

# **RACE CLOSE, HUGHES LEADS PLUNGE OF SO. BOSTON ELECTRIC INTO FORT POINT CHANNEL--47 DROWNED**

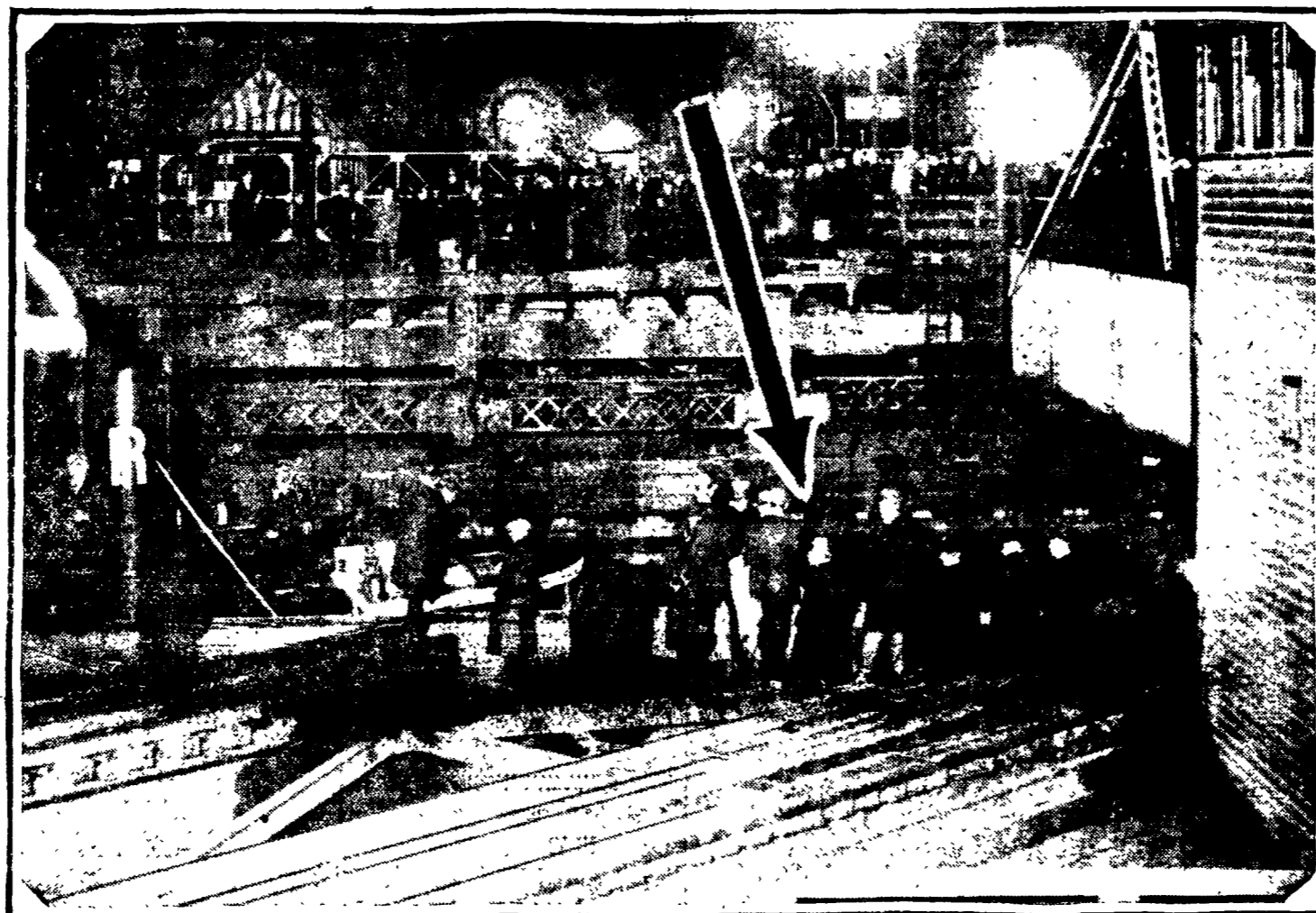
## **BARELY TEN ARE SAVED**

**SCENE OF BOSTON'S GREATEST DISASTER—  
ARROW SHOWS WHERE CAR DISAPPEARED**

### **Car Slides Into Open Draw With Its Brakes Set**

### **15,000 Rush to Scene Looking For Missing Loved Ones**

### **Motorman or Drawtenders Blamed —Total of 52 Bodies Recovered**



Just because a motorman failed to see the danger lights on the Summer-st drawbridge, 47 persons lost their lives when a convertible surface car of the Boston Elevated Railway plunged headlong through an open draw into Fort Point channel at 5:30 last evening and seven others were rescued, five from the cold waters of the harbor.

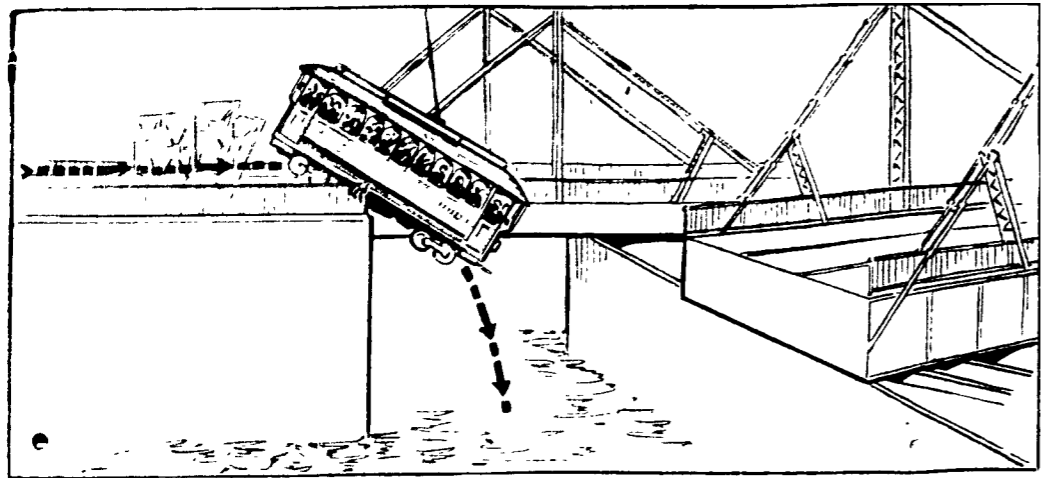
It was the greatest catastrophe that has ever taken place in this city. Were it not for the escape of the conductor, George McKeon, who stated positively that he had rung in 62 fares just prior to the accident, the general public would have been in utter ignorance of the number of lives lost.

At 4 o'clock this morning the number of known dead was 47. A total of 42 bodies had been recovered by the divers from the submerged car while four others had been recovered by grappling.

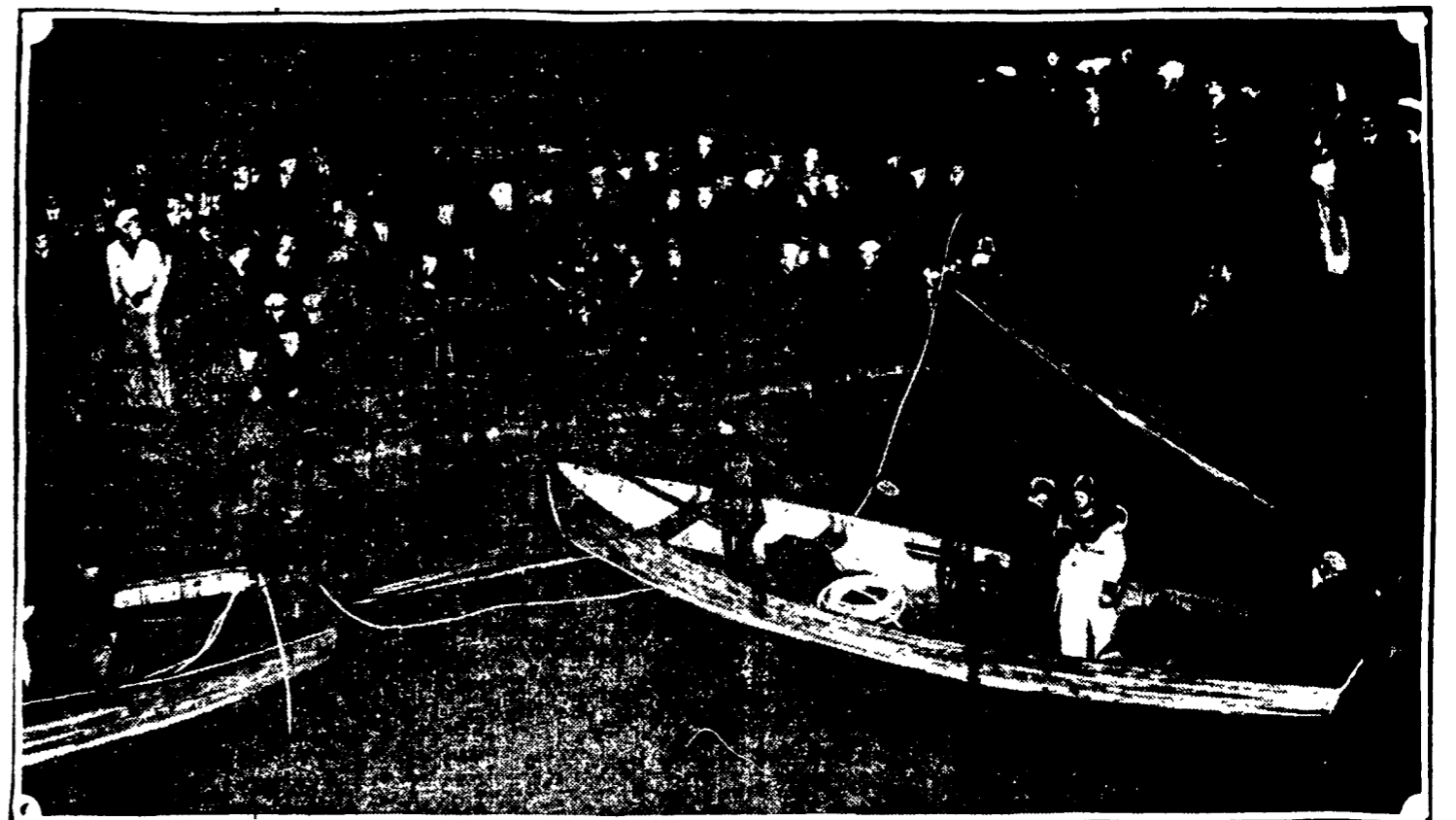
The full list of bodies had not been described by the medical examiner, but work was still proceeding in the

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# DIAGRAM SHOWING HOW TROLLEY CAR TOOK FATAL PLUNGE INTO CHANNEL

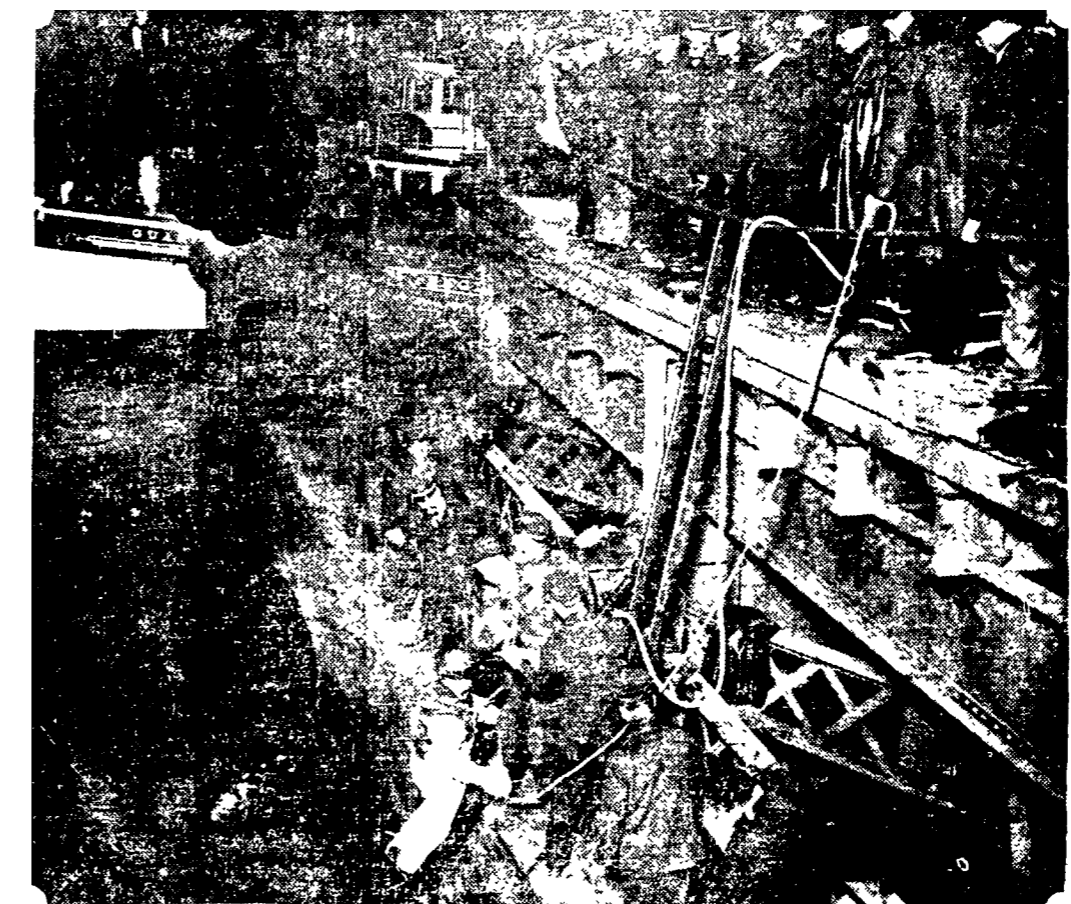


# TWO DIVERS FROM THE NAVY YARD AT WORK



ONE SHOWN ON LEFT OF PICTURE HAS ALREADY GONE DOWN AND THE OTHER, ON THE RIGHT, IS ABOUT TO FOLLOW

## DIVER F. P. FOLEY ABOUT TO DON HELMET TO GO DOWN IN A SEARCH FOR BODIES



Water Closed Over Car -

"I distinctly heard a grinding sound as the water closed in over the car and then the shouts resulting in the attention of the alarm attracted my attention for we all know there had been a wholesale loss of life because of the crowded condition of the car. I expected to see the surface of the water covered with drowning people, but instead only saw five trying to save their lives after escaping from the wreckage in the channel."

Some person rang in the fire alarm and small boats were soon seen in the waters making a search for those drowning around. Soon after the fire apparatus and police appeared on the scene and the work of rescuing the bodies was undertaken.

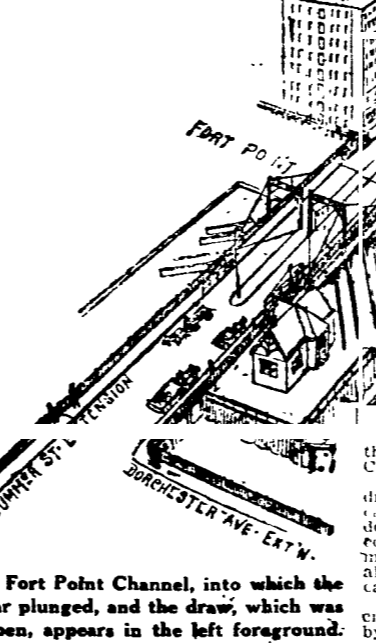
As soon as the work of rescue had well started the police, who had taken a very active part in the operation of the South Station, the work was again undertaken with new zeal. The police were very efficient and handled the great crowd with marked patience.

One of the early arrivals on the scene was Commissioner of Penal Institutions Shaw, who assisted in the rescue work. Mayor Cutler located the fireboat when the first of the bodies was recovered and later was on the Navy Yard boats and assisted materially. It was keen to the situation and had the various departments cooperating splendidly. He said he would have the terrible accident investigated.

Motorman Quoted as to Lights

One of the men rescued from the water was Gerald Walsh, the motorman, who jumped from the car, but not in time to avoid being cut and bruised in his descent. First he stoutly denied that there were lanterns on the drawbridge, but later in the evening, is alleged to have acknowledged that the lights were there. He was removed to

Fort Point Channel, into which the car plunged, and the draw, which was open, appears in the left foreground.



Crowd Placed at 30,000

The scene of the accident is less than 100 yards from the South Station, and it attracted thousands from the station, where they were assembling to take their trains for home. A conservative estimate of the number of persons who visited the drawbridge during the evening was placed at 30,000. The crowd was orderly and well behaved at all times. Dr. Magrath distributed the bodies as rapidly as they were recovered between

the North Grove-st Morgue and the City Hospital Morgue.

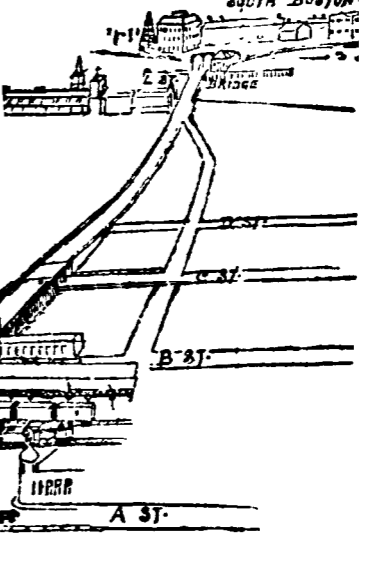
The statement made by one of the divers, that the clock in the car indicated that 13 passengers were on board, does not agree with the statement by conductor McKeon. An old railroad man said that when the persons were all thrown into the forward part of the car, it might have effected the clock. The accident cast a gloom all over the city, the loss of life being the greatest by accident in its history.

## PRIESTS PRAY FOR SOULS OF THE DEAD

One of the earliest arrivals on the scene of the terrible catastrophe was Rev. Philip O'Donnell, pastor of St. James Church, and with him was one of his curates, Rev. John J. Fitzgerald. Scanning the closed draw of the bridge looking down on to the water beneath the surface of which was the fated car with its 50 or more dead, Fr. O'Donnell asked for brief particulars, which were given.

It was pointed out to him just where the car came along, smashed through the gates, reached the edge and then went over. Fr. O'Donnell's face depicted his feelings as he whispered words of sorrow at the awfulness of the accident. Rev. James A. O'Rourke, Rev. T. J. O'Connell and Rev. William H. Grant of St. Peter and Paul's Church, Rev. George A. Lyons and Rev.

## BIRDSEYE VIEW OF SCENE OF ACCIDENT AND ITS APPROACHES



J. Walter Lambert of, the Gate of Heaven Church, Rev. Francis J. McNeil and Rev. T. C. Sullivan of St. Vincent's Church all joined the group. The clergymen, standing at the rail, took off their hats, as did the crowd of nearly a hundred spectators nearby and the priests' lips were seen to move in prayer as they offered up their supplications for the repose of the souls of the dead.

## GRIM STRUGGLE INDICATED

Bodies Removed From Sunken Car Were Badly Bruised About the Head

At midnight the police boat Watchman arrived at Constitution Wharf with 12 bodies. They were those of men of middle age and their faces and heads were badly bruised indicating that there was a terrible struggle in the submerged car before the men died.

There were only five spectators upon the wharf and they were driven away by the police.

The bodies were placed in burial baskets and removed to the Northern District Mortuary, in North Grove st, where Medical Examiner Magrath will view them and perform autopsies. Friends of missing persons may view the bodies at this place in the efforts to identify all the dead.

## BARELY TEN ARE SAVED

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slow and terrible process. The number identified positively was 25.

### Tragedy Due to Carelessness

That the accident was due to carelessness on the part of the motorman was the consensus of opinion as expressed last night, and to add to the mystery of the tragedy, the motorman insisted that the lights were not displayed on the drawbridge, while three drawtenders are equally positive that the lights were lit and displayed on the bridge as required.

Motorman Gerald Walsh of 788 East 6th st, South Boston, who was driving the car, stated that the car was within 10 yards of the open draw before he realized the danger and that the brakes refused to work, although the rear truck of the car, which disengaged from the body and remained on the South Boston side of the draw with brakes set tight, gave mute testimony that the car must have been going fast and was carried by the momentum after the brakes had been hurriedly applied.

More than 15,000 persons sought points of vantage along the water front in that vicinity eager to get information or the slightest tidings of absent loved ones. Broken hearted sobs and distressing cries of anguish could be heard later in the evening when the crew of Fireboat 44 dragged the waters in that vicinity and brought to the surface in their grappling irons the drowned bodies of men.

### Rushed to Death Unaware

That the occupants of the car must have been unaware of the close proximity of danger was shown by the few persons who managed to extricate themselves from the car, both before and after it had taken the fatal plunge. Among the few who landed on the ground was conductor McKeon, who jumped and landed on his face, and was followed by a woman passenger who, crazed by the closeness of death, fled from the scene.

William R. Rush of the Charlestown Navy Yard for assistance. This was quickly responded to by the presence of a patrol boat, towboat, barge with a derrick and other paraphernalia suitable for the work at hand.



GEORGE WIENSIS Whose Body Was Recovered.

All agree, and there were several eye-witnesses of the accident aside from the carmen and other interested persons, that the car crew were taken wholly unaware and that in the motorman's eagerness to put every ounce of power on the brakes, the grip of the brakeshoes was so tight that the wheels slid along on the rails, while a lighter application of the brakes would have stopped the car sooner. Eye witnesses stated that the car was going at a rapid rate and that the distance intervening when the danger was discovered was altogether too short to avert the wholesale loss of life.

### Navy Yard Sends Help

The magnitude of the disaster brought to the scene Mayor James M. C. Neill, who after a consultation with Pres. Matthew C. Bush of the Boston Elevated Railway and Deputy Chief Labor of the Fire Department, called by telephone on Commandant

Prior to the arrival of the fleet from the Navy Yard, Fireboat 44 ran up into the draw and, with searchlights and boats, made an earnest effort to rescue those entrapped at the bottom of the channel in the car. Searchlights were placed on the bow of the fireboat and the Fire Department placed others on the railings of the drawbridge to better illuminate the murky channel and facilitate the work of rescue.

Valuable assistance was also rendered by the crew of the towboat William G. Williams, who manned boats and searched in company with the firemen for the victims rescuing five immediately after the accident. The towboat was opportunely near the scene of the accident.

### Priests Quickly on Scene

Priests from the various churches adjacent to the scene quickly arrived, and Rev. Fr. Fitzgerald of St. James parish performed a service for the dead when the body of George Wiensis of 9 Wall st, this city, was brought into the fireboat in the grappling irons, the first to be raised from the channel.

It was apparent to the officials that the accident was of appalling moment and this resulted in calling the ambulances from the several hospitals and the wagons from the various police precincts in the region of the bridge, as well as the Fire Department and the wrecking crews of the Boston Elevated Railroad and many officials of that corporation.

According to the statements of conductor McKeon and motorman Walsh to a representative of the Globe last evening, the car, Boston-bound, started from the P-st barns and was en its way to the corner of Washington and Summer sts, making many stops to take on the employees at the Commonwealth Docks and big Fish Pier, as well as other business houses along the route.

### Car Packed to the Doors

The car came along Summer-st extension and passenger after passenger was taken aboard until the 34 seats were filled. Then the work of stowing more passengers into the car was undertaken by the conductor until there were seated, hanging to straps and huddled together in the aisles and vestibules just 62 passengers, whose fares were rung up on the clock.

Eye witnesses say passengers were packed on the steps and were hang-

ing on, so crowded was the car, for it is no uncommon occurrence to pack from 90 to 100 in these cars during the rush hours. One of the passengers stated that everybody appeared to be in a happy frame of mind, were bent on the full enjoyment of election night, and were awaiting their arrival in the city proper to get the first tidings from the bulletin boards.

### Jump for Their Lives on Crash

The car was coming along the street at a fairly rapid pace, according to eye witnesses, when there was a powerful and jerky application of the brakes, which threw many of the passengers off their balance. Those on the rear platform, including the conductor, heard the crash of the forward vestibule against the high iron gates and jumped for their lives, while the car drove through the gate and took its fatal plunge through the draw. With a tremendous splash, followed by a gurgling sound that could be heard a long distance, the ill-fated car, with its precious freight, fell into the muddy bottom of the channel, completely submerged.

When the noise of the crash had subsided and the waters of the channel closed over the car and imprisoned passengers, a few struggling men were seen on the surface of the water fighting desperately for their lives, having broken their way through the windows at the bottom of the channel and swam to the surface. They were in most cases exhausted, and had it not been for the close proximity of the relief boats, they, too might have joined the majority of the passengers in death.

### Taken to the Hospital

The rescued were all men, and as soon as they were landed were taken hurriedly in the ambulances to the Relief Hospital for treatment. Meanwhile the doctors in charge of the ambulances worked over them unceasingly until their arrival in Haymarket sq.

Additional boats soon formed a formidable flotilla and the crews lost no time in searching the waters for any persons who might be found. After a most diligent search, the boats' crews returned to their ships and the grappling hooks were pressed into service in order to locate the sunken car and determine if possible its exact position on the bottom to facilitate the work of the wrecking crew. It was the opinion of those engaged in the work that the car had either turned turtle or was lying on its side in the mud.

### All Hurdled Into Car End

Judging from the angle in which the car took the plunge, the passengers must have been all thrown in a heap in the forward end of the car, as the car disappeared, all being caught in a trap with doors and windows closed tightly.

The car took a plunge of about 20 feet before striking the water and then settled in about 30 feet of water and mud. There is 23 feet of water in the channel at mean low tide, but the tide had been coming two hours at the time of the accident.

One of the first officials to appear on the scene was Medical Examiner Dr. George B. Magrath, who boarded the fireboat and awaited the result of the grappling for the bodies.

At 7 o'clock there were exclamations heard from the crowd peering over the parapets of the bridge and an instant later two firemen engaged in grappling brought a body to the surface, held it above the surface and then rowed around to the port side of the fireboat. It required but a minute to tenderly raise the body and lay it on the deck, where it was covered with a tarpaulin.

### First Bodies Recovered

Dr. Magrath, after an investigation, announced that in his opinion, based on the finding of a receipted bill, the body was that of George Wiensis of 9 Wall st, this city.

He was, according to the medical examiner's system of identification, numbered 6298; a second body brought up 15 minutes later was identified as Antonio Della Pelle of 366 Commercial st, this city. The clothing of both men were also identified minutely by the medical examiner, and the initials of the last body recovered were on his belt, A. D. P.

### Story of Eye-Witness

It was after the recovery of the second body that the big Navy Yard flota appeared in the channel and after that the work was pressed vigorously with the aid of divers.

Fr. Trop, an eye witness of the accident who was heading for the South Station to take a train for home, said he saw the car coming along on Summer-st Extension and that it was moving at a rapid pace. He saw the car take its flight into the water.

Mr. Trop said he could not determine to my satisfaction whether the lights were out on the drawbridge or not, but heard the gates slam the lights were burning as usual. I distinctly heard the grinding of the brakes and the efforts