

# ANSONIA'S RUINOUS FLOOD

## MUCH PROPERTY SWEEP AWAY.

The Bursting of a Reservoir Dam Sends a Reckless Torrent Through a Portion of the Village, Demolishing Everything in Its Path—Happy No Loss of Life.

ANSONIA, March 27.—Great destruction of property was caused yesterday afternoon by the breaking away of Quillinan's dam at Beaver lake, about a mile and a half above the village. The property was bought about a year ago by the Ansonia Water company for reservoir purposes. Last fall the company erected a new dam, increasing the depth of the water about 7 feet. On the stream below the lake are located a number of manufacturing establishments, the power for which is supplied from three other dams. There was great excitement and alarm in the village when it became known, about 2 o'clock, that Quillinan's dam showed signs of giving way under the unusual body of water resulting from the heavy rains. In the hope of averting the threatened calamity between one and two hundred men soon gathered at the dam and threw stones and other materials into the water at the place where the granite work appeared to be yielding. The flood gates were also opened, but neither of these measures were of any avail. The little stream of water that was coming from the face of the dam steadily increased in size until at about 4 o'clock the whole structure gave way and the immense body of water swept down the little valley with a deafening roar, and a force which swept away everything in its path.

Fortunately the people in the factories and houses on the course of the flood had received sufficient warning of the impending disaster to seek safety on high ground. The torrent that burst from the dam opening was five feet high and about three hundred feet wide. The first building which the flood struck and instantly swept away in ruins, was the factory owned by Dana Bartholomew, and occupied by the Derby Bit company. The operatives had just beat a hasty retreat from the premises to places of safety, their departure being so hurried that many of them left behind their tools and wearing apparel. Had the abandonment of the shop been delayed only a few seconds longer there must have been a terrible loss of life. The power of the flood was so great that the heavy iron machinery in the shop and large sections of the brick walls were swept along a distance of several hundred feet. A long piece of shafting, weighing about a ton, was hurled against a big hickory tree with such force that it was bent around the trunk in the shape of a horse shoe.

The flood sustained a momentary check at the Schunck dam, where there was located a building occupied by Henry B. Whiting as a fishing rod manufactory. After a moment, however, the dam gave way and the liberated mass of waters swept on, taking with them all of the factory building except its tall chimney. A house occupied by Henry Green and owned by Richard Hamilton and A. Martinez's barn were the next to go. Then the waters rushed in upon the pond of the Spring Manufacturing company and carried away a massive granite dam which had been regarded as strong enough to resist any pressure. The shops were badly damaged, but not wholly demolished. Just below this point the flood diverged to the right, and crossing Beaver street wrecked the barns of Mrs. Kane and Michael Donovan. The latter building, which was left in the middle of Center street, turned the water to the left and towards the Naugatuck river. The flood swept along the roadway, rendering it impassable from Main street to Beaver street. Some twenty buildings in the immediate vicinity had a narrow escape from destruction.

A large stone-arched bridge at Main street, built two years ago, so far succumbed to the force of the waters that it is now impassable, except for foot travel. A heavy stone culvert under the Naugatuck railroad track, a short distance below Main street, was washed away and with it about 30 feet of the road bed, rendering the road impassable for trains. From here the waters spread out over the meadows. Near the culvert stood the house of Richard Lynch. His little son ran into the house to warn his mother of the approaching flood, and with her three children she ran out just in time to avoid being swept to death along with the demolished house, which was carried off in mere fragments. Three men who stood on the bank watching them also had a narrow escape. The earth crumbled under their feet, and it was only by desperate exertions that they saved themselves from being carried away by the torrent.

The total loss of property from the flood is estimated at all the way from \$50,000 to \$500,000. Four dams, three large manufacturing establishments and three bridges were swept out of existence and many poor men suffer severe losses through demolished fences, the gulling of lots and damage to buildings. The loss to the town of Derby is \$8,000 or \$10,000. The Sperry Manufacturing company say that \$25,000 would not make good their damage. The Derby Bit company had about \$8,000 in stock ready for shipment, and their total loss is estimated at about \$50,000. Henry B. Whiting's loss will be at least \$10,000, as all of his stock and tools were swept away. The building was the property of the Ansonia Water company, and was valued at about \$35,000.

After the receding of the waters the sidewalks on Main street, below Central street, were covered to a depth of from four to six inches with a soft, sticky mud, making walking very disagreeable to the crowds collected. In the street a gully twenty feet wide was made. Pieces of timber and broken parts of trees and other debris were deposited in two or three of the streets, and many cellars in lower Ansonia were deeply flooded. That no lives should have been lost under all the circumstances is almost miraculous. The greatest excitement and anxiety prevailed until it became positively known late in the evening that no person had been killed. Those rendered homeless by the complete or partial destruction of their houses were promptly given shelter by their neighbors.

Travel on the Naugatuck road was not seriously delayed by the washout at the culvert, trains being run around the break on the Derby road.