

ACCIDENT AT THE TUNNEL.

A Bee Line Freight Car Run Into the North Approach to the Tunnel.

(Columbus Dispatch, September 3, 1881)

At 10 A.M. while Peter McGuire, Yard Master of the Bee Line at this place, was having some freight cars shoved west, on the stubtoe siding, the momentum became so great that the train was not checked until the west end of it ran off the toe of the siding, precipitating one car into the north approach to the tunnel. The distance from the end of the siding to the tunnel is sixty five or seventy feet. Three cars and part of the fourth were on the ground. The forward car, as the train was moving, ploughed through the stone coping and iron railing at the south end of the approach – at the very highest part. The stone coping and twenty feet of the iron fence went down ahead of the car, breaking the stone and narrowly missing a couple of consolidated cars. They passed upon the north incline, one going south and the other north.

There were forty-nine [cars] in the train – sixteen flat, twenty freight and thirteen stock. The stock cars were empty. The freight cars were closed, so that their contents could not be noted. Six of the flat cars were empty; six were loaded with railroad iron, and four with lumber. It was a heavy train – a very heavy train – and long, reaching from the tunnel to a point far east of the east end of the Union Depot.

Mr. George H. Lee, Agent for the Bee Line, was called upon for a statement as to how the accident occurred. He said the men neglected to take notice that some cars were standing on the siding, and pushed down upon them with violence. He admitted that it was a piece of carelessness; that there was no excuse for it.

A great crowd of people gathered about the spot and talked of the narrow escape made by the street cars and wondered why the railroad companies did not put up bumping blocks at the end of these sidings. There are about eight or ten sidings ending near the tunnel approaches. Not one of these sidings has a bumping block. Not long ago, a Pan Handle yard engineer, in a reckless moment, ran a train into a coal office at the south end of the tunnel. It was supposed then that somebody would put up bumping blocks. The blocks are badly needed for safety of human life in the tunnel!

The Bee line folks went to work immediately to remove the cars from the approach, and finished this afternoon.

TUNNEL TUMBLE.

Car Down In the North Entrance to
Tunnel – Danger at the Railroad
Crossings in the City.

(Ohio State Journal, September 5, 1881)

Attention was called in this paper some time ago to the danger, at the High Street railroad crossing, of cars being run through into the entrances to the tunnel. The danger at that time was apprehended at the south entrance to the tunnel. Saturday morning the Bee Line ran an empty gondola car off a switch into the north end of the tunnel just narrowly missing two Consolidated street cars. The car was pushed off at the highest point, taking with it about twenty feet of iron railing and stone coping.

The car sustained but little damage, considering the height of the fall. The trucks were brought up on the street car tracks, and the body of the car was pulled up the way it went down. The tunnel was blockaded about three hours.

This accident, as well as the one about a year ago, in which a coal office was moved several feet during the night was caused by the fact that there is no bumping blocks at the end of the tracks. There are a dozen or more tracks coming out at this point, and there are no stops or bumpers at any of them.

This affair was an accident, and there can be no blame attached to the trainmen, yard men or anyone else except to the ones whose duty it is to see the proper protection at the end of the track.

It is a common thing to see cars off of the end of these track, and in this case the yardmaster had just had a train of forty-eight cars run into his yard, and as they were standing they blocked up his main track, and to clear this, one of the yard men gave orders to run them down a few car lengths on this spur – which would have held them - but they struck some empty cars with such force as to push them over into the tunnel, the brakes, as they were then set being insufficient to hold the cars.

The entire accident was caused by lack of knowledge on the part of the men giving the order not knowing how many cars this spur would hold. Both Mr. Lee the Agent, and Mr. McGuire, the Yard Master, were absent at the time of the accident, and no blame can be attached to them.

As a matter of fact the city needs more protection at all of the railroad crossings. There should be bumpers at the ends of all of these side tracks. A bridge is needed across the tracks, and another bridge is needed across the tracks on Dennison avenue. The crossing at Park street should be improved or the means of getting at the bridge over the track, on this street, should be improved. There is danger to persons and property, and the greatest inconvenience every day at these crossings. At the same time there is much talk in the City Council and elsewhere about improvements in this line, but nothing is done. There is a demand for action and something should be done at once.