

AN AWFUL WRECK

C.,S.&C PASSANGER TRAIN HURLED FROM THE TRACK,

By a Broken Rail, Seven miles from Columbus.

One Car Set on Fire, but an Awful Holocaust prevented.

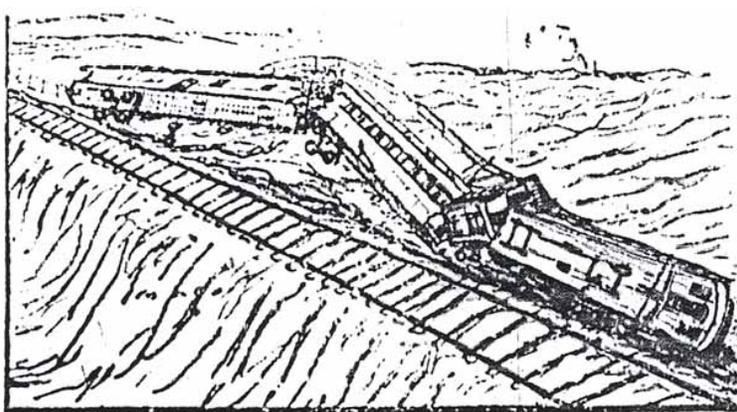
Five Passengers Seriously Injured, One Probably Fatally.

A MIRACULOUS SAVING OF LIFE.

Description of the Scene and List of the Injured.

(Columbus Dispatch, August 22, 1888) "If ever God smiled on a railroad," said Dr. Ferrell this morning, "He smiled on the C.,S.&C. to-day". [Cincinnati Sandusky & Cleveland Railroad. It become part of the Big Four Line in 1889.]

And all who saw the awful wreck which occurred on that road at a quarter past five o'clock this morning said the same thing. With two sleepers, a ladies' car and a smoker, containing sixteen passengers, pitched down a fifteen-foot embankment, and rolled over and over, without a word of warning, and the lamps all burning – the only wonder is that every man, women and child on the train was not either crushed or burned to death. As it was, only five men were very seriously injured, and only one of the five so badly hurt that any fears of death are entertained. The wonderful escape of the rest seems little less than miraculous.



The scene of the wreck was what is known as the “seven mile cut” or the “seven mile bridge”. It is seven miles from Columbus, and just beyond the little station of Avenue. The train that was wrecked is known as the “mixed train,” and runs between Springfield and this city. Mr. Chris Harris is the conductor, A. Long the engineer and William Reynolds the fireman. It was on its way her from Springfield and was due here at 4:10 this morning. On account of a delay at Springfield, however, it was something over an hour late and was going at the rate of 20 miles an hour. It was composed of fifteen freight cars, a baggage car, and the four passenger cars that and the four passenger cars that were wrecked, the passenger cars being at the rear end of the train.

At a quarter past five o’clock, just after the train had crossed the “seven mile bridge,” and was nearing Avenue a piece of rail flew off. The jolt which resulted was felt on the engine. The engine, however, did not leave the track, but one freight car after another did, and although the jolting of these cars as they were dragged along over the ties was plainly felt by all on the train, the engineer, instead of stopping pushed right on. Finally the draw-bar of the baggage car was pulled out, and as a result the four passenger cars following were pitched headlong from the tack down the deep ditch on the right. The engineer did not stop, however, but dragged the freight cars along for half a mile further, tearing up the track in a most damaging manner, splitting and crushing ties and tearing out rails the entire distance. When he stopped one freight car was found

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..... much as if the thousands of people who have ridden over the C.,S.&C road between here and Springfield, during the past few months have ridden over a broken rail, and been in imminent danger of their lives.

Why the engineer pulled on for half a mile after the wreck occurred puzzled many of the passengers, some of whom were positive that had he stopped instead of rushing ahead the passenger coaches would not have been thrown from the track. Much indignation was expressed at his course. On being asked by the reporter why he had thus gone ahead, he replied:

“I didn’t know what had occurred. I didn’t know what was behind me. I had an idea that the train had broken in two, and I hurried ahead in order to prevent this portion of the train behind from plunging into the front portion. That was my only reason for it.”

The most marvelous thing about the whole affair was the fact that not one person was killed. Said Mr. Shumate, of Cincinnati, as he wrung the coal oil out of his coat sleeves. "I have been in twenty five wrecks, and this is the worst one I ever saw outside of the Ashtabula affair. How all escaped death is what I can't understand. There are two things, however, that I can understand. One is that that rail was broken long before this and the other is that an engineer who would run ahead, as this engineer did, for half a mile, is a fool, that's all."

Agent Webb put a force of hands promptly at work this morning clearing up the track, and he expressed the opinion that the road would be ready for the running of trains in a couple of hours. How this could be done, however, with all the ties to be supplied and rails to be relaid, for the half mile along which the derailed freight cars were dragged, it was hard to see.

General Agent Webb, of the road, was seen shortly after noon and asked for his estimate of the damage incurred. This, after some hesitation, he said was not great and that \$700 or \$800 would repair all the cars in the wreck. Mr. Webb said the track was cleared at eleven o'clock and trains running. By this is meant, of course, that only a temporary track was been laid. As it was it was rapid work.

The injured men, Messrs. Rust and Higgins, of Springfield, were given medical attendance during the day by Dr. Ferrell, and this afternoon were sent home on the afternoon train. Mr. Rust was hurt much more than was at first supposed. His chest is badly bruised, and it is thought that internal injuries were inflicted. Mr. Palmer, who was hurt more seriously than any other was still at the Davidson house this afternoon, and was in great pain.

At two o'clock this afternoon the two trains, No. 8 due at 8:35 A.M., and No. 4 due at 11:15A.M., which had been delayed on the other side of the wreck, arrived at the depot, the track having been sufficiently repaired to admit of their passing over.