

William T. Gessford

(27 Sep 1856 – 10 Aug 1889)

Gessford. Suddenly on August 10, 1889, William T. Gessford, beloved husband of Ida Gessford and eldest son of James W. and the late Margaret M. Gessford, aged 32 years 11 months. Funeral from his father's residence, 631 H street s.w. on Tuesday, August 13 at 2 p.m. Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend (Baltimore papers please copy).

The Evening Star, August 12, 1889

Fell From a Car

The Frightful Death of a Son of Police Lieut. Gessford

William E. Gessford, foreman of the blacksmith shop in the Navy Yard met with a fatal accident Saturday afternoon while returning to his home in Baltimore. Mr. Gessford, in company with a younger brother, left here on the 7 o'clock train for Baltimore. He had once lived at Odenton, and when near that station he went into the baggage car to chat with the railroad men and get a good view of Odenton. When the train got on the bridge crossing the Patuxent river he put his head out of the baggage car door to look down at the water below. Suddenly he fell from the car and rolled off the bridge into the water. The train was stopped and his body was recovered. He had probably been killed instantly. On his head was a terrible wound which had been made by an iron bar that projected from the bridge. The body of the unfortunate man was taken to Odenton and a message sent to his father, Lieut. Gessford of the police force in this city. The body arrived here later in the afternoon and was taken to Lee's undertaking establishment, where it was prepared for burial. The deceased was 32 years old and leaves a wife and two children. The funeral will take place from his father's house, No. 631 H street southwest, tomorrow afternoon.

The Washington Post, August 11, 1889, p. 2

Thrown From A Train

Lieutenant Gessford's Son Killed at the Patuxent Bridge

Struck By An Iron Bar

He was Standing in the Door of the Baggage Car when He Met His Death –

A Fall of Thirty Feet Into the River Beneath the Bridge – Instantly Killed

William E. Gessford, the eldest son of Lieutenant Gessford, of the police department, was knocked from a train on the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad, while crossing the Patuxent River last evening, and almost instantly killed. The accident occurred shortly before 8 o'clock. Mr. Gessford left the city on a train that drew out of the Baltimore and Potomac Depot at 7 o'clock for Baltimore. He was accompanied by his younger brother, and when about twenty miles from the city he left his seat in the smoking car and walked into the baggage car to chat with some of the railroad officials with whom he was acquainted.

As the train approached the bridge crossing the Patuxent River Mr. Gessford stepped to the door in the side of the baggage car and was leaning out looking down the river, when a bar of iron projecting from the bridge struck him on the side of the head. The blow knocked him against the door-casing, and then he fell headlong from the car, struck the side of the bridge, and slipped from there into the water, a distance of thirty feet below.

The accident caused the utmost consternation among the train officials who witnessed it. The train was stopped and party at once started to search for the body. It was recovered in a very short time and brought to shore, but life was already extinct. A terrible wound in the side of the head showed that death must have followed almost immediately after the unfortunate man was struck by the projection from the bridge.

The remains were removed to Odenton, where they were placed in the depot for conveyance to this city, and a telegram was sent to the police headquarters with information of the terrible occurrence. Lieutenant Gessford was promptly communicated with, and at his request the remains of his son were brought to this city.

They arrived about 11 o'clock and were taken to Lee's undertaking establishment to be prepared for burial as soon as the arrangements for the funeral can be perfected.

Mr. Gessford was 32 years of age, and was employed as a foreman in one of the blacksmith shops at the navy yard. He was well known in the city, but until a short time ago had spent four or five years in Baltimore and Annapolis, where he worked at his trade. He leaves a wife and two children who reside in South Washington. Lieutenant Gessford was deeply shocked at receiving the intelligence of his son's death, but he nevertheless appeared at the depot and directed the removal of the remains to the undertaker's. The deceased was a brother of Henry Gessford, the First precinct station-keeper.

The Washington Post, August 12, 1889, p. 6

William E. Gessford's Funeral

The funeral of William E. Gessford, who was killed on the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad, at the Patuxent River on Saturday night as stated in yesterday's Post, will take place on Tuesday afternoon from his father's residence, on H street, between Sixth and Seventh streets southwest.