

SPANS SWEEP AWAY BY SURGING WATER; SECTIONS HARD HIT

Hancock and Shepherdstown Bridges Are Wrecked— Williamsport Section Suffers Heavy Damage in Record Flood

Scenes of the disastrous Potomac Valley flood, taken from an airplane, will be found on Page Six.

WILLIAMSPORT—The Potomac river was believed to have reached its peak at midnight after rising to a new high of 49.6 feet above normal or four feet above the Johnstown flood stage in 1889. Town in darkness. Scores of families were homeless and the Red Cross and Salvation Army set up temporary rehabilitation headquarters. Hagerstown pumping station above Williamsport believed flooded.

HANCOCK—The middle span of the bridge across the Potomac river was washed out yesterday afternoon and the remainder was expected to collapse momentarily. Scores of homes and business establishments were inundated by water as high as 15 feet in Main street.

SHEPHERDSTOWN—Three spans of vehicular bridge across the Potomac were washed out. The pumping station was inundated and the power plant at Dam No. 4 had five feet of water over the first floor.

CUMBERLAND—Hundreds homeless as waters recede after reaching a height of 14 feet in city streets. Approximately 40 homes swept away; traffic completely paralyzed. Streets patrolled by National Guardsmen to prevent looting.

HARPER'S FERRY—Highway bridge across the Potomac between here and Weverton washed out. Railroad bridge still standing. Lower part of town covered with 12 feet of water and many forced to flee to higher ground.

BRUNSWICK—Baltimore and Ohio passenger station flooded and railroad yards covered with water.

After soaring to its highest peak in modern history, the Potomac river began receding at Hancock early last night and was believed to have reached its peak at Williamsport at midnight after having soared approximately 50 feet above normal, or four feet above the Johnstown flood stage of 1889.

Leaving in its wake desolation and destruction, the angry waters swept away the middle span of the vehicular bridge at Hancock, three spans of the bridge at Shepherdstown, inundated countless homes in the valley and carried away buildings, poles, trees and livestock.

The western section of the bridge at Williamsport was inundated early last night and it was closed to pedestrians and vehicles.

The Western Maryland railroad bridge across the Potomac river at Nettle, W. Va., was reported washed out last night.

While telephonic communications to the Hagerstown pumping station above Williamsport were broken, it was believed the waters had flowed in over the 47-foot wall and covered the floor of the building. In that event the pumps may be disabled for weeks. The pumps were put out of commission because of crippled power facilities early yesterday and Hagerstown was getting its water supply from the mountain reservoir. The reservoir has a capacity of 100,000,000 gallons, which would be sufficient to meet local needs for at least a month. The Potomac Edison power plant at Williamsport suspended operations shortly before noon yesterday.

Members of Company B, enroute to Cumberland to aid National Guardsmen in patrolling the city against looting and to help in the administration of relief, were stranded in McConnellsburg yesterday and camped there for the night.

SPAN CARRIED OUT BY RAGING WATERS

Harper's Ferry, W. Va., March 18 (AP)—Four old spans of the vehicular bridge between here and Weverton, Md., were carried out tonight by the rampaging Potomac river.

The spans, about 350 feet long, were the part of the bridge which withstood the flood of 1924. About 200 feet, rebuilt after the previous flood, was still standing.

The Potomac was 35 feet above normal tonight.

Homes Are Flooded

Countless homes and other buildings in the Williamsport lowlands were either washed away or inundated. The house of Richard Obitts was washed away. Those made homeless by inundation included Russell Mauck, Harvey Brant, Hill Ardinger, George Zimmerly, Weber Malott and Joseph Forsythe.

The G. A. Miller lumber yard, lower section of the Byron tannery and the polo field were flooded. Several smaller buildings in the Cushwa coal yard were carried away and the yards were completely inundated.

During the day and night, thousands of persons visited Williamsport and hundreds watched the waters from high hills or the bridge. Complete houses, trees, poles, large oil drums and even livestock were carried downstream by the raging stream.

The creek at Kemp's Mill went on a rampage and many homes and the highway were covered with 15 feet of water. Only the roof of the