

"TOM" COOPER KILLED IN PARK AUTO RACE

Noted Cyclist and Driver Breaks His Neck in Collision.

TWO OTHERS MAY DIE

Broker Barlow and Helen Hall Badly Crushed—Machines Came To- gether at Curve.

One person, "Tom" Cooper, the noted cyclist and auto driver, dead, two dying in Roosevelt Hospital, and a fourth person seriously injured, is the result of an automobile race in Central Park shortly after midnight. The two machines collided on the drive near West Seventy-seventh Street and Eighth Avenue.

With "Tom" Cooper in the machine which he was driving were Miss Helen Hall of the Hotel Wroxeter, 135 West Forty-fifth Street; Miss Virginia Vernon of 835 Newark Avenue, Jersey City, and a Mr. Barlow, said to be a cotton broker, who lives in Paterson, N. J. Later at the hospital the young woman who first gave the name of Vernon, was said to be Miss Helen Lovett. At 2 o'clock four friends called for her in a carriage and took her away. They refused to say where they intended to take her.

Miss Hall and Mr. Barlow both sustained fractured skulls and will die, it is said. Miss Vernon sustained a fracture of the leg. She also was taken to the hospital. The occupants of the other machine were arrested.

The first story of the accident was to the effect that Tom Cooper was driving a party of friends at high speed down the drive, and, coming to the curve near the exit from the Park at Eighth Avenue, he ran into a machine which was standing there waiting for a supply of gasoline.

Later it was stated by Miss Vernon, the only one of the Cooper party able to talk, that both machines had come southward on the drive at a furious speed the occupants enjoying a race. She said:

"Our car and the Thomas car were racing down the drive. Just north of the spot where the automobiles met the Thomas car shot ahead, and our car dropped behind. Then Cooper tried to get up alongside the Thomas car again, and our front wheels buckled with the rear wheel of the Thomas car. There was a ripping sound and our tire parted, and in another second we were all in midair.

"Both cars were going pretty good, and it was a close race. When the Thomas car shot ahead, we told Cooper not to mind them, as we were tired of the speed. I remember my friend saying to Cooper that it was no use to try to catch them.

"As we neared Seventy-seventh Street our car gained on the other car, and as we came close to a curve our car ran up close to the other one.

"When I woke up after the collision I found my friend lying insensible on the grass. Try as I would I could not wake her. Then I thought she was dead.

"The other car had gone on, but after a short time it came back. Then I told them to hurry and send ambulances to the place and take the injured people to the hospital."

Miss Vernon had suffered a fractured leg, many bruises on the body, and several painful cuts.

In the meantime the occupants of the other machine came running back. One of them, seeing how serious matters were, ran to the San Remo Hotel and asked the night clerk to telephone for ambulances. The clerk, M. J. Tobin, states that he called Roosevelt Hospital and had trouble in getting service because he was not a policeman. Finally two ambulances were sent to the scene of the accident with Dr. Dwight and Dr. Parker.

In the meantime the Park police and several policemen on the avenue heard the crash of the machines coming together and hurried to investigate. It happened to be a policeman from the West Sixty-eighth Street Station who arrested the occupants of the automobile which had escaped injury.

When he took his prisoners to the station he was told that as the accident had happened inside the Park the prisoners would have to go to the Arsenal Station. As the accident happened close to the precinct line, the police added to the general confusion and delay caused by the Roosevelt Hospital authorities.

Dr. Dwight, upon arriving, immediately pronounced Tom Cooper dead. His body was laid on a park bench and covered with a sheet. It was guarded for two hours by the police and then taken to the police station.

Dr. Parker found that Miss Hall was in very bad condition. In being thrown from the machine she had landed on the side of her head, which was crushed. She cannot live.

Mr. Barlow, the cotton broker, had sustained a fractured skull. It is not expected that he will recover either.

Miss Vernon, a plucky young woman, limped around, rendering her companions what assistance she could give, and telling the police in a disconnected way all she knew of the matter. She did not go to the hospital until all the others had been seen. At the Roosevelt Hospital Mr. Barlow, it was found, had \$405 in his pockets.

Tom Cooper's name is as widely known as that of almost any man who has been associated with sporting events. For nearly twenty years he had been before the public as a cyclist, and later as an automobile driver, appearing on race tracks since 1890. He was contemporary with Mile-a-Minute Murphy, Arthur A. Zimmerman, Eddie Bald, Fred Titus, John Johnson, and preceded Jimmy Michael and the later-day foreign importations. Cooper toured the world as an automobilist and made vast sums of money through his acting as the foreign agent of bicycle promoters in recent years for six-day races.

His last public appearance was in the recent races at the Empire City track, where he drove a Matheson. He was scheduled to appear there in the last race meet, held on Election Day, but an injury to his hand prevented him from steering a machine at the last minute. He planned to drive a Matheson at Palm Beach in the Ormond meeting in January, though the details of his appearance were not yet arranged.

Cooper was a man of about 35 years of age, of powerful build and great strength. It was frequently a matter of comment that a man of his weight could show such speed in driving a bicycle, but invariably he was found near the top of percentage tables that told of the winnings of the followers of the circuit.