

ONE ARMED MAN SAVES A FAST B. & O. S. W. TRAIN

HE SACRIFICES A BIG FOUR ENGINE TO PREVENT LOSS OF HUMAN LIFE

Runaway Car From Upper Yards Whirls Through Union Depot.

WHISTLES GIVE THE SHRILL ALARM

Was on the Track of Oncoming Train – Loaded With Lumber.

L.E. Davidson Throws the Switch turning the Car to
Big Four Track and Wrecks Standing Engine.

(Columbus Sunday Dispatch, Oct. 21, 1906) Rare presence of mind of switchtender L. E. Davidson, of the Big Four yards just west of the High street viaduct probably saved a large number of lives and a great property loss to the Baltimore & Ohio Southwestern railroad. Shortly after 6 o'clock Saturday evening, while a crew was switching cars in the Big Four yards near the fairgrounds, a Norfolk & Western box car, loaded with lumber, cut loose and with rapidly increasing speed rushed through the yards toward the Union Station.

THROUGHT UNION DEPOT

The yard and road engines screeched a warning but the switchmen were unable to sidetrack the runaway and it dashed through the Union station train shed at a high rate of speed. The switches were set for track No. 7 the track on which Baltimore & Ohio Southwestern passenger train no. 108 was due, and there was great anxiety for the fate of the train as the heavy car rushed down the main track at rapidly increasing speed. The trainmen remember the fate of B. & O. S. W. No. 106 just 12 years ago when two heavily loaded coal cars got away up in the yards and rushing down the B. & O. S. W. track crashed into the passenger train on the steel bridge over the river killing the engineer and fireman.

WAS AT HIS POST.

Davidson was standing at the switch when he saw the runaway. The seriousness of the situation flashed through his mind. Big four local no. 54 was standing on the siding and B.& O. S. W. No. 108 was due. He realized in an instant that an accident could not be averted. He must turn the runaway into the big four freight head-on or let it go down the main track toward No. 108. He heard the passenger train whistle.

THREW THE SWITCH.

He reached down and grasping the handle threw the heavy switch just as the car was nearly upon him. There was a loud crash and a shower of splinters and glass as

the heavy car struck the engine of No. 54 with terrific force. The engineer and fire man saw the car coming and jumped, escaping injury but both the car and the engine were badly damaged. A few minutes after the collision the passenger train came in sight. It was late and was rushing along at a high rate of speed. The main track had not been damaged in the least and it passed into the Union station without delay.

HE CHOSE QUICKLY.

Davidson will undoubtedly be rewarded for his bravery and presence of mind. To a Dispatch reporter he said: "It was pretty hard to turn her into our own train, but it was a case of lives against property and I thought it would be better to have a freight wreck than a passenger wreck."