

[Hallock, Benjamin B.]

TERRIBLE CALAMITY.

Accident On The Erie Railroad.

COLLISION AT MAST HOPE STATION—FROM TEN TO FIFTEEN PERSONS MANGLED  
AND BURNED TO DEATH, AND SEVERAL WOUNDED—NAMES OF THE KILLED

[Abridged]

MAST HOPE, Penn., July 15.—Another terrible accident occurred on the Erie Railway, at Mast Hope Station, 30 miles from Port Jervis, on Wednesday night, by which some ten or fifteen human beings were suddenly crushed, bruised, mangled, and finally burned to death, nothing but a few charred remains being left for sepulture. The facts of this last and most disastrous calamity in the annals of Erie Railway horrors are as follows: Train No. 3, through night express, left Jersey City at 7 o'clock on Wednesday night...The train arrived safely at Port Jervis...where locomotive No. 318 was attached, of which Chas. Coffee was Engineer; Henry Smith was the conductor. The train sped swiftly along westward, the passengers having mostly made themselves comfortable for the night as they supposed, and little dreaming of the terrible havoc which was shortly to ensue. An extra to freight train No. 39 lay in the long switch at Mast Hope, waiting for the express to pass. This was also bound west, and it being a single track for some miles along here, the freight train had to make way for the express. The conductor of the freight train was J. S. Brown and the engineer James Griffin...The express train was some 25 minutes overdue at Mast Hope, it being then about 12 o'clock, when the engineer of the freight train, awakening from a comfortable nap, and presuming, it is supposed, that the express had gone by, reached out and pulled the throttle of his engine, and the train slowly moved forward on to the main track. The engine had just reached the "frog," and stood partially on the main track, diagonally to it, when the express train rounded the curve at a tremendous rate, and quick as lightning crushed into the freight engine, completely shattering the two locomotives, and "telescoping" the forward cars on the passenger train into a heap of ruins. The passenger locomotive was overturned, scattering the fire through the splintered wreck, which speedily ignited, and blazed up into a brilliant conflagration. The engineers and firemen on both trains escaped with very slight injuries, although how they escaped they are themselves unable to tell.

The only witness of this terrible collision was Edward Smith, the flagman on the freight train, who was sitting upon the depot platform, and was injured by the locomotive as it careened from the track. The passengers in the rear passenger cars, who were thoroughly aroused by the shock, at once rushed out, and aided by the hands on the freight train, endeavored to rescue the injured passengers from the burning wreck. The fire had gained such headway that it was useless to attempt to check it, there being no water near. The rear cars of the train were shoved back one by one, three of them being saved by this means. The fire meanwhile communicated to the depot and telegraph office, which were likewise burned to the ground. The heat became so intense that it was impossible to render much assistance in extricating the dead and wounded, and they were therefore left to perish in the flames.

A German, who lives near the scene of the disaster, was aroused by the engineer of the train, and saw the flames when they first burst forth from the burning cars. As he approached the wreck he heard the most agonizing screams issuing from the smoking car, but they gradually died away as the victims succumbed to the effects of the fiery element.

...One of the most harrowing scenes of the disaster was the death of the Rev. D. B. [B. B.] Hallock, a Universalist clergyman from New-York City, on his way to Syracuse. He was

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accompanied by his brother-in-law, who made every effort to save him, but without avail. Mr. Hallock was caught by the legs in the crushed timbers of the smoking car, and although he was uninjured, and appealed piteously for help, nothing could be done to save him from his terrible fate.

...On a long board, alongside the track, have been place the remains of the victims rescued from the fire. They are seven in number, only one of which can be distinguished, and that is the body of the Rev. D. B. [B. B.] Hallock. It was known where he lay in the wreck, and his body is the least burned of all...How many persons really perished in the flames it is impossible to tell at present...The number is variously estimated at from ten to twenty.

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From conversation [the following afternoon, at the scene] with various persons at the scene of the disaster, there seems to be little doubt that the sole blame of the accident rests upon the engineer of the freight train, James Griffin. He confessed to John M. Ridgeway, Esq., a magistrate of the Pike Company, who had an interview with him in the morning, that he had been asleep while lying in the switch. Griffin went away some time during the morning, and it is reported that he has fled.

[Several statements follow, along with the report of another correspondent and a list of the injured and dead individuals.]

The remains of the bodies were taken to Lackawaxen, Pa., where an inquest is being held by the coroner from Milford, Pennsylvania

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THE REV. MR. HALLOCK

The Rev. B. B. Hallock of No. 329 East Fourteenth-st., who was one of the victims of the Erie Railroad calamity, yesterday morning, was born at Brookhaven, L.I., Feb. 24, 1804. He commenced preaching in 1838, and was settled over the old Fifth Society of the Universalist Church, and was also Principal of the Mechanics Institute School. He retired from the pulpit about 12 years ago. Mr. Hallock was a prominent Mason and Odd Fellow, and had written a book on Odd Fellowship. He was also publisher of *The Ambassador*, now *Leader* [a Universalist publication], and for several years editor of an O. F. periodical. Mr. Hallock was on his way to Hillowog, Broome County, at the time of his death. His remains will be interred at Binghampton.

*New York Tribune*, New York NY, Fri. 16 Jul 1869

Transcribed on 14 Jan 2010 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY

[Hallock, Benjamin B.]

Biographical Record

Rev. B. B. Hallock was one of the victims of the "Mast Hope Disaster," on the Erie Railroad, July 16, 1869. Caught by the legs in the crushed timbers of the car in which he was sitting, although perfectly conscious and fully aware of his impending fate, he lifted his voice in prayer, and calmly met the devouring flame.

Mr. Hallock was a native of Brookhaven, Long Island, and was at the time of his death, 65 years of age. His original profession was that of a teacher. Preaching at first only occasionally, he finally ceased to teach, and gave himself wholly to the work of the ministry. His settlements were in Stamford and New Haven, Connecticut; with the Fifth Society, now extinct, in New York City; in Mohawk, New York, and perhaps other places. For a season he was associated with Rev. Henry Lyon, deceased, in the New York agency of the "*Christian Messenger*," and in the sale and publication of Universalist books. For some twelve years he had seldom attempted to preach.

Mr. Hallock was a simple-hearted, meek, Christian man. He was a good, correct, logical writer; but his delivery was not sufficiently energetic, perhaps owing to extreme diffidence, to win for him a favorable reputation as a preacher. But those who met him face to face knew his moral worth, and yielded him cordial esteem. For some years his energies were paralyzed, through adverse circumstances; but his soul rallied in all its force, under the fiery trial to which he was subjected. Resigning himself to his sad fate, after unavailing efforts for his deliverance, he urged his friends to leave him, and calmly gave his spirit into the hands of the Father.

*The Universalist Companion*, Boston MA, 1870, p. 80

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