

[Rudgers, J. Leslie]

LESLIE RUDGERS' TRAGIC DEATH  
Instantly Killed in an Accident Last Monday  
WORKING WITH THRESHERS  
Fell From Traction Engine and Was Run Over  
by Separator Attached While on the Road

The incredible news spread rapidly last Monday forenoon that Leslie Rudgers had been accidentally killed, and it was a shock to the community.

Mr. Rudgers had been engaged by Charles Winters to assist him in threshing and the outfit was en route from the farm of George Lines (on the road between Perry and the High Banks) and the farm of J. C. Herrington, where he was next engaged to work.

While traveling on the road between the corner above Wm. Parker's and below Robert McBride's, and while about in front of the farm of Karl Sharpsteen on that road, the fatality occurred. Mr. Rudgers was on the traction engine, and whether he lost his balance and fell, or whether he suffered a sudden fainting fit, will never be known. His body was caught under the separator and had been dragged for several feet before the accident was discovered. It was found that life was extinct, his neck having been broken and his shoulder fractured, and death had apparently been instantaneous.

Mr. Winters had gone on ahead, and Mr. Rudgers and August Carlston were the only ones on the engine. They had been conversing during the journey right up to the time of the accident. Carlston, who was steering the machine, happened to glance around and noticed that his companion had disappeared. He reached over and shut off the engine, when he discovered Mr. Rudgers' body wedged under the wheel of the separator, where it had been pushed along for a distance of 10 or 15 feet. Earle Sweet of Perry happened to be passing at the time, and he hastened to Sharpsteen's farm for assistance. A message was also sent to Jerry Herrington's farm, and with the help of men from those places the separator was jacked up and the body removed.

It seems very probable that death was due to heart failure, rather than from the victim merely losing his balance and falling, and circumstances would seem to bear out this theory. The engine was running at its normal rate of about 3 miles per hour, the separator being drawn by the pole, which is over 5 feet long. Mr. Rudgers was exceedingly active and quick in his movements, and many people believe that if he had merely missed his footing or lost his balance, he would have been out of the way before the wheels could have struck him. Also, the fact that he made no outcry makes the theory more plausible.

[Rudgers, J. Leslie]

J. Leslie Rudgers was born in Perry on November 16th, 1883, on the farm which had since been his home. About five years ago he was united in marriage to Miss Elsie Rounds of Cortland, who, with one daughter, Arla Janice, survives him.

"Les," as he was familiarly called, had probably as large a circle of friends and acquaintances as any man in Perry. His was a genial, Happy disposition, full of life and the enjoyment of living. Big-hearted and jolly, an accomplished musician, his untimely death will be keenly felt by those with whom he had been associated.

Funeral services were held yesterday afternoon at 2 o'clock at the farm home, Rev. Clara Morgan [Universalist] officiating. Interment was in Hope Cemetery. Over 200 people came to pay their last respects to the departed. The floral offerings were profuse and beautiful.

The members of the Perry Center Band and the Perry Military Band, of which organizations he had been a member, played the selection "Abide With Me" at the grave.

Besides his wife and daughter, he is survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. James [and Emma Saxton] Rudgers, and one sister, Mrs. F. D. [Nellie] Fanning, of Perry.

Those present from out of town were Mr. and Mrs. Rounds and Wm. Nicks, of Cortland, and Mr. and Mrs. I. Newton Rudgers of Montclair, N.J. Many letters and telegrams of condolence were received from friends who were unable to be present.

The sympathy of the community goes out to the afflicted family in their bereavement.

*Perry Record*, Perry NY, Thu. 26 Oct 1916

Transcribed on 10 Dec 2012 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY