

PRICE FIVE CENTS

SPAN WENT DOWN.

A STRANGE ACCIDENT AT MUSCATINE.

A Span of the High Structure There Shrinks in the Cold Until It Slips off a Displaced Caisson—No Fatalities, and Span Can be Raised and Replaced.

Muscataine was divorced from Drury township, Rock Island county, Saturday afternoon, by a strange accident, and 160 farmers with their teams, who were in the city, had to drive down the river to an ice bridge two miles south, in order to get back to their homes in Illinois. In the meantime thousands of people had been attracted to the common center, about as they were at Davenport a couple of years ago, when the ice swept out the draw span of the uncompleted government bridge, and were watching a couple of men pick themselves off the ice, and three or four horses that hung suspended by their harness in midair, until they dropped and received injuries that led to their being mercifully shot.

It was the second span from the Illinois shore that went partially down. It is a short, 160-foot span, and had free play on a roller at one end to allow for contraction and expansion from cold and heat. It stood upon caissons filled with cement and sunk in cement, but in the nine years that the bridge has stood it is calculated that the piers must have been slightly displaced by the action of the ice. At any rate, the span contracted so much Saturday that the end slipped off the caisson, and down it went.

On the span at the time were Patrick Curry and Frank Nicholas of Muscatine, driving wagons heavily loaded with wood. The span dropped a few feet at the free end, stopped, then sagged again, stopped, then with a crash dropped onto the ice and into the shallow water beneath. Curry and Nicholas had time to save themselves, and besides Curry's broken nose and bruised face sustained no injuries.

Hon. George T. Baker of this city received news of the accident by telephone, and in response to request went down on the Firefly to the scene. He superintended the building of the bridge in 1891. He found the span intact, with only a floor beam broken. It can be raised and replaced in the course of two or three weeks, but until that time it will be sadly missed. It is used by hundreds of farmers daily in visiting Muscatine.