

## Charles A. Divver ( - 20 Jun 1910)

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**Divver.** Suddenly on Monday, June 20, 1910 at 8:15 o'clock a.m. at Georgetown University Hospital, Charles A., beloved husband of Irene Divver (nee Barr) aged 23 years. Funeral from his late residence, 728 F street southeast, Wednesday, June 22 at 2:30 o'clock p.m. Relatives and friends invited to attend. Interment at Congressional cemetery.

*The Evening Star, June 20, 1910, p. 2*

### **His Life For Others**

#### **Motorman Divers Dies in Effort to Protect Passengers Burned By 3,000 Volts**

#### **Attempts to Pull Broken Live Wire Out of the Way**

#### **Succumbs To His Injuries**

#### **Accident Opposite the Chain Bridge Station of the Cabin John Bridge Electric Line Yesterday**

Charles Divers, motorman, gave his life that passengers in his care might escape danger. Burned by a live wire which hung over the tracks opposite Chain Bridge station on the Cabin John line yesterday afternoon. Divers died in the Georgetown University Hospital at 8:15 o'clock this morning.

Charles Divers, motorman, had been in the employ of the Washington Railway and Electric Company for three years, and he knew the danger of touching a wire which carried 3,000 volts -- a current which must deal death upon slightest contact. But the motorman feared the dangling coil would touch some of the passengers in the open car, because it swung perilously near the tracks, and instead of waiting for repairman to reach the scene he put a newspaper over his hand and sought to pull the wire away.

Almost at the instant he grasped the wire he was thrown off his feet and his clothing burst into flames. The terror-stricken crowd looked on for a minute while the motorman was being burned to death. But an unidentified hero appeared upon the scene. He seized the dying man and pulled him from the live wire, which was coiled about him.

"I couldn't tell just what he did," afterward said S.T. Dorsett, who was near the scene, "but I know he did a daring thing. It seemed as if he was certain to get killed. He made a success of his undertaking, however, and I'm only sorry he did not get the motorman from the curled wire in time to save his life."

### *Trouble With the Wires*

It was shortly after 6 o'clock when the accident happened. Trouble having been experienced with the wires at that point earlier in the afternoon, repairmen were sent out from the company's shops shortly before 3 o'clock in the afternoon to repair damaged wires. Just before Divers was electrocuted an eastbound car ahead of his had trouble with the wires, the trolley spool jumping the wire and breaking the span, throwing the latter across the feed wires. The broken span dangled over the westbound track so close to the eastbound cars, it is stated, that Divers feared it would endanger the passengers on the open car.

About eight cars had been delayed by the accident, and the passengers or most of them had left the cars and gone ahead to see what was being done. The sputtering wire had to be removed before traffic could be resumed and Divers thought he could get it out of the way without calling out the repairman. He took the desperate chance and lost his life.

S.T. Dorsett and J.M. Maupin, treasurer and secretary, respectively, of the Potomac Heights Land Company, were near the scene of the accident. They were there earlier in the day, when the first trouble with the wires was encountered, and they remained until the dying man was taken away to the hospital. Mr. Dorsett said that when Divers took hold of the dangling wire with a newspaper it seemed as if the wire curled about him almost instantly and held him a prisoner.

#### *Caring for the Victim*

Dr. D.R. McNeill of Nashville, Tenn., who was returning in an automobile from a trip to Great Falls, went to the assistance of the victim. He found Divers being cared for on the ground nearby, water having been thrown upon him to extinguish the blaze. Many holes had been burned through his clothing, and his flesh had been burned and blackened. The sight presented was such that several ladies fainted and had to be looked after by other passengers.

Men, women and children crowded about the burned form of the man lying on the ground near the branch, many of them neglecting to notice the danger in which they placed themselves by walking near the live wire. It was with considerable trouble that those who rendered assistance succeeded in keeping back the crowd. It was not until sometime after the fatality that repairmen appeared, remedied the trouble and restored traffic.

#### *Divers Taken to the Hospital*

T.K. Maupin, brother of J.M. Maupin, got his big touring car ready, and when Dr. McNeil had finished his first-aid treatment he hurried the dying man to the Georgetown University Hospital. The chauffeur paid no heed to the speed laws, covering part of the distance at a sixty-mile-an-hour gait. Drs. Moser and Ready were waiting at the hospital, ready to take charge of the motorman. Several persons who accompanied the motorman to the hospital assisted in carrying him into the building.

The physicians looked at the patient and shook their heads, realizing that death was a question of but a few hours. Divers' first thought, when he regained consciousness, was of his wife and two-week-old child. Mrs. Dives had left her sick bed and gone to the hospital from her home, 728 F street northeast, as soon as she heard of the accident and she was on hand when her husband asked for her.

Motorman Divers was thirty years old. He had been in the employ of the Washington Railway and Electric Company about three years, and was regarded as an excellent and careful motorman. Capt. Schneider of the seventh police precinct directed members of his command to investigate the accident and report to the coroner.