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THE LARGEST CIRCULATION OF ANY PAPER IN THE STATE.

YOU READ IT, WHY NOT AD?

WHO IS THE MURDERER?

Coroner's Jury Endeavoring to Fix the Responsibility For the Peck's Mill Disaster of Last Sunday.

MOTORMAN ARRESTED.

Public Demands That Some One Be Held Responsible For The Awful Disaster. Testimony Showing That Both the Motorman and the Trolley Company Are to Blame. Investigation to Be Resumed on Tuesday.



SEVENTY EIGHT HUMAN BEINGS were sent into eternity one week ago this afternoon by the falling of a trolley car from Peck's Mill bridge, a short distance from Stratford. They had little or no warning, judging by the stories told by the few who survive the awful disaster. A coroner's jury of six men has been investigating the cause of the accident. They will resume their labors on Tuesday. The jury consists of County Commissioner Henry Lee, R. T. Whiting and A. J. Cables of Bridgeport, and Stiles Judson, Sr., Henry P. Stagg and J. Henry Blakeman of Stratford. Each one of these men is a representative man in his own town. This jury has a difficult and highly important duty to perform. It is likely that they fully realize this fact by this time. The eye of the public is upon them in a much more piercing manner than the public eye of the community has ever before been turned on six men. These six men will decide who is to blame for this terrible catastrophe, and they must decide in a manner that will meet with public approval. If they do not, they will long be remembered and reminded of any laxity or partiality that may be shown as the result of their inquiry.

The blame has not been fixed yet, and the "Herald" will not presume to decide in advance of the coroner's jury who is responsible for the murder of twenty-eight human beings. At such times and in treating such appalling matters a spirit of absolute fairness should prevail. There is great bitterness over this disaster, and it is the bitterness that grows more bitter and refuses

manuslaughter and now under bonds, and the corporation which owns the road, it is a simple matter to understand which is the powerful and which the weak or vessel. There is no intention of being unfair to anyone concerned in this awful tragedy, but the preponderance of influence, the power of a corporation compared with that of one man—in this case the motorman—is well known. We all understand that the power of a corporation is in this state; we all have seen illustrations of the weakness of a man as an individual. We feel that the coroner's jury will look upon the aspect of the tragedy without fear or favor. Consider the corporation in this wholesale murder. Just the same as you do the motorman—an individual; and you will not err or stray far from the mark of justice which the public and those who mourn expect you to reach as the result of this investigation.

This far, and we say it in a spirit of perfect fairness and without fear of contradiction, there is evidence to show that both the motorman and the corporation are to blame for the murder of those twenty-eight human beings on last Sunday afternoon.

The motorman was running fast; the track was not in a safe condition. That, briefly, is all that can thus far be adduced from the investigation as showing who and what is responsible for the accident. It now remains to determine on which side the preponderance of evidence exists relative to culpability. When that is ascertained, the jury should not have any difficulty, no social, political or business scruples against placing the blame where it should be placed.

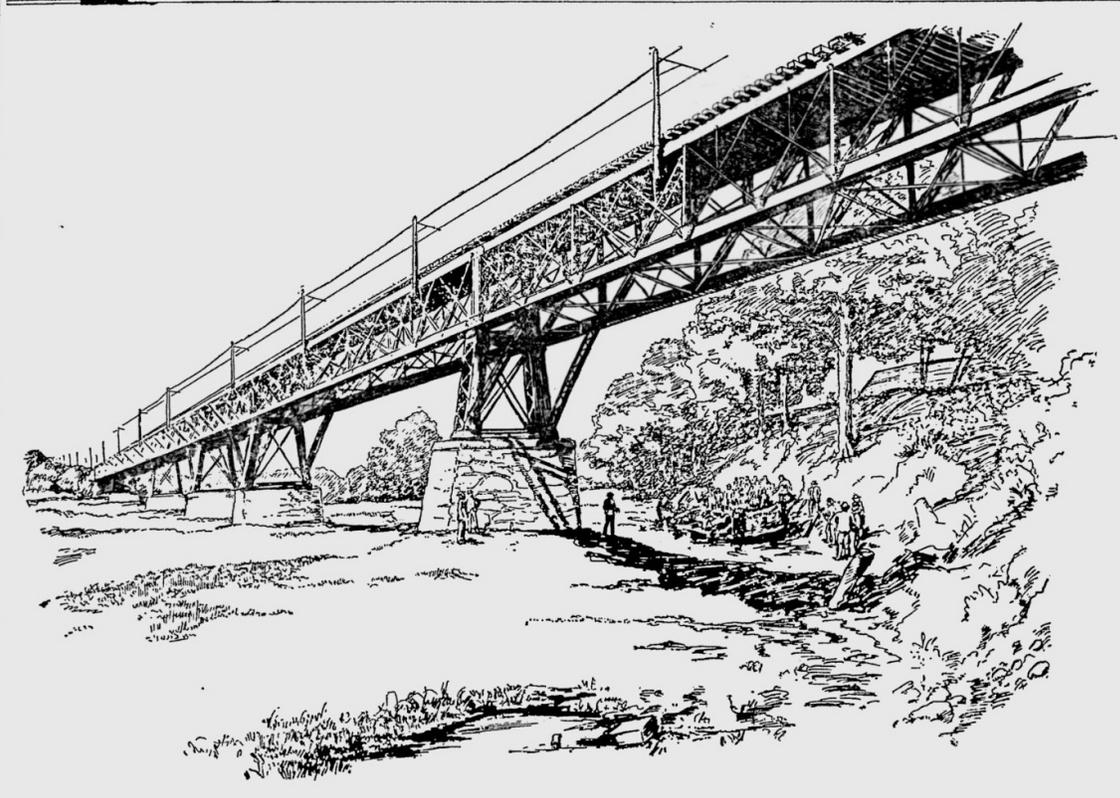
There have been many insinuations that the jury would be biased. We do not feel that there is reason for apprehension on this score. The reason for this apprehension, if indeed there be any, is owing to the manner in which the inquiry has been conducted. Many of the witnesses were not pumped dry of information which they might have given had questioning been conducted in a more lawyer-like manner. Sometimes, we are sorry to say, but we say it with all fairness, the inquiry took on the habiliments of a farce, but it was not intentional. We know that. The subject in hand is so stupendous that ordinary methods do not appear to fit the case. That is why there has been reason for more or less adverse comment.

Sometimes, too, the jurors who have the privilege of asking questions have "gone at" witnesses in a manner which gave the impression that the jurors were conducting the defense. County Commissioner Henry Lee has been the one notable exception to this inclination of the jury, with A. J. Cables closely following him. It was this attitude of the three Stratford jurors which was responsible for the criticism they were subjected to by certain portions of the press, and it was in an effort to clear away this suspicion of partiality that Juror Blakeman made a public declaration in the press for himself and two townsmen. We do not wish to pose as instructors of the jury, but if Henry Lee could be the examiner of witnesses for the jury, much greater progress could be made and more real relevant points be brought out. Mr. Lee and Coroner Doten could take all the information out of a witness bearing on the case and do it without putting the witness on the defensive and in a combative frame of mind as has usually been the case when the other jurors " tackled " him. The attempt to break down the testimony of a witness is a poor policy in such examinations. There isn't a witness who will faintly in such an awful tragedy. He will tell the truth as best he can.

For this wholesale murder, someone must be found responsible. It must not be possible to drop twenty-eight human beings from a trolley bridge to eternity and no one be responsible.

The public demands a verdict of the jury of six men that will definitely fix the blame.

All eyes are upon the jury.



PECK'S MILL BRIDGE FROM WHICH THE TROLLEY CAR DROPPED.

gaze prominently again until last winter, spending the time in the interim entertaining drummers and travelling men who occasionally come to the city. She and her little daughter were together all this time. Her husband lives in Winstepauk, where he is employed about or runs a livery stable. Last winter, however, Mrs. Carroll became known as "the female drummer." She was selling a washing machine and a bill file. In introducing the bill file she went into the various offices about the city, and there are those who are uncharitable enough to say that she had an object in so doing. However that may be, the men whom she met could tell better than anyone

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to be assuaged by any lotions except the administration of complete justice. There are two factors in this accident against whom the clenched fist of public opinion is raised. One is the motorman, George Hamilton; the other is the Shelton Street Railway company. The feeling is intense that one or both of these factors is responsible for the murder of twenty-eight human beings, and the coroner's jury must find one or both responsible for the accident. It should not be possible to murder twenty-eight human beings and find no one responsible. The jury cannot—no, it dare not in the face of the public demand for justice—render a verdict of inability to prove or establish responsibility. There must be a verdict that will hold someone or something responsible. Divine Providence cannot be brought into this, as in the case of beings struck by lightning or other such instrumentality. The neglect of someone, the carelessness of someone, is responsible for this wholesale murder and the public expect the jury to place that blame where it belongs. As between the motorman, standing alone as he does, already accused of



CORONER'S JURY of six in conjunction with Coroner Doten has been inquiring since Monday afternoon into the cause of that awful disaster. They have not yet arrived at a conclusion. It is likely that the inquest will be held for some days yet in order to get all the light possible on the matter. It is useless to go into the details of the horrible story. Everyone who reads newspapers is familiar with every detail and then the facts brought out before the jury will be gone over with a view to showing in which direction the responsibility lies. It is the evidence relative to the cause of the accident. The car started from the lower bridge in Bridgeport on its third trip to Derby that day at about 4:45 o'clock in the afternoon. It was in charge of Conductor John Carroll and Motorman George Hamilton. Hamilton had been a motorman for four years. The trolley company says that it placed the pick of the safest men on the line of the Bridgeport Traction company on the Shelton line. The schedule time for the round trip on Sunday from Bridgeport to Derby was three hours. On Friday and Saturday the schedule time had been two hours and a half for the round trip.

The officials of the trolley road claim that the Sunday schedule was extended for the express purpose of safety. The distance from Bridgeport to Shelton is 13.99 miles. The round trip would therefore be 27.98 miles, practically 28 miles. The time allowed on Sunday, including stops, was three hours, which, figuring as low as is consistent with sense, would make the speed rate of the car ten miles an hour. It could not possibly have been less and make the trip in three hours.

The car in charge of Conductor Carroll and Motorman Hamilton was one of the ordinary open cars of the Milford Street Railroad company. President Radel says that the car is practically a new one, last summer being the second summer it was in use. It is one of the ordinary trolley cars with both trucks and motors under the center of the car, which leaves both ends with no support under them.

The car was loaded with about forty-five passengers. It was not a rollicking, skylarking crowd at all. They were mostly middle-aged persons, young men with their sweaters, mothers with their children. So far as the testimony shows, there was not a single thing that occurred during the trip of that was out of the ordinary. The car was on the Peck's Mill bridge which led any of the passengers who escaped with their lives to remark that there was some danger. But when the car had run on the bridge about 100 feet it suddenly toppled over and dropped from the east side of the bridge and landed on its top in the mud at the bottom of the pond, thirty-seven feet below. The heavy bottom of the car, each one of the motors weighing 1,000 pounds, snapped the side posts between the top and the bottom, and the victims were before they had a chance to escape.

There were not many people in the immediate vicinity at the time the car dropped, but in a very short time there were sufficient to go to the rescue of the dead and dying and injured. The son of William E. Peck and Miss Frances E. Peck, his cousin, is right at this point, and Miss Peck seems to be the only one who was comparatively close to the car and saw it drop from the trestle. She was in her room upstairs and looked from the window as she heard the car coming down the grade to the bridge.

When she saw the car topple over she ran out and gave the alarm and turned her house into a hospital for the time being, where the injured were carried. The dead bodies were carried up from the wreck and laid out under the apple and pear trees on the grassy knoll on the lawn. Then they were taken to the Stratford town hall, where twenty-three were laid on the floor. It was a heart-breaking scene about that on Tuesday morning the hearing of testimony began. Owing to the necessary delays in securing witnesses, there were tedious waits. On Thursday much startling testimony was brought out.

Following the most important parts of the testimony which appears in full on the trolley company:

Miss Frances E. Peck.—When I first saw the car it was three or four car lengths from the trestle work. When I first saw it it was going very fast. It didn't teeter or sway there, but it was simply going fast. All the other cars slow down there. I didn't notice any motion to the car there. It passed out of my view behind the barn and I heard a peculiar rumbling sound. I wondered if anything had happened and I looked intently. When it came in view again it was off the track and was swaying from side to side, not rocking up and down. Then the car rolled off the bridge. It didn't seem to plunge off end first, but simply rolled over.

"The car was going faster than any car I had ever seen pass. This attracted my attention. I wondered when I heard the peculiar rumbling if anything was going to happen. The first swaying motion I noticed was after the car had passed the roadway under the bridge, and was well upon the bridge. Some motorman stop the cars before going upon the bridge, and others slow down."

Miss Peck was in her room combing her hair at the time. She could look from the window and have an unobstructed view of the track and car.

Mrs. Kattie Taylor of 161 East Main street was visiting at the home of her brother-in-law, Frank H. Webb last Sunday. The house is about 700 feet from the Peck's mill bridge.

"I had never seen a car cross the bridge, and I went out and stood in the middle of the track," she said, "and saw it going very fast, and I could see that it was teetering. When I stood there the car jumped the tracks. I was so excited that I don't know just what happened, except that I saw the car give a lurch and the seat

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WHO IS THE MURDERER?

(Continued From Page 1.)

moment it went over sideways off the bridge. "I couldn't see the motorman then. There were two men on the back platform with the conductor. I am sure the car did not stop up before it went

grade changes about fifty feet from the abutment. I had not noticed that there was any undue rocking, when cars passed over it. "On the bridge there is the usual guard rail. It is 6 by 8 inches, and sets down upon the ties about an inch. So that it is five inches above the ties. This is about the usual guard rail. The company ordered before the accident an iron guard rail to be laid inside the rails but it has not arrived. I consider the present rail perfectly safe. "It is not customary on trolley

before the opening, and I told him everything was in good shape. "We never put in steel guard rails on a bridge except where there is a curve. Usually a 6x8 timber guard is used. In this instance a 6x8 guard was used. I consider the timber guard used ample. "The cause of the accident was the unusual speed of the car together with the fact that the car was going from a springy substance to a rigid substance. Then the gauging of the wheels

ton line, Friday night, that he was placed on that line because he was an experienced man, and that the orders were to run slow near and across bridges." Henry A. Thumm of Shelton, superintendent of the Shelton Street Railway company, said: "I gave orders to the men that even if they were behind time they should not run recklessly or fast to make it up. The first two days the road was open, the men were given two and one half hours to make the round trip, but it was changed at Mr. Radel's suggestion Sunday, so that each car had 3 half hour more to make the round trip."

James H. Edwards, an engineer employed by the Berlin Bridge company, said: "The timbers used are of the size and kind usually found on all trestle work. I consider that they are safer than if steel or iron guard rails had been used. Common practice and experience has demonstrated that the timber guards of the size used on Peck's bridge are fully adequate. The only explanation I can give of the accident is that the car must have been going at great speed, and that the distance it did over the trestle."

Mrs. Sidney A. Pitt's testimony was taken at the hospital. She lost her husband and child but does not yet know that fact. She said: "The first I knew that the car was off the track was when I felt myself falling. I occupied a seat in the third row from the rear. I could not see the motorman and I don't know whether he tried to stop the car. I was conscious when the car struck the ground and retained consciousness when I was first liberated. I know we were going at a very, very rapid rate."

The testimony of Frank E. Krapp, another survivor, was also taken at the hospital. His sweetheart, Bessie Toomey, was with him. She was killed. He does not know that. He said: "I think the car was going at a pretty good rate; faster than it ought to. I don't believe I was off my feet before the car fell. It all happened so quickly that I don't recollect whether the passengers were frightened. I know the motorman by sight and don't recall that he had any words with anyone during the trip."

Matthew Robbia, a Frenchman, whose testimony was taken through an interpreter at the hospital, said the car as it went on the bridge was rocking or plunging like a ship in a heavy sea.

TESTIMONY AGAINST ROAD. The following testimony appears against the road: George T. Jewell, town treasurer of Stratford, visited the scene of the accident shortly after it occurred.

"I made an examination of the ties nearest the bridge and found that there was no dirt under the ties closest to the abutment for a distance of six or eight feet. By jumping on the ties they yielded some. It was apparent that there was no dirt under perhaps two or more of the ties. There were others who stood on the ties when I did. E. B. Bliss of King street was one of them."

George E. Hawes, of Bridgeport, was at the scene of the accident Monday morning between 8 and 9 o'clock. He had a camera with him and took six pictures of men at work on the track

near the approach to the bridge. He said: "I was on the ground and had taken some pictures of the wrecked car. I saw the gang working on the road and for my own pleasure took several snapshots. It wasn't until I saw the claim made in the papers that no work had been done on the road near the abutment that the thought occurred to me that the pictures would come in handy."

"I saw a number of laborers at work about the rails. They were tamping dirt about the ties and rails there. I saw two flat cars loaded with dirt being emptied at the abutment." Frank R. Sammis, of Stratford, was the wreck an hour and a half after the accident. "I noticed," he said, "that at least three cross ties on the east side of the approach, just before the junction with the bridge, were several inches from the earth. Shortly after I left the place a car came along in the opposite direction, and I heard someone say as it passed over the spot I had just left:

Just as the car struck the bridge I left my seat and stood on the running board to see the understructure of the bridge. The car was toppling over before I jumped. I stood looking at the motorman, and I saw him apply his brake. I did not see him jump at all. I have known the motorman for a year or so, but am not particularly well acquainted with him. I have ridden on many trolley cars, and do not think it was going beyond the ordinary rate. What I mean by the ordinary rate is about the rate maintained going through city streets."

Elton B. Hale, the inspector who was in charge of the cars that left the Bridgeport depot on Sunday, said that Motorman Hamilton asked to be relieved at the end of his second trip so he could get his dinner. "I told him he could not be relieved and he seemed disappointed. I would not say that he was angry, but he did not act pleased. The only conversation I had with him was when I told him he would have to make the trip. He replied: 'It has taken me almost four hours to make

THE KILLED.

- JOSEPH HOTCHKISS, age 62, 161 Prospect street, Bridgeport.
- PATRICK M'DERMOTT, 529 Pembroke street, Bridgeport.
- MRS. PATRICK M'DERMOTT, 529 Pembroke street, Bridgeport.
- PETER RING, age 57, 45 Seymour street, Bridgeport.
- MRS. FRANK BLICE, Strawberry Hill, Stratford.
- MAUD BLICE, aged 3, Strawberry Hill, Stratford.
- MELVIN BLICE, aged 5, Strawberry Hill, Stratford.
- MRS. JOSEPH H. RYGG, Strawberry Hill, Stratford.
- AMANDA GAUVIN, Waterbury, laborer.
- HENRY C. COGSWELL, age 68, 574 Washington avenue, Bridgeport.
- HENRY DORR, age 17, 18 Franklin street, Bridgeport.
- MRS. ARTHUR HOLMES, age 19, 247 Helen street, Bridgeport.
- WILLIAM H. HARVEY, age 49, 112 Madison avenue, Bridgeport.
- MRS. WILLIAM H. HARVEY, age 49, 112 Madison avenue, Bridgeport.
- JOHN E. CARROLL, age 25, Stratford avenue and Broome street, Bridgeport.
- MRS. BESSIE TOOMEY, age 21, 25 Revere street, Bridgeport.
- DANIEL GALVIN, age 26, Ansonia.
- MRS. ELIAS E. BRADLEY, Milford, Ct.
- SIDNEY A. PITT, Jr., age 7 months and 8 days, 200 Main street, Bridgeport.
- VICTOR ANDERSON, coachman, 85 Park place, Bridgeport.
- DANIEL GALVIN, age 26, Ansonia.
- MICHAEL GALVIN, age 28, Ansonia.
- WILLIE OSBORN, Strawberry Hill, Stratford.
- JOHN J. FLYNN, age 36, Reads street, Bridgeport.
- MRS. ELLEN BRENNAN, age 53, 232 Ogden street, Bridgeport.
- HOWARD BALDWIN, age 38, Stratford.

"Look at that car jump." I also observed that where the last stretch of rail was laid on the west side near the approach, the end of the rail which connected with the first section on the trestle did not rest upon it but the two joints met between ties."

John M. Fancher, of Stratford, was standing at the Shelton end of the trestle and saw the accident. He said: "I saw the car coming down the grade. I don't think that it was running faster than common cars. I saw the car jump the rails and totter for a moment, and then go over. I couldn't tell what the motorman was doing or where he was. I saw two men jump off the bridge."

William Kelly, of Bridgeport, was on the car and jumped, landing in the mud below, unharmed. He testified: "The car was going neither too fast nor too slow. The car commenced to 'teeter' some after it left the approach.

the last one, and it will take longer to make this."

Ephraim Wakeman of Stratford was placed at the bridge as a watchman. He said: "While on duty Monday morning, a gang of men in charge of Contractor Blakeslee came down with several loads of dirt and dumped them about 200 feet south of the abutment."

"About eight that morning I saw some boys about the controller. I noticed that the covering of the controller had been taken off and warned the boys away. After the coroner's jury had left the wreck Monday afternoon, I saw an employe of the Traction company, No. 20, taking a fume from the rear of the car. I remonstrated with him, but the employe said it was all right. I did not think the fume had burned out."

E. B. Underwood, secretary and treasurer of the Connecticut Electrical company.

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MOTORMAN GEORGE E. HAMILTON.

on the bridge. It left a big trail of dust behind it."

John D. Cralfe of Derby, is the young man who jumped out over the side rail of the car and landed safely on the trestle just as the car toppled over. He tells this story:

"I was in the second seat behind the motorman, on the end at the left, next to the guard rail. I came over the bridge in the morning from Derby and the car came so fast that I was scared. My mind was on jumping. When we came near the bridge in the afternoon I was looking out for it."

"The car went down the grade very fast, rocking and swaying. It struck the bridge and bounded into the air. Then I knew it was off the rails. It ran bumping along for fifty feet or so, turned suddenly to the right, and right and dropped off the bridge. I was ready to jump, and when the car lurched to the side, I sprang up, knocked the curtain, which was half way down, out of my way with my shoulder, and stepped over the guard rail. I jumped for the bridge. Something struck my feet, I don't know what, knocking them out from under me and I landed on my side in the middle of the bridge. I was watching the motorman. He didn't shut off the power, and he didn't try to put the brake on. I am sure of that. He seemed to be 'frozen.' I am here to tell the truth and not make it light or heavy for anyone. I never saw the motorman before. I know he didn't shut off the power or put the brake on. I was watching him all the time, and wondering why he didn't stop the car."

"The motorman was cranked at the depot when the car came in. I heard him talking with another man who was giving orders, and saying something about the man being a wooden man. When the car reached Conductor Carroll's house it stopped. A woman came out on the veranda and I heard the motorman say: 'It took us five hours to make this trip, and I suppose it will take five more for another.' When the car went along by Avon park it was going faster than I ever rode before. It was not going so fast at the bridge as it did near the park."

Major William W. Starr, of Bridgeport, who had charge of the alignment and construction of the trestle says: "I examined the road there after the accident. Any new embankment is elastic, and there may have been a little giving there. I could not tell how much, but there might have been half an inch. At a change of grade there is always an apparent depression. The

bridges to have the inside iron guard rail."

"I was over the road Sunday about 1:30 p. m., just before the wreck. I observed nothing wrong. I sat on the front seat of the car. The car was going not faster than a mile an hour. If there had been any depression there it appears that I would have noticed it, and had it repaired. It was for just such things I was looking."

"I would rather not give an opinion as to the cause of the accident. It might be right and it might be wrong. I believe that the approach to the bridge was safe. The rails used on the road are fifty-six pound rails, that is, they weigh fifty-six pounds to the yard."

D. A. Blakeslee, the New Haven contractor, who had charge of the construction of the road bed, went over the road Saturday.

Mr. Blakeslee said: "I considered the road perfectly safe. I stood near the abutment late Sunday night as cars passed. I saw there was a slight giving, but nothing out of the ordinary. A track gauge placed along there Monday morning showed that the track to be in perfect condition. The guard rails are those usually used. If this had happened on a curve, I should have said an inside steel guard rail would have prevented it, but this was on a piece of straight track. The guard rail did not rock because of the speed, the headway this car was under. Of course I didn't see it but my opinion is that the car was going very fast. If this guard rail had been close to the rail, the wheels bounding as they were, would have come down upon top of the guard. The rail is placed about a foot from the track for this reason."

C. W. Blakeslee, of the firm of C. W. Blakeslee & Son, New Haven, built the road. He is a civil engineer and contractor.

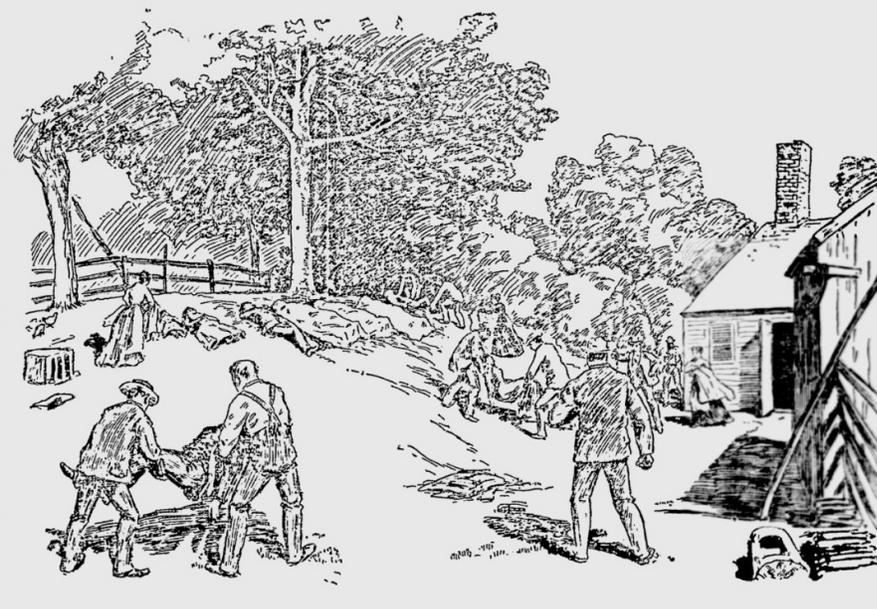
"I went over the bridge some time after the accident," said Mr. Blakeslee, "and found it all right. The road was in fit shape to open, and nothing was done at the approach for several days prior to the opening, as it was considered to be in perfect alignment. Saturday my brother and I went over the road looking for any defects, and the only place a settlement was found was near Far Mill river."

"Mr. Radel asked me if the road would be fit to open Wednesday, and I told him I would not, but that it might be opened the following day. Thursday, Mr. Radel rode over the road Wednesday and also Thursday

might not have been exactly the same the rails."

Supt. James Butler of the Bridgeport Traction company said:

"I told Motorman Hamilton, with the rest of the men selected for the Shel-



LAYING THE DEAD ON THE GRASS MOUND AT THE PECK HOMESTEAD.