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# THE JOHNSTOWN FLOOD

**ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST AND MOST AWE-INSPIRING TRAGEDIES**  
White City Amusement Park, 63rd Street and South Parkway, Chicago, IL (1905)

I have seen the Johnstown Flood." Wherever you see a person at White City wearing a circular card with the preceding inscription on it, you see a person who is entirely pleased and gratified with the return of his small investment, and one who is willing to inform others that they are missing something educating and entertaining if they fail to see this great exhibition.

The Johnstown Flood is the most impressive and realistic of all scenic productions, and is produced on a mammoth scale. The entire show is a triumph of scenic art and startling realism. On a large staging the entire city of Johnstown, Pa., is reproduced in perspective, with the streets and houses being exact patterns of the actual structures in that town.

Business is being carried on in the city, people walk the streets, the trains arrive at the stations, and the entire scene is one of activity. After several days of rainfall, the sun had shone clear and bright on this fatal night. The citizens of the town had celebrated Decoration Day, and the entire business section of the city was gayly decorated in bunting and flags. Night falls, and now the mountains which rise on all sides of the town throw the long blue shadows over the valley and the lights glitter from the casements and windows. In



Johnstown Flood



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strong contrast to the lurid glare of the factories, the moon bathes the city in a mantle of silver.

Suddenly the skies cloud over, and in a moment a fierce storm bursts over the city, the thunder crashes and re-echoes in the mountains. Then quiet comes again and the stars twinkle in the heavens and the little valley is wrapt in slumber.

The reservoir breaks and the torrent comes sweeping down the narrow defile, washing away several villages, and dashes on with a sullen roar toward Johnstown. On comes the wall of water, carrying with it men, women, children and all kinds of trees, houses and animals. The roar of the coming cataract has been heard by some, who flee to safety, but the next instant the city is swept away. Where 2,000 houses had stood there is nothing but a sea of water. The entire city of Johnstown has been wiped out.

The story of the flood is the story of one of the greatest tragedies of the world. On Friday, May 31, 1889, in the State of Pennsylvania, the entire beautiful valley of the Conemaugh was devastated, 10,000 lives were wiped out and millions of dollars' worth of property was destroyed.

Johnstown, Pa., was one of the most prosperous manufacturing towns in the state. Including its suburbs, it had a population of 35,000 persons, and was situated at the junction of the Conemaugh River and Stony Creek. One of the largest steel works in the country, the Cambria Iron Company, had its plant there.

About fifteen or eighteen miles northeast from Johnstown was the great reservoir, which was 500 feet above the city. The great basin held more than sixty million gallons of water, which was held in check by a dam 700 feet in length, 90 feet thick at the base and 110 feet high. This reservoir was the property of a number of wealthy gentlemen of Pittsburg, who formed the "South Fork Fishing Club."

When the dam burst, after many days of heavy rains, the great wall of water swept down over the little city and it was completely annihilated. This tragedy is so faithfully reproduced and is given on so great a scale that the audience forgets that it is only a spectacle which they are watching and sits spellbound, intently gazing at the unfolding of the story.