HAGERSTOWN MAIL.

Hagerstown, Md., Nov. 30, 1877.

GREAT FLOOD.

THE POTOMAC, ANTIETAM AND CONOCOCHEAGUE,

HIGHER THAN EVER BEFORE KNOWN.

Widespread Damage and Long Continued Rain.

Details of Ravages in our County.

The year 1877 will be marked in history as that of the greatest of all floods recorded in this locality. The rain commenced falling on Thursday last, on Friday came down in torrents, and did not cease except temporarily until Monday. Saturday the Potomac, the Antietam and the Conococheague rose rapidly, but little damage being done along the line of the latter in this County. It was on the other two streams that the main ravages occured which are given below. The chief loss falls upon the Canal and two of the Railroad Companies. The Baltimore & Ohio Road has been washed and injured to such an extent between Martinsburg and Cumberland that trains are not running on that portion of the main stem, though local travel from Hagerstown and other points West is uninterrupted. Passengers for the Valley are conveyed on wagons from Harper's Ferry to Halltown and thence by rail to Stanton.

In consequence of the destruction of the Cumberland Valley Railroad Bridge across the Potomac, the trains of that company again make Hagerstown their western terminus instead of Martinsburg. The officers of the company are now in Philanelphia consulting as to what shall be done with the bridge, the estimate being that from thirty to forty thousand dollars, will be needed to replace damages.

In Cumberland there has been no flood since 1810 to compare with this, and the damage to property was great.

Next to our own immediate neighborhood and the valley of the Potomac, the greatest damage appear to be along the course of the Virginia Rivers, east of the mountains. In Bortetort County on the James, a whole village was swept away and some 20 colored people drowned. Washington City was flooded along the whole line of the River, even up to Pennsylvania Avenue, and Georgetown along the canal was all under water, with great damage. Harper's Ferry was in its lower parts completely submerged and the citizens had to take to the hills.

Along the Atlantic Coast the damage was widespread and the U. S. Steamer *Huron* starting out during the storm from Fortress Monroe was lost on the N. Carolina Coast along with about 100 of her officers and crew. Never before has the country been visited by a more widespread, long continued or disastrious flood and tempest.

THE POTOMAC.

From careful inquiry we arrive at the conclusion that never before during the life of any one living has it been so high. The record of the greatest height was in 1852, and what purports to have been a mark, the highest point attained then at Embrey's Warehouse in Williamsport, was three-fourths of an inch higher than the flood of the present year, but this mark is not looked upon as accurate, and is not supported by measurements above and below it, which uniformly make the water higher this year than in 1852. At Boyer's Warehouse, Mercerville, it was three-fourths of an inch higher, and at Shepherdstown it is reported 6 inches higher. Along the entire line of the Potomac from Cumberland to Georgetown the damage to the canal and railroad, as well as to private property, far exceeds anything before experienced. Not only was fencing, grain, hay, fodder, stock and lumber swept away and borne down the river, but several houses and quite a number of stables, hog pens, chicken coops and all kinds of out-houses were swept away, and were seen passing by Williamsport and other points on the river.

CROWDS OF VISITORS

from Hagerstown and the surrounding country were in Williamsport on Sunday looking at the surging river, and watching and commenting upon the different articles borne down with the flood. At Embrey & Cushwa's Warehouse hands were at work day and night removing and saving property, and their actual loss, besides the flooding and cleansing of the warehouse, was very slight —25 barrels of cement, some plaster and coal which were damaged. Mr. S. Culbertson, on the west side of the Conococheague, who has a lumber-yard there, lost all his lumber, amounting to from 40,000 to 60,000 feet. The greater part of Friend's farm, at Mercerville, was under water, up to the barn and house, and where the Conococheague and Potomac met was a vast lake, covering canal, acqueduct and everything except the tops of trees.

ARDINGER'S MILL,

formerly the Van Lear mill, was in the middle of the creek, and the Conococheague was pouring into the windows of the upper story, leaving but a few feet of the stone walls visible between the water and the eaves of the roof. On Monday business was carried on in boats loading and unloading into the second story. The stone bridge at this point was not yet passible on Monday, but did not appear to have been injured. The acqueduct on the canal, which was wholly submerged, was not injured. The most serious injury near Williamsport was to the

C. V. RAILROAD BRIDGE.

The superstructure of this costly work went about 5 o'clock on Sunday afternoon. Its danger was appreciated, and six car loads of coal, railroad and pig iron were sent out from Hagerstown to hold down the capping of the bridge and track. Mr. T. J. Nill, the Agent here, accompanied the train, and the train was run to the Virginia side, which was in greatest danger, and there stationed. But a slight space remained between the surface of the stream and the track on the bridge, so that its destruction by the heavy bodies coming down the stream was inevitable. Three canal boats, in turn, which had broken loose from Williamsport, struck the bridge. Two passed under and went down the stream, while the other blocked the stream. Then came an immense float of drift wood, which cut off a large willow tree as with a knife, and, striking the bridge with a concussion which sounded like the discharge of artillery, and was heard in Williamsport, bore off with it the whole superstructure save only that which spanned the canal, and the canal boat which was held in suspense was thus released and went down the stream with the moving mass. At this juncture, it was Mr. Nill's good fortune to escape most miraculously. He was the last upon the bridge—some fifteen or twenty men having just left it when he saw the impending danger, and started in a run for the Maryland side. The first concussion knocked his feet from under him, and he fell; but recovering, just as the portion of the bridge behind him was swept away, and whilst that upon which he ran was coiling up and moving under his feet, he succeeded in reaching the shore uninjured and almost at the instant the bridge disappeared.

THE HIGH OFFICIALS OF THE ROAD,

President Kennedy, General Superintendent Lull, and General Agent Boyd, were all present, on the bridge, a few minutes before it went down, with fifteen or tweney other persons. A little engine had been trying to haul out the canal boat that had lodged, to the Virginia shore, but without effect. Col. Kennedy and Col. Lull had walked off towards the Maryland side, leaving Genl. Boyd and Mr Nill. The former started a few minutes before the latter and was about fifty yards ahead of him when he saw the drift approaching and started in the manner above described.

THE NAKED PIERS

are all that now remain to mark where this fine bridge once stood, and it is apprehended that they will thus stand for some time, as it is feared no immediate steps will be taken to rebuild—that portion of the road not having paid running expenses for some time.

DAM NO. FOUR.

Our information is that only a very small part of this splendid dam, of the finest mason work, and the best on the river, which cost half a million dollars, has been washed away. This dam is between the above bridge and

THE SHEPHERDSTOWN BRIDGE,

one span of which was destroyed, but we learn has been secured and made fast below, and will be replaced. This span is 150 feet long, the bridge having four spans of the same dimensions. The loss is covered by insurance. A canal boat belonging to Geo. McCann, loaded with his own coal, was the first to strike this bridge, followed by two others, empty, belonging to Lawson Poffenberger and Mr. Boyer. These were the first ... [illegible]

HARPER'S FERRY IRON BRIDGE,

which was supposed for some time to have been in great danger, but withstood the terrific shocks and pressure brought against it in a wonderful manner, it having been struck by no less than fifteen canal boats, besides the Powell's Bend bridge, houses, logs and all kinds of floating missiles. We understand from Mr. Ways, Agent of the B. & O. R. R. Co., that but a single span of the bridge—that over the current—was affected, and that only in the bending of some of the irons of the bridge. The structure is wholly secure, the trains passing over it on Monday.

THE DAMAGE TO THE CANAL

cannot now be reported accurately, although it is known to be very great, and will put an end to operations for the present season. The locks at Harper's Ferry and several others it is found have been washed out and greatly damaged. From Sandy Hook, past Harper's Ferry, a distance of four miles, the tow-path is wholly destroyed, and we understand that the superintendent of the upper divisions, Mr. Stanhope, says it is impossible to ride a hundred yards on the tow-path anywhere. In places, the bed of the canal is

FILLED WITH MUD,

and all the locks are choked up with accumulations of different kinds, while the channel of the canal has been washed on the outside. The company's buildings along the entire line have been greatly damaged or washed away, and it is believed now that under no circumstances could the canal be open for trafic before August next. The damage is roughly estimated at about

HALF A MILLION DOLLARS.

The company lost heavily in their shops at Sandy Hook and Sharpsburg, where large quantities of lumber were carried off, and a great many lock gates, in whole or in part, constructed. These gates which were washed away from Sharpsburg were caught at Sandy Hook, or some of them at least. Every effort to save property was made by the superintendents and the men, but without much chance of salvage.

At Mercerville, the lock-tender's office, stable and hog pens were washed away, and among the suffering were Lawson Poffenberger, Wm. Blackford, and all the farmers along the river bottom.

DELANY'S LOCK HOUSE

was swept away, and a number of canal boats were washed out on to the flats, where they will lie and go to pieces. A steamer, called the "Skeddaddler," with about 50 barrels of flour for Cumberland, got aground there, and was not gotten off in time, and has now to be cut out of the berm-bank.

THE COMPANY'S SCOW

floated down the river and in its course picked off two unfortunate (or fortunate) individuals who had taken up their quarters in a tree to save themselves from the sudden rising of the flood.

THE ONLY FATAL DISASTER

in this county was the drowning of Mr. Charles Little, of Hancock, which took place Saturday evening, below dam No. 4, below Williamsport. Mr. Little, who is a boatman, was proceeding up the canal. When the water got deep on the tow-path, his driver refused to go any farther. Mr. Little got on one of the mules to drive. In a short time the current was too strong, the mules were swept down in the flood and Mr. Little was drowned. The two mules scrambled to the bank, some distance below, and were saved.

TRANSFER OF PART OF THE REALTY.

At Powell's bend, opposite Falling Waters, the dwelling-house of Mr. Andrew Pope, a well known farmer of that neighborhood, was taken up bodily and carried upon the land of one of Mr. Pope's neighbors. It was upon Mr. Pope's land that one of the spans of the railroad bridge landed. David Straw, of the same ... living between the canal and river, lost a corn crib containing 100 barrels of corn. Mrs. Louisa Davis, another neighbor, lost 75 barrels of corn, a buggy, sleigh and other articles.—The house of John Snyder, a small building was also carried off. A small house belonging to Mr. John H. Gattrell and tenanted by a man named Price, was carried off. Mr. Gattrel's saw mill was also injured and moved about four inches. At Rose Hill, Alonzo Berry lost a great deal of fencing.

ABOVE WILLIAMSPORT.

Everything between the canal and river from Williamsport to Hancock, that could be carried off was swept away by the storm whilst the ground has been covered with the usual accumulations. Here is where the greatest damage was done to the Canal and Railroad, but it is impossible for us, from the want of means of information to give details. At last accounts a powerful force was clearing and repairing the track of the B. & O. Railroad, along the river—travel over it being entirely cut off.

THE HANCOCK NEIGHBORHOOD.

The upper part of Hancock was under water, which filled the cellars, cisterns and wells, and covered the first floors of many of the citizens' residences. No lives were lost and the injury to the property was simply of a damaging not of a destructive character. Beyond Hancock, and along the flats and slopes of hills, many houses were swept away, and from daylight until near 10 A. M. there were no less than four houses observed floating past the town.

ALL THE BRIDGES

between Hancock and Indian Spring on the Turnpike were carried away. The bridge known as Bowles' bridge was literally lifted from the piers and abutments and floated a few yards down where it lodged against trees.

Two other bridges of lesser importance were also carried away. The bridge over the Tonoloway is impassable. All the sleepers and the entire flooring are swept away. Nothing remains but the pens and roof. It may be a month before travel can be comfortably resumed.

THE ANTIETAM.

This creek, upon whose banks the great battle which bears its name was fought, rises in different forks a short distance north of Mason & Dixon's Line, in the South Mountain, and running near Leitersburg, Hagerstown, Funkstown, Keedysville, Sharpsburg and the Antietam Iron Works, empties into the Potomac below Shepherdstown, at the latter place. Old citizens of Leitersburg, which is the nearest town to the Pennsylvania line, say the stream was never before so high, within the recollection of any one, by three feet, as it was on Saturday last, and from above the Line and near on to Waynesboro', we have accounts of the ravages of the freshet from eye witnesses.

AT THE FORKS,

midway between Lettersburg and Waynesboro', in Pennsylvania, there was on Saturday morning a wooden-covered bridge on stone abutments. The rushing torrents down these two forks meeting here swept the bridge entirely away, carrying it down the stream and depositing it on Mr. Rhinehart's farm, in Maryland. One of the abutments was also washed out and damaged. Mr. Walters' stable at this point was also carried off, and all the fencing, corn and shocks, hay and other produce within the range of the flood swept away. The wooden bridge with stone abutments, on one of the most eastern of these forks, known as

LITTLE ANTIETAM,

at Hartle's, was also swept away and one of the abutments destroyed. The saw mill purchased but a short time since by Mr. Frisby M. Stouffer from the Clopper estate at the same place was very much damaged and the dam was broken. Here also great quantities of fencing and corn were swept off. In Mr. Garver's house the water came in so as to float the beds.

Coming down the stream to Leitersburg the damage through that rich bottom land was very great. All the fencing on the numerous valuable and highly improved farms, within reach, was swept off, and with the corn shocks and other accumulations filled the stream.

At Lehman's Mill, which was purchased from the Geo. Bell estate, just above Leitersburg.

A PEN OF 21 HOGS,

fat and ready for the market, was swept away and some of the hogs were carried down the stream four miles and most of them recovered. About 6 of the animals were drowned.

Foot bridges were twisted and crossing logs were carried off along the entire stream.

BRIDGES SAFE.

The two county bridges at Leitersburg, across the Antietam—one at Strite's Mill and the other on the Hagerstown turnpike at F. K. Zeigler's—are uninjured, and in fact there was no damage sustained worth noting between Mr. Zeigler's and Hagerstown. Mr. Zeigler's premises at the bridge were completely flooded, and he suffered a loss of a great deal of fencing in common with every farmer living on the historic stream of which we are now writing. Among his losses were his cooper shop and sheds carried off.

GOOD'S MILL

is the next prominent point below. At this point the county bridge was not damaged and the injury sustained was very little, as the property is not valuable. The old saw mill was raised up and broken in two. Here the roof of David Stover's spring house was lifted off the structure and carried away in to an eddy, and after whirling around several times was carried back and deposited pretty nearly in its old place.

DOWN THE STREAM

came the rushing flood until it struck what is known as "Hager's upper mill, owned by Joseph Trovinger, where it inflicted a good deal of damage upon his saw mill and carried away a large quantity of lumber and logs.

The bridge near this point, on the Smithsburg pike, across the Antietam, was one of those belonging to the county somewhat injured. It is entirely passable, but will require repairs where it has been washed away by the current and had some of its caps knocked off by the debris.

THE ANTIETAM PAPER MILL

is the next important point on down stream. It was of course flooded in its lower stories as was the other paper mill at Funkstown, but we have heard of no specific damage to either further than the necessity imposed of cleaning out mud and deposits from the flood. There is no bridge at this point, and what damge was done to the dams, at the time of writing the water is too high to enable us to report.

THE OLD HAGER MILL,

now owned by Mr. Rowland, almost on the borders of Hagerstown, is the next point of interest. The mill itself is in a little cove, or bend of the creek, which renders it safe from any current, and although completely filled with water was no more disturbed than it has been many a time before during its existence of nearly a century. All day Sunday hundreds of sight-seers were visiting it to see the flood, but interest was chiefly confined to the county stone bridge which spans the Antietam here. It was very badly washed both on top and at the sides, and will need repair. It was left quite passable.

FUNKSTOWN.

This is an important point, and here the waters of the Antietam spread out more formidably than at any given point on the stream, for there is a big bend here and wide stretches of low land. The neck was submerged, ... were anchored fast to keep them from being swept away. The paper mill was flooded, of course, in its lower stories, but the only serious damage to be summed up, apart from the washing away of fences, fodder and corn, was to one of the county bridges. The substantial structure on the national road, the scene of the first battle ever fought in this valley, after Indian times, is wholly intact, although it was rendered impassable during the height of the flood, by the water cutting off all communication on the Funkstown side. The other bridge there across the Antietam, built by the county, is materially damaged on the same side, the water having washed out the curtains or walls supporting the approaches to the bridge. On Tuesday very little water was running over the dam there, a new channel having been cut out on the east side of the bridge.

FIERY'S AND ROSE'S MILLS.

The next point below Funkstown is Fiery's Flour Mill, which was filled with water to the second floor, but no material injury inflicted. The county bridge here, which is of stone, was slightly damaged, having had some of the stone knocked off the abutments. At Rose's paper mill there was no damage done the bridge across the stream, but an old frame building 60 feet long, used as a bleach house to the paper mill, was swept away.

AT KEMP'S MILL.

At the old Booth's mill, now owned by Mr. Jno. Q. A. Kemp, situated where the Williamsport and Boonsboro' road crosses the Antietam, one mile east from Breathed's Station, the scene was exceedingly exciting. At abount 10 o'clock, on Saturday morning, the water had risen considerably and Mr. Kemp had let his gates down and stopped the machinery of the mill. It rose steadily until about dusk the road, which runs along the side of the dam and considerably above ordinary water, was submerged, and floating logs, trees, fence rails and other things commenced to come down. There was a deep stream running down the road, between Mr. Kemp's house and the mill, and through the archway, where wagons drive to unload wheat, there was a roaring torrent. By this time the water was so high, that, although there is a high fall below the dam, it could be scarcely seen where the dam was. It was one level sheet of roaring water. The basement story of the mill, containing coal and screenings, was inundated; a few bushels of wheat in the sink were also injured. The road above the mill was soon piled up with floating trees, rails, &c., so as to make it entirely impassable. A considerable amount of the floating wood was saved.

EXCITING INCIDENTS.

The injury to the dam was fortunately very slight, only about ten feet of the coping being carried off. A large number of men from the neighborhood had congregated and as drift-wood came down and struck the mill, pulled it out to keep it from damming up the water. The hog pens below the mill were washed away and a fine lot of hogs had been driven out of them, just in time to be saved. A few yards below the mill stands the house and blacksmith shop of Mr. Joseph Garver. The basement story of Mr. Garver's house, one room of which is the dining-room and the other a store room, was filled with water to the ceiling, injuring the furniture and ruining a great many housekeeper's stores in the store room. Mr. Garver had his garden fence washed away and also had all his vegetables washed from his garden. Mr. Garver's loss was considerable. The torrent that swept around the blacksmith's shop carried away a pile of coal, about a ton of iron, a lot of wheels and miscellaneous articles and a wheat drill. The last mentioned article lodged at the iron bridge one and a half miles below the shop.

The house belonging to Mrs. Booth, a hundred or so yards below the mill, was filled with water and part of the porch carried off. The colored family, who inhabit it, had to leave it in the night.

THE OLD STONE BRIDGE,

which crosses the creek at this point and which has been standing there for a great number of years, apparently as firm as the rocks planted by nature herself, had one of its abutments undermined, which caused the eastern end to sink about eighteen inches. This rendered it impassable for vehicles, for some time. The arches do not appear to be broken.

The bridge over the mouth of Beaver Creek, a few hundred yards farther on, was uninjured. At this point loss of human life came near being added to the other disasters.

A HORSE DROWNED.

About dusk on Saturday evening, a colored man, a school teacher of Boonsboro', named Charles Trusty, passed over the Antietam bridge on his way from Hagerstown to the house of Richard Waters, on the "Devil's back bone." The Beaver Creek bridge stood up out of the water, but there was a strong current passing around each end of it. A number of persons endeavored to dissuade Trusty from attempting to cross it; but he persisted and reached and passed over the bridge. When he got into the water, on the eastern end, the current was so strong that it swept the horse off his feet and into the Antietam, where he was drowned. Trusty made a narrow escape. He clutched the limb of a tree under which he was passing, and crawled to the land by its assistance.

AT THE ROXBURY MILL,

situated a mile and a half above Kemp's, the damage was more serious, the whole dam being swept away. About 1 o'clock, Saturday night, after the water commenced to subside, a party of men, who had been assisting Mr. Kemp, went to look after Roxbury mill. They found the water was four feet deep in the lower story of the house—to the top of the first story of the mill. The stone bridge at this place was also injured. The abutments at both ends were undermined and the bridge sunk considerably, almost ruining and rendering it impassable.

Mr. Andrew Miller, who lives between these two mills, lost a considerable amount of fencing. In the night he had to remove his horses from the stable to save them from drowning. A four horse wagon was swept from the yard into the creek, but fortunately lodged in some trees on the edge of the creek and was recovered.

Mr. Jacob Stone, who lives next above Mr. Miller, also suffered. He lost his yard, garden and considerable other fencing, and the porch of his house.

Mr. Wm. Spruger, who lives a short distance above Mr. Stone, had his house invaded and moved out in the night.

ANTIETAM RAILROAD BRIDGE.

This structure, which comes next, stood bravely against the pressure of the flood, although on Saturday night the raging torrent was so fierce that, for prudential reasons, trains were not run over the bridge. A special train brought up passengers from Weverton, who either walked across the trestle work, or were conveyed across in a hand car, and were then brought to Hagerstown, by the regular train, on this side, arriving here about midnight. Subsequent examination established the safety of the bridge and trains have since been passing as usual.

HITT'S BRIDGE,

on the road from Bakersville to Keedysville, was somewhat injured though it is passable; and the next point of interest is Myer's Mill, formerly Newcomer's, which was flooded like other mills and about one third of the dam washed away. Dan'l Bovey, at Hitt's bridge, lost all his corn crop, with the exception of 13 shocks.

BURNSIDE'S BRIDGE

is the next in order, and although there were reports that it had been damaged, the fact is it has escaped entirely. The next we come to is

THE ANTIETAM IRON WORKS.

Here every preparation had been made and nearly completed by the the Messrs. Ahl, for the starting up of the Iron Works, which would have afforded employment for a large population and have infused prosperity into the whole neighborhood, all of which is now paralyzed or indefinitely postponed. As we write, we cannot tell the extent of the damage to the dam, which is only supposed to have been injured. Two months supply of coke, or about 800 tons, had been collected, and operations would have commenced within three weeks. This coke was swept away along with other moveable material. The county bridge across the Antietam at this point was a good deal washed, and will require some repair. Messrs. Ahl's loss is roughly estimated at $10,000.

THE CONOCOCHEAGUE.

This stream, which has twice the volume of the Antietam, and was, like it, higher than ever before known, so far as to our county, inflicted comparatively very little damage, except in the washing away of fences, fodder and other transitory matter. Its overflow at Williamsport is mentioned elsewhere; but above that point the damage wrought was of the usual character from high water. The Old Red Mill was of course under water and had to be cleansed.

KEMP'S MILL

was completely flooded, suspending operations for cleaning up as usual. The water was so high as to run into the first story of his dwelling house, and persons who went over from Hagerstown to Williamsport on Sunday, intending to return by that pike, found it impassable by reason of the flood.

THE TURNPIKE BRIDGE

on the National Road is untouched, although the water was higher there than ever before. Mr. Daniel Huyett, whose mill escaped all damage save the ordinary immersion, tells us that he saw an immense tree, three feet across the stump, strike the bridge, but was sucked through without injury.

Farther up the stream the absence of all special damage is reported. The bridges are all safe and the iron bridge at the Broad Fording, although slightly moved, is uninjured.

CHAMBERSBURG,

in our neighboring county, across the line, did not fare so well. There the Conococheague wrought sad havoc, according to the *Valley Spirit*. On Saturday afternoon the water rose there so rapidly that Market Street bridge, which has stood for 60 years, was soon rendered impassable and will have to be rebuilt. Miller's hotel yard and stable were flooded. King Street bridge was uninjured. Two-thirds of the western wall of the woolen mill, the largest wall in town, fell out into the creek with a tremendous explosion, but the principal part of the machinery was uninjured. A blacksmith shop was wiped out entirely. Gilbert's Agricultural Works were submerged and damaged, but not destroyed. Ludwig's brewery was flooded and damaged. The Furniture Works of H. Sierer & Co., formerly the Edge Tool Factory, was most injured. Five thousand dollars worth of finished material was carried away, along with a large quantity of lumber, and the finishing shop, 75 by 40 feet of brick and frame, wholly destroyed. The total damage to this company is set down at $10,000. Bridges along the stream were damaged and a great deal of other injury inflicted.