

APPALLING

The City of Johnstown, Pa., Wiped Out of Existence.

DEATH AND RUIN REIGN SUPREME IN THE CONEMAUGH VALLEY.

Battered Between Ten and Twelve Thousand People Perished by Flood and Fire.

The Bodies of Thousands of Unfortunates Buried in the Mud and Debris of the Streets.

Fears of a Pestilence From the Stench of Decomposing Bodies—Terrible Scenes of Misery and Suffering.

DETAILS OF THE AWFUL DISASTER.

PITTSBURG, Pa., June 1.—About 7 o'clock a. m. information reached this city that Johnstown had been destroyed by a flood. The reports were meager at first, all wires being down. At 1 o'clock a. m. the reports were more definite. The lake owned by the South Fork Fishing Club at Johnstown and the reservoir at Red Bank, swollen by recent rains, had burst their banks. Without any warning the deluge came down on Johnstown. The loss can not be estimated. Thousands of people have lost their lives. The flood swept the entire town away. Houses were backed up along the banks of the Conemaugh for three-quarters of a mile, piled up on top of each other, a mass of debris seventy-five feet high, and all on fire.

A special train containing newspaper men only got as far as Bolivar, twenty miles from the scene of the disaster. The Pennsylvania railroad from there on is nothing but a mass of water, and the tracks lie high standing on dead and piled in heaps clear to Johnstown.

Forty persons were rescued from the waters between Johnstown and New Florence. They were in a completely exhausted condition and could not hold on to the rocks.

The special train pulled in at Bolivar at 11:30 and trainmen were notified that further progress was impossible. The greatest excitement prevailed at that place and parties of citizens are out all the time endeavoring to save the poor unfortunates who are carried to eternity in the rushing torrent.

The tidal wave struck Bolivar just after dark, and in five minutes the Conemaugh river, 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. The passengers were mixed with a number of citizens that once gathered on the county bridge, and they were rescued by a mass of water, and were taken to the opposite side.

Frank J. Herron, solicitor for the Times, says that he has just arrived in this city. Mr. Herron tells a graphic story of the disaster that fell on the mountain river, that passed through the town of Johnstown. About five o'clock the large reservoir above the town broke and the immense volume of water rushed down the city, carrying with it death and destruction. The water rose so rapidly that many people could not escape from their homes and were carried away from which they were rescued by men riding horses and mules.

THE DEADLY DAME.

In order to describe the extent of this calamity it is necessary to describe the respective locations of the reservoir and Johnstown. The reservoir lies about eighteen miles northeast of Johnstown, and is the site of the old reservoir which was one of the feeders of the Pennsylvania canal. The site of the reservoir is about three miles above Johnstown, and is from 200 to 300 feet above the level of the town. It is a natural reservoir, and is about a mile and a quarter in width, and in some places it is 100 feet in depth. It holds the water in a basin, and 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 1,000 feet wide. It is 90 feet in thickness at the base and the height is 110 feet. The dam is about 30 feet high.

Recognizing the menace which the lake had to the region below the South Fork club had the dam inspected once a week. The dam was built by a contractor, and the investigation showed that nothing less than some consolidation of nature would tear the dam away and loosen the waters of death. The steady rains of the last forty-eight hours increased the volume of water in the lake, and the dam, which was already swelled by the lesser rains earlier in the week.

From the best information obtained at this time it is evident that the nature of a cloud-burst must have been the culmination of the struggle of the water against the embankment of the dam. At 11:30 a. m. the first force of rescuers and press representatives, who had been making every effort for the past two days to gain entrance into the valley in which was located the city of Johnstown, accomplished their purpose just as the light of Sunday morning's sun broke over the mountain tops surrounding the place of desolation. The news received in this city during the day confirms in almost every detail all of the gravest fears, statements and conjectures that have been entertained. All reports received agree that the city is literally a ruin, the description of which is simply impossible.

From Johnstown to Mineral Point tower the Pennsylvania road bed has been completely swept away. For a distance of one mile the road is a mass of mud and water, and a complete wreck to a point above South Fork.

Twenty-seven Pennsylvania railroad locomotives and an unknown number of both freight cars and passenger coaches are lying in the river bed under the debris of Johnstown at the stone bridge. The bodies of Woodville and Conemaugh borough, above Johnstown, are swept as clearly off the face of the earth as if they had never had an existence. Of Woodville's population of 1,500 souls but about half a dozen have been accounted for. The Hungarian colony at Cambridge is scattering and plundering everything they can reach.

The work of exhuming the dead at Johnstown has only begun, but already 300 bodies have been carried out of the ruins. Eleven carloads of finished coffins and thirty undertakers arrived Sunday and the work of interment which began in the afternoon will rapidly progress under the direction of a specially organized force of men.

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This map, taken from the Pittsburgh Dispatch, gives an accurate representation of Johnstown and the adjacent country that was swept away by the great flood. The map shows the location of the reservoir, the dam, the city of Johnstown, and the surrounding country. It also shows the location of the various towns and villages that were destroyed by the flood.

At Conemaugh, Woodville, Kernville, Cambria City and other surrounding towns in the flooded district are as badly off as Johnstown. At Conemaugh, the town of Woodville has been literally wiped out of existence. At Woodville the percentage of death is even higher than at Johnstown. The town of Cambria City is also a mass of ruins. The town of Cambria City is also a mass of ruins. The town of Cambria City is also a mass of ruins.

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