

# THE RAGING SUSQUEHANNA

## WILLIAMSPORT FLOODED BY ITS RAPID RISE.

A NUMBER OF PERSONS DROWNED AND MILLIONS OF FEET OF LUMBER AND LOGS CARRIED AWAY.

WILLIAMSPORT, Penn., June 3.—Since Saturday morning last this city has undergone the experience of being flooded with thirty-four feet of water, of 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. The flood was nearly seven feet higher than the great high water of 1865.

Early on Friday news reached here 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, Grafs 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.

Soon after daylight, the rain having ceased, the stream began to subside, and as the river had not then reached an alarming height, very few 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 to the Court House, and was up Fourth-street to Market. Not long after it reached Third-street on William and advanced up Fourth to Pine. Its onward progress did not stop, however, as it rose higher on Third-street, and soon began to reach Fourth-street, both at Elmira and Locust streets. No one along Fourth between William and Hepburn had any conception that it would trouble them, but the sequel proved they were mistaken.

Soon after noon the water began crossing the railroad at Walnut and Campbell streets, and soon the country all north of the railroad was submerged, that part along the run being for the second time during the day flooded. 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 that 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 Kural-avenue on Locust-street, entirely across the city to the mountain on the south side. This meant that the water was six feet deep on the floors of the buildings in Market-square, over four feet deep in the station of the Pennsylvania Railroad and at the Park Hotel. Fully three-quarters of the city was submerged.

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 lumbermen. 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 Edward were drowned, three children of a family named Schultz, and a child of William Dietrich, a man named Mitchell, and an unknown man also perished, all in the city. At Nippenose, twelve miles up the river, twelve Nippenose were drowned, members of the families of George and William Youngman and two young lady visitors.

A general meeting of lumbermen was held this afternoon to take action on the question of looking after the lost stock. A comparison as to losses was made, but many of those present were unable to give an estimate of the amount they had lost. It was found that the aggregate of logs lost from the boom was about 200,000,000 feet, and the aggregate of manufactured lumber fully 40,000,000 feet. Among the heaviest losers under the last named head are the following: F. Coleman, Howard & Perley, Consolidated Lumber Company, White, Lentz & White, Williamsport Lumber Company, Payne, Cochran & Co., Edgar Munson, E. Williams & Foreman, B. C. Bowman & Co., and S. Mack Taylor. The only sawmill taken was the Beaver Mill structure, which contained two mills, that of S. Mack Taylor and the Williamsport Lumber Company. It went down stream just as it stood, and has lodged a few miles below the city, where it now stands intact.

The shingle mill of T. J. Duffy and his stock of shingles were taken, including the logs he lost from the boom. His total loss is \$20,000.

An examination of the boom made to-day shows that the piers are all safe but half a dozen, and the boom sticks are all in place, but one-tenth of the number. In about thirty days the boom will again be in good working order.

Two more lives were lost to-day. Abram Fiederley and his son, aged fourteen years, made an attempt to cross the river above the dam in a boat, but were carried over the falls and drowned.

News comes this evening that five men and a baby were drowned at Baker's Camp, near English Centre, in the northern part of Lycoming County.

There is a great amount of distress, as many families lost every thing they had in the way of provisions. Relief committees have been organized and will be at work by to-morrow. The citizens held a meeting to-day, and subscriptions were received ranging from \$1,000 down, nearly \$7,000 being raised. Groceries are about exhausted, except canned goods. There is a little flour in the hands of the railroad companies, which is being put out.

Railroad and telegraphic communication, suspended since Friday night, is opening. Railroad telegraph lines began working east to-day and trains are running from Dewart eastward. Bridges on the Pennsylvania Railroad from Linden to Sunbury were all taken. That at Montgomery is now being rebuilt, and when it is done, trains will be able to reach the south side of the river opposite this city. Through trains will be run by way of Lock Haven to the main line at Tyrone this week. On the Northern Central Railroad trains are run south only to Roaring Branch. All bridges between that point and here are gone but three.

PHILADELPHIA, June 3.—A member of the Philadelphia Times's staff telegraphs from Williamsport:

Trusting to the strong arms of brave John Nichol, I safely crossed the Susquehanna at Montgomery two hours ago in a small boat, and met Superintendent Westfall on the other side on an engine. We went to where the Northern Central crosses the river again to Williamsport, where it is wider and swifter. The havoc everywhere is dreadful. Most of the farmers for miles and miles have lost their stock and crops, and some their horses and barns. In one place I saw thirty dead cattle. They had caught on the top of a hill, but were drowned and carried into a creek that had been a part of a river. I could see where the river had been over the tops of the barns a quarter of a mile from the usual bank. A man named Gibson, some miles below Williamsport, lost every animal but a gray horse, which got into the loft and staid there, with the water up to his body.

A woman named Clark is alive with six cows that she got up-stairs. Along the edges of the washed-out tracks families with stoves and a few things saved are under board shanties. We passed the saw mill that by forming a dam is responsible for the loss of the Williamsport bridges. The river looked very wild, but Superintendent Westfall and I crossed it in two boats. It is nearly half a mile across. Both boats were carried some distance and nearly upset. It was odd, after wading through mud into the town, to find all Williamsport knowing little or nothing about Johnstown or what had been happening elsewhere. Mr. Westfall was beset by thousands asking about friends on the other side, and inquiring when food can be got through.

The loss is awful. There have not been many buildings in the town carried off, but there are few that have not been damaged. There is mourning everywhere for the dead. Men look serious and worn, and every one is going about splashed with mud. The Mayor in his address says: "Send us help at once—in the name of God, at once. There are hundreds utterly destitute. They have lost all they have, and have no hope of employment for the future. Philadelphia should, if possible, send provisions. Such a thing as a chicken is unknown here. They were all carried off. It is hard to get anything to eat for love or money. Flour is needed worse than anything else."

I gave away a cooked chicken and sandwiches that I had with me to two men who had had nothing to eat since yesterday morning. The flood having subsided, all the grim destitution is now uncovered. Last night a great many grocery and other stores were gutted, not by the water, but by hungry, desperate people. They only took things to eat.

There has been considerable anxiety about the banks owing to the people who are in urgent need, but they will weather the storm, especially if they receive any support from outside. The arrival and presence of Mr. Westfall, and his announcement that the road will be open from Philadelphia to the other side of the river to-morrow night, had done much to allay the panic and create a better feeling. One hundred special police have been appointed by Mayor Korseman.

A pathetic feature of the loss of life is the great number of children drowned. In one case two brothers named Youngman, up the river, who have a woolen mill, lost their wives and children and their property, too, by the bursting of the dam. Everything was carried away in the night. They saved themselves by being strong. One caught in a tree on the side of the mountain across the river and remained there from Saturday night until late Sunday with the river below him. A great many people are missing. How many cannot be told at present. It is possible the loss of life may run into the hundreds. Some railroad men, who came from a point above called

Jersey shore, found and anchored a number of dead bodies that were floating around.

Williamsport is the capital of Lycoming County, and is situated on the west bank of the Susquehanna River. It is 200 miles northwest of Philadelphia, 75 miles south of Elmira, and 91 miles north of Harrisburg. It is on the Northern Central Railroad and the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad, at the west terminus of the Catawissa and Williamsport Railroad. It is the greatest lumber market in the State. The southern bank of the river is connected by a suspension bridge, above which is the great Susquehanna boom, which cost about one million dollars and has a capacity of 300,000,000 feet of lumber. The city is in the valley and has scores of attractions. Relatively it is almost as badly situated for a freshet as Johnstown.