

FLOOD IN BOUND BROOK

**The New-Jersey Village
Also Visited by Fire.**

RARITAN RIVER A TORRENT

**Main Street of the Place Torn Up
by the Rushing Waters.**

OLD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BURNED

**The Flames Started in Cook & Co.'s
Lumber Yard—Much Valuable
Timber Destroyed.**

A BRAVE LIFE SAVER DROWNED

**Many People Forced to Remain on
Housetops All Night—The Loss by
Fire and Water \$60,000.**

BOUND BROOK, N. J., Feb. 7.—Such a scene of horror and devastation as was witnessed here when the sun arose this morning the inhabitants of this town hope never again to behold.

The effect of the heavy and continuous rains of Thursday on the Raritan River and the Delaware and Raritan Canal was first noticed about dusk yesterday, when the inhabitants of Bound Brook saw with alarm that the waters of the river were rising with appalling rapidity.

The tremendous pressure of the many streams that tumble from the Watchung Mountains into the Raritan River had become so great at 4 o'clock that the earthen dam running parallel between the river and the canal gave way in several places and permitted the swollen waters to combine in a torrent of irresistible power, that swept down the valley with devastating force and a thunderous roar.

Within a brief half hour the water had flooded Main Street and was still rapidly rising. The people, taken unawares, stared panic-stricken at the turgid stream that raced past their doorsteps and flooded their cellars. Then, when the waters rose higher and floated the furniture on the ground floors of their houses, the citizens took refuge, with screams of terror and cries for help, on the second floors and in many cases on the house roofs.

In these places they staid all night, exposed to the wind and the rain, watching the procession that rushed past them of chicken-coops, haystacks, dog-kennels, fences, kitchen furniture, driftwood, horses, cows, cats, bird-cages, and every imaginable household article that would float. They cried in vain for help, for the force of the raging torrent was such that no boat could withstand it, and, had the waters continued to rise, there is no doubt that the meadows below Bound Brook would be strewn to-day with the bodies of many men and women.

The lower streets of the town were under water at 7 o'clock P. M. to the depth of six, eight, ten, and twelve feet. Ropes, boats, rafts, and all manner of devices for saving the terror-stricken inhabitants of the lower portion of the town were in active operation.

Fire Adds to the Night's Terrors.

People were just beginning to wonder if the horrible waters would never cease rising when a lurid light on the heavy storm clouds overhead announced the presence of a new and a worse danger.

Cries of "Fire" rose hoarsely, and mingled with the shrieks for help, with the thunder of the raging waters and the roar of the wind.

Some time in the lumber yard of L. D. Cook & Co. had been moistened by the water, and had set fire to the piles of wood that surrounded it. The flames rose upward in sheets, and spread to the Presbyterian Church, which was burned to the ground in a brief hour. The flames threatened the buildings that clustered all round it in the business portion of the town, and brought out in ghastly relief the struggling figures of the rescuers, the fierce eddies of the current in the river, and the forms of the men and women who crowded together on the roofs of the houses.

Strange to relate, the calamity was marked by only one death. Frederick Miller, a brave fisherman and a powerful oarsman, was drowned while on an errand of rescue at a time when the flood and the flames were at their very worst. His body, surrounded by his seven children and their grief-stricken mother, is lying to-day in his cottage, in South Bound Brook, awaiting the action of the Middlesex County Coroner.

The Waters Held Back by the Bridges.

Bound Brook is peculiarly situated. Within its limits there converge a number of streams, which, in ordinary times, are mere brooks. They unite at that point with the Raritan River. Bridges abound, as there are many railroad lines which converge at Bound Brook. The debris that was carried to these bridges Thursday afternoon held back the rising water, until in places it stood eight feet deep in Main Street.

The Raritan River leads to the ocean from the hundreds of small streams which flow down the mountain sides all the way from the northern and western parts of the State. Each of these brooks became raging rivers on Thursday and poured their volumns into the already congested Raritan, and that river carried their waters down to add to the trouble at Bound Brook.

The Central Railroad of New-Jersey passes across the Raritan on a big stone bridge. The arch of the bridge is high and broad, being built so as to allow plenty of room for the extra water when there is a flood in the river. But it was not high enough on Thursday. The mass of water which poured toward it was too great for the opening, and soon began to back up. This caused an eddy, and into the opening and about its sides piled the debris. The

result was that before long little or no water was flowing through the arch, but began to back up into the town.

The waters of the Raritan continued to rise all day Thursday, and became more swift and turbulent. All day long the water rose, but the townspeople felt safe. The water mounted higher and higher, but the Bound Brook people had seen freshets before, and looked idly on.

The lower part of the city is separated from the river by the railroad embankment, and never since 1882 had the water flowed over the embankment. Bound Brook of to-day and the Bound Brook of 1882 differ greatly, for the town has grown apace since then, and there were many residents of the town on Thursday who looked at the raging river beyond the railroad bank with calmness, for they had no experience with the waters when they had risen to the rails and flowed through the town until parts of it were eight and ten feet under water.

A Flood Like a Tidal Wave.

By the time darkness had settled down over the Watchung Mountains, and the few street lamps in Bound Brook had been lighted, the people realized that the night had something else than quiet sleep in store for them. A few of the more alert had cleared out their cellars and removed their property from the first to the second stories of their houses. Some persons recalled the flood of 1882, when the Raritan River had foamed down the streets of the village and left misery and destruction in its wake. But none were prepared for the appalling scenes that a few hours later were to be lit up by the flames of the blazing church and the burning lumber yard.

Rapidly the water rose, and the excitement and alarm grew in proportion. The open flats east and west of the borough resembled at 7.20 o'clock P. M. an inland sea, in which the houses were islands, and the roadbed of the Central Railroad of New-Jersey a long, slender promontory.

Then the people awoke to the true state of affairs. The majority of them lost their heads and ran out of the houses to the higher portions of the town, screaming as they ran. Some ran to their next-door neighbors, seeking advice and help, but finding only dismay and excitement.

Already the stores along the northern end of Main Street were flooded, and the cellars were bursting with water.

The water rose so rapidly that it seemed as if a huge tidal wave from the ocean had swept over the New-Jersey flats into the village. The current was so terrific that, aided by the tempestuous wind, with racing waves and flying spray, it resembled the rapids of a fierce, swollen river. "I thought Judgment Day had come at last," said one man, talking to a reporter for THE NEW-YORK TIMES. "I expected to see the heavens drop over us in a sheet of flame any minute. There never was such a roaring, and shrieking, and howling! And then, the awful light of that fire! Lord bless me, but it's a wonder the women did not die of fright, let alone drowning!"

By the time the church clock had struck 8 o'clock—it will never strike again—Main Street was a scene of indescribable disorder and frantic excitement. Everybody thought everybody else was drowned. Each man, as he stood on his roof, holding on to a chimney and feeling the walls tremble, thought that his own house and that of his neighbor as well, were being carried away in the wild, black torrent that swept past.

Drowning of Miller, the Fisherman.

The experiences of the inhabitants and their thrilling tales of rescue and escape would fill a volume. Some people were carried away by the flood, and clung for safety to trees, remaining all night among the branches. Others were rescued with ropes, which ten men had to pull through the torrent, and others jumped from the second-story windows and swam for their lives among the eddies.

Below the bridge, on the north side of the town, there is a small saloon and hotel about 100 yards from the river. The Port Reading Hotel is a white structure, and it stood out spectre-like in the darkness last night. It is owned by a man named Mulvey, who was cut off with his wife from high ground before they knew what to do.

The stream made a diabolical eddy past the hotel, and among the crowd of men who lined the shore and stared helplessly at the lighted windows and listened to the cries for help there were few who cared to brave that mad torrent in a flat-bottomed boat.

Then suddenly a broad-shouldered man was seen dragging a boat by a rope along the shore.

"That's Miller, the fisherman," cried the crowd. "He can do it!"

Cheers of encouragement followed the big fisherman as he bent his back to the slim oars and sent the boat scudding through the roaring waters in the direction of the hotel. The current swept him far out of his course into the darkness, but the frightened woman at the second-story window had seen him coming, and her cries were answered by the hoarse shouts of those on the shore. Mulvey and his wife soon reached the boat.

Miller flung aside his coat to give his arms freer play, and his boat was not far from shore when a back-eddy swung it round, and the three passengers were thrown into the water.

Mulvey and his wife managed to get to shore, but the boat was torn away and swept down by the current.

Miller was not seen alive again. His coat was found this morning hanging high and dry on the branches of an apple tree, and his body was recovered later in the day from the meadows below the town.

Miller had rescued several persons before he made his final effort to rescue Mr. Mulvey and his wife.

Three horses in the stables of the Port Reading Hotel were drowned, and their bodies were carried far away.

On the outskirts of Bound Brook, situated on what is known as the "back road to Somerville," stands a three-story frame house, with a brick foundation and cellar. Frank W. Summers lives there with his wife and children. He is the Clerk of Somerset County. His mother, ill in bed with pneumonia, and his sister, afflicted with the grip, live with the family. There are also two children.

"About 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon," Mrs. Summers told a reporter for THE NEW-YORK TIMES to-day, "I noticed that the river was rising rapidly. In half an hour our yard was filled, and the meadow behind the house was a lake. I moved the sick folks upstairs, and began to take up the carpets. Before 6 o'clock the cellar was filled with water, and the kindling wood was afloat.

"The water mounted higher and higher until the first floor was covered two feet deep. The wind shook the house, and I thought the walls were going. The chairs, books, footstools and some of the crockery were swimming about the drawing room floor.

"We staid up all night, truly afraid to go to bed. The water began to go down about midnight, but there is still six feet in the cellar. I do not know how we will ever get it out. It will leave a thick deposit of mud anyway."

Mrs. Summers said that all night long she heard the terrified cries of people on the roofs of the neighboring houses, and sometimes, when the flames of the church shot high into the sky, she could see the people waving sheets and towels.

Men Shiver on a Roof All Night.

On the roof of the Standard Gas Fixture Company's building fifteen men stood and shivered all night long.

"The water was upon us before we knew what to do," said the company's Superintendent, W. H. Peabies. "It rushed madly past the building, down Main Street, and flooded our floor to a depth of five feet. Grease, acids, and oils were floating everywhere. We were surrounded and had no means of escape. We had no food or whisky. The water kept rising, and we climbed to the attic, and thence to the roof."

"Kuntz, the foreman, who had been 'on shore' before the flood began, rowed out to us in a boat about 1 o'clock. He brought us dry clothes and whisky, and all night long we stayed on that roof and watched the flames. Kuntz went away with the boat at 5 o'clock and did not return. So I jumped into ten feet of water and swam for the shore, fifty yards or so away. Later the other men were taken off."

Alpaugh & Rutt, who have a large general store in the Bound Brook Building, in

Main Street, were heavy losers by the flood. The water got into the cellars of the building and flooded several large oil tanks. This malodorous mixture then rose six feet or more and floated everything in the store. Carpets, baskets, rolls of linen, and straw hats were soon floating around with shoes, apples, cabbages, and brooms.

"The water poured into the cellar through the grating," said Mr. Rutt, "and, as there is no outlet, the cellars were soon filled. We will have to pump the water out somehow, I suppose. I never saw such a scene in my life. If we had read of its having happened in some far Western town we would scarcely have credited it. We are only thirty miles from New-York City."

Up Main Street, down which a deep, surging stream still flows, the scenes to-day would have been humorous if not so utterly pathetic.

W. Schures, the baker, was glad to have his life, but he was grumbling because all his bread and cakes were sodden pap. The harness store keeper, C. H. Casterlin, was trying to dry his horse blankets in the sunshine, and across the way C. M. Woods, who has a crockery and glassware store, was shouting:

"Water don't hurt my jugs and basins, but my cellar is full, and what can I do?"

Several Horses Drowned.

A more severe loss was sustained by David Taylor, who keeps a livery stable in East Main Street near the burned lumber yard. Three of his fourteen horses were drowned.

"It is a wonder I did not lose them all," he said. "Garrison, the blacksmith, at Fussler Avenue and Van Kuren Street, lost several. I saw a big dog drowned, too. He was sailing down the river on an upturned kennel. The kennel struck a big floating haystack, and the dog went down with a yelp. Sheds, barrels, and big pieces of torn-up sidewalks floated down after the haystack and kennel."

The force of the current lifted the manholes from the recently completed sewer in East Main Street, and horses, half plunging, half swimming, tumbled into them and were drowned to the number of a score at least.

The only source of official information to-day as to the flood was Mayor Coddington. There are no policemen in Bound Brook. The Mayor's office can only be reached by boat. All day long a pole ferry has been worked across Main Street, passengers paying 5 cents each.

The losses from the flood cannot be estimated at present. Mayor Coddington estimated the loss to the town at \$60,000, exclusive of the loss to the railroads.

The Central Railroad put a crew of men at work to-day putting its tracks in condition. An iron bridge of the Central Road was carried away and the road had to use the Lehigh Valley bridge. The Delaware and Raritan Canal Company will be a heavy loser. The banks of the canal, which runs beside the Raritan River for miles, have been carried away.

Railroad Tracks Under Water.

No trains passed through Bound Brook after 6 o'clock last night. The 5 o'clock train from Jersey City went through all right, but after that one train was laid up at Bound Brook and the rest at Dunellen, from which place all the trains started this morning. The Lehigh Valley Railroad and the Port Reading Railroad were both blocked by the water and several trains were stalled on each line. The water soon overflowed the railroad near the Middle Brook bridge, and by 10 o'clock last night nearly a mile of the railroad was under water. Bridges were washed out and the track undermined. The water extended toward Dunellen for about 100 feet beyond the Bound Brook station. The station, telegraph office, and Union News Company's stand were all partially flooded.

The telegraph operators worked until the water rose above their waists, and in Manning's drug store the telephone was available until it could only be reached by swimming.