

Violet Springman (- 7 Sep 1905)

The Evening Star, Sept. 8, 1905

Killed by an Auto

Fatal Accident of Which Child Was Victim

Coroner's Verdict

Exonerated of the Man in Charge of the Machine

Evidence Heard Which Showed That the Unfortunate Affair Was Unavoidable--The Witnesses

Violet Springman, the 11 year-old daughter of George W. Springman of 634 M street southeast, was



**Nine-Year-Old Girl, Victim of Auto-
mobile Accident.**

knocked down and killed by an automobile managed by Gilbert J. Osterman while playing in the streets near the corner of 11th and G streets southeast last evening about 8:30 o'clock. Osterman and his brother, Fred Osterman, who were in the automobile, were arrested, but were released this afternoon by order of the coroner after an inquest as to the accident at the morgue.

The body of the dead child was turned over to her father, and arrangements for the funeral are being made.

The little girl lived with a married sister at 1020 G street southeast, and last evening was playing with three girls of her own age at the corner of 11th and G streets. The children were running back and forth across the street.

Mr. Osterman, who is a contractor, had been visiting his old home in Anacostia and was returning to the home of his brother, with whom he resides, when the accident occurred. According to his statement of the affair he was proceeding north along 11th street at a reasonable speed. He slowed down to pass over the excavations left after the removal of the car tracks that formerly ran east from 11th street, and when his machine reached the other side he was moving at the rate of about eight miles an hour. He saw the children run across the street before he reached the point where they were playing, but none was in the street as he reached the north side of G street crossing.

Child Runs Into Street

He had not gone very far, however, when he saw a child run out from the east side of the street and he turned his machine toward the curb to prevent striking her. When the child reached the center of the street she hesitated and turned back. Before Mr. Osterman could stop his machine it had struck the child. He stopped immediately and his brother ran back to where he saw the child lying on the pavement. Together they carried her to a nearby drug store and a physician was summoned. When the physician arrived the child was dead. Policeman Totten met Osterman at the corner of Pennsylvania avenue and 11th street and after learning of the accident took charge of the case.

The body of the girl was removed to the morgue and the Ostermans were placed under arrest.

At the coroner's inquest this morning a thorough examination of the case was had. The eye-witnesses to the accident were all examined and several persons who had seen the automobile were questioned to ascertain its speed. There seemed to be a divergence of opinion as to how fast the machine was traveling. The Ostermans both stated it was not moving faster than eight or ten miles an hour, and another witness, who had been engaged in the automobile business, stated that it would be dangerous to the occupants of a machine to run it at a greater speed over such rough pavement. He gave it as his opinion that it was moving at a rate between eight and twelve miles an hour.

Alleged Excessive Speed

Several other witnesses stated that the machine was moving at an excessive rate of speed before the accident, but none gave a satisfactory estimate. All agreed that the driver had done his utmost to avoid an accident and that he had stopped his car as soon as he could after the accident.

Most of them agreed that if the child had continued on her way across the street the accident would not have occurred and that to avoid it was impossible, after the child had turned, as she ran directly into the machine.

Among the witnesses examined were Policeman Totten, Dr. Webb, who had been summoned immediately after the accident; the Osterman brothers, George F. Duval, Lancing W. Trower, Mrs. Hannah M. Moore, Harry M. McFarland and John Moran, eye witnesses; Annie Bolton, Lucy Bolton and Mary Brown, children who were playing with the dead girl at the time of the accident; Augustus Reinhardt, who was also playing with the party; W.H. Hammond, an automobile driver and machinist, who saw the accident, and William Hale, who had seen the machine just before the accident.

As a result of the testimony adduced the jury found that the child came to her death through accident, and by order of the coroner the Ostermans were released from custody.

The Washington Herald, September 8, 1905

**Crushed to Death By Automobile
Little Girl Frightfully Mangled
Inquest This Afternoon
Driver Saw Child Too Late to Prevent Tragedy --
Is an Expert Chauffeur**

Another automobile accident last night was added to the already long list. Little Violet Springman, nine years of age, was struck and instantly killed by an automobile operated by Gilbert J. Osterman, about 8:15 o'clock last night, on Eleventh street, near G street southeast.

The child was picked up and carried to a nearby drug store, but when Dr. Webb arrived on the scene the child was dead. The skull was fractured and her body mangled almost beyond recognition.

Gilbert Osterman, who was operating the machine, and his brother Fred, who was with him at the time, were both taken to the Fifth precinct station where they were locked up, charged with manslaughter.

Mr. Osterman said at the station house that he had gone to the garage early in the evening and gotten his machine to go to Anacostia to get his brother Fred. After being joined by his brother, Osterman started for Lincoln Park. He had just crossed the bridge and gotten some little distance up the street when the accident occurred.

Was Visiting Sister

Violet Springman was visiting her sister, Mrs. Gertrude Langley, at 1020 G street southeast, yesterday evening, and after dinner went into the street to play a game called "goal" with several children living in that neighborhood.

Violet happened to be "it" and started across the street just as the automobile was turning the corner. She got nearly to the curb and then either lost her head or, as a part of the game, ran back across the street directly in the path of the speeding auto. Mr. Osterman reversed the power and tried to swerve out of the child's way, but was too late, the heavy machine striking the child, knocking her under the automobile.

Before the vehicle could be brought to a standstill, Violet had been dragged about twenty yards. When picked up by several persons who were standing near by, the little girl was a mass of blood and grime. Her face was cut open, the head cut, and several locks of her hair were torn from the scalp.

She was still breathing when picked up, but was unconscious. Several of those present carried her to the corner drug store where stimulants were administered. Dr. N.E. Webb, who lives near by, was sent for, but when he arrived he pronounced the victim of the accident dead. Her body was then sent to the morgue.

Women Swooned

Mrs. George DeVal was standing on the curb with her husband at the time of the accident and so greatly was she shocked that she fainted and later grew hysterical. Two other women who saw the accident also fainted. One of the women who was standing on the car tracks at Eleventh and G streets when the child was run over swooned and had a narrow escape from being run over by a car.

The streets were thronged at the time of the accident and at first a demonstration was made, directed toward the unfortunate young man operating the machine. It was quieted, however, and later much sympathy was exhibited for the driver.

Mrs. Gilbert Langley, the sister of the dead girl, was sitting in the second story of her home at the time of the accident, and, having her attention called to the street by the scream of several witnesses, looked around just in time to see the frail little body of Violet knocked down and crushed by the powerful machine.

Violet's father, George W. Springman, a laborer, who lives with his sister-in-law, Miss Emma Mitchell, at 634 M street southeast, was notified of the accident late last night.

When seen this morning at her home, Miss Mitchell said that Violet's mother had died when she was only two years of age and that ever since that time she had made it her duty to look out for the child. She had treated her as her own child, she said, and had grown to love her with a mother's love.

Yesterday she was feeling ill, and sent Violet to Mrs. Langley's home for the day so that she might have the house to herself and rest undisturbed. This accounted for the little girl being so far from home at the time of the accident.

Several witnesses were subpoenaed, and were present at the inquest this afternoon.

Gilbert J. Osterman is a well-known contractor and builder of this city, with offices in the Colorado building. He and his brothers live at 1316 L street northwest. Mr. Osterman is an enthusiastic autoist, and is considered an expert in the matter of running a machine. Both he and his brother are stricken with grief over the accident.

After the inquest the Coroner decided the girl's death was due to an accident.

The Evening Star, Sept. 12, 1905

Interment in Congressional Cemetery

Funeral services over the remains of Violet Springman, the 11 year-old daughter of George W Springman, who was knocked down and killed by an automobile driven by Gilbert F. Osterman Thursday

evening last, were held yesterday afternoon at 2 o'clock at the home of her father, 934 M street southeast. Rev. W.H. Lamar, pastor of the Wilson Memorial M.E. Church, officiated. The pallbearers were selected from among those who had been playmates and schoolmates of the child and included Spencer Taylor, Earl Higdon, Robert Grace, William Bean, Ernest Scheffer and Edward Cable. The interment took place at Congressional cemetery.