

DESTRUCTION AND DEATH AT STOCKTON.

Full Details of Awful Accident Which Turned Town Picnic Into Scene of Death and Wild Confusion. ~~1904~~ 1905 AUG.

The Stockton town picnic has been an annual feature for the past five years, or more. Annually several thousand people congregate in the quiet, staid, old-fashioned town and there listen to the best orators of the country, who flock to the town in numbers and make addresses. Games and sports of all kinds are indulged in and a day of general merry making is enjoyed by all. Everyone who has ever lived in the town, no matter in what section of the country he may be, manages in some way to get in time to attend the annual town picnic.

The farmers of this section this year have been favored with abundant crops, and the grape harvest promises to be the largest in the past ten years, so bands were playing in the streets, speeches were being delivered and the renewing of friendships and the chance to talk politics made everyone forget their troubles, and be imbued with the enthusiasm of the day. The sky was blue, the sun never shone brighter, nature never looked fairer and the people were never in such good spirits. There was not a thing to tell of the dreadful calamity which was soon to fall upon the gay gathering, flickering out in an instant the lives of some of the gayest, plunging in deepest grief the friends and relatives of the doomed ones, and making the annual Stockton town picnic of the year 1904, one never to be forgotten.

One of the features of the day was a ball game. This was begun late in the afternoon and the majority of the crowd remained to see the sport. The game was an exciting one and the spectators shouted and cheered enthusiastically. In their excitement they had failed to notice the black clouds rolling up in the west and the fact that the birds, which a few moments before had been so gaily singing, had ceased and that there was hushed stillness in the air, which seemed to tell of impending disaster. The large dashes of rain which

splashed in the faces of the crowd were the first warning they noticed that a storm was about to break.

Then there was a hurried run for shelter. Rain fell in torrents and the wind arose with such suddenness, that many before they could reach the shelter of the nearby grove, were blown from their feet. The wind increased in velocity every minute, and the din was deafening and the people crouched and covered beneath buggies, against trees or any place where the least bit of shelter afforded. Three or four thousand people, men, women and children were huddled together in the woods, expecting every minute that it would be their last. To add to the terror of the crowds, the grove was almost as dark as night, and when the lightning flashed the surrounding gloom was lighted up for an instant, and the faces of the people, pale and frightened looked more like ghosts than human. Women shouted and screamed, and men acted like children. All about them trees were swaying and horses were stampeding, plunging this way and that. The scene is indescribable, and its like was never before seen in Chautauque county. It seemed as if the very heavens had opened, so hard was the downpour, and the roar of the thunder, the crashing of the trees and the roar of the wind, indicated that the elements were holding high carnival and the fate of man or beast was not to be considered.

The wind twisted tops of buggies off and played havoc with everything within its reach, while the rain came down in torrents. Perfect pandemonium reigned. There were some crying, some praying and others working to get out of the grove. A large rope strung around the ground prevented those with horses from driving out and they were packed in so thick that they could not drive by each other.

Suddenly a large tree over two feet through broke about six feet up and came over striking the carriage containing Mr. Orrin Dalrymple, wife and three grand children, also Austin Pierce a young man living at Fredonia. Mr. Dalrymple received injuries which proved fatal, he was removed to the hotel at Stockton where he died soon after. Inez Scott, granddaughter, was instantly killed while the mother children escaped without injury. Mrs. Dalrymple was injured but slight hopes of her recovery are entertained. Austin Pierce was badly mangled. Those injured and killed were pinned under the large tree and men were dispatched to Stockton for axes and iron bars to help in removing the suffering ones and the dead bodies.

The first to be taken out was the body of a young lady who was immediately identified as Miss Scott of Shumla, a village near Fredonia. Several persons, both male and female, all more or less injured were dragged out from their perilous positions and then the body of Orrin Dalrymple was recovered. He was not dead when found. His wife was next rescued.

The body of Austin Pierce, who was about 19 years old, lay completely under the main trunk of the tree. He had been struck full by the tree and his death was instantaneous, as his head was crushed. So great was the force of the tree when it descended that his body had been driven far into the ground, and it was nearly an hour before it could be released. A hundred or so men, secured holds on the tree and succeeded in raising it sufficiently for others to drag the body out.

Mr. and Mrs. Orrin Dalrymple were old and respected residents of Shumla. The grandchild killed was a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Scott of Shumla. Austin Pierce the young man, was a son of Arthur Pierce living in Glasgow, on the Derby farm. All have the sympathy of the community.

The bodies of the dead were removed to the Crissey morgue.

The storm at Cassadaga was terrific. Limbs of trees were blown off and many were blown over, while the telegraph and telephone poles were razed, and the lines broken so all communication with the outside world was cut off, only Lily Dale being reached by phone.

The thunder and lightning were terrific; never before has such a storm been known in the county. It cut a path through the Ellis woods at Cassadaga uprooting the trees and blowing them down.

AFTER THE STORM.

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Courtesy of
Leonard J. Deering,
Fredonia, N.Y.

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Telephone communication with Stockton was finally re-established at twelve o'clock Friday morning and further and complete details of the fatality which turned Thursday's Town picnic into a place of death and mourning were secured. There are three dead from the accident, while the fourth reported as having been killed, Mrs. Orrin Dalrymple of Shumla, is found to be seriously injured and still but partially conscious Friday morning. Her son assisted by friends from her home, took her Friday morning from Stockton to her home on the Arkwright road just above the hamlet of Shumla.

Doctors who had been in charge of her gave it as their opinion that her injuries were not fatal, but the shock of finding out the death of her husband and her advanced age make the case a very serious one. Both Mr. and Mrs. Dalrymple are nearly seventy years of age.

The published report that there was an unknown child dead, killed by the tree, proved to be false. The child referred to was a young sister of the Miss Inez Scott who was killed and reported missing for sometime after the accident. It was finally discovered that she had been taken by some other relatives and the load, including the little girl had driven toward Cassadaga before the storm struck. The girl is safe at the home of these people in Cassadaga.

Reports of the fury of the storm and the damage done in and around Stockton as well as at the grove where the picnic was in progress have not been exaggerated. Stockton's streets are lined with broken trees and shattered limbs and half the orchard fruit in the entire section traversed by the storm is on the ground. The orchards and roadside trees along the roads out of Stockton show the terrible force of the wind but so far as can be ascertained no roads have been blocked.

A corrected list of the injured is given today as follows:

Mrs. Orrin Dalrymple, hip broken and internal injuries.
Chester Bills of Portland, arm injured and severely shocked. Bills was in the carriage with Austen Pierce who was killed, and the horse was also killed. It belonged to Bills. His escape from death was little short of marvelous and the

fact that his injuries are very light adds to the wonder.
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Morris Arnold of Elm Flats had three ribs broken and shoulder broken or severely injured. Arnold's horse was killed and his buggy smashed. His escape from death was also of the marvelous nature. He was accompanied by the hired man from his father's farm, LeRoy Nichols, who had his back badly bruised and strained. He is able to get about a little this morning.

Hazel Scott, a younger sister of Inez Scott, who was killed, was thrown out but escaped without injury except shock and fright.

Mrs. Jay Anderson of Portland was in a carriage near the foot of the tree which caused the devastation, and the tree in its rebound crushed two wheels of the carriage and forced the side of the seat over against her. One hip was broken. Her husband was just climbing into the carriage but escaped injury.

There is reported to have been one runaway team frightened at the storm and the falling tree but no casualties have been reported from it.

All the injured were reported Friday as being in favorable condition and before noon most were taken from the temporary hospital in Miller's Hotel to their respective homes.

The occasion, up to the time of the swooping down of the storm, had proved to be the most successful picnic in the history of the annual event. Fully six thousand people as estimated by competent judges, were there scattered about the grove, where the speaking was just concluding, or watching the ball game which had been in progress until the first drops of the rain fall which preceded and presaged the storm, causing the umpire to call the game.

J. L. McCullough had been chairman of the day, and the occasion had been highly enjoyable. Attorney John Leo Sullivan of Stockton and Fredonia was the orator of the day and had spoken on "A Model Community" in an eloquent and satisfying way and the speech was voted the best ever given at one of the town picnics. Other speakers were Delmer E. Batcheller, superintendent of schools of Olean, a former Stockton boy, and Louis Lindel of Washington, D. C. Music had been furnished by a choir under the direction of Prof. Samuel Ames, and the Portland band furnished the other music.

The program, the vein of the speeches, the size and character of the crowd, the beautiful day and the good feeling everywhere apparent had made it an occasion long to be remembered, for its success.

Coroner Osgood's presence was fortunate for it gave the sanction of one in authority for the work of caring for the bodies of the dead and rescue for the injured. He took charge so far as it was necessary, and only the best words can be said for the efforts of all who assisted.

Interviewed by phone Friday, Coroner Osgood after expressing his sorrow for the unfortunate accident and sympathy for Stockton and for the families and friends of the victims said that there was nothing more for him to do. The whole affair was an accident and no legal steps were necessary not could be taken.

Measurements have been taken of the tree which caused all the damage and loss of life. It was a veritable king of the forest but was advanced in age and already decaying where the break occurred. The measurements of the tree show that it was eleven feet in circumference at the butt, and one hundred

The tree was bare of limbs for a distance of 56 feet, and it was 67 feet from the stump to where the limbs and trunk struck across the rig occupied by Pierce, who was killed, and his companion Bills who so miraculously escaped. These figures give a good idea of the size of the tree and the damage it was capable of doing.

Mrs. Jay Anderson, another of the injured, was taken to her home in Portland Friday leaving here just before noon.

FUNERAL OF THE VICTIMS.

Wife and Daughter of Orrin Dalrymple Are in a Precarious Condition.

Shumla, Aug. 27.—(Special)—The remains of Orrin Dalrymple and Miss Inez Scott, the victims of the Stockton accident, were brought to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Scott of this place Friday, and the funeral will be held Sunday afternoon at the Christian

church near Cassadaga, with burial following in the cemetery connected with that church. Rev. W. H. Morgan of Fredonia will officiate at the funeral.

Mrs. Scott at whose home the bodies now rest, is a daughter of the dead man and mother of the dead girl. Her health is very frail and she has collapsed almost entirely under the shock of the terrible tragedy.

Mrs. Dalrymple, whose injuries were so severe that she was reported at first as being dead, has also been taken to the Scott home and lies hovering between life and death in the room next to the one where the remains of her husband and granddaughter were placed. She recovered consciousness before reaching her daughter's home and when there, was told of the fate of her husband and Miss Scott. The shock was so great that she swooned and has since been in a serious condition. She has internal injuries and her recovery is very uncertain.

The same storm which caused the havoc at Stockton, is responsible for the death of Miss Mary Salhoff, who lived on the Glasgow road near Laona. She was in delicate health from heart disease, and had been cautioned that she could not survive a shock or excitement. The force of the storm and the incessant lightning proved too much for her condition and she succumbed, death following in a few hours. Funeral arrangements are not announced.