

NEW HARTFORD
PECULIAR RUNAWAY ACCIDENT
FVH, 5-25-1917)

A most distressing yet peculiar runaway accident took place in this village on Monday morning of the present week when a team of young horses owned by William Ackerman of Center Hill ended their mad flight by landing on the Central New England trestle just opposite the Tribune Office.

Mr. Ackerman had left his team on Main Street while he went into the local post office. The horses started off at a walk towards the mill of the Case Woodruff Corporation where they were accustomed to stop each time the trip was made to New Hartford. In going up Central Avenue the horses became frightened of shouts of various ones on the street to stop and then started up on a dead run.

Instead of making the turn to the grist mill the animal did not turn until reaching the C.N.E. tracks and then turned and went at a mad run down the tracks towards Pine Meadow. The horses headed across the high trestle at full speed and went out upon the structure for a distance of at least forty feet before they fell and when found all four legs of each animal had gone down between the trestle ties and the wagon was piled up on top of the animals.

The C.N.E. bridge gang was working on the trestle and these men with residents of the village who rushed to the scene at once from their positions. The harnesses were cut off and then with the aid of planks and ropes the horses were rolled over.

The first animal to be freed hung over the side of the trestle by his collar which was cut away and the horse dropped a distance of about fifteen feet to the ground. It was thought that both horses would have to be shot and all bystanders were astonished to see the first horse get to his feet, whinny to his mate still on the trestle and then walk off to Stancliff's barn on Brook Street.

The second horse was wound with ropes and rolled over the side on the trestle and then lowered to the ground, and he too escaped with no serious injury. Mr. Ackerman and all who saw the accident could hardly believe their eyes or realize that the horses had escaped without at least some broken bones.

The greatest damage was done to the harness which had to be cut to get the wagon and horses off the trestle but the straps were repaired by P.H. Roberge and Mr. Ackerman drove his team home in the afternoon, the only noticeable harm was a few scratches on the horses legs.

(Copied by Leonard Alderman, 1997.)