

How They Met Their Maker

Historical Newspaper Death Notices of People from the Greater White Lake Area

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Rodrique Tremblay was quoted as saying “Death is a part of life” and he was completely accurate as death occurs to somebody, somewhere, daily. Death is inevitable, and none of us get out of this thing called life...alive. Some departures from life are mundane, while others are extraordinary.

A review of early issues of the Whitehall Forum (Whitehall, Michigan) and the Montague Observer (Montague, Michigan) - newspapers of the White Lake area of Western Michigan - revealed numerous notices of people that departed this life for the other side. Some of these notices were generous with the details of the departure, almost to the point that it would be considered inappropriate by today's reading public. The following is information gleaned from these resources.

The White Lake area owes its existence to the rich timber resources that were present when settlers started coming to the area in the late 1830's. Logging was the first step to utilizing this plentiful resource and was a dangerous activity which required cutting, loading, transporting, piling, and floating to get it to the sawmill. A number of men lost their lives during this process.

Paul Kreske

was employed by Herman Licus, a subcontractor to the Staples and Covell lumber entity, for a logging job in White River township in Muskegon County. Paul bid his wife and four children goodbye on an early Saturday morning in January of 1893, and headed to the logging site.

Paul and another man, Joseph Pike, were responsible for sawing the trees down. Around 3pm they came to a large white ash tree and began the process of bringing it down. The tree showed signs of toppling and Pike gave the warning to “look out” which Paul responded to by running to a spot near a brush fence where the snow had piled. The tree fell but split from the unsawed portion which left the butt of the large tree hanging approximately 16 feet in the air. The tree wavered for a moment and then fell towards Paul. Unable to remove himself from the path of the tree due to the deep snow, the tree crashed upon him, pinning him against another log that had already been cut down.

The big ash tree resisted efforts to remove Paul and had to be cut into two pieces and extracted by oxen before assistance could be rendered. Unfortunately, Paul had been killed instantly as his body was nearly cut in half. His stomach and bowels were burst open and his entire middle torso was crushed. His family was left in poor circumstances and relied on the charity of the German citizens of Montague, Michigan to help defray the cost of his funeral. Paul Kreske was 32 years old. /

Milton Stevens

and several other men were employed by Rudolph Bell who was a subcontractor responsible for breaking in a load of logs for the Staples and Covell lumber entity. “Breaking in” a rollway is defined as rolling a pile of logs to the water from a landing next to a river or stream. In 1910 Fred Norman painted an example of breaking a rollway in (Figure 1) and illustrated the danger associated with such a job.

The men were working at a large rollway near Hesperia, Michigan and found that the log pile had become blocked due to a jammed log. Freeing the logs required the identification of the key log causing the jam, and then removing it. A chain would be attached to the key log and pulled by oxen. Attaching to the key log was probably the most dangerous job in the entire process of logging and this task fell upon Milton.

Milton identified the key log and made his way into the jumbled mass of logs to attach the chain. Just as he set his cant hook into the key log, a log from above started rolling and the whole mass rolled over him before he could escape. His horrified coworkers immediately came to his aid and were stunned to see him encased twelve logs deep into the mass but were even more amazed to see that he was still alive. The logs were interwoven and had to be chopped in two to reach him, and after 3 hours of hard work the last log was removed from his chest whereupon he expired. Milton Stevens was 30 years old.²

Some men initially survive a logging accident but receive injuries in the process. A middle-aged man named **John Marshman**

survived a log rolling over him while engaged in activity at a Smith and Field lumber camp in 1890 but about one month later died from the injuries sustained from the accident.³ The actual cause of death was not noted but could be assumed to be internal injuries.

Gust Carlson

and Rueben Decker were teamsters for the Covell Brothers lumber entity in 1893 and were tasked with transporting a logging tram car (Figure 2) to a point upriver. This weighty load had been loaded onto a heavy pair of trucks and was being pulled by a strong quartet of draft horses, the front two of which were controlled by Decker, and the rear two controlled by Carlson.

Before departing from Whitehall, Michigan Carlson had been cautioned not to attempt descending the hills at Carleton creek or at the



Figure 1. *Breaking in a rollway*, Fred Norman, painter, 1910



Figure 2. *logging tram cars*

North Branch without unhitching the forward team and leading it down, and to keep the other team well in hand. He chose to disregard that guidance and proceeded down the hill at Carleton creek with all four horses. The heavy load responded accordingly and the front team felt the “crowding” resulting from the gravitational pull of the load. As a response, the front team started, or jerked, forward at the sharpest part of the curve and the load started over the embankment. Carlson was thrown from the top of the logging tram car which rolled twice and caught Carlson in its path. The heavy weight of the logging tram car drove Carlson face down into the sand, instantly killing him, while Decker was able to avoid being crushed and successfully extricated himself from the debris. It took some time to release Carlson and he was found heavily bruised about the head and neck. The 28-year-old man was considered to be straight and reliable and was to have been married.⁴

When the logs made it to the mills around White Lake they were processed into lumber, lathe, shingles, etc. Working in a mill was a dangerous occupation as safety consisted of keeping one's hands and clothing away from moving machinery.

John Anderson

was employed by the Wilcox Lumber Company and on a warm day in July 1887 filled in for another worker who was attending a funeral. John substituted himself on the edger, a machine with which he was familiar, and at half past 3pm the mill whistle blew for quarter shut down time. When the machinery stopped, workers were horrified to find that Anderson had literally been cut in two. His lower body remained on the machine while his upper body had been drawn through the spiked rollers into the chute and dropped to the lower floor of the mill.

Nearly 30 men had been working near the edger but not a single person witnessed the accident. They theorized that Anderson, upon hearing the whistle, stepped up to the saws with oil cans in each hand to lubricate the bearings. While leaning forward to complete this task his clothing was probably caught by the saw teeth and in an instant, he was whirled into eternity, probably not realizing his awful situation as the saws pierced through his body.

Anderson was considered a bright and reliable worker and had a large circle of friends that were shocked by his untimely demise. The superintendent of the mill assumed all expenses of the funeral and a fitting burial. John Anderson was 25 years old.⁵



Figure 3. Late 1800's edger mounted for portability.

John Bergstrom

a Swede, worked at the Staples and Covell sawmill in November 1888. John was engaged in the activity of cleaning sawdust away from one of the wheels of the band saw when, by some misunderstanding of signals, the machinery was engaged, and his clothes caught in the saw whereupon he was mangled in a fearful manner. The machinery was stopped as soon as possible, and John was extricated, but he lived for only a few minutes. This accident resulted in John's wife, Sophia, bringing a civil action against Staples and Covell for \$10,000.00 in damages.⁶ In November 1890 the Supreme Court of Michigan sustained a lower court verdict in favor of Staples and Covell.⁷ John Bergstrom was 40 years old and left a wife and 1 year old son.

An incredible accident occurred on the evening of August 30, 1887, that shocked witnesses and took the life of **Fred Krupp**

who was a tail sawyer on the day crew at the A.J. & C.E. Covell mill. Fred was on his way to Montague from Whitehall and decided to visit the men working on the upper level of the Ferry Lumber Company mill. Fred had just seated himself on the sill of one of the windows when a large plank caught on the circular saw and was sent through the air like a missile, striking him in the abdomen and carrying him through the window to the ground below. He was

carried, unconscious, to Dr. Jones office in Montague where he appeared to rally, and was able to speak to those about him, but it was evident that he was sinking rapidly and within 30 minutes had expired. Fred was a bright young man and well thought of by all who knew him. He was 21 years old. ⁸

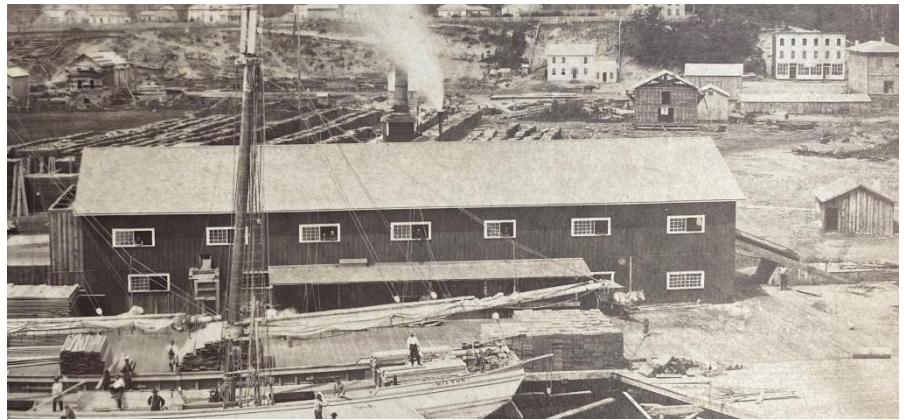


Figure 4. Ferry Lumber Company mill 1870

Lawrence Samuelson

was employed at the Covell Brothers sawmill on the night crew and on the evening of October 13, 1892, he fell asleep on the boiler. The mill whistle blew and startled Lawrence. In a frightened state he tried to get down from the boiler and fell into a vat of hot water, sustaining serious scalding about the head, neck, and chest region. ⁹ After suffering for a month from his wounds Lawrence passed away on November 14, 1892. He was 17 years old. ¹⁰

Not all accidents in the mills were the result of entanglements with machinery. James Hazelton was the superintendent of the Whitehall Manufacturing Company's planning mill and on July 7, 1887, was giving a tour to his wife and her aged parents Alonzo Southard and

Phoebe Southard

who were visiting from Drayton Plains, Michigan. The quartet had boarded the elevator to ascend to the second floor of the mill and just as their heads had cleared the plane of the floor the ropes hauling the elevator broke, sending the four occupants dashing to the lower floor 9 feet below. All sustained injuries but Phoebe appeared to have fared the worst out of the group suffering a compound fracture of the left ankle, and serious injuries to her right knee and her back. She did not seem to rally from the accident like the others, and when not completely under the influence of opiates, complained bitterly of her injuries. Three days later the silent messenger came and ended her suffering. ¹¹ Phoebe Southard was 71 years old.

Gideon Fry

worked in a planing mill in Big Rapids, Michigan in December 1887 and sustained an injury that required him to undergo surgery at Ann Arbor, Michigan. Gideon did not survive the surgery and passed at 8:45 pm on Sunday, December 4, 1887. There is nothing unique about the passing of Gideon Fry but the story of how his brother George found out garnered plenty of attention.

George Fry lived in Oil City, Pennsylvania and was at his home writing a letter at 9:46 pm Oil City time. He observed that the clock in the room had stopped. This particular clock belonged to Gideon as he had left it at his boarding house when he departed Oil City, and asked George to retrieve it for him. George approached the clock and noticing that it was not run down, started it again. It was at this point he heard the voice of Gideon coming from the clock in a clear, distinct manner stating "I'm gone; I'm gone"

The next day, Monday December 5, 1887 another brother, Daniel, received a telegram at 9:40 am giving notice of Gideons death. This telegram was shown to George at 1:30 pm the same day and served as the first information he received about Gideons death. On Friday December 9, 1887 George received a letter from Big Rapids, Michigan detailing Gideons last moments, in which it was stated he died at 8:45 pm and his last words were "I'm gone; I'm gone" A summary of this strange case is as follows:

1. 8:45 pm December 4, 1887 Gideon Fry died
2. 9:46 pm December 4, 1887 George Fry hears Gideon say "I'm gone; I'm gone"
3. 9:40 am December 5, 1887 telegram reaches Oil City announcing Gideons death
4. 1:30 pm December 5, 1887 George receives the information from the telegram ^{12, 13}

Gideon Fry was 30 years old and left a wife, Florence Emma, who was a daughter of Perry Howe of Montague, Michigan, whom he married in 1884. ¹⁴

The clear water of White Lake is inviting to all who enjoy recreational activities such as boating, fishing, sailing, skating, or swimming but it can be a cold, uncaring mistress. Many people have felt the cooling kiss of the water while swimming and succumbed to its eternal embrace. One such individual named

Oscar Nelson

who was considered an expert swimmer, was enjoying a refreshing dip at the booming grounds on a Sunday afternoon in August 1890. Upon removing himself from the water and being partly dressed was taken with a spasm and pitched forward into the water. He drowned before help could reach him. Efforts to revive him were unsuccessful. ^{15, 16} One could only speculate that Oscar suffered from epileptic seizures. Oscar was a 14-year-old Swedish boy from Whitehall, Michigan.

Henry and Alice Bisbee resided in Whitehall until 1873 when they moved to Ludington, Michigan and Henry established a successful jewelry business. They were fond of the White Lake area and in July 1887 they and their six children visited via their yacht for a vacation, staying at the White Lake resort. Henry and Alice went uptown leaving

Harry Bisbee

the eldest son and his brother Clare to amuse themselves while they were gone. The boys made a raft out of driftwood and were enjoying themselves poling the raft around in the shallow water near the resort. Harry was just learning how to swim and was increasing his confidence by jumping off the raft and take a few strokes alongside. Unbeknownst to the duo was a sudden drop off of the lake bed and they came nearer to this point with their recreational activity. Harry jumped from the raft once more, unaware that they were at the drop off, and he disappeared beyond site.

Clare, trying to wade to him, sounded the alarm and several people immediately responded. Clare was at once pulled out of the water for fear that he would join him, and several tried diving to reach Harry but the 40 foot depth made it impossible. His body was recovered by the life saving crew several hours later, and the grief stricken family returned to Ludington a few days later, cutting short their vacation. ¹⁷

One of the most bizarre drowning episodes in White Lake history occurred on Thursday July 31, 1902 to

Willie Quigley

the 9 year old son of George and Ida Quigley. Willie and his sister were playing with other children on a dock near Swedentown, Whitehall when he complained that he had a headache. Willie started for home and on his way stopped to play with a large turtle sunning itself on a log. It was speculated that Willie had been jabbing at the turtle with a stick and either fell in or was pulled into the water by the turtle as it caught the end of the stick in its mouth, making a sudden jerk.

The other children returned to the Quigley home and in response to Ida's questions said that the last they saw of him was when he was playing with the turtle. She immediately called for assistance from a man named John Haverkate and he, with another neighbor, went to the place where Willie was last seen. After probing about found the boy in about 10 feet of water.

A physician was called and efforts were made to resuscitate the boy but were unsuccessful. Willie's face and hands showed evidence of being bitten by the turtle after he had fallen in. Large imprints of the turtle's teeth were left on his flesh indicating that the turtle had grabbed Willie and pulled him under water. Willie knew how to swim and would have saved himself if this were not the case.¹⁸ Willie's funeral ended this amazing story of the one, and probably only drowning caused by a turtle in White Lake.

Humans were not the only life form that died from drownings, as on occasion horse teams would fall through the ice when the owner made a poor decision.

Christ Rager

made a poor decision on New years day 1892 when he went out with his valuable Newfoundland dog and was playing fetch using sticks thrown into the floodwaters that had risen, covering fields and roads. A stick was thrown into a flooded field and when the dog went to fetch it became entangled in a wire fence and was drowned.¹⁹

The fledgling cities of Whitehall and Montague were thrilled when the Michigan Central railroad pushed a railroad line into their locale in 1870. The line was known at that time as the Pere Marquette branch and certainly helped to stimulate the growth of those two communities, but also presented a potential danger to those who were not cognizant of their surroundings.

George Stoneman

was an indian well known in the town of Whitehall who could speak English fluently, and was considered remarkably bright for an indian. He was a soldier of the civil war, receiving a pension on account of having two fingers shot away during his period of service. He was also highly thought of by other indians and was the head of the band to which he belonged.

A warm evening in July 1887 found George walking along the railroad track where he met two members of his band who had been picking berries and were heading to the area known at the time as Sweet's station. George walked with them for a period of time and then relayed to his brethren that he wished to walk alone, to which they complied and increased their pace while George lagged behind.

His companions made their destination and had retired to their tents when they heard the passenger train from Muskegon rumbling along the tracks. They had not seen George since they left him behind and thought to go and check on his whereabouts. They noticed a group of trainmen huddled near something on the track and when they went to check found the mangled remains of George.

It was believed that George had been imbibing liquor and had lain down on the track and fallen asleep. The passenger train coming from Muskegon that evening had been delayed for about an hour due to a broken bridge and George may have thought it to have passed through the area prior to laying down.

The trainmen claim that when George was struck he had been in the position of laying on the rail bed with his head on one of the rails, and that the engine and 3 cars had passed over him dragging him about 60 feet. An inquest was held and the Coroner's jury rendered a verdict that relieved the railway employees of any blame.²⁰

Frank LeTarte

an engineer for the Chicago and West Michigan Railroad, was operating a train near Twin Lakes, Michigan on the night of April 11, 1888, when unbeknownst to him a freight train coming from the opposite direction had stalled on the railway ahead of him. A flagman from the freight train had been sent ahead to warn Frank, and upon seeing him Frank became very excited. He tried to reverse the engine in an attempt to slow and stop his forward progress but was unsuccessful.

Frank shouted "Jump!" to the fireman with him as he grasped the rail on the outside of the engine and seemed to jump off. The fireman attempted to reverse the engine and succeeded before he jumped off. The train came to a standstill and avoided a collision, but Frank was missing. His mangled body was found farther back on the track, and it was surmised that he had been caught by the engine when he jumped and had been dragged head foremost over the ties for some distance.²¹

Harry Esterling

a young man from Montague had gone to the Dakota territory in fall of 1890 and was returning to see his parents who had moved to Trout Creek, Michigan. A brief stop in Aitken, Minnesota allowed Harry an opportunity to obtain lunch before the train continued.

Harry lingered a bit too long, and the train started to depart without him. He attempted to board the train while it was in motion but lost his footing and fell between the platform and the track, striking his head on the rail. The wheels of the car passed over his head and brought instant death.

His parents were notified, and plans were made to bring the body to Montague for interment. His sister

Minnie Esterling

who had been suffering from Quinzy and hemorrhage of the lungs but had improved to the point that her parents believed her out of danger, heard of Harry's demise. The shock of the news apparently was too much for her and she expired. The double hearse funeral of Harry, 18, and Minnie, 15 was a sorrowful event for friends and family.²²

Gun safety measures were apparently unimportant as many instances of injury were the result of poor handling of weapons. Many injuries were not fatal and resulted in disfigurement, loss of limb, or a minor flesh wound. Some accidents were completely avoidable if common sense had been implemented, and

Henry Schraeder

experienced the results of poor decision making. Henry, the son of a Grant Township, Oceana County farmer, wished to go hunting one morning in February 1892 but was forbidden by his mother. He then asked if he could clean the gun he wished to hunt with and his mother consented. During the cleaning process the rod and cloth got stuck in the barrel, and Henry thought the best way to remove it was to insert a cartridge into the weapon

and trigger it, believing the rod and cloth would be blown out. Henry raised the weapon up as if aiming and pulled the trigger.

Henry's mother asked her husband to check on him as she had heard the discharge and thought to herself that it made an uncommon noise. Henry's father found him lying prone upon his back, appearing lifeless, and carried him into the house. The parents found that part of the cartridge shell had blown his right eye out and inflicted a terrible gash on his right cheek.

A doctor was summoned to the home and did what was possible to comfort the boy. It was unknown if Henry would survive, but survive he did, for another 10 months when he died on December 27, 1892. It was believed that Henry, 16 years old, died as a result of this wound. ²³

John Smith

a 15 year old lad from Montague who had a great love for hunting went out for some birds Monday morning April 14, 1890. He came to a fence, leaned the weapon against the fence, and then crossed over. He reached back over the fence for the double barreled shotgun and while pulling it over the trigger caught on something that discharged the contents of one barrel into his left temple, blowing out nearly a handful of brains.

A number of people heard the shot and hurried to the site to find John with a frightful tearing of the flesh and crushing of the skull. They carried the boy to his home and summoned a doctor who found the brains protruding from the gaping wound in the forehead and slowly oozing out. He comforted the boy as his abilities allowed but said there was no hope for recovery. Surprisingly, with such a severe wound, the boy clung to life for nearly a week, expiring on Sunday, April 20, 1890. ^{24, 25}

Not all accidents are immediately fatal to the experienter as many people have lived for extended periods of time from the moment of the accident. Some accidents though, have indirectly claimed the lives of others, which happened with story of

Frank Leland

a citizen of Montague who went rabbit hunting on Thursday, December 24, 1891 and had laid down his gun under a beech tree as he went about gathering some beechnuts. His dog, in the meantime, had found a flock of sheep and was chasing them. Frank, knowing that a dog chasing sheep was an activity that was highly frowned upon by the sheep owner, and could lead to his financial responsibility if damage occurred, attempted to call the dog off but failed.

Frank, intending to put a load of shot into the unruly canine, reached for his gun grasping it by the barrel. Pulling it towards him the trigger caught on a twig and the discharge caught him in the arm near his left shoulder, inflicting an ugly flesh wound and fracturing the bone.

Franks little son who had accompanied him on this hunting trip, quickly grasped the seriousness of the situation and ran to a nearby neighbor for assistance. Frank was brought to his home and a doctor was summoned. The doctor thought his life could be spared if the arm was amputated but Frank refused.

The doctor called upon Frank on Tuesday, December 29, 1891 to ascertain his condition and found him in a critical condition, as fever had set in. A consultation was held and the decision was made to amputate the arm. Weak from the loss of blood, fever, and subsequent sickness Frank was unable to survive the amputation.

It was two days later while working over a sick lady at the county jail that

Samuel Adams Jackson

the doctor who completed the amputation, became alarmingly and suddenly ill. He immediately diagnosed himself with blood poisoning and proceeded to treat himself accordingly. He calmly stated to a reporter that “The poison obtained entrance to my system through an abrasion of my third finger so small that it escaped the examination I made previously to the operation.”

Doctor Jackson wore through the first and secondary stages of the poisoning and on Saturday, January 9, 1892 showed signs of recovery. This was a momentary recovery as the next day he began to fail rapidly and on January 12, 1892 transitioned to the other side. ^{26, 27}

Farming was a common activity if one was not deeply involved in logging or other types of work, but could be quite dangerous depending on the activity in which one was engaged. Robert Osborne learned on a warm day in August 1908 just how dangerous farming could be when his youngest son

Leslie Osborne

was involved in an accident that claimed his life. Leslie and his brother were helping his father with some farming tasks, one of which was to roll a field that had been harvested of oats. Leslie was engaged in rolling the field with a roller pulled by two horses, while Robert and his other son attended to drawing the oats into the barn. Robert observed Leslie and noted to himself that the field was nearly finished, and returned his attention to the barn. About 5 minutes later Robert again turned towards Leslie and was perplexed to see that Leslie was not on the roller and that the horses were standing still. He quickly went over to the roller and found Leslie dead under the roller. Nobody had witnessed the accident so they could only speculate how it happened. Leslie Osborne was 13 years old. ²⁸



Figure 5. Horse drawn roller example.

Horses were a critical part of the farming operation and for transport, but at times they could be spooked by some of the most innocuous actions. When horses become spooked they run uncontrollably, damaging the carriages or wagons that they are pulling, damaging property they may run into, and potentially killing people by running into them or throwing them from the wagon or carriage.

Chris Rabe

was heading home from Montague on December 21, 1889, when something spooked his horses. The team immediately started running and ultimately threw Chris from wagon whereupon he sustained serious injuries. After several days of intense suffering, Chris expired on December 27, 1889. ^{29, 30}

Not all farming accidents involved horses, as

William R. Anderson

found out while working in his barn. William had been prone to cramps and while working up in a loft experienced cramping, which caused him to fall from the loft. His body was found partly covered with straw and since there were no witnesses it was speculated that he clutched at the straw when he fell, bringing it down upon him where he broke his neck on impact. William was 60 years old. ³¹

Henry Warnick became a resident of Montague in 1869 and worked at the foundry for six years before transitioning into the hotel business serving as proprietor of the Montague House for a period of time. He then moved his operation to Muskegon, Michigan on October 1, 1889 by leasing the old Washington House and renaming it the Warnick House, which was located at the corner of Western Avenue and Eight street.³² With his family, he welcomed travelers to rest at his hotel. His youngest child was Charlotte Bertha Augusta Warnick, an exceptionally bright child that was lovingly called

Lottie Warnick

The location of the Warnick House was near a sharp curve of the city electric streetcar track, with the curve being at the end of a considerable eastward decline along 8th street. This declined allowed the streetcar driver to power off about 2 blocks from the Warnick House where the momentum and gravitation would carry the car to the curve onto Western Avenue, but required that the driver be prepared to apply the brakes if too much speed was obtained.

Sunday, May 18, 1890 found Lottie on the porch engaging with Christina Flordan and Minnie Lennan, two young ladies who were employed at the Warnick House. The two older girls decided to cross over the street to a peanut stand, leaving Lottie on the porch. Apparently, Lottie chose to follow the girls and found herself in the path of an oncoming streetcar.

William Olson, the driver of the streetcar, was traveling approximately 4 miles per hour when he saw Lottie walking along the track in front of the streetcar, whereupon he applied the brakes and called to her to get out of the way. The streetcar came to an immediate stop and Lottie was found lying on the rail. One of the rear wheels was resting upon her, and when the streetcar was moved she was extricated. She had both lower limbs and her left arm crushed, as well as a frightful wound across her body from the streetcar wheel. Henry carried her into the house and a doctor was summoned. The wounds were of a serious nature and within fifteen minutes Lottie died.

A coroner's jury was empaneled and testimony was taken from witnesses. The jury concluded that Lottie Warnick came to death, killed by the electric streetcar number three, through recklessness by the driver on Western Avenue at about 3 pm on Sunday, May 18, 1890.³³

Henry and his family were beside themselves with grief. Henry believed that the driver ran the car faster than the other cars go, and that he could have stopped the car before it struck her. This belief led him to file suit in June 1890 against the streetcar company for \$10,000.00 damages.³⁴

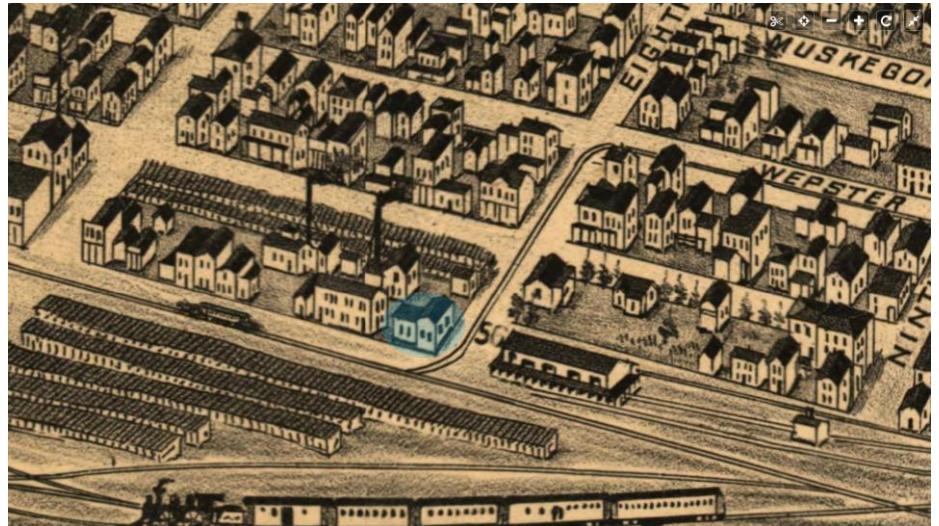


Figure 6. The Warnick House. 1889 Bird's eye view of Muskegon Michigan.

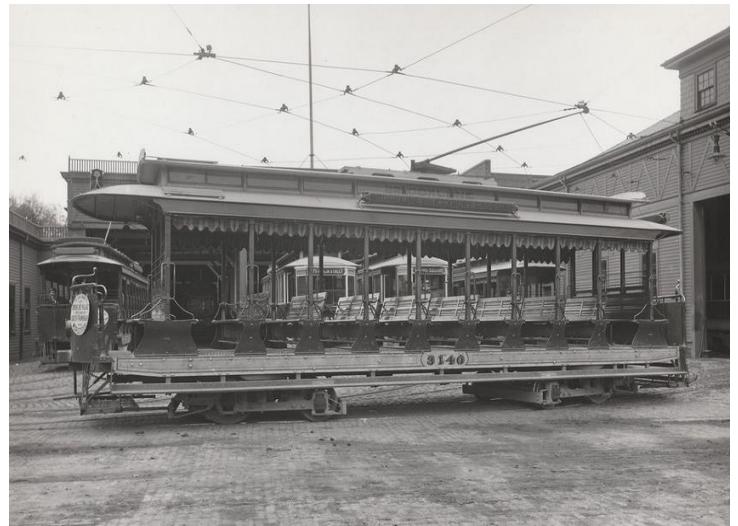


Figure 7. Electric streetcar example circa 1889.

The superintendent of the streetcar company, Mr. McLaughlin commented that the accident was unfortunate and that the track runs very nearly to the sidewalk at the sharp curve, and that drivers are to give extra precaution at this point. Mr. McLaughlin stated that William Olson was as sober and cautious as any man could be, has good eyesight, good judgement, and that the company has great confidence in him.

The death of Lottie has been a great source of solicitude for the drivers but they claimed that they had repeatedly warned her not to come too near the track, establishing that there were previous occurrences where Lottie was unsupervised. The patrolmen on that beat had taken the child from the street on previous occasions and had cautioned the parents against her being allowed to come out alone.

The president of the streetcar company, Mr. Nims, conducted an investigation and failed to find anything that intended to establish carelessness on the part of the driver. He claimed that the accident location was a hazardous site where collisions between streetcars and steam cars or horse teams were liable to occur at any time. He stated his drivers are constantly on alert for children as it is common for them to run along the track in front of the cars and be allowed to play on the tracks. The children place sticks and other obstructions on the rails, and act with perfect indifference to the danger to themselves or to the passengers. Mr. Nims stated that in it all there is a lack of co-operative care on the part of the parents, which amounts in some instances very nearly to criminal carelessness.³³

In March 1891 the suit against the streetcar company was settled out of court, the terms of which were not publicly disclosed.³⁵ The terms were irrelevant to Lottie who was 4 years old at the time of her death.

On August 9, 1889, while hunting in Fruitland township, A. J. Treat and George Caskey made a gruesome discovery. They found what appeared to be a coat leaning in an upright position against a tree, but upon closer examination found that it contained a skeleton.³⁶ A hat, pants, rubbers, pocket knife, and some money were found nearby. The bones were incomplete with only part of the skull present with a few teeth and fragments of the jaw. There were only portions of the vertebrea, shoulder, and legs, as well as other fragments.

An inquest was held to determine the cause of death and the identity of the individual. The inquest jury, after viewing the remains and examining witnesses, returned a verdict that the remains were those of

Frank P. Stoner

and that he came to his death by reason of being tarred and feathered by persons unknown to the jury. Frank was formerly of North Muskegon, Michigan and had been coated with coal tar and varnish. Many people believed the inquest jury was wrong with their verdict, and that the bones were not Frank Stoner.³⁷

The stresses endured in life can sometimes rob a person of their resistance to afflictions and sickness, and

Lucinda Chase

found out how true this was in April 1892. Her husband, Hawley Chase, had become sick and languished at deaths door for nearly two months while Lucinda provided care for him. Their house caught fire and burned to the ground at which time Lucinda became so stressed that she succumbed to pneumonia and passed on April 26, 1892 at the age of 57. Hawley followed closely when he died on July 3, 1892.³⁸

Good eyesight is important during daily activities for anybody and when one has poor eyesight accidents can happen. On October 31, 1888, a boy working in a restaurant in the Ripley block, Montague noticed the body

Dr. John W. Switzer

laying in the stairway leading down to Cherry's barber shop in the same block. He was found laying with his head in a pool of blood at the bottom of the stairway with his feet resting upon the steps. His nose was crushed and head and neck bruised and swollen.

A jury was impaneled and after several hours of deliberation returned a verdict of accidental death. It was believed that the doctor went to his office, wrote some letters and started for the post office. The steps leading up to the post office in the Ripley block were side by side with the steps leading down to the barber shop. The doctor was known to be near sighted and having left his glasses at his office undoubtedly missed his way and stepped into the basement stairway. He then fell to the bottom and lay stunned, bruised, and bleeding until his life ebbed away. The cause of death was believed to be a concussion of the brain. John Switzer was 43 years old.³⁹

The Eagle Tannery Works of Whitehall employed plenty of people at various positions within the factory. One

Gust Kreisel

was working at the factory in August 1892 and was involved in a dreadful accident. It was a standard activity in which Gust engaged on that fateful day where he would put a belt on a pully in the bark room while the machinery was in motion to start some other part of the machinery that is not continually in motion. One of the employees told Gust that he would have the engine slacked down in preparation for the belt adjustment, and as he had gone to do so Gust attempted to put the belt on the pulley while the machinery was in full motion.

Upon the employees return Gust was found lying on the floor stripped naked of his clothing and in a frightful condition. Both legs had been dislocated at the knees, his head severely cut open, and his flesh so torn open that his testicles were exposed to such an extent that one of them was afterward removed. His body was more or less bruised all over. Doctors were summoned and they did a very good job sewing up cuts and restoring Gust to consciousness, and had hope that he would recover if inflammation did not set in. Gust lived for a week longer and then succumbed to his injuries at the age of 50 years.⁴⁰

Many people flippantly use the phrase "Scared to death" during conversation and on one occasion in November 1889 the family of Augustus Holden of Whitehall wondered if it was possible upon the death of their

daughter Holden

which occurred after a short illness. It was reported that several young boys had a dead snake in their possession and seeing that the girl was afraid of it began chasing her. She went home very much frightened, became sick and died at the age of 12 years.⁴¹

Madge Chapman was playing with some friends near the brick yard hill in Whitehall on October 13, 1892. She had been put in charge of taking care of her baby brother that day and had him in a baby cab, otherwise known as a baby carriage. The cab was left on the brow of the hill while the girls were playing, and the nature of the hill was that it was quite steep and precipitous.

Baby Chapman

while lounging in the cab was, in some unknown manner, set in motion and went over the ledge of the hill. The baby was violently thrown out of the cab striking his head on the hard clay. He was taken home in an unconscious state where a doctor found that his skull was fractured. All efforts to save him proved futile and he expired.⁴²



Figure 8. Example of a baby cab circa 1892.

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