

# FLOOD TAKES EIGHT LIVES

## Water from Mountain Reservoirs Overflows Brickyards at Dutchess Junction.

### FIRST BREAK GAVE WARNING

Otherwise the Loss of Life by the  
Deluge Which Followed Would  
Have Been Much Greater—New  
York Central Tracks  
Washed Out.

MATTEAWAN, July 14.—The Melzingah dams, which supply Fishkill Landing and Matteawan with water, burst at 2:30 o'clock this morning. The waters rushed down the mountain, following the old bed of the Melzingah Brook. Two bridges were swept away. The great volume of water struck the little settlement occupied by the laborers of Frank Timoney's brick yard at Dutchess Junction.

There were two floods. The first was not disastrous, but alarmed the inhabitants, most of whom left their houses. A short time later the second dam burst, pouring the flood down the mountain, carrying with it a great mass of debris. This struck the buildings in the rear of Timoney's brickyard.

One building was a boarding house, conducted by Patrick Murphy. This building contained five families—Mr. and Mrs. Conroy and five children; Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Murphy and four boys; John Conroy, wife, and two children; an Italian named Deluka, wife, and child, and Mrs. Ann Ferry, a widow, and her young son. A short distance from the Murphy boarding house was a building occupied by about twenty-five laborers, mostly Slavs, with a few Italians.

Five bodies have been taken from the wreckage left in the wake of the flood, and there are known to be two and probably three more lying somewhere beneath the piled-up debris, which is all that remains of the houses that were swept away by the mighty torrent. The names of those whose bodies have been recovered as officially given out by Coroner H. B. Bevier of Matteawan are as follows:

CONROY, Mrs. JOHN, aged thirty-six, wife of the engineer in Timoney's brick yard.

FERRY, Mrs. MARY, aged thirty-eight.

FERRY, WILLIAM, aged nine, son of Mrs. Ferry.

DELUKA, PHILAMEUA, an Italian girl, aged six.

SRUKA, JOHN, a Hungarian, aged twenty-eight.

The missing are:

CONROY, JOHN, son of Engineer Conroy, aged two.

CONROY, JULIA, daughter of Engineer Conroy, aged six.

An unknown Hungarian.

#### The Broken Reservoirs.

There were two reservoirs in the mountain, the lower one half a mile distant from the other. The upper dam gave way, letting the volume of water into the lower reservoir. This also burst, and the water rushed down through a ravine. The water works system was operated by a private company. The reservoirs were situated in the Fishkill Mountains, about a mile east of Dutchess Junction.

A visit to the upper reservoir shows that the overflow began about seventy-five feet from the gatehouse, and washed the south side of the bank out for a distance of seventy-five feet. That weakened the wall so that it started toward the north end of the gatehouse overflow, and gradually weakened the bank and the retaining wall. A lot of immense boulders were carried down the stream half a mile, through the gap in the lower reservoir. The wave was about fifteen feet high, as shown by traces along its course.

When it reached a point about 700 feet above the buildings it had spread out until it was about 200 feet wide and 10 feet deep, moving with resistless force. It tore out by the roots trees that were from 1 to 2 feet in diameter.

#### Stories of Eye Witnesses.

John Conroy, the engineer at Timoney's brick yard, whose wife and two children lost their lives and who himself sustained a broken arm, was dazed by his losses and injuries and was unable at first to say much about the disaster. He directed inquirers to Henry McGurgan and Michael Clark, two brickyard hands who had been in one of the destroyed buildings. They and several other men were in the structure when it started from its foundations.

Several of the men escaped by jumping from the windows as the building was carried along by the flood. Clark remained in the floating structure until it struck one of the brickyard shanties, which was moved from its foundation by the collision. When the current had swept the shanty near the shore he jumped on the bank and escaped unharmed. McGurgan, in attempting to reach the bank, fell under the building, which passed over him. He clung to roots of trees that had been uncovered by the torrent, and climbed up the bank to a place of safety. His back was severely injured.

#### Worse than Johnstown for One.

To-night Engineer Conroy stated that his wife and children were not in the building when the second flood came. They were on a knoll on the edge of the flood. He told his wife to stay there with the children until he went back to the building. But she attempted to find a place of greater apparent safety, and in crossing to another house the flood swept her and the children to their death.

Mrs. Conroy, before her marriage, lived at Johnstown, Penn., where the great flood occurred several years ago. She was rescued there by John Conroy, who afterward married her.

John Sruka and his brother Martin, who had left their building after the first "big water," as they called it, came down, returned to the building to save some of their effects. Martin, hearing the roar of the advancing waters of the second flood, called to his brother and started for the high ground. His brother, however, disregarded the warning and perished, however.

Conroy says he slept until 1:30 A. M., when he was aroused by the people in the house, who warned him of the approaching flood. He came out and found most of the people of the house on the stoop. The water was then about four feet deep. The men, wading through water up to their hips, began carrying women and children to places of safety. The first wave, Murphy says, swept the stoop away. The second carried the house down stream, piling up a mass of wreckage.

Frank McGinnis, a fifteen-year-old boy, a machine tender in Timoney's yards, was on the piazza of Murphy's house. He says the house broke in two. The flood carried the first half with him clinging to it down toward Hammond & Freeman's yards, which adjoin Timoney's. He went under several times, but managed to swim, and was at length pulled out in an unconscious condition by Charles White, a fellow workman. He had no clothing on when rescued. He was badly bruised and received a great cut on the face.

John T. Lundy of Matteawan, one of Timoney's employes, rescued Patrick Murphy and four little boys. He waded out to a building and carried them one by one to a place of safety. This was directly after the first wave. They had no more than got to the bank before the house was swept away.

Murphy lost about \$1,000 in cash, which had been given him by laborers for safe keeping. A number of watches were lost and several hundred dollars by other brickyarders. Fifteen or twenty of the laborers have no clothing but that in which they escaped.

#### Havoc on the Central Road.

After wrecking Timoney's brick yard and the houses adjacent to it, the flood overflowed the New York Central Railroad and washed out the tracks for a distance of several hundred feet. A freight train was

passing south at the time of the deluge. The water struck the locomotive, raising it partly on its side, but the engineer opened the throttle and pulled his train through at a fast rate, and thus escaped being swept into the river. He afterward gave the alarm to the nearest signal tower.

The Montreal express train arrived at the scene about three minutes after the accident, and was flagged through the efforts of M. H. Reilly, an employe at Timoney's brickyard, who boarded at Murphy's. He thought nothing of the heavy rainstorm until he heard somebody on the piazza, about 1:30, speak of the reservoir on the hill.

After making inquiries he apprehended danger and went down to the track. Soon afterward he heard a tremendous roar in the mountain and then the crash of the buildings being swept away. A freight train had just passed that portion of the track and stopped below, having struck a rock that had rolled down the mountain. Reilly hurried down the track and told the flagman that the roadbed was covered by the flood and he had better flag the express, which he did.

Trains were stalled by the washout all the way from Fishkill to Poughkeepsie. One of these was a Cook excursion train, the passengers on which expected to start for Europe to-day. A temporary trestle was hurriedly built at the break in the railroad track, and within about six hours trains were again moving.

#### Damage by the Flood.

There are three of the Timoney brick yards. Two of them are badly damaged. The north one, managed by Frank Timoney, Jr., is a total loss. The flood swept directly over it, carrying away everything but the sheds. The brick-making plant, wagons, carts, &c., were swept across the railroad track into the river.

At the northern yard were sixty arches of "green" brick, 45,000 in each arch. The water softened these and let the whole down in a mass of clay. A twelve-arch kiln was burning. The flood put out the fire and practically ruined the brick. Mr. Timoney will be unable to resume operations in the two yards this year. The yards had a capacity of 24,000,000 bricks a year, and Mr. Timoney's loss is \$25,000. The adjoining brick yard of Hammond & Freeman was damaged to the extent of \$5,000.

The three buildings in which the laborers had quarters were totally wrecked. There is hardly a piece of wood two feet long anywhere. In the ravine there are great rocks, some of them weighing five to ten tons each, rolled down the mountain by the torrent. One rock, weighing ten tons at least, lies on the site of Murphy's boarding house. It is supposed to be the one that knocked the house off its foundation.

About 1,000 yards above Murphy's boarding house, directly in the centre of the ravine, was a small settlement of Arabs, thirty or forty in number, occupying half a dozen huts. There is not a vestige of the settlement now. So far as known, no Arabs lost their lives. They have not reported anybody missing.

On either side of the railroad track are great piles of rubbish, tree trunks, rocks, pieces of houses, all sorts of household goods, clothing, &c.

The disaster does not affect the water supply of Fishkill Landing and Matteawan, which derive an abundance from other reservoirs.

Half a mile up the mountain from the scene of the disaster was Cascade Bridge. It originally covered a gap ten or fifteen feet wide. The torrent swept the bridge away and enlarged the gap to a width of seventy-five feet, and cut huge waterways in the earth and rocks. A few rods above Cascade Bridge was a second bridge, which was also torn away. Near this second bridge is an almost perpendicular fall fifty feet high, made by the flood.

#### Searching for the Victims.

Two gangs of men worked all day in the ruins, searching for the dead. One was employed by Coroner Bevier and the other by Mr. Aldridge, a neighboring brick manufacturer. The Coroner was present nearly all day, and will hold an inquest here to-morrow.

Between Timoney's and Hammond & Freeman's brick yards is a stone wall about four feet high. There is also a clump of trees there. The flood headed directly for Hammond & Freeman's yard, but a mass of rubbish lodging in the trees and against the wall diverted the current, sending it to the left and directly across Timoney's yard.

All the bodies but one thus far recovered were found in the debris in and around the clump of trees. The body of the Italian girl was found beside the New York Central Railroad tracks, and it is possible that some of the missing may have been swept into the river.