O'CONNELL, Patrick 6 December 1893

Designation	Accident Location	Accident Due to
Navvy	Yilgarn Railway	Fall from ballast train

Patrick O'Connell, aged 30, died when he slipped as he attempted to get onto a moving wagon. He had been working with a gang at a camp near Merredin. He is interred at York Cemetery. Information provided by Julie Rae a York Historian. March 2016

FATAL ACCIDENT

An accident attended with fatal consequences happened to a man named Patrick O'Connell on the Yilgarn rail way line on the 6th instant. From particulars to hand it appears that the deceased man was engaged as a ballast man on the line in question was endeavoring to enter a truck while in motion, and in so doing his foot slipped the result being that he was violently hurled under, neath the trucks. The injuries were of a terribly ugly nature, O'Connell's legs, arms, and chest, being literally smashed. He was at once dispatched into Northam and thence to York at which town he was placed in the hospital for medical treat ment. It was at once seen that the wounds were of too serious a nature for deceased's medical attendants to hold out the slightest hope of recovery, and the unfortunate fellow only lingered until about 10 o'clock on Thursday night, when he passed quietly away, apparently not suffering much ,pain. The deceased was about 30 years of age. An inquest was opened yesterday afternoon before the Resident Magistrate acting as Coroner, and a Jury consisting of Messrs.Pyke, Hillman and Henderson. After having viewed the body and taken the evidence of one Witness the enquiry was adjourned for a week.

Source: *Trove/The West Australian (Perth)* Tuesday 12 December 1893 Page 4.

AN ADJOURNED INQUEST

Was held on Saturday last enquiring into the circumstances surrounding the death of Patrick O'Connell, who died in the York Hospital on the 7th instant, from injuries received in a railway accident. The E.M. acted as Coroner, and Messrs. C. Hillman (foreman), S. Pyke and H. Henderson as jury. The following evidence was taken :

Michael Reddan said - On the 6th of December last the gang men were filling ballast near Merredin. The deceased was one of the gang. We knocked off about 5 o'clock. We are working about 3 miles from the camp, and we generally returned to camp on the wagons. On the afternoon of the 6th instant we waited for the train. She came up at about 6.30 p.m. My mate went on to the level place to get in with me. The deceased stopped with the others of the gang. The train did not stop when she came up; it was travelling about 3 miles an hour. I heard the men calling. Out that a man was " rolled." - Billy Murtha was present, and Jimmy Munro was driving the engine. The train does not stop to pick up the men. You have to run to get on. The body I saw in the dead house is that of Patrick O'Connell. The place where the men get in is at a cutting a couple of feet high.

By the jury. - There was no drink about the place. The deceased was not affected by the heat.

Cornelius John Fogarty said - I am employed on the Yilgarn Railway line as a ganger. On the 6th of December deceased went to get on the trucks while in motion. I heard someone call out, and I saw deceased after he was picked up on the bank. I spoke to him but he did not say how the accident occurred - he simply said it was a bad job, or words to that effect. He had the left leg broke, the right leg seemed put out at the knee, and he was hurt

in the chest. The left arm was broken. Deceased was taken to the camp about 4 miles away towards Merredin. The men are in the habit of jumping in the trucks while the train is in motion, This is the practice on all lines during construction. Deceased was sober.

By the jury. - I did not see how it happened. Deceased was quite sensible all the time. The train would have pulled up if the men had waited. It was a heavy grade at the spot. Deceased expressed to me afterwards that it was his own fault.

By the Coroner. The men are usually fetched into camp by the train. The train usually stops for the men. The engine-driver will always stop the train unless the men make a rush to get on. If the train were to stop before it got to the gang of men there are men who in my experience would wait until the train moved on rather than walk a hundred yards. Where the accident occurred the cutting was narrow. It was not a good place to jump on the trucks.

Patrick O'Mara corroborated the evidence in main of the previous witness. He bandaged up the deceased. Cross-examined he said that he saw the deceased rolling. The axle box caught him and shoved him along. Witness kept deceased against the bank. A signal was given to stop the train which was done immediately.

Dr. O'Meehan said — On Thursday evening the 7th inst, between 6 and 7 o'clock, the deceased was brought to the Hospital. His legs and left arm were bandaged up. I did not interfere with him as he was dying from collapse. I injected some ether to try and revive him, and gave him some brandy. He died that evening between 9 and 10 o'clock. I took off the bandages next day and examined the body. His right thigh bone was fractured into the knee joint, the left thigh and arm were fractured, and his left side was crushed. He died from collapse, the result of the shock from the accident. The voyage by the train must have hastened his death. The man who bandaged him deserves great credit. It was done in a most artistic manner. The deceased could not have lived.

The jury returned the following verdict:
"That the deceased Patrick O'Connell came to his death owing to an accident incurred while getting into a truck on the Yilgarn line while in motion. We think that the contractors should make a hard and fast rule to prevent the men from jumping on the trucks while the train is in motion."

Source: *Trove/Eastern Districts Chronicle (York) Saturday 23 December 1893 Page 2.*