed about in a whirlpool. In many cases forest giants were snapped off as if they had stood in the track of a cyclone. The verdant valleys became in an instant a mere waste of sand and debris. Even immense rocks were carried along by the flood. Opposite the village of South Fork is a huge boulder weighing fully 60,000 tons that was not there before. It is as large as a medium-sized house. Nothing was strong enough to resist the force of the flood where its blows had full effect - nothing except the everlasting hills. The hills indeed played a very important part in the catastrophe. South Fork creek from the dam to its confluence with the Conemaugh, two miles below, is a very rapid stream. Not half a mile below the breast of the dam it makes a sudden turn to the right. At this point juts out a little mountain piled on the top of the Alleghenies. It was against this that the flood first struck after being let loose, the hills throwing it back with a reactionary force momentarily stronger than the force of the flood itself. Midway between the hill and dam there was a large frame house. Hurling against the hill by the force of the flood, the hill dashed it back with a thud and it was ground to pieces in the swirl. Not a vestige of it remains. Across the stream, at Lamb's house, was a bridge - Lamb's bridge. It was the first of a hundred other bridges to be swept away. Between the house and the bridge Mr. Lamb's spring wagon was standing. The flood caught it up but the hill tossed it back, and when the water subsided it was found about twenty yards from where it originally stood, and strange to say, it was almost uninjured. Indeed, it is still in such good condition that I rode on it on Thursday morning from the dam to Johnstown, a distance of twelve miles over the roughest rode in Cambria county. Taking a fresh start after its contact with the hill below Lamb's house, the flood swept onward down the South Fork Valley and then along the Conemaugh and through Johnstown. At many points there are sharp angles formed the the hills in the winding valleys, at every one of which the mad flood repeated its angry and destructive contortions.

A NICE SENSATION SPOILED.

"One of the reportorial brotherhood, leaning a little towards imagination and sensation had gotten up a story of a new Paul Revere, who had come riding along on a foam-bedecked steed and warned all neighbors to fly from the flood, and who finally succumbed with his noble charger. It was a soul-stirring story, and excellent story for a dime novel or some other elegant publication. It was a nice story, but then came the fellows, who are quick at figures and who have spoiled many other nice stories before, and have proven that they deserve no credit. That young man could not have done it, even if he had any intention to do so. The flood was too fast for any horseman and there was no road in the Conemaugh Valley over which a horseman could go. But while this new Paul Revere in this famous creation made by a few strokes of a reporter's pencil is a myth - the reporter, it will be remembered, killed him in the flood that he might not rise up and bear testimony against a false witness - there were many little Pauls. The South Forks people had watchers at the dam during the fatal Friday who reported its condition from time to time. As it was certain that the dam would break should the water flow over the embankment, two boys were stationed at the bend in the road near it to give notice of the impending calamity. These were Baker's boy and Gaskill's boy. Of these Baker's boy was the last to come down bearing intelligence of the fact that was a sure prelude to disaster. But he was in no danger. He had the start of the flood. Besides the South Fork Valley road at most points between the dam and village is high above the highest crest obtained by the flood wave. Below the

village, between South Fork and Conemaugh, there was no road at all except the tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Below Conemaugh there was no chance for a Paul Revere. Warnings were given in abundance, but there was no real notice except that afforded by the coming of the flood. Many persons were drowned who had no notice at all - they were in the water before they knew the flood was coming.

#### THE DISASTER - DOWN THE CONEMAUGH.

"When the flood reached the village of South Fork the destruction of human life began. At the station in the village an eastbound train was standing within hearing distance of the roar of the coming waters. It was able to pull out in time and escape. At some distance from the station down the Conemaugh Valley stood an extra freight train waiting orders. The engineer and conductor were in the tower, the fireman and flagman were on the engine and two brakemen were asleep in the caboose. The men in the tower heard the roar and saw the coming flood. Crying to the brakemen, but failing to rouse them, they hastily detached the engine and fled before the mountain of water. Before them was danger, but behind them was certain death. As they dashed down the valley the flood made a momentary pause at the village of South Fork. There is a bend in the Conemaugh river at its confluence with the South Fork creek, and the flood dashed itself against the hillside in front of it. The waters were thrown back upon the hills on the south bank of the creek. This was an interruption, but with an angry swirl the great wave righted itself and swung down the valley after the flying engine. Steam soon proved to be no match in speed against the water. The stout stone viaduct was snapped and dashed to fragments as if it had been a pipe of clay. Obstacles only stood in the way to become the sport of the wave. Across the bridge, on the track of the detached engine, was a freight train barring the way. As soon as the bridge was crossed the lever was reversed and the men jumped and ran for their lives up the hillside. The flood was close upon them, and they had scarcely got above the water line when it lifted up the engine as if it had been a soap bubble, engulfed the freight and tore up the tracks. Then on it went, making a mad rush for the suburbs of the city below.

#### IN JOHNSTOWN.

"The course of the Conemaugh river between South Fork and Johnstown is a tortuous one, and the flood in its sweep was only thrown back from one hill to be dashed against another. The obstacles and interruptions only seemed to add to its fierce energy, and when the town of Conemaugh was reached it was denuded almost in an instant of every habitation that had sheltered a populous community. Below was the doomed city of Johnstown. The inhabitants were oblivious of the impending calamity. The merchant was in his store bartering away his goods; the merchants were at their daily toil in the shops; the house-wives were going about their household duties. That there was danger was known, but there had been danger before more than once, and it passed away without a calamity. The previous cries of "Wolf!" made the cry ineffective now that the wolf was at the door. Only the timid and the prudent escaped the coming flood by going to the hillsides in time. For the others, the only notice was the ringing of the bell at the Cambria Iron Works, but so brief was this notice that the bell had not stopped ringing when the flood came. There was no time for even the bell-ringer to escape. The warning came too late, and only a few minutes elapsed before Johnstown was swept away, the angel of death holding his sable wings over the engulfed city.

"To those on the hillside the sight was an awful one. Before the bell was rung there were few people in the streets. At the first tap there was a panic, and the frightened inhabitants rushed into the thoroughfares, trying to make their way to the hillsides. A man who was on Johnstown Hill at the time told me that he had a view of Main street from end to end. In an instant the deserted street became black with people running for their lives. An instant later the flood came and licked them up with one eager and ferocious lap. The whole city was one surging and whirling mass of water, which swept away houses after house and block after block and street after street with a rapidity that even the eye could not follow. It was a sight that, once seen, can never be forgotten - a sight to be remembered only as a terrible dream.

"The course of the flood in Johnstown was apparently as unreasoning as the freaks of a madman and as cunningly devised for deadly effects as the blows of an armed maniac running amuck. Into the city

the great wave rushed, sweeping everything before it. The course of the Conemaugh is a gentle curve around Prospect Hill. A part of the wave seemed disposed to follow the course of the stream while the other part was intent upon dashing into and through the heart of the town. The conflicting forces of the element, however, kept together until the point between Franklin and Market streets was reached. Here they separated, one current sweeping along the course of the Conemaugh to the Pennsylvania Railroad bridge and the other making the dash through the town. Thus the flood had two prongs, one as destructive as the other. The gorge at the bridge threw the Conemaugh current back upon the town along the course of Stony creek, while the other prong made a mad rush upon the western hills and was thrown back to meet the receding waters from the bridge. At this moment the whole of the Johnstown valley presented the appearance of a mountain lake lashed by a tornado that was itself a contortion - the whole city was a whirlpool, even the largest edifices being tossed like toys by the angry eddies that made escape for the imprisoned inmates of floating houses impossible. Many of the houses took fire from the stoves as they were hurled from crest to crest of the angry waves, and it is supposed that it was to this cause - the burning fires in the houses - that the conflagration in the gorge, which added to much to the horrors of the disaster, was due.

"When the work of destruction and death in Johnstown was complete and the great wave rolled down the Conemaugh Valley, bearing with its freight of human bodies, some of which it carried as far as the Allegheny and the Ohio, the waters rapidly subsided in the city, revealing a condition that can only be described as appalling. The scenes that then confronted the vision of the survivors would have been through impossible before the flood had come and gone."

#### JOHNSTOWN BEFORE AND AFTER THE DISASTER.

In turning from the Johnstown that was to the Johnstown that is the heart sickens at the prospect, writes a correspondent. Everywhere the marks of the devastating element reach they eye. Instead of compactly-built streets intersecting each other and a vista of cheerful yards and gardens there are long stretches of sand and gravel. one of these follows the winding course of the Conemaugh. The other was made by the tongue of the flood that kept straight on by the impetus given it in the Conemaugh Valley. These tongues of wave, separating like the two prongs, had an effect as salutary as the circumstances in itself was singular. Some property and many lives were saved in consequence. The force of the current being divided was diverted from the heart of the town, and many buildings are still standing in a part of Main street. They are wrecked, some almost wholly, others only slightly, at least in appearance. Into this space, so curiously preserved from utter ruin, many floating buildings jammed, some of them with their living human inmates. Some of these were saved, as were many of the residents in that sectin of the city. Had these buildings gone many additional lives would have been sacrificed, and unless the bridge itself had shared the fate of the rest of the town the gorge that began when the train fell over the bridge would have been even greater and more unmanageable than it now is. As it is, it is interesting as an agent of mercy as well as a remarkable example of partial escape from the fury of the flood.

(Compiled from [The Johnstown Flood](#) by Herman Dieck, A.M.)

## CHAPTER 6

One of the most terrible sights was the gorge at the railroad bridge. This gorge consisted of debris of all kinds welded into an almost solid mass. Here were the charred timbers of houses and even now the charred and mutilated remains of human beings. The fire at this point, which lasted until June 3d and had still some of its vitality left on the 5th, was one of the incidents of the Johnstown disaster that will become historic. The story has not been and even now cannot be fully told. One could not look at it without a shock to his sensibilities. So tangled and unyielding was the mass that even dynamite had little effect upon it. One deplorable effect, however, was to dismember the few parts of human bodies wedged in the mass that the ruthless flood left whole.

From the western end of the railroad bridge the view was but a prelude to the views that were to follow. Looking across the gorge the first object the eye caught in the ruined town is the Melville school, standing as a guardian over the dead - a solitary sentinel left on the field after the battle. Still further on and near the centre of the old town were the offices and stores of the Cambria Iron Company. Beyond and around both buildings, were sand flats, mud flats until the 29th of May, the almost navigable water of the flood itself until the 2d of June, the most populous and busy part of the city until the 31st of May. Part of the ground was covered by a part of the shops of the Cambria Company. Not a vestige of these remain.

#### UNHEEDED WARNINGS.

For several years has the strength of the dam been a subject of discussion among the people of the Conemaugh Valley, and it was predicted that some time it would succumb to the tremendous pressure behind it and give the lake free rein in a dance of death and destruction. But the many laughed, and the few who were fearful held their peace. When the great storm of Friday came, the dam was again a source of uneasiness, and early in the morning the people of Johnstown were warned that the dam was weakening. They had heard the same warning too often, however, to be impressed, and many jeered at their informants. Some of those that jeered were before nightfall scattered along the banks of the Conemaugh, cold in death, or met their fate in the blazing pile of wrecked houses wedged together at the big stone bridge. Only a few heeded the warning and these made their way to the hillsides, where they were safe.

Early in the day the flood caused by the heavy rains swept through the streets of Johnstown. Every little mountain stream was swollen by the rains; rivulets became creeks and creeks were turned into rivers. The Conemaugh, with a bed too narrow to hold its greatly increased body of water, overflowed its banks, and the damage caused by this overflow alone would have been large. But there was more to come, and the results were so appalling that there lived not a human being who was likely to anticipate them.

#### THE BREAKING OF THE BOOM.

At one o'clock in the afternoon the resistless flood tore away the huge lumber boom on Stony creek. This was the real beginning of the end. The enormous mass of logs was hurled down upon the doomed town. The lines of the two water courses were by this time obliterated, and Stony creek and Conemaugh river were raging seas. The great logs levelled everything before them, crushing frame houses like eggshells and going on unchecked until the big seven-arch stone bridge over the Conemaugh river just below Johnstown was reached.

Had the logs passed this bridge Johnstown might have been spared much of its horror. There were already dead and dying, and homes had already been swept away, but the dead could only be counted by dozens and not yet by thousands. Wedged fast at the bridge, the logs formed an impenetrable barrier. People had moved to the second floor of their houses and hoped that the flood might subside. There was no longer a chance to get away, and had they known what was in store for them the contemplation of their fate would have been enough to make them stark mad. Only a few hours had elapsed from the time of the breaking of the lumber boom when the waters of the

Conemaugh lake rushed down upon them. The scoffers realized their folly. The dam had given way, and the immense body of water which had rested in a basin five miles long, two miles wide and seventy feet deep was let loose to begin its work of destruction.

#### THE DELUGE COMES.

The towering wall of water swooped down upon Johnstown with a force that carried everything before it. Had it been able to pass through the big stone bridge a portion of Johnstown might have been saved. The rampart of logs, however, checked the torrent and half the houses of the town were lifted from their foundations and hurled against it. This backed the water up into the town, and as there had to be an outlet somewhere, the river made a new channel through the heart of the lower part of the city. Again and again did the flood hurl itself against the bridge, and each wave carried with it houses, furniture and human beings. The bridge stood firm, but the railway embankment gave way, and some fifty people were carried down to their deaths in the new break. Through this new outlet the waters were diverted in the direction of the Cambria Iron Works, a mile below, and in a moment the great buildings of a plant valued at \$5,000,000, were engulfed and laid low. Here had gathered a number of iron workers, who felt that they were out of the reach of the flood, and almost before they realized their peril they were swept away into the seething torrent.

#### ROASTED TO DEATH.

It was now night, and darkness added to the terror of the situation. Then came flames to make the calamity all the more appalling. Hundreds of buildings had been piled up against the stone bridge. The inmates of but a few of them had had time to escape. Just how many people were imprisoned in that mass of wreckage may never be known, but the number was estimated at between 1000 and 2000. The wreckage was piled to a height of fifty feet, and suddenly flames began leaping up from the summit. A stove had set fire to that part of the wreck above the water, and the scene that was then witnessed is beyond description. Shrieks and prayers from the unhappy beings imprisoned in the wrecked houses pierced the air, but little could be done. Men, women and children, held down by the timbers, watched with indescribable agony the flames creep slowly toward them until the heat scorched their faces, and then they were slowly roasted to death.

Those who were held fast in the wreck by an arm or a leg begged piteously that the imprisoned limb be cut off. Some succeeded in getting loose with mangled limbs, and one man cut off his arm that he might get away. Those who were able worked like demons to save the unfortunates from the flames, but hundreds were burned to death.

#### SWEPT TO THEIR DOOM.

Meanwhile Johnstown had been literally wiped from the face of the earth, Cambria City was swept away and Conemaugh borough was a thing of the past. The little village of Millville, with a population of one thousand, had nothing left of it but the school-house and the stone buildings of the Cambria Iron Company. Woodvale was gone and South Fork wrecked. Hundreds of people were drowned in their houses, hundreds were swept away in their dwellings and met death in the debris that was whirled madly about on the surface of the flood; hundreds, as has been said, were burned, and hundreds who sought safety on the floating driftwood were overwhelmed by the flood or washed to death against obstructions. The instances of heroism and self-sacrifice were never excelled, perhaps not equaled, on a battle-field. Men rather than save themselves alone died nobly with their families, and mothers willingly gave up their lives rather than abandon their children.

#### HER LAST MESSAGE.

"At three o'clock in the afternoon," said electrician Bender, of the Western Union at Pittsburg, "the girl operator at Johnstown was cheerfully ticking away; she soon had to abandon the office on the first floor because the water was three feet deep there. She said she was wiring from the second story and the water was gaining steadily. She was frightened, and said that many houses around were flooded. This was evidently before the dam broke, for our man here said something encouraging to her, and

she was talking back as only a cheerful girl operator can when the receiver's skilled ears caught a sound of the wire made by no human hands. The wires had grounded or the house had been swept away in the flood, no one knows which now. At three o'clock the girl was there and at 3.07 we might as well have asked the grave to answer us."

#### EXAMPLES OF BRAVERY.

Edward Deck, a young railroad man of Lockport, saw an old man floating down the river on a tree trunk, with agonized face and streaming gray hair. Deck plunged into the torrent and brought the old man safely ashore. Scarcely had he done so when the upper story of a house floated by on which Mrs. Adams, of Cambria, and her two children were both seen. Deck plunged in again, and while breaking through the tin roof of the house cut an artery in his left wrist, but though weakened with loss of blood, he succeeded in saving both mother and children.

J.W. Esch, a brave railroad employee, saved sixteen lives at Nineveh.

At Bolivar a man, woman and child were seen floating down in a lot of drift. The mass of debris commenced to part, and by desperate efforts the husband and father succeeded in getting his wife and little one on a floating tree. Just then the tree washed under the bridge and a rope was thrown out. It fell upon the man's shoulders. He saw at a glance that he could not save his dear ones, so he threw the means of safety to one side and gripped in his arms those who were with him. A moment later the tree struck a floating house. It turned over, and in a second the three persons were in the seething water, being carried to their death.

C.W. Hoppenstall, of Lincoln avenue, East End, Pittsburg, distinguished himself by his bravery. He was a messenger on the mail train which had to turn back at Sang Hollow. As the train passed a point where the water was full of struggling persons, a woman and child floated in near shore. The train was stopped and Hoppenstall undressed, jumped into the water, and in two trips saved both mother and child.

#### THE TIDAL WAVE AT BOLIVAR.

The special train pulled in at Bolivar at 11.30 and trainmen were notified that further progress was impossible. The greatest excitement prevailed at this place, and parties of citizens were all the time endeavoring to save the poor unfortunates that were being hurled to eternity on the rushing torrent.

The tidal wave struck Bolivar just after dark and in five minutes the Conemaugh rose from six to forty feet and the waters spread out over the whole country. Soon houses began floating down, and clinging to the debris were men, women and children, shrieking for aid. A large number of citizens at once gathered on the county bridge and they were reinforced by a number from Garfield, a town on the opposite side of the river. They brought a number of ropes and these were thrown into the building waters as persons drifted by in efforts to save some poor being. For half an hour all efforts were fruitless until at last, when the rescuers were about giving up all hope, a little boy astride a shingle roof managed to catch hold of one of the ropes. He caught it under his left arm and was thrown violently against an abutment, but managed to keep hold and was successfully pulled on to the bridge, amid the cheers of the onlookers. His name was Hessler and his rescuer was a train hand named Carney. The lad was taken to the town of Garfield and cared for in the home of J.P. Robinson. The boy was about 16 years old.

His story of the frightful calamity is as follows:

"With my father, I was spending the day at my grandfather's house in Cambria City. In the house at the time were Theodore, Edward and John Kintz, and John Kintz, Jr., Miss Mary Kintz, Mrs. Mary Kintz, wife of John Kintz, Jr., Miss Tracy Kintz, Miss Rachel Smith, John Hirsch, four children, my father and myself. Shortly after 5 o'clock there was a noise of roaring waters and screams of people. We looked out the door and saw persons running. My father told us not to mind as the waters would not rise further. But soon we saw houses being swept away and then we ran to the floor above. The house was three-stories, and we were at last forced to the top one. In my fright I jumped on the bed.

It was an old fashioned one with heavy posts. The water kept rising and my bed was soon afloat. Gradually it was lifted up. The air in the room grew close and the house was moving. Still the bed kept rising and pressed the ceiling. At last the post pushed the plaster. It yielded and a section of the roof gave way. Then suddenly I found myself on the roof and was being carried down stream. After a little this roof commenced to part and I was afraid I was going to be drowned, but just then another house with a single roof floated by and I managed to crawl on it and floated down until nearly dead with cold, when I was saved. After I was freed from the house I did not see my father. My grandfather was on a tree but he must have been drowned as the waters were rising fast. John Kintz, Jr., was also on a tree. Miss Mary Kintz and Mrs. Mary Kintz I saw drowned. Miss Smith was also drowned. John Hirsch was in a tree, but the four children were drowned. The scenes were terrible. Live bodies and corpses were floating down with me and away from me. I would hear persons shriek and then they would disappear. All along the line were people who were trying to save us, but they could do nothing and only a few were caught."

They boy's story is but one incident and shows what happened to one family. God only knows what has happened to the hundreds who were in the path of the rushing water. It is impossible to get anything in the way of news, save meagre details.

#### ANOTHER SCENE OF HORROR.

An eye-witness at Bolivar Block Station tells a story of unparalleled horror which occurred at the lower bridge which crosses the Conemaugh at this point. A young man and two women were seen coming down the river on a part of a floor. At the upper bridge a rope was thrown them. This they all failed to catch. Between the two bridges the man was noticed to point towards the elder woman, who, it is supposed, was his mother. He was then seen to instruct the women how to catch the rope which was being lowered from the other bridge. Down came the raft with a rush. The brave man stood with his arms around the two women. As they swept under the bridge he reached up and seized the rope. He was jerked violently away from the two women, who failed to get a hold on the life line. Seeing that they would not be rescued he dropped the rope and fell back on the raft which floated on down. The current washed the frail craft in towards the bank. The young man was enabled to seize hold of a branch of a tree. The young man aided the two women to get up into the tree. He held on with his hands and rested his feet on a pile of driftwood. A piece of floating debris struck the drift, sweeping it away. The man hung with his body immersed in the water. A pile of drift soon collected and he was enabled to get another secure footing. Up the river there was a sudden crash and a section of the bridge was swept away and floated down the stream, striking the tree and washing it away. All three were thrown into the water and were drowned before the eyes of the horrified spectators just opposite the town of Bolivar.

#### REFUSED TO DESERT HER CHILDREN.

Early in the evening a woman with her two children were seen to pass under the bridge at Bolivar, clinging to the roof of a coalhoues. A rope was lowered to her, but she shook her head and refused to desert the children. It was rumored that all three were saved at Cokeville, a few miles below Bolivar. A later report from Lockport says that the residents succeeded in rescuing five people from the flood, two women and three men. One man succeeded in getting out of the water unaided. They were kindly taken care of by the people of the town.

A little girl passed under the bridge just before dark. She was kneeling on a part of a floor and had her hands clasped as if in prayer. Every effort was made to save her, but they all proved futile. A railroader who was standing by remarked that the piteous appearance of the little waif brought tears to his eyes. All night long the crowd stood about the ruins of the bridge, which had been swept away at Bolivar. The water rushed past with a roar, carrying with it parts of houses, furniture and trees. The flood had evidently spent its force up the valley. No more living persons were being carried past. Watchers with lanterns remained along the banks until daybreak, when the first view of the awful devastation of the flood was witnessed.

(Compiled from The Johnstown Flood by Herman Dieck, A.M.)

## CHAPTER 7

More than one brave man risked his life in trying to save those in the flood. Some details of heroic action are brought to light. In many instances the floaters displayed remarkable courage, and gave their chances for rescue to friends with them. Some stood back for mothers and were lost while the parents were taken out. Many a dear boy went down to a watery grave that a sister or father might be saved. Such instances of self-sacrifice in the face of fearful danger were numerous, and it shows conclusively that the heroes are not all dead.

### REMARKABLE STORIES OF ESCAPE.

Almost every one had a story of remarkable escape. On a train, Michael Ronesen, an Irishman, tells a wonderful story of his escape. He says he was walking down Main street when he heard a rumbling noise, and, looking around, he imagined it was a cloud, but in a minute the water was upon him. He floated with the tide for some time, when he was struck with some floating timber and borne underneath the water; when he came up he was struck again, and at last he caught when he was finally by a lightning rod and held there for over two hours, when he was finally rescued.

Mrs. Ann Williams tells a rather remarkable story. She was sitting sewing when the flood came on. She heard some people crying and jumped out of the window and succeeded in getting on the roof of an adjoining house. Under the roof she heard the cries of men and women, and saw two men and women with their heads just above the water crying: "For God's sake either kill us outright or rescue us." Mrs. Williams cried for help for the drowning people, but none came, and she saw them give up one by one.

### DEEDS OF HEROISM

The sad story of the Conemaugh is not without its deeds of heroism. The appalling scenes of horror developed daring courage where least expected, while every-day heroes in the midst of the terrifying scenes usually degenerated into arrant cowards.

Mothers coolly sacrificed themselves to the fury of the flood or fire to save the lives of their children and loved ones. Not infrequently some pale-faced woman, clinging with her child to floating debris and realizing that the support was too frail for two, would be seen to lift her precious burden high upon the floating debris, and, with a hasty kiss, bidding farewell to all that bound her to the world, sink beneath the waves.

### A MAN WHO SAVED 22 LIVES.

Edward C. Will is a young foundryman of Cambria, 27 years old, whom no one ever suspected of possessing more than ordinary courage. When the flood was at its height and people were floating down the rushing torrents in hundreds, Will rushed to his boat, and, sense-less to the pleadings of wife and relatives, shoved his frail craft far out into the angry current. Gliding rapidly alongside a floating roof upon which a woman and two children were kneeling with blanched faces and stony stare, he skillfully evaded the obstructions that every minute threatened to crush the craft, and lifting the terrorized creatures to his boat, shot across the current to the bank whence he came.

A shout of applause swelled from the throng that lined the bank, but, unmoved by plaudits, young Will repeated the perilous journey, not one, but seven times, until 22 lives had been saved by his indomitable energy. The next day, when most of Johnstown was still under water, Will ascended the stream to the desolate city and again distinguished himself by many acts of heroism and endurance. Tribute too fulsome cannot be paid to his noble character, but after all, among the heroes that these strange scenes developed, he is only one of the many.

### HEARTRENDING RECITALS BY SURVIVORS.

James P. McCanagh had a terrible experience in the water. He saw his wife was safe on land and thought his only daughter, a girl aged about 21, was also saved, but just as he was making for the shore he saw her and went to rescue her. He succeeded in getting within about ten feet of land when the girl said "Good-bye, father," and expired in his arms before he reached the shore.

A pretty, pale little woman told part of her sad story as she nervously clasped and unclasped her hands and cried in a quite heart-breaking way. Years ago, in the Virginia Valley, somewhere near Winchester, this sad engineer, named Fenn, They were married some years ago, came to Johnstown, where they had a neat, comfortable home. Fenn made good wages, their eight children were always well clad, and their mother lived with her life concentrated upon them.

On the afternoon of the flood Fenn went to the butcher's and passed out of this short history in the waters. When the flood came into the Fenn house, the mother gathered her chicks in the parlor and told them not to be afraid, as God was there and would guard them. Up came the torrent, and they went to the second floor, and again the little mother talked of hope and bade them be of good cheer, "for papa-Heaven rest him-would come soon in a boat and take them away." Up, Up and up rose the water, and now the family were forced to the top story. The rooms were very low, and soon the heads of the mother and children were beating against the ceiling. "Mamma," said the eldest child, a girl, "wouldn't it be better to go outside and die in the open air?"

"Yes, dear," said the mother, "we'll make a raft, and all go down together."

### **A MOTHER'S EFFORTS FOR HER CHILDREN.**

She fought her own and her children's way to the window and opened it. She caught a piece of plank and on it put the eldest child, with a hasty kiss and a "God bless you." Then she let it float away into the darkness and the roar of the waves. Six times these frail barks were freighted with precious cargos and argosies of pious trust. The children were frightened, but obedience was part of their creed, and they made but little protest.

Now came the turn of the last child, Bessie, the four-year-old. One can fancy what it meant-the last and the dearest. There was scarce breathing space in the room now, and, if haste was not used, death would come there at once. To a broad plank Bessie was fastened securely and was blessed as had been the others. "I loved them all, oh, I loved them all!" said the mother. "But I had two kisses for Bessie, for she was Tom's favorite, and was such a good child. She put her arms about my neck and said, 'You know you said God would take care of me always, mamma. Will he take care of me now?'"

### **HER EIGHT CHILDREN GONE.**

"I told her he would and she need not fear and then she was carried away. 'I'm not afraid, mamma,' she called out, and I heard her, although I could not see her-and that's all, except that the roof was torn off and I floated off on it, and some Italians saved me at Kernsville, sixteen miles from here."

"And the children, Mrs, Fenn, I hope they all escaped?"

"We have found two of them dead-Bessie and George-and there is not a mark on Bessie's face, and oh I am so tired. They're all gone, every one-eight of them-and I am going home to Virginia after all these years to rest and try to think."

### **A FEARFUL FIGHT FOR LIFE.**

At Lockport, about eighteen miles from Johnstown, Eliel Benson, an old man, Mrs. Boyle, Paddy Madden and two Hungariens were rescued. Mr. Benson said to a correspondent:

"I live in Cambria City. I think not less than 1500 people were lost. In the house with me on Chestnut street were ten people besides myself, and I feel sure they were all lost. Up to four o'clock the water,

which was about seven feet deep in the streets, remained stationary. At about four o'clock in the afternoon the great rush came. In fifteen minutes the water rose fully ten feet, and in five minutes more I am sure fifty houses came floating down the streets. There were people in every one of them, and God only knows how many were lost. As they were carried off the houses were jammed together and against the houses still standing, and in a very few minutes they were all battered to pieces before they had been carried very far. The house I was in was soon smashed to pieces, and I managed to jump on to a cellar door. In a few minutes I was pushed off into the flood, and when I looked where Cambria City stood there was nothing but a great lake of water. It looked to me as if every house had been razed or covered over. The vast sheet of water was full of floating timbers, roofs of houses, rafts and other articles. The scene was indescribable. The cries of the men, women and children were fearful. I passed Paddy Madden's wife, my son's wife and a man clinging to the roof of a house. I cried to them and bade them good-bye. In a short time I was caught by the water and turned under. Every once in a while I got into a whirlpool, and almost lost my grip on the cellar door. I saw people in the water ahead of me and all around me, Many of them were struck by the crashing timbers and killed outright. They were so badly hurt that they fell into the water and were drowned at once."

### **AN INTERESTING DESCRIPTION OF THE CATASTROPHE.**

A correspondent of the Philadelphia *Press* gives the following thrilling narrative of the terrible flood:

"Far up the valley of the Conemaugh, over the hills, *not* up the course of the stream, some people saw a strange white fog through the rain of the lowering afternoon. Pious Catholics about St. Joseph's Church in Conemaugh borough saw it, crossed themselves and fled. Superstitious colored people living in the little 'black patch,' near the Gautier Works, also in Conemaugh borough, saw it and fled, too. These were a fraction, Johnstown was tired of hearing of the dam.

"Meantime the flood was on its way. Long before this the waters had burst man's puny breastwork South Fork, sniffed freedom and leaped headlong down the valley, flattening a forest before it in its first wild leap for liberty, after years of control. Long before this it had made an unavailing grasp at the Limited, standing just beyond its reach, and devoured the crew of the freight which stood on the tracks just below it. Long before this it had made a running river of the main street of the borough of Frankford, swept away a roundhouse and toyed with a dozen engines as boys toys with a rubber ball. Long before this it had caught the passengers fleeing, fifteen of them, from the day express, and with a delicate, ironical touch, for a loosened mountain monster had drowned Miss Paulson's pretty friend and hardly bruised the petals of her corsage bouquet.

"All this it had done, but not yet shown itself in the straight gorge which begins at the head of the valley and the end of Conemaugh borough and continues up past Woodvale. Only the white fog hung over the hills beyond the town in the stream which few but superstitious people heeded. The fog was advancing, but then that might be the wind.

"The engine house of the Conemaugh Fire Department was in the east end of Conemaugh borough, and from it there was a good view up the valley to and beyond Woodvale. As work had stopped at the Gautier Works, between it and the river, James Kelly and a dozen other members of the were idling in the firehouse.

"These men heard at half-past 3 a succession of the quick whistles in the north shore of the Conemaugh, and running out saw an engine whizzing down the Pennsylvania Railroad. the engineer looking out of the cab window and gesticulating with his left hand, while with his right he pulled the warning rope. Quick-witted Irish boys, they knew that no Pennsylvania Railroad engineer would come down the road in that matter unless something was very far wrong. They rushed into the street, looked up the gorge and saw not the borough of Woodvale. There was no borough of Woodvale. Not the gorge of the Conemaugh entering the Conemaugh valley. There was no gorge. The borough of Woodvale was demolished. The gorge was filled up by the most appalling thing that ever visited in time of peace a civilized community. Some of them say it was sixty, some seventy-five feet high. Some of them say it was of broken timber; some say it was of solid water. All say that there were

houses on it, and men, women and children, with hands outstretched in prayer, and that it went at the speed of a fast freight.

### **A RACE BETWEEN ENGINE AND FLOOD.**

"Then they fled south, up to the hills, and watched. They saw the unknown engineer fleeing eastward along the track, with the flood racing behind him. They do not know, nor does anyone to this day, who he was, or whether he outran it. They saw the flood strike Johnstown. They saw it erase the houses on Railroad street, and then, as if not content with the destruction of everything on the face of the earth, bear down into its bosom, grasp the rails and stringers and ties of the street car tracks and carry them along before it. They saw it strike the long, low, solidly built iron Gautier Works, and saw Peter McMullen, whom they well knew, and who had been called into the works to adjust a belt, climb upon the roof, in fancied safety, and saw the roof, the man, the whole quarter-mile of building, curl and crumble up before the flood like a shaving before a carpenter's plane, and the in fragments go sliding away.

"Then they saw the watery curl deploy upon the plain and while one wing moved straight downward and westward along the course of the Conemaugh the other charged south and across, toward the churches and hotels about the upper end of Johnstown. They saw their friend and comrade, Pat Early, of Woodvale, drifting down on a roof with his mother and sister. They might have heard, but for the roar of water and the crash of the houses, the mother say to the son: 'Lift up my head, Pat.' They might have seen, but for the muddy spray, the son lift up the mother's head and then see the son's body stiffen with horror as the mother's stiffened with death. These are some few things that the young men of the Conemaugh Fire Company saw and heard as the flood swept past them.

"From Woodvale's Mill to the German Catholic Church in the lower fringe of Conemaugh borough is an easy mile. Never an instant let or hindrance did the wing which charged southward across the plain find between the two. There was nothing to be seen but the little homes and little shops, places to make homes with. The church was a wreck. It burst the brickwork in upon the eastern wall and made two windows into one.

### **THE CONVENT CHAPEL SPARED.**

"Then it turned somewhat eastward. Here occurred what will, while the Conemaugh has a valley, be called a miracle. At the corner of Clinton and Locust streets, Johnstown, stood the convent of St. John's Parish. Above it, on Locust street, stood the German Lutheran Church, and next it, on the convent side, the parochial school, of them, with Sister Ignatia at their head, fled into the second story of the convent chapel. The Lutheran Church and Catholic School disappeared before the scourge of the valley like snow in the first thaw of March, but those that passed on that wild devastation and saw and live and could remember, say that Sister Ignatia stood in the chapel window praying with both hands clasped upon a crucifix. When the flood passed the sisters came out safe and went to chloroforming the wounded for surgeons, knives and splints.

"It was near here, but further down, opposite the northern wall of the Methodist Church, that the wing of the flood struck the new Queen Anne house of John Fronheiser, a superintendent in the Cambria Works. He was at home as most men were that day, trying to calm the fears of the women and children of the family during the earlier flood. Down went the front of the new Queen Anne house, and into the wreck of it fell the superintendent, two elder children, a girl and a boy. As the flood passed he heard the boy cry: 'Don't let me drown, papa; break my arms first!'

"And as he heard them, came a wilder cry from his wife drifting down with the torrent, to 'Save the baby.' But neither wife or baby could be saved and boy and girl stayed in the wreck until the water went down and they were extricated.

### **SIXTEEN MILLION TONS OF WATER.**

"Jacob Reese, of Pittsburg, the inventor of the basic process for manufacturing steel, in estimating the

force of the flood, said:

"When the South Fork dam gave way 16,000,000 tons of water rushed down the mountain side, carrying the thousands of tons of rocks, logs and trees with it. When the flood reached the Conemaugh Valley it struck the Pennsylvania Railroad at a point where they make up the trains for ascending the Allegheny Mountains. Several trains with their locomotives and loaded cars were swept down the valley before the flood wave, which is said to have been fifty feet high. Cars loaded with iron, cattle, and freight of all kinds, with those mighty loco- motives, weighing from seventy to one hundred tons each, were pushed ahead of the flood, trucks and engines rolling over and over like mere toys.

"Sixteen million tons of water gathering fences, barns, houses, mills and shops into its maw. Down the valley for three miles or more rushed this mighty avalanche of death, sweeping everything before it, and leaving nothing but death and destruction behind it. When it struck the railroad bridge at Johnstown, and not being able to force its way for that stone structure, the debris was gorged and the water dammed up fifty feet in ten minutes.

"This avalanche was composed of more than 100,000 tons of rocks, locomotives, freight cars, car trucks, iron, logs, trees, and other material pushed forward by 16,000,000 tons of water falling 500 feet, and it was this that, sliding over the ground, mowed down the houses, mills and factories as a mowing machine does a field of grain. It swept down with a roaring, crushing sound at the rate of a mile a minute and hurled 10,000 people into the jaws of death in less than half an hour. And so the people called it the avalanche of death.'

## **HORROR PILED ON HORROR.**

"Horror piled on horror is the story from Johnstown down to the viaduct. Horror shot through with intense gleams of humor. It is known that one girl sang as she was whirled through the flood, Jesus, lover of my Soul," until the water stopped her singing forever. It is known that Elvie Duncan, daughter of the superintendent of the Street Car Company, when her family was separated and she was swept away with her baby sister, kept the little by chewing bread and feeding it to her. It is known that John Dibart, banker, died as miserably in his splendid house as did the poorest prisoner, in his cell; that the pleasant park, with the chain fence about it, was so completely annihilated that not even one root of the many shade trees within its boundaries remains. It is known also that a leaden-footed messenger boy who was ambling Main Street, fear lent wings to lift him into the *Tribune office in the second story of the postoffice and that the Rosensteels, general store-keepers of Woodvale, were swept into the windows of their friends, the Cohens, retail store-keepers of Main Street, Johnstown, two miles from where they started. It is known that the Episcopal Church, at Locust and Market streets, went down like a house of cards, or as the German Lutheran had gone, in the path of the flood and that Rector Diller, his wife and child and adopted daughter went with it, while of their next door neighbors, Frank Daly, of the Cambria Company, and his mother, the son was drowned and the mother not so badly hurt in body as in spirit, died three nights after in the Mercy hospital, Pittsburg.*

*"All these people living on 'The Point,' the heart of the valley, seemed to have had no warning, made no effort to escape, died or were swept away without sign, save total of destruction, as the timbers and telegraph poles and logs protruded here and there from the mass of ruin which marched in advance of the flood. One of these was the word that ticked into the Pittsburg office of the Western Union from Mrs Ogle, the chief operator in the Johnstown general office;*

*"This is my last message. The flood is coming.'*

*"But while the flood was driving people to silent death down the valley, there was a sound of lamentation on the hills. Hundreds who had climbed there to be out of reach during the morning's freshet saw the city in the valley disappearing and their cries rose high above the crash and the roar. Little time had eyes to watch or lips to cry. O'Brien, the disabled Millville storekeeper, was one of the crowd in the park. He saw a town before him, then a mountain of timber approaching, then a dizzy swirl of men at the viaduct, a breaking of the embankment to the east of it, the forming of a whirlpool*

*there that ate up homes and those that dwelt in them, as a caldron of molten iron eats up the metal scraps that are thrown in to cool it, and then a silence and a subsidence.*

*It was a quarter of 4 o'clock. At half past 3 there had been a Johnstown. Now there was none.*

#### *CHAOS AND FLAMES.*

*"What followed was chaos, paralysis and panic. Those who got out were swept out. As night came on a little point of flame that had been almost unnoticed in the wreckage above the dam grew larger. It crept about the living and the dead, the whole houses and the houses that were split in half. It became a blaze, a fire, a conflagration. While it lighted up the foot of the valley another flame grew bright at the head. It was the Catholic Church, and the same Conemaugh fireman who had first seen the approach of the flood were fighting it. Thus night fell--a swirling, subsiding lake where four boroughs had been, a town of flame at either end, a whirlpool where an embankment had been grasping for more human lives.*

*"Over the crackle of the flames, the cries of the dying and the roar of the whirlpool came another sound, It was the unsteady tolling of the bell in Millville school rung by two children of Charles Dobbins, of Johnstown, who had been swept into the second story of the building, and so they all unwittingly, in their childish terror, tolled curfew for Johnstown.*

*(Compiled from The Johnstown Flood by Herman Dieck, A.M.)*

## CHAPTER 8

The bridge whose "resistance of the torrent" has been the matter of so much talk, was a noble four-track structure, just completed, 50 ft. wide on top, 32 ft. high above the water line, consisting of 7 skew spans of 58 ft. each. It still remains wholly uninjured, except that it is badly spalled on the upper side by blows from the wreckage, but that so remains is due solely to the accident of its position, and not to its strength, although it was and is still the embodiment of solidity. Had the torrent struck it, it would have swept it away as if it had been built of card-board, leaving no track behind; but fortunately (or unfortunately) its axis was exactly parallel with the path of the flood, which hence struck the face of the mountain full, and compressed the whole of its spoils gathered in a 14 mile course into one inextricable mass, with the force of tens of thousands of tons moving at nearly 60 miles per hour. Its spoil consisted of (1) every tree the flood has touched in its whole course, with trifling exceptions, including hundreds of large trees, all of which were stripped their bark and small limbs almost at once; (2) all the houses in a thickly settled town 3 miles long and 1/4 to 1/2 wide; (3) half the human beings and all the horses, cows, cats, dogs, and rats that were in the houses; (4) many hundred of miles of telegraph wire that was on strong poles in use, and many times more than this that was in stock in the mills; (5) perhaps 50 miles of track and track material, rails and all; (6) locomotives, pig-iron, brick, stone, boilers, steam engines, heavy machinery, and other spoil of a large manufacturing town, all this was accumulated in one inextricable mass, which almost immediately caught fire from some stove which the waters had not touched. Hundreds if not thousands of human beings, dead and alive, were caught in it, many by the lower part of the body only. Eye-witnesses described the groans and cries which came from that vast holocaust for nearly the whole night as something almost unbearable to listen to, yet which could not be escaped. Hundreds, undoubtedly, suffered a slow death by the fire; yet we cannot doubt that the vast majority of the men, women, and children in that fearful jam, which covered fully 30 acres, and perhaps more, were already dead when the fire began.

Johnstown proper is in a large basin formed by the junction of the Conemaugh and the almost equally large Stony Creek, flowing into the Conemaugh from the south, just above the bridge. The bridge being hermetically sealed, it and the adjacent embankment formed a second dam about 30 feet high, Johnstown serving as a bed of a reservoir which we should judge to be nearly large enough to hold the entire contents of the reservoir above, except that it was already filled knee-deep or more by an unusually heavy but annual spring flood. One offshoot of the main torrent was deflected southward by the Gautier Works, and went tearing through the heart of the more southerly portion of the town, and still another similar branch was split off from the main torrent further down; but in the main, the direct force of the torrent did not strike this southerly portion of the town. It struck first against the jam, and thus lost most of its fierce energy, flowing thence southward in a heavy stream, which tossed about houses in the most fantastic way, so that this part of the town looks much like a child's toy-village poured out of a box hap-hazard; the houses are not torn to pieces generally.

About half the loss of life was in this district, for all Johnstown became speedily a lake twenty or more feet deep, and stayed so all night; and it was here, and not in the direct path of the flood, that all the "rescuing" of people from roofs and floating timbers occurred. Nothing of the kind was possible in the flood itself. Likewise, after the break in the embankment had occurred, and the flood began to recede from Johnstown, it was from this district chiefly that people were carried off down stream on floating wreckage. All that came within the direct path of the flood was fast within the jam.

The existence of this temporary Johnstown reservoir naturally broke the continuity of the flood discharge, and transformed it into something not greatly different from an ordinary but very heavy freshet. Cambria City, just below the bridge, was badly wrecked, with the loss of hundreds of lives; but in the main, from Johnstown down. the flood ceased to very destructive. It took out almost every bridge it came to, for 50 miles, and washed away tracks, and did other minor damage, but the Johnstown "reservoir" saved hundreds of lives below it by equalizing the flow.

### **THE DAY EXPRESS DISASTER.**

John Barr, the conductor in charge of the Pullman parlor car on the first section of the day express, which was caught in the flood at Conemaugh, tells a thrilling story of his experience.

His train, with two others, had been run onto a siding on high ground at Conemaugh Station, opposite the big round-house. He saw the water coming and describes it as having the appearance of a mountain moving towards him.

He immediately ran to his car and shouted to his passengers to run for their lives. John Davis, who is connected with a large rolling mill near Lancaster, was travelling from Colorado with his invalid wife and two children, aged about 4 and 6. Mr. Davis was engaged in getting his wife off the car, and Conductor Barr grabbed up the two children, and, with one under each arm, started for the hills, with water right at his heels. He ran a distance of about 200 yards and barely managed to deposit his precious burden on safe ground before the flood swept past him.

Mr. Barr says it will never be known how many persons lost their lives from the ill-fated train. The one passenger coach which was carried away had some people in it; how many nobody knows. He thinks at least twenty were drowned, A freight train was between the day express and the flood on an adjoining track, and this served to in a measure protect his train.

Some idea of the terrible force of the flood may be gained from Mr. Barr's statement that the engines in the round-house 37 in number, swept past him standing half way out of the water, their forty tons of weight not being sufficient to take them beneath the surface. The baggage car was lifted clear out of the water and landed on the other side of the river.

A Miss Wayne, who was travelling from Pittsburg to Altoona, had a wonderful escape. She was caught in the swirl and almost all of her clothing torn from her person, and she was providentially thrown by the angry waters clear of the rushing flood.

Miss Wayne said that while she lay more dead than alive on the river bank, she saw the Hungarians rifle the bodies of the dead passengers and cut off their fingers for the purpose of obtaining the rings on the hands of the corpses. Miss Wayne was provided with a suit of men's clothing and rode into Altoona thus arrayed.

Miss Maloney, of Woodbury, N.J., a passenger on the parlor car, started to leave the car, and then, fearing to venture out into the flood, returned to the inside of the car. When the water subsided the crew rushed to the car, expecting to find Miss Maloney dead, but the water had not gone high enough to drown her and she was all right, though greatly frightened. She displayed a rare amount of forethought in the face of danger, having tied securely around her waist a piece of her clothing on which her name was written in indelible ink. She fully expected that she would be drowned, and did this in order that her body, if found, might be identified.

When the water was still high Conductor Barr made an attempt to get back to his car from the hill, but after wading up to arm-pits in the water he was forced to return to safe ground.

### **THE P.R.R.'S LAST TRAIN.**

The last train to which the Susquehanna River permitted the use of the tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad between Harrisburg and Lancaster rolled into Broad Street Station at 9:35 P.M. on Saturday, June 1st. It was a nondescript train. The last car was a vestibule Pullman which had never stopped at so many way stations before in its aristocratic life, and which had been cut off the stalled Chicago limited at Harrisburg to be taken back to New York. The rest of the train and at Lancaster had been changed into the York and Columbia "tub."

No train's name ever fitted it better. The tub had swam through seven miles of water on its way, water differing in depth from three inches to three feet.

The seven miles of water covered the track between Harrisburg and Highspire. When the newspaper

train touched with the morning dailies and to some extent with the men who make them, dashed drippingly into Harrisburg at half-past 7 in the morning it had only encountered three-fourths of mile of water. No reports of a great increase in the Susquehanna's output had reached beleaguered Harrisburg during the day, and the express started out with two engines, 1095 and 1105, towing it and a fair chance of reaching Philadelphia on time. The original three-quarters of a mile of overflow--caused by the back water of Paxton creek--was passed without incident. The water was about up to the bottom steps of the car platforms and the pilot of the leading engine threw to each side a fine billow of yellow water, sending a swell like that of a tramp streamer passing Gloucester, in among the floating outhouses and submerged slag heaps of the suburbs of Harrisburg and bring cheers from thousands who watched and forgot the advance from their second-story windows and forgot the condition of their first-floor furniture in the excitement of watching the amphibious prowess of the day express.

"We've seen the worst of it," said the elderly kindly conductor to a couple of excited women passengers as the last of the three-fourths of a mile of billows was thrown from the pilot of 1095. "We've seen the worst of it, but the train will have to wait here a little while--the fires are almost out."

So 1095 and 1102 stood puffing and panting for a while on the high track while the afternoon sunlight dried their dripping flanks and the baffled Susquehanna rolled its burden of driftwood sullenly southward on their right. Then the day express rolled on again. The dry ground was just about long enough to give the train an impetus for another header into the Susquehanna's overflow. It was into the Susquehanna itself that the header seemed to be taken this time. It was no longer a question of an overflow creek in a railroad cut. The billows from the prow of 1095 swept not in among overturned outhouses and submerged slag heaps, but out on the broad coffee-colored bosom of the river to be broken into a thousand chop waves among the churning driftwood. The people in the second-story windows forgot to cheer. The people in the coaches forgot to joke on the men's part and to fret on the women's. It was curious and it was ticklish. The train was running slowly, very slowly. The wheels were out of sight. The water was swirling among the trucks and lapping at the platforms. The only sign of land locomotion about the day express was an audible one, a watery pounding and rumbling of the wheels on the hidden tracks.

The day express looked like a long broad river serpent wriggling on its belly down along the green river bank. Gradually there was a simultaneous though not concerted movement among the passengers. They began crowding toward the platforms and looking toward the land side. Suddenly a brakeman broke the queer silence, in a voice which had just the least crescendo of excitement in it. "If you people don't keep quiet we can't do anything!" he shouted. The demand was a little absurd, the direction of a land coxswain to "trim ship." Still, it had its uses. It relieved the tension which everybody felt and nobody acknowledged. The passengers retired the platforms.

Joking began again among the men and fretting among the women. They hadn't been much fun in looking toward the land side anyway. What has appeared to be a recession of the waters when looked at from above was merely a swelling of the stream from the overflow of the canal which parallels the road for several miles at that point. All at once the train which had been moving more slowly for each of a good ten minutes stopped short. It seemed as if 1095's sharp nose had scented danger like a sensitive horse, and, panting, refused to go further.

Then the engine crews were seen by the passengers to leap from their cabs thing deep in the water and begin hauling at some sub-aquean obstacle. "Driftwood," said the same brakeman who had commanded quiet. So it was. A train stopped by driftwood! It was floating all about and threatened to impede the progress of the day express altogether. Fence rails from far up country farms, planks from dismantled signal stations, platforms along the line, railroad tires innumerable, branches and even small trunks of trees floated against the wheels with disjunct stacks of green wheat and other ruined crops upon the ever-rising flood of the river. There had been high dry land in sight just beyond Highspire Station, but as sure as guns were iron and floods were floods the land was disappearing. The river's rise was steady. The inhabitants of the drowned lands who appeared to take the drowning easily, though no such drowning had been known to them in a quarter of a century, had been in large

numbers keeping company of the train for the last two miles in skiffs and punts. They rowed close to the cars and towed away the larger drift. They were not entirely on life-saving service. There was a bit of the wreckage in their composition. They towed the trunk and ties into their front yards and anchored them to their window-blinds.

Finally the straining backs of the engine crews gave one mighty tug at the hidden obstacle. A huge platform plank floated loose from 1095, and 1095 shrieked triumph. The wheels began to churn the brown water with yellowish white and 1095 and 1102 ran up on the dry ground like the eagle in the sun, to whom Irish poet compared the Irish troops at Fontenoy. As they did so the clatter of a light advancing train was heard from the east, and a sound of cheering. A single engine drawing two crowded cars show around the bend, and ran with a light heart into the torrent out of which the day express had just emerged.

"They'll never get through," was the unanimous comment of the day express passengers, and their verdict seemed to be confirmed officially by the brakeman who shouted: "This train will stop at all stations between Lancaster and Bryn Mawr. There will be no more trains between Harrisburg and Lancaster to-night." Afterwards adding, "As this is the last train it will have to take the place of the 'tub.'"

(Compiled from [The Johnstown Flood](#) by Herman Dieck, A.M.)

## CHAPTER 9

## A PROCLAMATION BY THE GOVERNOR OF PENNSYLVANIA

GOVERNOR BEAVER having received official information regarding the terrible destruction of life and property in the valley of the Conemaugh, issued the following proclamation:

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, Executive Chamber, Harrisburg, PA., June 3, 1889.--To the people of the United States: The Executive of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has refrained hitherto from making any appeal to the people for their benefactions in order that the centres of disaster during the late floods, which have been unprecedented in the history of the State or nation. Communication by wire has been established with Johnstown to-day. The city authorities are in control, the Adjutant-General of the State co-operating with them. Order has been restored and is likely to continue.

Newspaper reports as to the loss of life and property have not been exaggerated. The valley of the Conemaugh, which is peculiar, has been swept from one end to the other as with the besom of destruction. It contained a population of 40,000 to 50,000 people, living for the most part along the banks of a small river, confined within its narrow limits.

The most conservative estimates place the loss of life at 5,000 human beings and of property at \$25,000,000. Whole towns have been utterly destroyed, not a vestige remaining. In the more substantial towns the better buildings, to a certain extent, remain, but in a damaged condition. Those who are least able to bear it have suffered the loss of everything. The most pressing needs so far as food is concerned have been supplied. Shoes and clothing of all sorts for men, women, and children are greatly needed. Money is also urgently required to remove the debris, bury the dead and care temporarily for widows and orphans, and for the homeless generally. Other localities have suffered to some extent in the same way, but not in the same degree.

Late advices would seem to indicate that there is great loss of life and destruction of property along the west branch of the Susquehanna and in localities from which we can get no definite information. What does come, however, is of the most appalling character, and it is expected that the details will add new horrors to the situation. The responses from within and without the State have been most generous and cheering. North and south, east and west, from the United States and from England there comes the same hearty, generous response of sympathy and help. The President, Governors of States, Mayors of cities, individuals and committees, private and municipal corporations seem to vie with each other in their expressions of sympathy and in their contributions of substantial aid.

But gratifying as are these responses, there is no danger of their exceeding in the necessities of the situation. A careful organization has been made upon the ground for the distribution of whatever assistance is furnished in kind. The Adjutant General of the State is there as representative of the State authorities, and is giving personal attention, in connection with the Chief Burgess of Johnstown and a committee of relief, to the distribution of the help which is furnished. Funds contributed in aid of the sufferers can be deposited with Drexel & Co., Philadelphia; Jacob C. Bomberger, bankers, Pittsburg. All money contributions will be used carefully and judiciously. Present wants are fairly met. A large force will be employed at once to remove the debris and bury the dead, so as to avoid disease and epidemic.

The people of the Commonwealth and others whose unselfish generosity is hereby heartily appreciated and acknowledged may be assured that their contributions will be made to bring their benefactions to the immediate and direct relief of those for whose benefit they are intended.

James A. Beaver.

By the Governor: Charles W. Stone, Secretary of the Commonwealth.

## THE FIRST RUSH OF THE DEATH WAVE.

A man who was above the danger line on the right bluff above the town, and who saw the first rush of the death wave, says that it was preceded by a peculiar phenomena, which he thinks was the explosion of the gas mains. He says that a few minutes before the wall of the water had reached the city there was a tremendous explosion somewhere in the upper part of the place. He said that he saw the fragments of the buildings rise in the air, and the next moment saw two lines of flame down through the city in different directions, and frame buildings were apparently being torn to pieces and wrecked. The next minute the water came, and he remembers nothing further. There really was an explosion gas main, the cause of the fire at the bridge is explained. Light frame buildings set on fire by the explosion were picked up bodily and tossed on top of the water into the wreck at the bridge without the fire being extinguished.

Mrs. Fredericks, an aged woman, was rescued alive from the attic in her house. The house had floated from what was formerly Vine street to the foot of the mountains. Mrs. Fredericks says her experience was terrible. She said she saw hundreds of men, women, and children floating down the torrent to meet their death, some praying, while others had actually become raving maniacs.

## THE REAL HORRORS OF THE DISASTER.

"No one will ever know the real horrors of this accident unless he saw the burning people and debris besides the stone bridge," remarked the Rev. Father Trautwein. "The horrible nature of the affair cannot be realized by any person who did not witness the scene. As soon as possible after the first crash occurred I hastened to the bridge.

"A thousand persons were struggling in the ruins and imploring for God's sake to release them. Frantic husbands and fathers stood at the edge of the furnace that was slowly heating to a cherry heat and incinerating human victims. Every one was anxious to save his own relatives, and raved, cursed, and blasphemed until the air appeared to tremble. No system, no organized effort to release the pent up persons was made by those related to them. Shrieking they would command. 'Go to that place, go get her out, for God's sake get her out,' referring to some loved one they wanted saved. Under the circumstances it was necessary to secure organization, and thinking I was trying to thwart their efforts when I ordered another point to be attacked by the rescuers, they advanced upon me, threatened to shoot me or dash me into the raging river.

"One man who was trying to steer a float upon which his wife sat on a mattress lost his hold, and in a moment the craft swept into a sea of flame and never again appeared. The agony of that man was simply heartrending. He raised his arms to heaven and screamed in mental anguish and only ceased that to tear his hair and moan like one distracted. Every effort was made to save every person accessible, and we have the satisfaction of knowing that fully 200 were spared from cremation. One young woman was found under the dead body of a relative.

"A force of men attempted to extricate her and succeeded in releasing every limb but one leg. For three hours they labored, and every moment the flames crept nearer and nearer. I was on the point several times of ordering the men to chop her leg off. It would have been much better to save her life even at that loss than have her burn to death. Fortunately it was not necessary; but the young lady's escape from mutilation or death she will never realize."

The flood and fire claimed among its victims not only the living, but the dead. To-day a handsome coffin was found half burned in some charred wreckage down near the point. Inside was found the body of a man shrouded for burial, but so scorched about the head and face as to be unrecognizable. The supposition is that the house in which the dead man had lain had been crushed and the debris partly consumed by fire. The body is still at the Fourth Ward school house, and unless reclaimed it will be buried in the unknown field.

## THE CLOCK STOPPED AT 5.20.

One of the queerest sights in the centre of the town is a three-story brick residence standing with one wall, the others having disappeared completely, leaving the floors supported by the partitions. In one of the upper rooms can be seen a mantel with a lambrequin on it and a clock stopped at twenty minutes after five. In front of the clock is a lady's fan, though from the marks on the wall paper the water has been over all these things.

In the upper part of the town, where the back water from the flood went into the valley with diminished force, there are many strange scenes. There the houses were toppled over one after another in a row, and left where they lay. One of them was turned completely over and stands with its roof on the foundations of another house and its base in the air. The owner came back, and getting into his house through the windows walked around on his ceiling. Out of this house a woman and her two children escaped safety and were but little hurt, although they stood on their heads in the whirl. Every house has its own story. From one a woman sent up in her garret escaped by chopping a hole in the roof. From another a Hungarian named Grevins leaped to the shore as it went whirling past and fell twenty-five feet upon on pile of metal and escaped with a broken leg. Another is said to have come all the way from very near the start of the flood and to have circled around with the back water and finally landed on the flats at the city site, where it is still pointed out.

## THE SITUATION

A correspondent thus describes the situation at Johnstown, nine days after the disaster:

"So vast is the field of destruction that to get an adequate idea from any point level with the town is simply impossible. It must be viewed from a height. From the top of Kernville Mountain, just at the east of the town, the whole strange panorama can be seen.

"Looking down from the height many things about the flood that appear inexplicable from below are perfectly plain. How so many houses happened to be so queerly twisted, for instance, as if the water had a twirling instead of a straight motion, was made perfectly clear.

"The town was built in an almost equilateral triangle, with one angle pointed squarely up the Conemaugh Valley to the east, from which the flood came. At the northerly angle was the junction of the Conemaugh and Stony creeks. The southern angle pointed up the Stony Creek Valley. Now about one half of the triangle, clear as a platter, except for three or four big brick buildings that stand near the angle which points up the Conemaugh.

"The course of the flood, from the exact point where it issued from the Conemaugh Valley to where it disappeared below in a turn in the river and above by spreading itself over the flat district of five or six miles, is clearly defined. The whole body of water issued straight from the valley in a solid wave and tore across the village of Woodvale and so on to the business part of Johnstown at the lower part of the triangle. Here a cluster of solid brick blocks, aided by the conformation of the land evidently divided the stream.

"The greater part turned to the north, swept up the brick block and then mixed with the ruins of the villages above down to the stone arch bridge. The other stream shot across the triangle, was turned southward by the bluffs and went up the valley of Stony Creek. The stone arch bridge in the meantime acted as a dam and turned part of the current back toward the south, where it finished the work of the triangle. turning again to the northward and back to the stone arch bridge. The stream that went up the Stony Creek was turned back by the rising ground and then was reinforced by the back water from the bridge again and started south, where it reached a mile and a half and spent its force on a little settlement called Grubbtown.

## WORK OF THE WATER.

"The frequent turning of this stream, forced against the buildings and then the bluffs, gave it a regular whirling motion from right to left, and made a tremendous eddy, whose centrifugal force twisted everything it touched. This accounts for the comparatively narrow path of the flood though the

southern part of the town, where its course through the thickly clustered frame dwelling houses is as plain as a highway.

"The force of the stream diminished gradually as it went south, for at the place where the currents separated every building is ground to pieces and carried away, and at the end the houses were only turned a little on their foundations. In the middle of the course they are turned over on their sides or upside down. Further down they are not single, but great heaps of ground lumber that looks like nothing so much as enormous pith balls.

"To the north the work of the waters is of a different sort. It picked up everything except the big buildings that divided the current and piled the fragments down upon the stone bridge or swept them over and so on down the river for miles. This left the great yellow, sandy and barren plain, so often spoken of in the dispatches where stood the best buildings in Johnstown-the opera house, the big hotel, many wholesale warehouse, shops and the finest residences.

"In this plain there are now only the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad train, a school house, the Morrell Company's store and an adjoining warehouse and the few buildings of the triangle. One brick residence, badly shattered, is also standing.

### **HOUSES CHANGED BASE.**

"These structures do not relieve the shocking pictures of ruin spread out below the mountain, but by contrast making it more striking. That part of the town to the south where the flood tore the narrow path there used to be a separate village which was called Kernville. It is now known as the South Side. Some of the queerest sights of the wreck are there, though few persons have gone to see them.

"Many of the houses that are left there scattered helter skelter, thrown on their sides and standing on their roofs, were never in that neighborhood nor anywhere near it before. They came down on the breast of the wave from as far up as Franklin, were carried safely by the factories and the bridges, by the big buildings at the dividing line, up and down on the flood and finally settled in their new resting places little injured.

"A row of them, packed closely together and every one tipped over at about the same angle, is only one of the queer freaks the water played.

"I got into one of these houses in my walk through the town to-day. The lower story had been filled with water and everything in it had been torn out. The carpets had been split into strips on the floor by the sheer force of the rushing tide. Heaps of mud stood in the corners. There was no vestige of furniture. The walls dripped with moisture.

"The ceiling was gone, the windows were out and the cold rain blew in and the only thing that was left intact was one of those worked worsted mottoes that you always expect to find in the homes of working people. It still hung to the wall, and though much awry the glass and frame were unbroken. The motto looked grimly and sadly sarcastic. It was:-

"There is no place like home."

"A melancholy wreck of a home that motto looked down upon.

### **A TREE IN A HOUSE**

"I saw a wagon in the middle of a side street sticking tongue and all straight up into the air, resting on its tail board, with the hind wheels almost completely buried in the mud. I saw a house standing exactly in the middle of Napoleon street, the side stove in by crashing against some other house and in the hole the coffin of its owner was placed.

"Some scholar's library had been strewn over the street in the last stage of the flood, for there was a

trail of good books left half sticking in the mud and reaching for over a block. One house had been lifted over two others in some mysterious way and then had settled down between them and there it stuck, high up in the air, so its former occupants might have got into it again with ladders.

"Down at the lower end of the course of the stream, where its force was greater, there was a house lying on one corner and held there by being fastened in the deep mud. Through its side the trunk of a tree had been driven like a lance, and there it stayed sticking out straight in the air. In the muck was the case and key board of a square piano, and far down the river, near the debris about the stone bridge, were its legs. An upright piano, with all its inside apparatus cleanly taken out, stood straight up a little way off. What was once a set of costly furniture was strewn all about it, and the house that had contained it was nowhere.

"The remarkable stories that have been told about people floating a mile up the river and then back two or three times are easily credible after seeing the evidences of the strange course the flood took in this part of the town. People who stood near the ruins of Poplar Bridge saw four women on a roof float up on the stream, turn a short distance above and come back and go past again once more return. Then they were seen to go far down on the current to the lower part of the town and were rescued as they passed the second story window of a school house. A man who was imprisoned in the attic of his house put his wife and two children on a roof that was eddying past and stayed behind to die alone. They floated up the stream and then came back and got upon the roof of the very house they had left, and the whole family were saved.

"At Grubbtown there is a house which came all the way from Woodvale, On it was a man who lived near Grubbtown, but was working at Woodvale. When the flood came. He was carried right past his own home, and coolly told the people at the bridge to bid his wife good-bye for him. The house passed the bridge three times, the man carrying on a conversation with the people on the shore and giving directions for his burial if his body should be found.

"The third time the house went up it grounded at Grubbtown, and in an hour or two the man was safe at home. Three girls who went by on a roof crawled into the branches of a tree, and had to stay there all night before they could make anyone understand where they were. At one time scores of floating houses were wedged in together near the ruins of Poplar street bridge. Four brave men went out from the shore, and stepping from house-roof to house-roof brought in twelve women and children.

"Some women crawled from roofs into attics of houses. In their struggles with the flood most of their clothes had been tore from them, and rather than appear on the streets they stayed where they were until hunger forced them to shout out of the window for help. At this stage of the flood more persons were lost by being crushed to death than by drowning. As they floated by on roofs or doors the toppling houses fell over upon them and killed them.

### **SAVED FROM DISFIGURATION.**

"The workers began on the wreck on Main street just opposite the First National Bank, one of the busiest here, the houses being crushed on one side on the street and being almost untouched on the other, a most remarkable thing considering the terrific force of the flood. Twenty-one bodies were taken out in the early morning and taken to the morgue. They were not much injured, considering the weight of lumber above them.

"In many instances they were wedged in crevices. They were all in a good state of preservation, and when they were embalmed they looked almost lifelike. In this central part of the city examination is sure to result in the unearthing of bodies in every corner. Cottages which are still standing are banked up with lumber and driftwood, and it is like mining to make any kind of a clear space.

### **DYNAMITE TEARS THE BODIES.**

"Thirteen bodies were taken from the burning debris at the Stone Bridge at one time yesterday

afternoon. None of the bodies were recognizable, and they were put in coffins and buried immediately. They were so badly decomposed that it was impossible to keep them until they could be identified. During a blast at the bridge yesterday afternoon two bodies were almost blown to pieces. The blasting has had the effect of opening the channel under the central portion of the bridge.

"The order that has issued that all unidentified dead be buried is being rapidly carried out. The Rev. Mr. Beall, who has charge of the morgue at the Fourth Ward school-house, which is the chief place, says that a large force of men has been put at work digging graves, and at the close of the afternoon the remains will be laid away as rapidly as it can be done.

"William Flynn has taken charge of the army of eleven hundred laborers who are doing a wonderful amount of work. In an interview he told of the work that has to be done, and the contractors' estimates show more than anything the chaotic condition of the city. 'It will take ten thousand men thirty days to clear the ground so that the streets are passable and the work of rebuilding can be commenced,' said he, "and I am at a loss to know how the work is to be done. This enthusiasm will soon die out and the volunteers will want to return home.

"It would take all Summer for my men alone to do what work is necessary. Steps must be taken at once to furnish gangs of workmen, and I shall send a communication to the Pittsburg Chamber of Commerce asking the different manufactures of the Ohio Valley to take turns for a month or so in furnishing reliefs of workmen.

"I shall ask that each establishment stop work for a week at a time and send all hands in the charge of a foreman and timekeeper. We will board and care for them here. These gangs should come for a week at a time, as no organization can be effected if workmen arrive and leave when they please.'

"A meeting was held here in the afternoon which resulted in the appointment of James B. Scott, of Pittsburg, generalissimo.

"Mr. Scott in an interview said that he proposed to clear the town of all wreckage and debris of all descriptions and turn the town site over to the citizens when he has completed his work clean and free from obstructions of all kinds.

### **TRACING BODIES BY THE SMELL.**

"I was here when the gang came across one of the upper stories of a house. It was merely a pile of boards apparently, but small pieces of a bureau and a bed spring from which the clothes has been burned showed the nature of the find. A faint odor of burned flesh prevailed exactly at this spot.

"'Dig here,' said the physician to the men. 'There is one body at least quite close to the surface.' The men started in with a will. A large pile of underclothes and household linen was brought up first. It was of fine quality and evidently such as would be stored in the bedroom of a house occupied by people quite well to do. Shovels full of jumbled rubbish were thrown up, and the odor of flesh became more pronounced. Presently one of the men exposed a charred lump of flesh and lifted it up on the end of a pitchfork. It was all that remained of some poor creature who had met an awful death between water and fire.

"The trunk was put on a cloth, the ends were looped up making a bag of it, and the thing was taken to the river bank. It weighed probably thirty pounds. A stake was driven in the ground to which a tag was attached giving a description of the remains. This is done in many cases to the burned bodies, and they lay covered with cloths upon the bank until men came with coffins to remove them.

"Then the tag was taken from the stakes and tacked on the coffin lid, which was immediately closed up, as identification was of course out of the question. There is a stack of coffins by the railroad bridge. This collection, consisting of trees, sides of houses, timber and innumerable articles, varies in thickness from three or four feet to twenty feet. It is about four hundred yards long and as wide as the river. There are thousands of tons in this vast pile. How many bodies are buried there it is

impossible to say, but conservative estimates place it at one thousand at least. "The corps of workmen who were searching the ruins near the Methodist Church late last evening were horrified by unearthing one hundred additional bodies. The great number at his point shows what may be expected when all have been recovered. >br>

"In one of the tents a baby was born, The mother is Mrs. O'Connor, whose husband was lost in the flood. Both mother and baby are doing well, in fact better than thousands of other poor sufferers. The latest addition to the list of homeless victims of the flood will in all probably be christened Johnstown Camp O'Connor.

"The only church totally destroyed by the flood was St. John's Protestant Episcopal, which stood at the corner of Locust and Market streets. A sand bank now marks its site. The ruins washed down to the mass above the railroad bridge and town, and lodged a little further up stream.

"The rector, the Rev. A. P. Dillen, formerly of Lancaster, Penna., was drowned with his family. He was last seen standing at a window with a child in his arm. His other arm was about his wife and his girl stood at his side.

"Such houses as are so damaged as to be in danger of falling are being pulled down. Others are propped up until the work of repair can be commenced and already the work of putting up frame structures is under way.

"A multitude of tents are standing where once were row of substantial buildings. They are occupied by the militia and the laboring force, while the homeless natives are camped out on the various hillsides."

(Compiled from [The Johnstown Flood](#) by Herman Dieck, A.M.)

## CHAPTER 10

Measures for relief for the sufferers by the flood were promptly taken by the thoughtful persons, even before communication was reopened by the afflicted district. From every city, town and hamlet subscriptions for the Johnstown sufferers are coming in. The distress caused by this unparalleled disaster is wide spread, and the cry for relief did not come from Johnstown alone. As soon as it was possible to reach the afflicted districts relief committees and trains with clothing, provisions, household goods, etc, were sent there.

A correspondent telegraphed on the second day of June to the Philadelphia *Times*:

"Just as Sunday broke over the valley of the death at Johnstown the first of the impatient rescuers who had been waiting at the borders broke into the city precincts. Johnstown is not figuratively but literally a ruin.

"Doctor Wakefield has issued a call for physicians to come, as they are needed. There are plenty of people here with broken arms, legs and bruises that need medical attention. Among the incidents is the following: A lady, her brother and two children were visiting a family here, and, singular as it may seem, it is said every one of the family with which she was visiting were drowned, while all the visitors were saved. Since yesterday organized relief has taken the place of disorder and confusion and the work of distributing provisions and caring for the wants of the needy is now going on with some regulation and order. Adjutant General Hastings arrived Saturday night and immediately set to work to get aid to those in the greatest distress. Hundreds of willing hands stood ready to render assistance, if they had somebody to direct them what to do. Every farmer within a large radius of this place was astir by daylight this morning, and, with wagons, drays, horses and all kinds of conveyances, were on hand to haul provisions or do anything that might be wanted.

"The relief train from Pittsburg arrived at an early hour this morning and the work of transferring the provisions from Sang Hollow, the furthest point east reached by train, was begun at once. All of Coopersdale, Cambria City and Sheridan, below Johnstown, and what few people are left at Woodvale and East Conemaugh above were supplied as fast as the work of distribution could be carried on. As is usual in all such cases of distress many came here for the purpose of pilfering and nearly every train from Pittsburg brought a lot of toughs whose object is to prey on the charity being dispensed and rob those deserving of even what little they have left.

"The few hours that have intervened since the disaster occurred have given people time to consider the situation, and instead of sitting down and weeping for lost ones they are actively engaged in taking care of themselves and assisting others. This principle seems to have taken hold of the brave people left from the Johnstown flood, and many a poor woman or man goes about the duties of the day with a heart heavy for some absent one who was drowned or killed by the crush of buildings.

"Thousands of sight-seers and anxious friends are gathered about the wrecked city and hundreds of workers are busy taking out bodies, removing debris and caring for the wants of survivors. All night long 500 laborers worked like beavers on the railroad track and at 8 o'clock Sunday morning the first train passed over the road from Sang Hollow to Johnstown. It was received all along the line with cheers and shouts of joy from the hundreds of sufferers who were waiting along the track eager to obtain the supplies contained in the relief trains, three of which lay in Sang Hollow all night waiting to get through.

"The first train to pass over the reconstructed track was that sent out by the the citizens of Pittsburg and manned by the Americus Club boys.

"The work of getting the bodies together for easy identification began this afternoon. The central point was Morrellville. On Fairfield avenue is a large vacant lot belonging to Frank Leckey. At 5 o'clock this was almost entirely covered with coffins, while between them, and stooping over them, were weeping men and women.

"Although the number was short of one hundred at 5 o'clock, others will come in, and there is not telling what the total will be. On one rough box was a piece of paper with the words, 'Three children.' To-night they were lifted out and all three placed in one coffin. The little bodies were almost naked and the purple faces bruised and cut.

The corpse of a beautiful young woman lay in the extemporized morgue. Several people say that it is that of Miss Ida Fischer, a prominent young lady of Johnstown.

Only a few hundred yards below the bridge a number of bodies had been taken to private houses. They were taken to the Morrellville morgue this afternoon.

"St. Mary's German Catholic Church stands a quarter of a mile below the bridge. Its walls are standing, but inside it is filled with mixed, broken benches and ruined images. In it were found the mangled body of P. Eldridge and the remains of several negroes.

"The distance to St. Columbia's Catholic Church is a half mile. The streets to it are filled with broken houses and people in those that were left standing were busy shoveling mud from the first floors. The scene at St. Columbia's Church was awful. Forty or fifty bodies had been carried into it and laid on the muddy seats.

"Trenches were being dug in Lower Yoder Catholic Cemetery and Grandview Protestant Cemetery this afternoon. The bodies that were exposed when the waters began falling are in bad condition. Some have already been interred. In the haste and excitement no definite arrangements seem to have been made for funeral services. The only suggestion that could be obtained at Morrellville was that all the bodies would be buried and general memorial services held after the present suffering is alleviated.

### **GREAT ENERGY SHOWN.**

"One remarkable feature of the disaster is the energy with which Johnstown sets to work to repair the ravages of the flood. In every direction gangs of workmen are burning the debris and clearing the streets, getting ready for the time when the property holders may be able to rebuild their houses. It is because of this last the change in the condition and appearance of the town is so constant from day to day. Whether the city will be soon rebuilt is, however, another matter. One great difficulty in the way of rebuilding will be found in the uncertainty in regard to party lines. The city lots being entirely covered and the landmarks obliterated, it will not be easy for lot-owners to locate the exact bounds of their properties. Fortunately, the county seat being at Ebensburg, the deeds have been preserved and a re-survey is possible. When the boundaries of one lot in a square are determined, the location of the others will be comparatively easy. When this is done there is no question that the city will be rapidly rebuilt.

"Though rapid progress was being made in the work on the ruins of Johnstown, a week after the disaster the piles of rubbish were still up to the second story windows of quite a number of houses on Main street. A great hinderance to progress was found in the tangled multitude of telegraph, telephone and electric light wires that were twisted into every conceivable shape and tightly wrapped around almost every thing. At the raft near the viaduct immense quantities of steel wire came down from the Gautier Steel Works. Much of it was barbed, and the laborers were terribly hampered by it. Their progress was also impeded by the several locomotives and tenders that were firmly imbedded in the mass and were practically immovable.

"Several stationary engines were located at various points through the city and were used to pull out heavy timbers and tear apart buildings that resisted the destructive force of the water, but so solidly packed were the piles that the stoutest cables were repeatedly broken.

### **SIXTY ACRES OF BURNED DEBRIS.**

"Wandering over this muddy plain one can realize something of what must have been the gigantic force of that vast whirlpool. It pressed upon the town like some huge millstone, weighing tens of

thousands of tons and revolving with awful velocity, pounding to powder everything beneath. But the conception of the power of that horrible eddy of the flood must remain feeble until the sixty acres of burning debris is inspected. It seems from a little distance like any other mass of wreckage, though vastly longer than ever before seen in this country. It must have been many times more tremendous when it was heaped up twenty feet over its whole area and before the fire levelled it off. But neither then nor now can the full terror of the flood that piled it there be adequately realized until trip across parts where the fire has been extinguished shows the manner in which the stuff composing it is packed together.

It is not a heap of broken timbers lying loosely thrown together in all directions. It is a solid mass. The boards and timbers which made up the frame buildings are laid together as closely as sticks of wood in a pile-more closely, for they are welded into one another until each stick is as solidly fixed in place as though all were one."

(Compiled from [The Johnstown Flood](#) by Herman Dieck, A.M.)

## CHAPTER 11

## THE ORPHANS OF THE FLOOD.

The orphans of the flood - sadly few there are of them, for it was the children that usually went down first, not the parents - were being looked after by the Pennsylvania Children's Aid Society, which had transferred its headquarters for the time being from Philadelphia to Johnstown. There was a thriving branch of this society at that place before the flood, but of all its officers and executive force two only are alive. Fearing such might be the situation, the general officers of the society sent out on the first available train Miss H.E. Hancock, one of the directors, and Miss H.W. Hinckley, the secretary. They arrived on the 7th, and within thirty minutes had an office open in a little cottage just above the water line in the upper part of the city. Business was ready as soon as the office, and there were about fifty children looked after before evening. In most cases these were children with relatives or friends in or near Johnstown, and the society's work has been to identify them and restore them to their friends.

As soon as the society opened its office all cases in which children were involved were sent at once to them, and their efforts have been of great benefit in systematizing the care of the children who are left homeless. Besides this, there are many orphans who have been living in the families of neighbors since the flood, but for whom permanent homes must be found. One family here has cared for 157 children saved from the flood, and nearly as many are staying with other families. There will be no difficulty about providing for these little ones.

The Rev. Morgan Dix, on behalf of the Leake and Watts Orphan Home in New York, has telegraphed an offer to care for seventy-five orphans. Pittsburg has been proving itself generous in this as in all other matters relating to the flood, and other places all over the country are telegraphing offers of homes for the homeless. Superintendent Pierson of the Indianapolis Natural Gas Company has asked for two; Cleveland wanted some; Altoona would like a few; Apollo, Pa., has vacancies the orphans can fill, and scores of other small places are sending in similar offers and requests. A queer thing is that many of the offers are restricted by curious provisions as to the religious belief of the orphans. The Rev. D. Griffiths, for instance, of 1420 Chestnut street, Philadelphia, says that the Angora (Pa.) Homes would like some orphans, "especially Baptist ones," and Father Field of Twentieth and Cherry streets, Philadelphia, offers to look after a few Episcopal waifs.

The work of the society here has been greatly assisted by the fact that Miss Maggie Brooks, formerly secretary of the Johnstown society here, but living in Philadelphia at the time of the flood, has come there to assist the general officers. Her acquaintance with the town was invaluable.

The secretary of the society on the 11th of June prepared a statement for publication, the purpose of which was to correct a widespread impression that Johnstown is full of orphan children. It is as follows:

"From private citizens and from generous institutions throughout the United States telegrams and letters have been steadily pouring in ever since the disaster. Each bears in substance the same warm-hearted message: 'Send us the destitute little ones from Johnstown.' The fact is that the loss of life from the violence of the flood has been one of the most pathetic features of the Johnstown tragedy. This fact is shown to be true, not only from the number of silent little forms brought to the morgue next door, but that almost every family caught by the Johnstown flood now mourns a lost child. Adults were often saved by their strength and the judgment used in self-preservation, but the children were swept away from their parents and friends. Every relief agency here is taxed to its utmost to help stricken families, and the work for children is incessant. The Johnstown ladies will need for months to come all the sympathy and help that can be sent, but there seems to be at present more need of uniting families than of sending away children from Johnstown. Children reported, in the confusion of the past day, as being destitute orphans, have been claimed in the majority of cases by friends or relatives. Before closing, in behalf of the Johnstown Children's Aid Society, I wish to acknowledge the constant courtesy shown by headquarters and the various relief agencies to this office.

"HELLEN WALLACE HINCKLEY,  
Secretary Children's Aid Society of Pennsylvania, 69 Adams street, Johnstown."

## AT THE RELIEF STATIONS.

*Sun*, on June 7th, thus described scenes at the relief station:

"The first thing that Johnstown people do in the morning is to go to the relief stations and get something to eat. They go carrying their big baskets, and their endeavor is to get all they can. There has been a new system every day about the manner of dispensing the food and clothing to the sufferers. At first the supplies were placed where people could help themselves. Then they were placed in yards and handed to people over the fences. Then people had to get orders for what they wanted from the Citizens' Committee, and their orders were filled at the different relief stations. Now the whole matter of receiving and dispensing relief supplies has been placed in the hands of the Grand Army of the Republic men. Thomas A. Stewart, Commander of the Department of Pennsylvania, G.A.R., arrived yesterday with his staff and established his headquarters in a tent on Adams street, near the headquarters of the Citizens' Committee, and opposite the temporary Post Office. Over this tent floats Commander Stewart's flag, with purple border, bearing the arms of the State of Pennsylvania. The members of his staff are: Quartermaster-General Tobin Taylor and his assistant H.J. Williams, Chaplain Johns W. Sayres, and W.V. Lawrence, Quartermaster-General of the Ohio department. The Grand Army men have made the Adams street relief station a central relief station, and all the others at Kernville, the Pennsylvania depot, Cambria City, and Jackson and Somerset streets, sub-stations. The idea is to distribute supplies to the sub-stations from the central station, and thus avoid the jam of crying and excited people at the committee's headquarters.

"The Grand Army men have appointed a committee of women to assist them in their work. The women go from house to house, ascertaining the number of people quartered there, the number of people lost from there in the flood, and the exact needs of the people. It was found necessary to have some such committee as this, for there were women actually starving who were too proud to take their places in line with the other women with bags and baskets. Some of these people were rich before the flood. Now they are not worth a dollar. A *Sun* reporter was told of one man who was reported to be worth \$100,000 before the flood, but who now is penniless, and who has to take his place in the line along with others seeking the necessaries of life.

"Though the Adams street station is now the central relief station, the most imposing display of supplies is made at the Pennsylvania Railroad freight and passenger depots. Here on the platforms and in the yards are piled up barrels of flour in long rows, there and four barrels high; biscuits in cans and boxes where car loads of them have been dumped, crackers under the railroad sheds in bins, hams by the hundred strung on poles, boxes of soap and candles, barrels of kerosene oil, stacks of canned goods, and things to eat of all sorts and kinds. The same is visible at the Baltimore and Ohio road, and there is now no fear of a food famine in Johnstown, though of course everybody will have to rough it for weeks. What is needed most in this line is cooking utensils. Johnstown people want stoves, kettles, pans, knives and forks. All the things that have been sent so far have been sent with the evident idea of supplying an instant need, and that is right and proper, but it would be well now if, instead of some of the provisions that are sent, cooking utensils would arrive. Fifty stoves arrived from Pittsburg this morning, and it is said that more are coming.

"At both the depots where the supplies are received and stored a big rope line encloses them in an impromptu yard, so as to give room to those having them in charge to walk around and see what they have got. On the inside of this line, too, stalk back and forth the soldiers, with their rifles on their shoulders, and beside the lines, pressing against the ropes, there stands every day, from daylight until dawn, a crowd of women with big baskets, who make piteous appeals to the soldiers to give them food for their children at once before the order of the relief committee. Those to whom supplies are dealt out at the stations have to approach in a line, and this is fringed with soldiers, Pittsburg policemen, and deputy sheriffs, who see that the children and weak women are not crowded out of their places by the stronger ones. The supplies are not given in large quantities, but the applicants are told to come again in a day or so and more will be given them. The women complain against this bitterly, and go away with tears in their eyes, declaring that they have not been given enough. Other women utter broken words of thankfulness and go away, their faces wreathed in smiles.

"Last night something in the nature of a raid was made by Father McTahney, one of the Catholic

priests here, on the houses of some people whom he suspected of having imposed upon the relief committee. These persons represented that they were destitute, and sent their children with baskets to the relief stations, each child getting supplies for a different family. There are unquestionably many such cases. Father McTahney found that his suspicions were correct in a great many cases, and he brought back and made the wrongdoers bring back the provisions which they had obtained under false pretenses.

"The side tracks at both the Pennsylvania and Baltimore and Ohio Railroad depots are filled with cars sent from different places bearing relief supplies to Johnstown. The cars are nearly all freight cars, and they contain the significant inscriptions of the railroad officials: 'This car is on time freight. It is going to Johnstown, and must not be delayed under any circumstances.' Then there are the ponderous labels of the towns and associations sending the supplies. They read this way: 'This car for Johnstown with supplies for the sufferers.' ' Braddock relief for Johnstown.' 'The contributions of Beaver Falls to Johnstown.' The cars from Pittsburg had no inscriptions. Some cars had merely the inscription in great big black letters on a white strip of cloth running the length of the car: 'Johnstown.' One car reads on it, 'Stations along the route fill this car with supplies for Johnstown, and don't delay it.' The supplies from Cleveland were said to be exceptionally fine. There were bales of fine new blankets from the manufacturers, the best thing that could be sent.

"Money is pouring into Johnstown as fast as the Finance Committee will let it. That is to say, the committee have announced their wish that money be not sent to Johnstown yet, as the town is not yet ready for it. People feel encouraged, as well they may, over the liberal contributions that have been made for them.

(Compiled from [The Johnstown Flood](#) by Herman Dieck, A.M.)

## CHAPTER 12

## CRAZED BY THEIR SUFFERINGS.

When the great wave of death swept through Johnstown, the people who had any chance of escape ran hither and thither in every direction. They did not have any definite idea where they were going, only that a crest of foaming waters as high as the housetops was roaring down upon them through the Conemaugh, and that they must get out of the way of that. Some in their terror divided into the cellars of their houses, though this was certain death. Others got up on the roofs of their houses and clambered over the adjoining roofs to places of safety. But the majority made for the hills, which girt the town like giants. Of the people who went to the hills, the water caught some in its whirls. The others clung to trees and roots and pieces of debris which had temporarily lodged near the banks, and managed to save themselves. These people either stayed out on the hills wet and in many instances naked, all night, or they managed to find farm houses which sheltered them. There was a fear of going back to the vicinity of the town. Even the people whose houses the water did not reach abandoned their homes and began to think of all of Johnstown as a city buried beneath the water. But in the houses which were thus able to afford shelter there was not food enough for all. Many survivors of the flood went hungry until the first relief supplies arrived from Pittsburg. From all this fright, destitution, and exposure is coming nervous shock, culminating in insanity, pneumonia, fever, and all forms of disease. When these people came back to Johnstown on the day after the wreck of the town they had to be put up in sheds, barns, and in houses which had been but partially ruined. They had to sleep without any covering in their wet clothes, and it took the liveliest kind of skirmishing to get anything to eat. Pretty soon a citizens' committee was established, and for a fact nearly all the male survivors of the flood were immediately sworn in as deputy sheriffs. They adorned themselves with tin stars, which they cut out of pieces of the sheet metal in the ruins, and sheets of tin with stars cut out of them are turning up continually, to the surprise of the Pittsburg workmen who are endeavoring to get the town in shape. The women and children were housed, as far as possible, in the few houses still standing, and some idea of the extent of the wreck of the town may be gathered from the fact that of 300 prominent buildings only 16 are uninjured.

for the first day or so people were dazed by what had happened, and for that matter they are dazed still. They went about helpless, making vague inquiries for their friends and hardly feeling the desire to eat anything. Finally the need of creature comforts overpowered them, and they woke up to the fact that they were faint and sick. Now this is to some extent changed by the arrival of tents and by the systematic military care for the suffering. But the daily life of a Johnstown man, who is a refugee in his own city, is still aimless and wandering. His property, his home, and, in nine cases out of ten, his wife and children are gone. The chances are that he has hard work to find the spot where he and his family once lived and were happy. He meditates suicide, and even looks on the strangers who have flocked in to help him, and to put him and his town on their feet again, with a kind of sullen anger. He has frequent conflicts with the soldiers and sightseers, and he is just crazy enough to do anything.

One night a young Lieutenant in the Fourteenth Regiment from Pittsburg, which was doing guard duty, got drunk and went around flourishing a pistol and abusing people. He tried to force his way through the wreck at a place where the Sheriff had issued strict orders that no one should be allowed to pass. The military here are under the control of the civil power, and Gen. Hastings refuses to issue passes to the most important parts of town now unless they are countersigned by Sheriff Steinman. The man on guard duty at the place where the Lieutenant tried to pass refused to let the officer go by. The officer swore like a pirate, and threatened to pound the deputy.

"So help me God, sir," said the deputy, "if you try to go by me I will shoot you like a dog. I have lost my wife and all my children here, and I don't care what becomes of me."

The Lieutenant did not say anything further. He went away, and was soon placed under arrest by his commanding officer. Mrs. D.S. Lane had to be taken away insane. Her husband kept a shoe store on Morris street, the family living in Kernsville. The couple are quite aged and lost all their children and

property in the flood. Mrs. Lane brooded over the calamity to such an extent that her mind became affected, and her husband was obliged to take her away to an asylum.

Governor Beaver's conference with Mayor Fidler of Philadelphia, the 8th of June, and others, and his personal visit to Johnstown and return to Philadelphia between Saturday night and Monday afternoon, have been of great value in clearing up matters that were getting into some entanglement. It is now understood that there is a clear line of demarcation between the relief of destitution and suffering - including all that relates to the care of the sick and injured and the burial of the dead - on the one hand, and the clearing out of blockaded rivers, and the prevention of such pollution and poisoning of their waters as might spread disease through a score of counties distant from the devastated districts. While the purely charitable work belongs to the jurisdiction of the authorities and committees in charge of the funds contributed for relief by the benovolent uprising of the people - the work of removing the obstructions and pollution from scores and, perhaps, hundreds of miles of river beds goes properly under the jurisdiction of the State, and should be dealt with under the supervision of state authorities. No part of *the relief fund proper* contributed by popular subscription is to be used for this State service.

It is a further result of the conferences which the Governor has been holding that from and after Wednesday the 12th, General Hastings is in command at Johnstown, and that the Governor has appointed an Advisory Commission, selected from well-known citizens in whom the public have learned to place confidence - to exercise general supervision and direction over the whole work and whole field of relief.

#### GENERAL HASTINGS IN COMMAND

General Hastings, having divided the ruined area into district, on the 12th began putting contractors or subcontractors in charge of each. He caused these men to come to his headquarters, where he instructed them that they must find their own tools and supplies for their workmen, and that their operations would be under the supervision of engineers directly responsible to him.

It is estimated that at the rate at which the work of removing the drift above the stone bridge had been done, about three weeks more would be required to tear it apart, burning what is taken off the sides and sending down the river the material coming out of the channel that is being cut upward through the stream from the bridge. The most difficult part of this work is in making the channel, as the logs, boards, etc., are interlocked in every way, and the interstices packed with stones, brick, house plaster, sand and general debris, but there are additional hoisting engines ready to begin loosening and dragging logs. With these engines and the additional force of wood-choppers and other workmen expected to be on the drift by the end of this week, it is believed by Contractor William Flinn and others, that this great obstruction can be cleared away within the next eight or ten days. It is thought that at least 1500 men, or three times as many as were employed on the drift on previous days, could be used there advantageously. Now that number could be increased as the channel is lengthened. The cutting right and left from the channel will be much easier than the present work, as has been demonstrated by such cutting near the bridge. The main difficulty in working at the sides of the drift is in dragging the material out on land, to be burned.

The first real work under the supervision of the State commenced on the 13th of June at 6 o'clock a.m. The whistle at the Cambria Iron and Steel Works was the signal for the men to commence, and about 1500 started in with their picks and shovels. The early morning was warm and cloudy, and the fumes and odors from the decayed bodies was something almost unbearable. As the morning advanced the weather grew warmer, and by 10 o'clock the sun was shining brightly and every one on the ground was hard at work.

During the morning a crowd of worthless loafers in some manner secured an entrance to the town, and wanted to inaugurate a strike among the workmen. Some of the laborers were already dissatisfied at having new bosses over them, and only wanted to chance to complain. James McKnight, of Pittsburg, of the State contractors, got wind of the trouble brewing, and went among the men and informed them that he would have no kicking, and that all those who wished to quit would have to do

so immediately, and about 100 of the men left, but the loafers remained around, and Mr. McKnight went to General Hastings and demanded protection for his men. A detachment of militia from the Fourteenth Regiment were detailed to the place, and drove away all the men who refused to work. This caused General Hastings to issue an order to the soldiers not to admit any one to Johnstown proper without an order.

#### SEVERAL STORES OPENED.

The business men of the town seemed to have awakened to their senses, and a number of them were preparing to start over again in business. Two grocery stores were started near the Pennsylvania Railroad freight station. Both places were doing a land office business and this encouraged other merchants to start up, and the probabilities are that inside of a week, at least, a hundred stores will be in operation. Already two barber shops and one jewelry store have been opened.

#### GOOD NEWS.

Captain Seers, of the United States Army, one of the corps of engineers at Willet's Point, and Captain Burbank, of the West Point Engineering Corps, have laid out the different boroughs in five districts, and competent men have been appointed to take charge of each district. Captain Seers, in an interview, said: "I am only here to advise General Hastings, and do what I can to help him. I think that inside of two weeks the 3000 or 4000 men that will be at work will succeed in putting the town in very good condition, and I think inside of a month Johnstown will have almost recovered from this terrible shock."

#### THE LATEST ESTIMATE OF LOSS OF LIFE.

The general opinion among well posted people here is that the loss of life will be between 3000 and 4000.

It was generally given out that Johnstown and boroughs adjoining had a population of 35,000 people, but this is a very high estimate, and conservative people put the population between 25,000 and 28,000. Colonel Rogers, who has charge of the registration, states that, from all he can learn, the population only amounted to about 25,000, and this accounts for 10,000 supposed to be lost. The reports sent out from here to the effect that 12,000 to 15,000 people were missing were based upon the supposition that there were 35,000 inhabitants in these boroughs. The reports as to the number of bodies recovered at different points along the flooded districts are very conflicting. Supposed official reports have been sent in by different persons, and these are also conflicting, and put the number of bodies recovered anywhere from 1100 to 1800. Consequently there is no telling how many bodies have been recovered.

#### PASSENGERS LOST FROM THE DAY EXPRESS.

The following is the only full and complete list of passengers lost from the Day Express on the Pennsylvania road at East Conemaugh on the day of the flood:

Miss Long, Curwensville, Pa., body recovered. She had three children in her charge, but they have not been found.

Cyrus Schenck, Reading, Pa.

Miss J.B. Ralney, of Kalamazoo, Mich.

Miss Paulson, of Pittsburg.

Miss Bryan, of Philadelphia.

Mr. Ross, a cripple, residence unknown.

Mr. Ewing, Ligonier, Pa., body not found.

Manager of the Mansfield, Pa., Base Ball Club, name unknown, body not found.

E. Lyon, of New York, body not found.

F. Phillips, colored porter on the Pullman car, residence Thirty-eighth street, Philadelphia.

W. Shelley, Newark, N.J., body not found.

Mrs. J.F. King, residence unknown, body not recovered.

Anna Bates, companion of Mrs. King, body not recovered.

Mrs. Swineford, New Berlin, O., aged 70 years, weight about 150 pounds; body not recovered.

Mrs. Edward Swineford, St. Louis, Mo.; destination, Middleboro', Pa.; body not found.

Mrs. McCoy, body recovered and buried.

Two boys, sons of Mrs. McCoy, bodies not recovered.

Mrs. H.K. Smith and child, three years of age; bodies not recovered.

(Compiled from [The Johnstown Flood](#) by Herman Dieck, A.M.)

## CHAPTER 13

## AN IMPORTANT MEETINGS.

The first decisive step toward putting Johnstown's business men on their feet again was made on the 13th of June, when about 200 merchants who had survived the flood, many of them without a dollar, met Adjutant-General Hastings, and were assured that they would be re-established in business on long credit. Both Pittsburgh and Philadelphia wholesalers have offered Johnstown merchants this business courtesy. The meeting turned out to be an ovation to General Hastings.

The meeting was opened by the Adjutant-General, who said:

"I have been directed to clear the streets of Johnstown in order that merchants may be enabled to get to and from their business places. Our work is progressing rapidly and vigorously, and the best thing for Johnstown merchants to do is to begin business over again. I have communicated with eastern firms, who offer to assist you if you will resume business in this city.

"I would suggest that you build temporary structures for the present, until more favorable circumstances warrant the erection of permanent establishments. Word has been received from a large number of Pittsburg houses, offering to stock your stores with a full line of first-class goods on long credit. I advise you to improve this opportunity, and when in the course of time matters take a more tangible shape you will be able to repay all losses incurred.

"In conclusion, let me say that all those in need of relief should immediately make their wants known to me. No one should go hungry when they can have plenty to eat for the asking. We will provide shelter and clothes for all sufferers and try in every way to help the needy ones as much as we can. I am anxious to see Johnstown resume her own government as speedily as possible, and, while we have no martial law to prevent the people from passing through the streets unmolested, we will keep the troops here to check all unwelcome visitors, such as sight-seers, vandals and so forth."

Hearty applause followed, and several merchants spoke out to say that they were already making arrangements to resume business.

Joseph Morgan, Jr., of the Cambria Iron And Steel Company, stated that they had thrown open their doors, ready to receive orders, and would resume operations in the works at once. He agreed with the views of Adjutant-General Hastings on vandalism, and spoke of the necessity for barring out all persons from the ruins while the work of clearing the city was in progress.

"I thank God," said Colonel Linton, the next speaker, "for the new regime is managing the Relief Committee, which helps men by teaching them to help themselves. I am satisfied that united action will drag us out of the slough of despond, and there is no doubt of the future of the town."

The last words of Colonel Linton's speech were lost in a round of applause. Upon the suggestion of General Hastings, the Colonel dictated the following resolutions:

Resolved, That the merchants and business men of Johnstown assembled at the request of Adjutant-General Hastings, having listened with gratification to his remarks, agree to secure as rapidly as possible the resumption of business and to furnish the committee all the provisions required.

Resolved further, That each merchant and business man in Johnstown use his best efforts to restore by his own exertions his property and that of the community at large.

Resolved, That the business men and merchants of Johnstown tender their hearty thanks to Adjutant-General Hastings for his kindly suggestions and offers of aid.

The meeting then closed with the taking down of the names and occupations of the business men present in order to assist General Hastings in his work of relief.

## REPORT OF THE TRANSPORTATION BUREAU.

The report of the Bureau of Transportation, which died with the Citizens' relief Committee, was presented to James B. Scott June 12th. It shows that from June 4th to 11th inclusive, 1592 people were given free transportation out of Johnstown. out of these, 872 were over the Pennsylvania and 720 over the Baltimore and Ohio.

One hundred and seventy-six were sent to Pittsburg by the Baltimore and Ohio and 636 over The Pennsylvania: 157 were sent to Philadelphia over the Baltimore and Ohio. The Bureau of Information answered 287 telegrams and 68 letters, mostly inquiries from anxious friends as to the safety of Johnstowners.

#### FOR THE RELIEF OF THE SUFFERERS.

A plan for the concentration and distribution of the various funds now being collected for the benefit of the sufferers by the recent flood was arranged on the 13th of June, at a conference between Governor Beaver and Mayor Fitler, Thomas Dolan, Robert C. Ogden, John Y. Huber and Francis B. Reeves.

The conference was held at the Hotel Lafayette, Philadelphia, Governor Beaver telegraphing, while on his way from Harrisburg, that he would meet the representatives of the Citizen's Permanent Relief Committee of Philadelphia there on his arrival.

The formulation of the plan had been left to the Governor, and when the gentlemen above mentioned had assembled, he laid before them the following letter addressed to Mayor Fitler, which contains his opinion as to how the funds should be spent.

"My Dear Sir. - Impressed with the sacredness of the trust which has been entrusted to me in part by generous donors in this country and abroad for the relief of the sufferers by the late disastrous floods in Pennsylvania, especially in the Conemaugh and West Branch Valleys, I have called to my aid the experience, ability and well-known character of a number of prominent gentlemen of Pennsylvania, to assist me in making the distribution of the funds in my hands and such other moneys as may be entrusted to them.

"After careful consideration and consultation I have appointed as a commission to aid me in this work the following gentlemen: Edwin H. Fitler, Thomas Dolan, Robert C. Ogden, John Y. Huber and Francis B. Reeves, Philadelphia; James B. Scott, Reuben Miller, S.S. Marvin, Pittsburg; John Fulton, Johnstown; H.J. Cummin, Williamsport. I respectfully suggest that these gentlemen should visit the stricken districts at once, so as to determine the directions in which the funds entrusted to them should go beyond the supply of food, clothing, bedding, etc., which is regularly and systematically going on. Will you please consult the Philadelphia members of the commission and let me know their views as to the proposed visit, and when it can be made, and I will communicate with the other members on the subject. With grateful thanks for your cordial, earnest support and counsel in this emergency, I am very cordially yours,  
JAMES A. BEAVER."

The suggestions contained in the letter were favorably received, and unanimously adopted as the best means of relieving the distress of the State's citizens. After a short discussion it was decided that the commission should start on its tour of inspection next Monday afternoon, the members to visit all the towns affected by the flood, learn the amount of distress prevalent, and take immediate steps to assist the needy by furnishing food, clothing, household utensils, and, where it would be advisable, to purchase tools for workmen and mechanics, that they might resume employment as quickly as possible, and become self-supporting.

After this matter was settled, the Governor announced that he had abandoned the plan of using a million dollars out of the State Treasury, under the proposed indemnity bond, which was to be signed by 200 gentlemen to secure the Governor against loss in case the Legislature refused to appropriate the amount. The Governor stated that it would probably establish a precedent that might work harm in the future and it would be better to secure the money by other means. He said he had been offered and had accepted the million dollars by officers of the Philadelphia banks, who declare they

will require no security for its repayment and ask no interest for its use, merely accepting the Governor's word that he will use his efforts to have the Legislature appropriate the money from the State Treasury to repay the loan.

"This arrangement," said the Governor, in speaking of this plan of raising the million dollars, "supercedes the necessity of securing the names of 200 gentlemen, as the bond will not be given now, and the guarantee will not be required. It might be said that over 200 gentlemen had consented to go on the bond. Among those was General Simon Cameron. I could get fully 1000 names on that bond. It has been useful in showing the complete backing the Executive had in dealing with this emergency.

"The Commission which has just been appointed will deal with the question of relief; that is, the distribution of charity that may be needed by the people of this State. This commission is required to visit as soon as possible the stricken districts, so as to make a personal inspection and determine what can be done to put the people in a condition to support themselves. It is well known to every one who has had anything to do with the donors of the funds that it is their wish to make these people self-supporting. We are not only to give them food, but we are to give them clothing, shoes and cooking utensils.

"The work of supplying the poor people with necessities is going on rapidly. Since I came here I got a telegram asking for a car load of shoes. I handed it to Mayor Fidler, and he referred it to Mr. Ogden, who went out, and in 15 minutes the order was filled and preparing to be shipped. There is not a person in Pennsylvania that suffers. They are getting clothing, shoes, food, etc., even in the villages.

"The question is, how far the Commission can go in expending the funds beyond providing something to eat and something to wear.

"It is an error to suppose that the State intended to relieve destitution. The State will simply clear up the highways and watercourses."

The Governor said he did not know all the names of the banks offering to loan the million dollars, and said it would be unfair to mention some of them. The banks are very few that have made the offer - probably three or four - and it is thought that the Governor expects to hear from others soon.

(Compiled from [The Johnstown Flood](#) by Herman Dieck, A.M.)

## CHAPTER 14

The people of the entire country mourn together as one family, for this sorrow has brought into activity the spirit of brotherhood, which is apt to slumber in times of prosperity. This was an occasion which called for and obtained the promptest and most liberal benevolence. It was a duty, to offer aid promptly and liberally to the sufferers. Food, clothing, shelter, money were needed in large amounts for the instantaneous relief of the afflicted district. And not only was this given, but our merchants and business men also granted long credit to their customers who had lost all their possessions by the flood, and soon the valley of the Conemaugh will be again a prosperous industrial centre of the State of Pennsylvania.

Not only this valley was visited by this terrible disaster, but also other parts of the State suffered heavy losses by rain-storms and inundations about the same time as Johnstown.

## CENTRE COUNTY.

The flood played terrible havoc in Centre county, in both loss of life and damage to property. Bellefonte itself suffered little, being built on the hills. Along the Bald Eagle Valley the destruction was fearful, but happily there was no loss of life. The furnace at Curtin was so badly damaged that it had to be blown out. The entire bottom land, with all the spring crops, for 35 miles in the lower end of the valley, were destroyed. All county, township and railroad bridges from Milesburg to Lock Haven are washed away, and nearly all small buildings in the line of the flood succumbed to it.

The damage in the Bald Eagle Valley will amount to three-quarters of a million of dollars. In Penn's Valley there was loss of life and many miraculous escapes were made. The breaking of the mill dams all along the courses of the streams made it worse. All along this valley all the saw and grist mills were carried away and destroyed. The valley being narrow made the water deep and gave it force. The flood, occurring at midnight, caught most of the people unprepared. At Millheim and Coburn several houses were carried away with the people in them, but all escaped with their lives, except Mrs. Simon Phoust and three children. Their house was overturned, and the whole family was drowned. Her husband worked in Cameron county, and, hearing that there was trouble, started to come home, but he also was drowned in crossing the river at Sinnemahoning. The damage in this part of the county will also amount to nearly three-quarters of a million, made up of individual losses, ranging from \$300 to \$20,000. Some poor people lost not only their house and contents, but also their lot, nothing being left but a creek bottom of rocks and debris.

The great loss of life occurred on Fishing creek. It rises in Nittany Valley, ten miles above Bellefonte, and flows into the Bald Eagle near Mill Hall. The valley is narrow. There was a large dam at Washington Furnace, at the head of the valley, and it broke in the night and filled the valley from mountain to mountain, sweeping everything before it, leaving nothing but ruin and disaster in its wake.

All those drowned were lost by their houses being swept away and torn apart. The flood left only a few houses in what were prosperous villages of from twenty to thirty houses each. Many families were saved by getting on the roofs of their houses and floating to the end of the valley.

## MUNCY.

Muncy people were surprised on Monday, June 3, when the Philadelphia papers of May 31 and June 1 came in, to find that the story of their suffering had not been told.

The town is situated at the confluence of the West Branch river and Muncy creek, and in the loveliest valley in the Keystone state. Wherever the eye could reach beautiful country seats and well-tilled farms could be seen. Winding streams found their way to larger ones, well-kept roads carried and led the prosperous people to and fro, contentment was written on every hearthstone and joy at the prospect of great crops filled every farmer's heart. The grim hand of fate brought want and misery

elsewhere, but to beautiful Muncy Valley starvation was a stranger. The reverse is with us now. Farms are laid waste, factories are gutted, homes ruined, people are in want, children are becoming sick for the necessities of life, disease lurks in our midst, pestilence, with a gaunt hand, threatens to follow in the wake of rushing water, provisions are scarce, and those who dreamed of happy futures have no place to rest their heads.

The overflow of river and creek covered a territory at least two miles wide and three long, tearing out the large ice supply at Edwards' Point, pushing the large oil tank of the Tidewater Company from its foundation, sweeping the farm of Ernest Noble and destroying crops worth about \$5000, flooding the farms of James Sprout, washing out all the bridges on Glade run, filling every cellar in East Muncy, were the first efforts of the flood. "That was about as far as '65 flood came," and "this can't go any further," was heard on every side. But when the water rolled on the floors of Mr. De La Green's home, ruining all on the floors, and moving right up Market street at the rate of three feet per hour general havoc took place, and every one who could commenced to save property. It was almost folly. The water was coming the width of a weather-board on every house at 10 o'clock Saturday morning and it never halted until Sunday came. Then slowly but surely the tide turned. The record of 1865 had been beaten by over seven feet. Fortunately not a soul was lost, but homes have gone, and furniture is all ruined.

#### LEWISTOWN.

The town of Lewistown has been cut off from the rest of the world since the 31st of May. The situation was this: The waters rose nine feet higher than in 1847. Eight river bridges, railroad and county, were all swept away. there is but one open railroad here. Southward the line is a wreck.

The highways of the town are covered with debris ten feet high, and many of its population are sheltered and fed in the Court House and otherwise. It is impossible to estimate the loss by damage to property. No lives were lost.

#### NEWPORT, PERRY COUNTY.

Two-thirds of the town was overflowed. Seven families were destitute, their homes having been swept away. The water was seven feet deep in the streets in the central part of the town. The loss is estimated at a half million dollars.

#### LOCK HAVEN.

Superintendent Pettit, of the Pennsylvania Railroad, made his way to the edge of the city of Lock Haven on the 4th day of June. He saw some of the principal citizens, and they said there was no suffering. All the houses had from six to ten feet of water in them. Only one person was known to have been drowned at Lock Haven, but several lives were reported lost at Mill Hall, a town about four miles from Lock Haven.

The gravest apprehensions had been felt in regard to Lock Haven, and the very favorable outlook was the cause of general rejoicing.

the through mails delayed at Altoona were started over the mountains to Pittsburg on June 4th. One hundred and thirty two passengers accompanied them. They came to Ebensburg via Cresson by rail, and from Ebensburg to Blairsville. They will travel over the mountain roads in wagons, and at the latter place will take the train for Pittsburg. Later on some cases of destruction became known and relief was sent promptly. Wagon loads of provisions and clothing were sent to White Hall, Salona, Woolrich, Queensrun and Mackeyville.

The water in the houses on Main street, and in that section of Lock Haven where most of there sidences were, was three feet deep, while the principal portion of the town was submerged to a depth of from five to six feet. All communications were by boats and rafts. The water in the East-end District was eight feet deep.

## HARRISBURG.

The flood in the Susquehanna touched high water mark on the first of June at 6:30 A.M. when it registered twenty-six feet seven inches above low water mark, or two feet two inches above the great flood of 1865. From that hour until 10 o'clock the water was at a standstill, when it slowly began to recede. At 6 o'clock P.M., it had fallen two feet. This gave great hope for the night, but the water was still very high and capable of doing much damage. However, there was no fear from the northern waters, as the last of it reached there Monday afternoon and the incessant stream of saw logs which had been running since 7 o'clock Saturday evening cleared.

The great fear among the people residing along Paxton Creek was realized about 10 o'clock at night. The waters of the creek had receded and some of the five hundred flooded-out families had returned to their homes and begun to fix up, not without misgivings as to the backwater of the Susquehanna again flooding them.

This water came about 10 o'clock with a steady rush and for a second time the Sibletown people had to fly for their lives and abandon everything. Families again went through their Friday night's experience of being taken off in boats, and people who had remained home on Friday night were forced to get out by the second flood.

The Mayor's office, market houses and other places were soon crowded with unfortunate flood sufferers, and several hundred who were utterly destitute were at once given shelter and provision made for the others.

All day Monday committees of citizens were sending in supplies and money for the sufferers.

The Cumberland Valley Railroad bridge, a new iron structure, was battered all night badly by large logs, pieces of bridge and rafts, but was still standing Monday night with the water sweeping through it, and a jam of logs extended all along its upper side from the shore to the island, a distance of half a mile. The foot bridge piers were piled high with logs and debris, and a thousand huge logs were jammed into the approach to the Dock Street bridge.

The Pennsylvania tracks, from Harrisburg to a point below Steelton, were covered with logs and sawed timber jammed between the rails, and it took much hard work to remove them.

The highest point on Front street reached by the flood was by the back water, which almost reached the pavement in front of General Cameron's residence.

The grave of John Harris, the founder of Harrisburg, which is directly in front of the Cameron residence on the river bank, was covered by five feet of water and two huge saw logs caught in the railing about the grave, stuck up like tomb-stones.

The residence of Mayor Fritchey was underwater to the second story, and he had to be rowed home in a boat.

## RENOVO.

The town of Renovo suffered the loss of \$250,000 by the flood, and the whole country round was flooded completely. All of the telegraph lines were down and communication has been completely cut off until now. The water reached thirty feet above low-water mark, and on Saturday morning about three quarters of the town was under water and several thousand people were driven from their homes. Many houses with all their contents were swept away, and the flooded district is almost completely gutted.

P.H. Sullivan's Opera House, valued at \$20,000, was swept away after midnight on Friday, as was the South Renovo bridge, valued at \$25,000, while the main avenue of South Renovo was swept away to

within a few feet of the houses located there.

At Emporium and other points the lumber industries suffered losses which will run up to almost a million dollars, while all of the surrounding towns and hamlets were away under water. One life lost is reported at Lock Haven, but none here. Many of the people are much in need of aid.

#### COLUMBIA, PA.

At Columbia where the Pennsylvania Railroad strikes the Susquehanna, lumber yards, planing mills, rolling mills and boat-houses were surrounded. The Pennsylvania Canal, the Pennsylvania Railroad and the river were merged in one.

Viewed from Chickes rock, several hundred feet above the water level, for many miles above Columbia nothing can be seen of the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks or canal and all passenger trains for the West are backed off here and those for the East are made up at Columbia.

On the tide water canal the boats have been lifted like so many toys on to the banks. The Williamsport and Lock Haven booms arrived at Columbia, and the river from shore to shore and as far as the eye could reach, was covered with floating timber, wrecked bridges, dwellings, and animals.

The blast furnaces along the river at Marietta and Chickies banked their fires. At these points the damage to property was greatest. The water in these two towns reached Front street and overflowed the ground floors of dwellings and business houses. Much apprehension was felt and the people living along the lower streets were making hurried preparations to leave their homes should the river continue rising. The Columbia and Port Deposit Railroad from Peach Bottom to Frazer Station was covered with water.

#### IN MCKEAN COUNTY.

The New York, Lake Erie and Western's new iron bridge across the Genesee at Belmont, New York, was swept away by the flood, and two men who were on the bridge were carried away and drowned. The Allegheny was making havoc with the monster iron tanks of the National Transit Company on the flats at Olean, where are located a regular army of tanks, each having a capacity of 35,000 barrels. The water on the flats was all the way from five to fifteen feet deep, and seven of the jumbo tanks were floating helplessly about in the flood. Four of the tanks have drifted several rods from their grades.

The tanks are provided with patent safety valves, and the oil could not escape into the torrent unless the tanks are broken.

#### SUNBURY.

The water rose at the rate of two inches an hour all night, and hundreds of citizens were up all night.

About 2 A.M., with a grind and a crash, a large portion of a wooden bridge struck the Philadelphia and Reading iron structure, and down went a third span of it in the hissing and foaming torrent. Parts of barns, whole piles of boards and debris of all descriptions ground and crashed against the bridge the whole night long weakening several other spans and moving them out of position.

At Spruce street, at the lower end of the city, a din of blowing trumpets about 2:30 A.M. caused to crowd to rush there, and it was found that the river was up to the top of the bank. The residents were shoveling dirt and wheeling it to stay the angry waters, but to no effect. The river broke through the bank and soon the whole lower end of the city was under water clear up to the Philadelphia and Reading embankment. Above that point it also burst a sewer and yards soon filled around there and along the river front to Market street.

#### BEDFORD.

Not since the flood of 1847, so says the oldest citizens of the town, has Bedford been so inundated as it is. The rain had on that memorable Friday night been constantly falling for the past twenty-four hours. In the morning families living in the western part of the town, known as Texas, were compelled to move out of the houses. At noon cattle, hogs and sheep were carried down the river.

Traffic and mails were all at a stand. The beautiful lawn at the Springs Hotel, which was just put in readiness for the opening was entirely submerged. Four new iron bridges recently erected by the county have been swept away. At Cessna Station, eight miles north, 200 sheep were lost. At Everett, eight miles east, traffic was carried on all day by the use of flats. Ex-Sheriff Lashley, proprietor of the Lopalace Hotel, was compelled to close his hotel, the water being two feet deep in his barroom.

The railroad bridges between Bedford and Cumberland had been damaged to such an extent that no trains had reached Bedford from the south that day. Superintendent Meyers left on an engine Saturday and was held up somewhere between here and Hyndman, not being able to get either way. A party of commercial men tried to reach Everett by coach, but were compelled to return over the tops of fences. Gardens in the western part of the town have all been ruined. Several fine trout ponds near the town have gone with the wreck.

The damages to bridges alone in the county will reach \$50,000.

(Compiled from The Johnstown Flood by Herman Dieck, A.M.)

## CHAPTER 15

## WILLIAMSPORT.

Since June 1st the city of Williamsport was flooded with 34 feet of water, having the Susquehanna boom taken out with 200,000,000 feet of logs, over 40,000,000 feet of sawed lumber taken, mills carried away and others wrecked, business and industrial establishments wrecked and a large number of lives lost. A flood nearly seven feet higher than the great high water of 1865.

Early on Friday news was received there of the flood at Clearfield, but it was not before 2 o'clock Saturday morning that the swelling water began to become prominent, the river then showing a rise averaging two feet to the hour. Steadily and rapidly thereafter the rise continued. The rain up the country had been terrific, and from Thursday afternoon throughout the night and during Friday and Friday night, the rain fell here with but little interruption. After midnight, Friday, it came down in absolute torrents until nearly daylight Saturday morning. As a result of this rise Griffin's run, a small stream running through the city from northwest to southeast, was raised until it flooded the whole territory on either side of it worse than ever before occurred.

Soon after daylight, the rain having ceased, it began to subside, and as the river had not then reached an alarming height, very few persons were concerned over the outlook. The water kept getting higher and higher, and spreading out over the lower streets.

At about 9 o'clock in the forenoon the logs began to go down, filling the stream from bank to bank. The water had by this time reached almost the stage of 1865. It was coming up Third street, near the Court House, and was up Fourth street to Market. Not long after it reached Third street and William and advanced up Fourth street to Pine. Its onward progress did not stop, however, as it rose higher on Third and soon began to reach Fourth street, both at Elmira and Locust street. No one along Fourth, between William and Hepburn, had any conception that it would trouble them, but the sequel proved their mistake.

Soon after noon the water began crossing the railroad at Walnut and Campbell streets, and rapidly the country all north of the railroad was soon submerged, that part along the run being flooded for the second time during the day. The rise kept on until 9 o'clock at night, and after that hour it began to go slowly the other way.

By daylight Sunday morning it had fallen two feet, and the receding continued during the day. When the water was at its highest the memorable sight was to be seen of a level surface of water, extending from the northern line of the city, from Rural avenue, on Locust street, entirely across the city to the mountains on the south side. This meant that the water was six feet deep on the floors of buildings in Market Square, and over four feet deep in the station of the Pennsylvania Railroad at the Park Hotel. Fully three quarters of the city was submerged. The First Presbyterian, Christ Church and Trinity each had their organ badly damaged by the water. In St. Paul's Lutheran Church the electric motor that pumps the organ was flooded, and a large number of new books of worship, which had but recently been received, were damaged by the flood. Among the other churches that suffered were the Mulberry Street Methodist, Market Street Lutheran and Immanuel's Reformed Church of the Disciples. The City Mission foundation walls were injured, and the edifice is now badly out of plumb.

The loss was necessarily enormous. The business houses throughout the city all lose heavily, many of them over \$20,000 each. The loss falls heaviest on the lumber men. All the logs are lost and a large share of the cut lumber. The loss of life has also been heavy. Two children of Charles Edwards were drowned, and three children of a family named Shultz and a child of William Deitrich, a man named Mitchler and an unknown man also perished, all in the city. At Nippenose, 12 miles up the river, 12 persons were drowned, members of the families of George and William Youngman and two young lady visitors.

The loss of property has been very heavy in all places around Williamsport. Morris, Tioga county, is a

total wreck. The mills and part of the logs of Mr. Landis, the Dover Mill and the Blackwells Mill are gone. Many dwellings and other buildings are swept away. The Pince Creek Railroad has suffered greatly. The track is torn away and a large amount of the embankment was washed out just west of this city, and all along up to Blackwells and beyond. At Salladesburg much damage was done. Houses and mills were flooded, and in some instances moved and greatly injured. The plank road was torn up, bridges carried away, and great destruction caused at every point.

The tannery at Salladesburg was greatly damaged and considerable bark lost. The grist mill just above the site of the Larrys Creek Woolen Mills suffered serious damage and the dam was taken out. The farmers along the creek suffered very much in the loss of fences and outbuildings, and in some instances the soil was washed from a portion of the fields and the growing crops ruined. The Larrys Creek region has suffered from floods before, but never to the extent it has on this occasion. In one instance several persons only save their lives by clinging to the branches of trees until rescued. The iron road bridge near the mouth of the creek is turned around and rendered impassible, but the old canal aqueduct is still there. There was much other damage done along the stream. All along the line of the Philadelphia and Reading track through the city destruction met the eye. Many cars were lifted from the track and torn in pieces. The number of houses taken away or toppled into heaps of rubbish cannot yet be stated, but is quite large. Along the entire river front, going west from Pine street, debris is piled, and in some places extends up to Third street, even further into the heart of the city. On Pine street, near Third, a large outhouse lies on the street and sidewalk, while on Third street, above Hepburn, lumber and other drift are piled half as high as the houses. The forces of the water can be imagined when it is stated that a car, loaded with coal, was carried a distance of five miles and left sticking on top of a piece of the boom. A number of boom cribs were cut off as smoothly as if by a knife. Many families showed wonderful courage in remaining in their rhouses after the water entered the second stories. In some cases their only chance to get out of the buildings would have been through the trap doors in the roofs. It was often more dangerous to try to get out than to remain, and many boats, loaded with those seeking to escape, were overturned in the angry waters.

The clothing which had been called for was badly needed, as so many have lost all but what they had on, that being wet, and no chance being afforded to dry it.

A child was born in a saw mill occupied by a number of homeless people, the mother being wholly without necessary accomodations, and the committee found a sick woman in a distressing condition on the second story of a building that had been flooded, who was there without fire or other comforts.

Word has been received from the Crescent Nail Works, on the Northern Central Railroad, that the place has been nearly all washed away. Many of the houses and a part of the nail works are gone. The water was up to the roofs of most of the houses. The population took refuge in a church on the side hill and in such buildings as were not too much in water. The people were left entirely destitute.

#### A TELEGRAPHIC CORRESPONDENCE.

The following telegraphic correspondence passed between Governor Beaver and Mayor Foresman, of Williamsport:

WILLIAMSPORT, Pa., June 4th, 1889. - To Governor Beaver: The situation expressed in a few words to this, The boom has been cleaned of logs. From the principal yards along the river front the manufactured timber has been swept away. The houses of the poor people nearest the river have been carried away, with all they possessed. Thousands of people are homeless and without anything but the clothes upon their backs. Provisions are scarce and most needed quick. Many of our people are in absolute want for the necessities of life. Although bereft of property themselves, our business men have responded nobly for present necessities. At a meeting called yesterday \$7000 in cash was raised. We badly need disinfectants. Dead animals and all kinds of filth are strewed upon the streets, and grave fears of an epidemic are entertained. Stocks of goods of stores in the centre of the city are ruined. It is impossible to estimate the loss and damage to different kinds of property. Five million dollars is a low estimate of the loss on lumber alone; other losses larger. The surrounding country has suffered just as badly. Booms, bridges and villages have been swept away, and the loss of life has

been considerable. Judge Cummins is treasurer of the Relief Fund, and will see personally to the faithful distribution of all contributions. Responsible relief committees are now organized in each ward of the city, and aid is administered as fast as we get it. Please God, we are not dismayed, and rely on His guidance, the generosity of our own State and country to aid us in this hour of our dire necessity.

One thousand military tents will afford the greatest possible relief to our people, who are now without shelter, and the lumber all having gone other temporary shelter cannot be provided soon enough. The tents that you might send will be taken charge of by the Mayor, and taken care of and returned in as good condition as possible. Send us several large mess tents where we can feed the people in large numbers. The low ground where many of these people reside is an unfit place for them to return to for sanitary reasons.

MAYOR FORESMAN.

HARRISBURG, June 4th, 1889. - Mayor of Williamsport, Pa: Be of good cheer. Your reliance is not misplaced. God and the country will sustain you. Will reach with help as soon as Montgomery bridge can be crossed. I am loading cars here with flour and groceries, notwithstanding the pressure of our own stricken people. Will telegraph Philadelphia at once for provisions and disinfectants. Put your unemployed men to work removing debris and cleansing your city. I will furnish means for paying them reasonable wages, and this will answer the double purpose of preventing disease and the lawlessness which springs from idleness. May not be able to send you tents. The State has no large tents such as you desire. Better use your market house and other public buildings. May be able, when communication is established, to send you a carload of ordinary canvass. The country is responding nobly to humanity's call, and the address sent out last night will give a better idea of the situation, so that I have no fear of any lack of means for furnishing all needed help. Communicate with me directly and freely as to your needs and how I can co-operate in supplying them.

JAMES A. BEAVER, Governor.

WILLIAMSPORT, Pa., June 4, 1889. - Governor Beaver: With the tents asked for, furnish a supply of blankets and camp equipage.

J.S. FORESMAN, MAYOR.

The estimated loss of the merchants in the city is \$885,000, and that of the lumbermen is estimate at \$5,000,000. The Lumbermen's Exchange appointed Log and Lumber Committees for the protection of the lumber that has been caught on the banks. Fifty million feet of lumber have been caught above the boom and will be sawed here this Summer. The Taylor Mill, which floated off bodily, lodged about two miles below the city and will be returned. One firm has traced 29,000,000 feet of sawed lumber. If the present period can be tided over the city will recover. Contributions have been received from the cities of New York to Omaha, Neb., and the citizens were greatly cheered over the interest that is taken by the outside world.

It is estimated that three-fourths of the 200,000,000 feet of timber which floated away from Williamsport, Pa., is floating about the Chesapeake, or lying on its shores. The "Stray Log Committee," from the Lumber Exchange of that city, are now here surveying the situation.

It is probable that they will erect several saw mills on the shores of the bay to work up the stray logs, most of which have drifted upon the eastern shore.

Mr. Frank Gowan, who lives at Legroes Point, at the mouth of Bush river, says that several bodies have passed down the bay during the last few days. On Sunday he found the body of a man wedged between some timber and endeavored to extricate it, but could not. the body was that of a white man, of medium size, wearing a black goatee. He was about 30 years of age. Floating near the body were two houses, one a one-story, and the second a neat two-story cottage, freshly painted. The second story was above water, and Mr. Gowan climbed into it and found it nicely furnished, the furniture, wearing apparel, &c., being in just such positions as they were when the flood started the

cottage on its voyage.

One of the heaviest losers by the Williamsport flood is Mr. Henry James, the lumber dealer, of Baltimore. It is estimated that 15,000,000 feet of his timber floated away, a part of which will be recovered, with other timber, in the bay, and will probably greatly reduce his loss, which is now approximated at \$250,000.

The work of replacing the lost spans of the Sunbury bridge has been completed and through rail communication between Philadelphia and Williamsport has been restored, and on the 7th., day of June President Corbin issued the following notice:

"The Philadelphia and Reading Railroad will receive and forward free of charge any consignments of provisions or clothing for the sufferers by the flood at Williamsport. Such consignments to be marked to order of the Station Agent of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Company at Williamsport and will be subject to disposition of the relief committee of that city."

#### THE BELL'S GAP ROAD

A report from Bellwood, Pa., gives this information in regard to the condition of the Bell's Gap Railroad and Clearfield and Jefferson Railroad:

"The culverts, roadbed and small bridges washed out have been repaired, and the main line of railroad from Bellwood to Punxsutawney is in operation again. Loaded coal and coke cars are awaiting shipment over the main line of Pennsylvania Railroad. Telegraphic communication is again established over the line. Individual losses have been greatest at Irvona, Coalport and Blair City."

#### HUNTINGDON COUNTY.

From Bedford to Huntingdon, on the Rosstown branch, and in Lewistown, on the Juniata river, the devastation was the greatest in Central Pennsylvania, except, of course, in Johnstown.

Not a house was left that stood within reach of the swollen streams there. The damage to property will reach \$500,000, while the other towns in the county have suffered correspondingly. At Mapleton, the immense tannery of L.A. Roberts was damaged to the extent of \$200,000, and the loss to other property will reach \$100,000 more. The Powell furnace, at Saxton, sustained a loss of \$300,000, and at that place both the railroad bridges were swept away, leaving railroad communication with Bedford cut off. The Huntingdon and Broad Top Railroad sustained but slight damage. For a distance of three miles below Huntingdon four miles of the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks were destroyed, with bridges gone at Manayunk and Lewistown, the latter having gone down during a heavy storm last night.

From Huntingdon to the junction of the Juniata and Susquehanna rivers the sweep of the flood extended, filling this once beautiful valley with desolation and ruin. Growing crops in the lowlands were destroyed, and in Smith's Valley, this county, the farming lands, comprising an area twelve by two miles, have been stripped of every vestige of soil. As far as known 300 houses have been destroyed in this county. Relief committees are now engaged and are seeking assistance for the destitute.

#### IN THE CUMBERLAND VALLEY.

A heavy storm visited the entire length of the Cumberland Valley Railroad. The storm went over the river from the Maryland side and left ruin and desolation in its path. A barn belonging to a man named Criswell, of Falling Waters, was blown down, as was also part of his house. A number of other buildings were destroyed. A man named Powell took shelter at a corn-crib, which blew over and crushed him to death. John Vogel was caught in the storm and being carried along for a considerable distance was hurled against a fence with such force as to kill him instantly.

#### CARLISLE.

In Carlisle the shock was felt in every quarter of the town. Several persons were injured, one severely. Miss Kelly, of Springfield, near Newville, was walking from the Farmers' Bank toward Kramer's, and was struck by lightning and is in a critical condition. E.L. Kramer had his head and neck burned into a blister. Emma Eversman was burned upon the hand. A number of others were slightly injured. It injured the First Presbyterian Church tower and tore up pavements, chimneys, etc. The loss in Cumberland Valley will foot up very heavy.

#### TYRONE AND CLEARFIELD.

The Juniata river overflowed its banks at Tyrone and flooded the entire southern portion of the city, causing great destruction to property and the streets. People living in the flooded districts had to be removed from their homes in wagons to places of safety. All the railroads centering in this place are badly damaged by the floods. The water was never known to be so high at this place. At Curwensville one man was drowned and at Clearfield two young ladies.

The Susquehanna river overflowed its banks at Clearfield and the entire place was under water and all means of escape cut off. Many people gathered in the court house and opera house as a place of safety.

(Compiled from The Johnstown Flood by Herman Dieck, A.M.)