

A Science Service Feature

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! WHY THE WEATHER ! Mailed November 7, 1927

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AUTUMN FLOODS IN NEW ENGLAND.

Serious floods of the New England rivers usually occur in the spring, as a result of the melting of snow and the breaking up of ice, with or without the conjunction of heavy rains. Autumn floods, such as have just been in progress, are exceptional but by no means unprecedented.

Sidney Perley, in his "Historic Storms of New England," devotes a chapter to the floods of November, 1853, which were due to a great rainstorm toward the middle of the month. On Sunday, the 13th, rain fell in torrents in Boston and the darkness was so great that church services were abandoned or conducted by artificial light. At the Brattle Square church the congregation listened to a nearly invisible preacher and sang the hymn beginning,

"Mark the softly falling snow and the descending rain."

Most New England rivers were in flood. Among the many bridges carried away was one over the Naugatuck River at Ansonia, Connecticut, on which several people were watching the progress of the flood. Some of these persons were drowned.

The flood of October, 1869, known as the "pumpkin flood," resulted from rains of from one to three days' duration over New England, with extremely heavy rain on the 4th. Many places reported a fall of more than 6 inches on that date, and Canton, Connecticut, a fall of 12.35 inches. The Merrimac and Connecticut Rivers reached their highest points on the 6th, when the river-gaugereading at Hartford was 26.3 feet, or 16 feet above "flood stage".

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