

0. The Flooding of Johnstown, Pennsylvania in 1889 - Story Preface

1. Lake Conemaugh and the South Fork Dam
2. The Flood
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The city of Johnstown was settled in the lowland region where the Little Conemaugh River and Stony Creek River meet to form the Conemaugh River.

As transportation in Pennsylvania in the early 1800s started to grow, Johnstown became an important city along the Main Line canal route. This route was a combination of canals and the Allegheny Portage Railroad that linked Philadelphia to Pittsburgh.

Barges were hauled over the Allegheny Mountains through a series of inclined planes. Johnstown became the western city on this route.

Due to seasonal dry spells that effected the canals, a reservoir was created. A reservoir is a man-made lake that has a dam to hold back the water.

In 1852 the South Fork Dam was completed. Unfortunately the canal system became obsolete with the opening of the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1854.

The Cambria Iron Company was founded in 1852, in Johnstown. This company produced iron and steel products. It manufactured steel rails that were used in the building of railroads and bridges. This company helped to make Johnstown an industrial city.

In 1889, Johnstown boasted two opera houses, a library, a hospital, a railway station and a hometown baseball team called the Quicksteps. Everything about the town, and its people, seemed to be in great shape.

Seemed, in this context, is the operative word.

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Media Stream



Johnstown Flood, 1889

Langill and Darling

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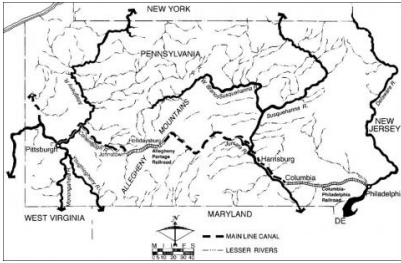


Johnstown Before The Flood.

Edgewood Publishing, 1889

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Main Line Canal Map

Map published by the National Park Service.

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Cambria Library circa 1880

Photo provided by the Jamestown Area Heritage Association, www.jaha.org.

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Opera House on Main Street

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