

# The New York Times.

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MONDAY, AUGUST 7, 1899.—

## CAR FALLS AND 36 ARE KILLED

### Disaster on a New Trolley Line Near Bridgeport.

### ON AN UNGUARDED BRIDGE

### Wheels Leave the Rails and the Car Dives into a Pond.

### RUSH DOWN A GRADE.

### Catastrophe Comes Suddenly and All But Two on Board Meet Death or Injury.

BRIDGEPORT, Conn., Aug. 6.—The greatest catastrophe recorded in Connecticut for nearly half a century occurred shortly before 4 o'clock this afternoon on the Stratford extension of the Shelton Street Railway, when a loaded car went off the trestle over Peck's Mill Pond, at Oranogue, about six miles north of Bridgeport, and sank in the flats forty feet below. Thus far thirty-six persons are known to be dead, and several others are injured. Only two persons are known to have escaped unharmed. It is believed that there were nearly fifty passengers on the car, but the indicator was removed by a conductor of another car and spirited away, so that at present it is impossible to ascertain the exact number.

The scene of the accident is midway between Shelton and Bridgeport. The car was north-bound, running toward Shelton. It was in charge of Conductor John Carroll of Bridgeport, who is among the killed, and Motorman Hamilton of Bridgeport. The latter escaped by jumping.

The trestle is 440 feet long and constructed of iron, with stone foundations. It is not protected by any guard rails. South of the trestle is quite an incline, down which the car ran at a rapid rate. After it had run about ten feet on the trestle the trucks left the rails. The car continued on the ties for about seventy-five feet, when it bounded off the trestle and dropped into the pond below, overturning completely, and striking on one end. When the car struck, the motor, which weighs four tons, and the heavy trucks crushed into it instantly killing many of the passengers.

William Kelley of Bridgeport, who was in company with Miss Margaret Farrell, escaped death by jumping from the car, as he felt it swaying, to the flats below. Soon afterward the car toppled over. He sus-

tained a severe shock, but was otherwise uninjured. He said to-night that the car was not running unusually fast, but was swaying considerably when it struck the trestle, and he realized the danger, and knew his only safety was in jumping. George Willis, Superintendent of the R. N. Bassett Company of Shelton, was on the highway not more than 100 feet from the scene, and witnessed the car toppling over. He said that there was one unearthly shriek as it went down, and after that, silence.

The accident was witnessed by Miss Frances Peck, who resides about 400 feet from the bridge. She was up stairs at her home when the car passed, and she asserts that it was running at an unusually high rate of speed. Frank Cramer, who was bathing near the bridge, says that the passengers were all singing when the car passed him.

#### RESCUERS REACH THE SCENE.

Drs. J. C. Lynch, R. W. Ivers, and J. M. Johnson of Bridgeport, who were passengers on a car a short distance behind, were quickly on the scene, and rendered all possible assistance to the injured persons. Word was sent to Bridgeport, and three ambulances and a police wagon were hurried to the scene, in which wounded passengers were taken to the Bridgeport General Hospital. Several other conveyances were pressed into this service. Medical Examiner Cogswell of Stratford improvised a morgue in the main room of the Town Hall at that place, and in a very short time twenty-three bodies were laid out, awaiting identification.

Undertaker Curtis of Stratford was notified almost immediately after the accident, and he utilized all sorts of conveyances to carry the bodies to the improvised morgue. Nearly the entire medical force of Bridgeport responded to telephone calls sent in, but when the doctors arrived they were able to render but little assistance, as so few of the passengers escaped instant death. The car, after falling, soon settled over on its side, and there was little difficulty in removing the bodies of the dead or in assisting the wounded. A camping party, which included Clifford Calvery, the rope walker, was in the vicinity, and its members rendered considerable assistance to the survivors.

The scene about the wrecked car was one of horror and seemed to stun all the early ones who appeared on the scene to render assistance. Fortunately the passengers who were not killed instantly were rendered unconscious, so that few of the gruesome scenes connected with most disasters were presented. All of the persons killed sustained fractured skulls.

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#### THE DEAD AND INJURED.

The identified dead are:  
BANKS, S., Shelton.  
BRADLEY, ELIAS E., Selectman, and wife, Milford.  
BLEW, FRANK, Mrs., two children; boy, aged three; girl, five; Stratford.  
BRENNAN, Mrs. PATRICK, aged fifty, Bridgeport.  
CARROLL, JOHN, conductor, Bridgeport.  
COGSWELL, HENRY C., Bridgeport, aged sixty; employe of New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad; member of the Board of Education.  
COTTER, WILLIAM, aged twenty-five, Bridgeport; identification not positive.  
DORUSE, IRVING, aged twenty-three, Bridgeport.  
GALVIN, DANIEL, Ansonia.  
GALVIN, JOHN, aged twenty-two, Ansonia.  
HOTCHKISS, JOSEPH, Bridgeport; engineer Fire Department.  
HARVEY, WILLIAM H., aged thirty-seven, and wife, Bridgeport.  
HOLMES, Mrs. ARTHUR, Bridgeport.  
KELLY, WILLIAM, Bridgeport; sprained arm.  
KRAFT, FRANK, aged twenty-five, Bridgeport.  
LANTHEAR, WINTON, motorman Bridgeport Traction Company.  
MCDONALD, Mrs., Bridgeport.

M McNALLY, THOMAS, aged thirty, Bridgeport; identification not positive.  
McCULLOUGH, WILLIAM, Stratford.  
McDERMOTT, PATRICK, aged fifty, Bridgeport.  
OSBORN, WILLIAM, Stratford.

PITT, ALFRED, aged twenty-two, Bridgeport.

RUGG, Mrs. J. H., Stratford.

RING, PETER, aged twenty-eight, Bridgeport.

TOOMEY, BESSIE, aged twenty-two, Bridgeport.

WELLS, ORLANDO B., aged sixty-three; shoemaker.

The seriously injured persons at the Bridgeport Hospital are:

BRENNAN, MARGARET; scalp wound.

DELANEY, CHARLES, New York, stock broker; injured internally.

FARRELL, MARGARET, right leg amputated above knee; will probably die.

HOLMES, ARTHUR, Bridgeport; contusion about body, left leg crushed.

HILLERIOUS, FRED; scalp wound, bruised about body.

HAMILTON, GEORGE; scalp wound; injury to leg.

KRATT, FRANK, Bridgeport; injuries about head and back.

OLBIN, MATHEW; scalp wound, cut and bruised.

PITT, Mrs. SIDNEY A., Bridgeport; right leg fractured.

RUGG, MABEL, aged five; arm broken.

#### CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT.

The road, which is practically controlled by the Bridgeport Traction Company, was opened for traffic last Thursday. President Andrew Radell was in Derby when he received news of the catastrophe, and he immediately drove to the scene. He was completely prostrated when he saw the extent of the disaster.

The cause of the accident probably will not be known until after Coroner Doten conducts an investigation. Motorman Hamilton, who escaped death, is suffering from such a severe shock that it was impossible to learn anything from him to-night. President Radell said that it was impossible for him to account for the accident. Immediately after his arrival at the scene he made a thorough inspection of the tracks on the trestle, and he could see nothing wrong. The cars were running over the trestle as usual soon afterward. He denied that the cars were being run at a high rate of speed, and asserted that every possible precaution had been taken to prevent such an occurrence. Seven inspectors had been put on to watch the running of the cars over the trestle, he said, and a time allowance of half an hour had been made and extra cars put on to provide for this.

One theory advanced is that faulty construction was responsible for the accident. At the point where the cars leave the road for the trestle it is alleged that the rails had sunk a little, and though the forward trucks took the rails all right, the rear trucks did not connect, and jumped the track, which caused the forward trucks also to leave the iron. It is the belief that if proper guard rails had been placed on the trestle the car would have been prevented from toppling over. The conductors and motormen have been ordered to run the cars to-night not faster than four miles an hour.

Upward of 6,000 people visited the scene of the catastrophe this evening, and pickpockets took advantage of the crowd to secure considerable booty.