

TWO ARE KILLED AND SIX INJURED AT RAIL CROSSING

TRAGEDY NEAR HIXSON

Mrs. Sam Borenstein and Mrs. Sam Novak Lose Their Lives

BORENSTEIN AND BABY IN CRITICAL CONDITION

Truck Filled With Picnickers Struck by Queen & Crescent Limited Injured Children Taken From Pilot of Locomotive

Two women were killed and five persons injured when the Crescent Limited passenger train struck a truck at a crossing three-quarters of a mile south of Hixson yesterday afternoon at 5 o'clock.

The dead:

Mrs. Sam Borenstein, nee Ida Daneman, 914 Forrest Avenue.

Mrs. Sam Novak, 40, 507 Poplar Street.

The injured:

Sam Borenstein, 914 Forrest Avenue, suffered a fractured pelvis, serious injuries to the spinal column and severe shock. His condition is grave.

Gilbert Borenstein, 3, suffered a fracture at the base of the skull and internal injuries. He is not expected to live.

Maxie Novak, 5, received a fractured ankle and internal injuries. His condition is considered serious.

Dorothy Daneman, 8 year old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. I. H. Daneman, 406 East Fifth Street, suffered a fracture of the upper right thigh

bone, a deep laceration of the left thigh and numerous abrasions.

Martin Borenstein, 10, received a laceration of the right leg at the knee and small abrasions about the arms and legs.

Allie Brogden, 9, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Brogdon, 114 Forrest Avenue, North Chattanooga, fracture of right elbow, bruises on body.

The injured Borenstein children and Maxie Novak are sons of the dead women.

Truck Is Flung High in the Air.

The truck was being driven by an employee of Mr. Borenstein, a 16 year old negro boy, who leaped out of his seat and saved himself when he saw the train rushing down upon the truck. The negro evidently did not see the train until the truck was squarely across the railway tracks. The machine was struck broadside and flung high into the air, landing approximately fifty feet from the crossing.

When the fast passenger train was brought to a standstill, Mrs. Borenstein and Mrs. Novak were found lying near the crossing, only a short distance from each other. Mrs. Borenstein's head had been partly torn away, resulting in instant death. Mrs. Novak's skull was crushed and her arm severed. She was dead when she arrived at the hospital. Mr. Borenstein and the four children were found on the pilot of the engine.

The party was returning from a picnic held by the Workmen's circle, Lodge 495, for the benefit of the Workmen's school. The picnic was held on H. Shavin's farm, about 200 yards from the crossing where the fatal accident occurred. More than 300 people attended the picnic.

Louis Shavin, 736 Battery Place, was driving directly behind the truck and saw the accident. He aided in taking the injured from the engine's pilot and carried Mr. Borenstein, Dorothy Daneman and Martin Borenstein to the hospital.

Eye Witness Tells of Fatal Crash.

"I was about thirty feet from the crossing," Mr. Shavin said, "when the accident occurred. I saw the truck go up the steep embankment leading up the railway tracks and

then I heard the whistle of the engine and, looking up, saw the train not more than fifty feet away. It seems that the instant I saw the engine, the crash came. The small truck was lifted up and thrown clear into the air, coming down on the other side of the train from me.

“When the train was brought to a stop, its rear end was even with the crossing and the truck was about fifty feet down the railway tracks. I found, when I ran to the engine, that the top of the truck had lodged on the engine’s pilot and the children were lying there. I helped them down, with the aid of the train crew, placed them in my car and carried them directly to the hospital.”

M. Solomon, 860 East Twenty-third street, passed over the crossing a few minutes before the crash, having been directly in front of the truck. Mr. Solomon said that he saw the engine about 500 yards down the track, but thought that the truck would stop for it. He was about 20 feet away from the crossing when he heard the crash and screams of the women.

Wann’s was called and two ambulances were sent to the scene. Meeting one of the automobiles about halfway between Chattanooga and Hixson, the ambulance attendants transferred two of the injured children to their machine and made a record run back to the city, while the other ambulance went on to the scene, to pick up the body of Mrs. Borenstein.

The picnic was held on the west side of the track and the participants were going home, crossing the tracks from west to east.

Conductor Brenizer Tells of Accident

According to Conductor C. A. Brenizer, in charge of the train, of 715 East Fourth street, Mrs. Borenstein was dead when members of the crew reached her. Her body was near the demolished truck, about twenty feet from the crossing and down an embankment on the east side of the track. The children were on the pilot of the engine.

Mr. Brenizer said the truck, which had a closed body, was driven by a negro boy about 15 years old. He said that the boy attempted to cross the track from the west to the east side and passed another car, going from east to west, on the railroad tracks. Apparently, Mr. Brenizer said, the boy stalled the truck in the center of the track and directly in front of the on-coming, speeding train. The other car he said escaped being hit by a matter of inches.

The crossing is at 329 milepost and is just a mile south of Hixson, at the end of the block

system. The track is straight there for about a mile, Conductor Brenizer said, and, going south, the train is on a steep grade.

Mr. Brenizer said the seven or eight cars were parked on the west side of the track, at the crossing, and four or five on the east side and these cars might have obstructed a view of the track.

Engineer Bill Williams was in the cab and applied his brakes, but was unable to avoid the crash. Mr. Brenizer said, “He stopped the train, which was carrying six cars besides a “dead-head’ Pullman, with the observation car, last on the train, about 100 feet from the crossing.”

Conductor Brenizer said the Borenstein children were taken from the pilot of the engine and sent to Chattanooga in private cars. He said no examination as to the extent of their injuries was made at the scene of the wreck, because of the desire to rush them to a hospital, but he believed they had been seriously hurt. The negro boy driving the truck apparently leaped for safety when he saw the train and escaped injuries, the conductor said.

Mr. and Mrs. Novak came to Chattanooga several months ago from New York and opened up the Manhattan Bakery on East Ninth Street. Mrs. Novak is survived by her husband, Sam; three sons, Jonas, Jake and Maxie; three daughters, Mrs. Gertrude Singar and Misses Bessie and Frances.

Funeral services for Mrs. Novak and Mrs. Borenstein were being planned for today at noon and probably will be held from Wann’s chapel.

Source: The Chattanooga Times dated Monday, June 11, 1928

Article provided by Shelton Goldblatt, Trudy Trivers

See next page for notes by Trudy Trivers.

**Notes by Trudy Trivers,
in or near the year 2003**

This past year, I have been interviewing my parents Howard and Ida Gault, and asking them about our family history. During one of these sessions, Mother volunteered a story about an accident she remembers hearing when she was a small child. Her story told of a group of Jewish people who were going to or from a picnic and the truck they were riding in stalled on the train tracks directly in the path of an oncoming train. Death and injury resulted from this accident, but Mother did not know any other details. I did not even have an approximate date, so I was unable to find out more.

The story remained in my thoughts. I searched the B'nai Zion Cemetery records for congregants who may have been buried on the same date. Yet, it wasn't until I spoke with Shelton Goldblatt of the Chevra Kadisha, that I received the clue that I needed to find the additional information about this tragic accident. Shelton noticed two gravestones at the Shaari Zion Cemetery of women who died on the same day. By coincidence, two weeks later, B'nai Zion posted BZ Cemetery records and Shaari Zion records on their website. With this information, I went to the Genealogy Department at the Hamilton County Bicentennial Library and researched the *Chattanooga Times* microfilm. I was able to find the exact article describing the accident, **June 10, 1928.**

The abbreviated story taken from the paper is as follows: "Two women were killed and five persons injured when the Crescent Limited passenger train struck a truck at a crossing three quarters of a mile south of Hixson yesterday afternoon at 5 o'clock." The women killed were Ida Daneman Borenstein and Anna Novak. The paper goes on to report that the group had attended a Workman's Circle picnic at H. Shavin's farm. I called descendants of those families mentioned in the *Times* article to find additional information. I was unable to find family related to Anna Novak. We do know her son, Jonas, mentioned in the article, moved to Atlanta, and later was the proprietor of the Manhattan Bakery there. Ida Daneman Borenstein was the niece of my great-aunt, Ida Daneman Brandman. They had the same first name, but I assume

different Hebrew names. According to Sylvia Daneman Saloshin and Gerry Daneman Sadow, they heard family stories about the accident during their childhood. Sylvia was named for Ida Borenstein.

Ida was a daughter of Jacob and Jenny Daneman, and a sister to Sylvia's father, Joe, and Gerry's father, Harry. Ida was married to Sam Borenstein, who was in serious condition following the crash. Gilbert Borenstein, Ida and Sam's three year old son, was gravely injured in the accident, according to the paper, and was not expected to survive. According to Sylvia and Gerry, their cousin Gilbert did survive. The last time they saw him, was when he was in the Marine Corps. and passed through Chattanooga following World War II.

Gerry added information about Martin Borenstein, an accident victim. Martin, son of Ida, was a stepson to Sam Borenstein. According to the paper, Sam had severe injuries to his spinal column. Martin, a child of ten, was sent to the Jewish foundling home following the accident. Gerry's grandparents, Jacob and Jenny Daneman, brought him back to Chattanooga and raised their grandson as their own. Harold Shavin's uncle, Hymie Shavin owned the Hixson property where the picnic took place. Harold, too, remembered hearing the story during his childhood. Harold was six months old at the time of the accident. If he attended the picnic, he was in a baby carriage.

I called the Norfolk and Southern Railroad and spoke with a technician who gave me the exact location of the accident. The paper said, "The crossing is at 329 milepost and is just a mile south of Hixson at the end of the block system." The technician looked up that number and said that the accident occurred at the intersection of Old Hixson Pike and the railroad tracks in back of the skating rink. I cross that intersection several times a week.

Al Page was eleven years old at the time of the picnic. He remembers the events vividly. He said children were playing and booths were set up where items were sold to raise money for the Hebrew School. There was a grocery store nearby, and Al remembers Mr. Press driving to the store to call for help. During the excitement of the emergency, Mr. Press almost ran into their family car. Al believes that Ida Borenstein

and Anna Novak left the stalled truck to try to stop the train. He believes that they may have survived had they not run onto the track. Their children were locked in the back of the bakery truck, and the hired driver, ran away when he saw the train approaching. Ida and Anna were trying to save their families.

Henrietta Chernick Elson was a little girl at the picnic and remembers her father taking out the back seat of their car and putting in two bloody children. He laid the seat on the ground and placed the two children into the car. Henrietta said that the accident is in her mind, and will always be in her memory. She also told me that Annie Menuskin, Jay Menuskin's aunt, chose not to get into the truck that day. Years later, she told Henrietta how thankful she was that she had made that decision. Annie, Abe, and Eddie Menuskin were cousins of Henrietta's mother and used to come to Henrietta's home on Sundays for lunch.

This fatal accident touched the lives of many members of our Jewish community. Three hundred people attended the picnic, and I am sure those families never forgot this fateful day. It is my hope that bringing this information to you and retelling the memories of their descendents will help us remember their courageous story.