

A River of Death.

IT IS FITLY NAMED
BLUE RIVER.

FIRE and WATER.
The Worst Railroad Accident that Has Ever
Happened in Indiana.

The terrible accident that occurred on the L. N. A. & C. railroad, at 6:15 o'clock, Monday morning a week, has been the topic of conversation ever since. The train had passed Salem, and at a distance of about one mile south of that town had reached the bridge that spans Blue River, a small stream (the bridge being but about 70 feet in length), when the structure, it seems, crumbled, and the train was tumbled into the water, except the engine and sleeper.

While it was snowing in Bloomington, the rain was descending in torrents from Salem south, and all the streams were swollen rivers. Blue River was said to be five feet higher than ever before known, and the abutment had evidently undermined.

The stories told by the passengers and trainmen give a true picture of the catastrophe than any sophomoric write-up published.

How the accident happened is best told by the fireman, Jas. Myers, formerly of Bloomington, Ind., who said they were running at the regular speed and had no trouble from water until they came near the bridge over Blue River. He stepped back to the tender to get some coal to throw into the furnace, when the engineer, Vaughn, called to him that the bridge was giving way. It appeared to him that the bridge did not commence to give way until they were almost over. Before he could realize what Vaughn was saying they were on the south side of the bridge, with the engine turned over. He looked back and saw the cars on fire in the creek, but was unable for a time to realize what was going on.

The accident came upon the passengers so suddenly that no one person can tell when he first realized the gravity of the situation. The engine had gotten over safe, but the cars were piled down the embankment, the baggage car being crushed to pieces almost. The buffet sleeper, "Avon," did not reach the middle of the creek, and the rear end stood on the bank. This enabled the passengers to get out before the car caught fire. The passengers in the regular coaches had to get out as best they could. Some had to swim or wade ashore, but the unfortunate who were too badly injured to swim were burned to death or drowned.

THE TRAIN BURNED RAPIDLY.

Mr. W. H. Wheeler, of Chicago, was in the sleeper at the time the accident happened.

"I was in the sleeping-car," said he, "talking with Mr. Jennings, a friend of mine, when the accident occurred. The bridge broke down before the engine had crossed, but its momentum carried it and the tender over in safety. The middle of the train fell down at once, but the only effect it had upon the coach in which we were was to give it a slight jar. We heard cries, and jumping out, I hastily put on my clothes, stuffing some portables into my overcoat pockets. Mr. Jennings and I lost no time in getting out, and when we did so were horrified at seeing the wreck, whose full extent he could not then realize. The main part of the train had fallen into the stream, and several passengers were caught in the debris. One man who was near us was struggling frantically to get free, and seeing his condition we pulled him out, with the assistance of Colonel Friedley, an attorney of the road. Owing to the position in which the cars had fallen they caught fire almost immediately from the stoves in the smoker, and the whole train was soon in flames. I never saw anything burn so rapidly. A man was caught in one of the lowest cars and would have certainly perished had it not been for Will Virden, the Pullman conductor. When the crash came he crawled out of the window of his car, and going to this man managed to get him out of the river. The water was deep enough to have drowned him, but Virden shoved out something which he caught and kept afloat with till he was picked up. In the meantime the flames were spreading rapidly, and almost before I knew it the flames were upon me. I had to scramble like everything to get out of the way, and even as it was I had my hair singed and hands and arms burned. I was glad to get off with my life, and it was the closest call I ever had. Mr. Jennings, in trying to get out of the way, fell, and was badly

A COLLISION PREVENTED.
"Another horrible accident would have occurred if it had not been for the presence of mind of Ham. Armfield, one of the brakemen. A through freight train was following only a short distance behind us, and Armfield happened to think of this as soon as he got out of the car. Catching up a lantern he climbed up the bank and ran back to meet the freight, which was running along at its highest rate of speed. The conductor and engineer, of course, had no idea of the wreck, and Armfield had just time to signal them so that they could stop within a feet of our rear car. He deserves more credit than anybody else there."

"I never saw anything burn half so fiercely as those cars did after the fire got started. From the position in which they lay a draught was created, and everything was soon in flames. All the cars—everything was destroyed."

PTEROUS CRIES OF THE BURNED AND DROWNING.
Mr. George W. Chandler, a well-known Chicago lawyer, was also on the train with his wife and child.

"We were all in the sleeper," he said, "when we felt a slight jar, and heard cries for help. Looking out of the window I saw the fire, and heard some who were caught screaming in the most agonizing manner. I got out, and running to the edge of the abutment, I saw the whole extent of the disaster. The fire had already started, and the car was ablaze in a minute. I ran back and helped my wife and child out. There was only one door out from the sleeper, and to reach it we had to pass through the narrow saloon. Had the car been full of passengers it would have been impossible for them all to have escaped. As it was, if the bridge had been forty feet longer, I think every passenger would have been caught."

"Some shocking incidents occurred. As we got out, several who were caught in the wreck began screaming for help, the flames beginning to reach them. It made my blood run cold to hear them screaming and able to give them so little help. One man I saw managed to crawl out of the cars. He fell into the river, and managed to swim a little in the icy water, after which he sank. He must have been severely wounded, and I do not think his body was recovered. I saw several others caught in the smash of the cars, and I only wonder that more were not killed. Colonel Young, Mr. Keller and the other officers were indefatigable in their exertions for the comfort of the passengers, and I think no possible blame can be attached to the road. The accident could not possibly have been foreseen. All the baggage we had was lost, the car which contained it being one of the first burned."

Mr. John Brockenbrough, of Lafayette, Ind., another passenger, said:

"I was in the sleeper at the time. The first intimation we had was the slight jar which followed the settling of the cars into the river. It was very peculiar about the track, which were jolted back and did not bring over the engine. When I got out I saw several caught in the cars that were in the water. I think I saw two or three who were so badly hurt that they could not get out by themselves. The officers of the road did everything in their power to relieve the sufferers."

BROWNING LIKE RATS IN A TRAP.

Another man who was in one of the middle cars was reciting his experience to a companion, who was congratulating him upon his escape, as follows:

"Louisville Commercial: The remains of Andrew Eichler, the tailor, of No. 81½ Twentieth street, Eichler was formerly a gent's furnishing goods dealer in this city and did business on Jefferson street, a few doors below Third, on the south side. Recently he received an appointment to travel for a Chicago house. His wife and children lived with his father at 81½ Twentieth street, and Eichler was on his way to join them and spend the holidays when he was overtaken by his terrible fate. Eichler is the sixth victim that has been dragged from the debris of the bridge horror. His flesh was so badly charred and mangled that he could only be recognized by the clothes he had on. When his identity was made his father was telegraphed to come and take charge of the remains. The body was unrecognizable, and the father could hardly believe the disfigured corpse was that of his son."

CAN THIS STORY BE TRUE?

Bedford Star: "The body of Andrew Eichler, of Louisville, was horribly mangled. A piece of board about four inches wide was run through the body, a big hole was torn through the right leg at the hip, and the abdomen was torn open, and the arm was severed if not completely for something. It was a horrible sight to behold. The nothing was of some black and brown and he was a skin cap, without a brain. Fourteen dollars were found in his pockets."

We learn from Mr. Kerns that there were two more men drowned whose

names were not known.

Wednesday, January 9th, 1883.

Adjourning Term

OF THE

Monroe Circuit Court.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that there will be an Adjourned Term of

the Monroe Circuit Court, November

Term, held at the Court House, in Bloomington, commencing

Wednesday, January 9th, 1883.

and parties and witnesses in court

in pending, will take notice thereto.

By Order of Court.

Attest: D. W. BROWNING,

Clerk Monroe Circuit Court.

Jan. 2d 1883.

a little I fond the skin dropping off my hands, and I must have got them burned in some way, but I don't know how. It was the narrowest escape I ever had, and if my hair doesn't turn it won't be because I wasn't badly enough scared. I lost my overcoat and valise, but I feel as if it wasn't anything now."

A GALLANT RESCUE.

Joseph Speer and Patrick Cane are residents of Chicago, and were on their way to Louisville to work on some asphalt floors that are to be placed in the fire engine houses. One of Speer's face was blistered by fire till the flesh peeled off, and he bears marks of the fire on parts of his body. While in the water a burning piece of timber fell from the bridge and struck him on top of the head, knocking him unconscious, singeing all the hair on his head and burning the scalp, the back of the neck was parched and blistered, as was the body in several places above the waist. His legs and feet were also burned, and a long gash across the forehead was inflicted by a piece of timber.

Cane escaped with slight injuries—a burn on one hand and a gash across the head. Said Speer: "You see Cane and I have worked together so long that we almost look upon each other as brothers. We had had a pleasant trip from Chicago, on our way to Louisville, and awoke a few minutes before 6 o'clock Monday morning. We had just passed into the smoking car and were in the act of lighting our cigars when the terrible crash started us. The car began to revolve, and in a few seconds it splashed heavily into the stream. After that I knew nothing till I found myself floating between two pieces of burning timber. I had received several cuts on my head and a fracture of my left arm which rendered me almost helpless to save myself. I was struggling to get from the floating furnace, when Cane saw me and swam to my rescue. The fire had consumed all the clothing on my back, and I was in such agony that I fairly writhed while my noble companion worked to release me from the torturing position. Once extricated, I was unable to swim, and Cane had to me around the waist and float me to the place where a sleeping couch stood almost upright against one of the abutments. By degrees we worked our way to the top of the couch, where we were safe. Had it not been for the coach which provided this way of escape the list of the lost would have been doubled, and I would have been one of the drowned."

THE EXPRESSMAN'S STORY.

One of the pluckiest men on the train was express agent Davis. His story was something like this: He was sitting in his chair, when without any warning, and apparently in an instant, the car was derailed two positions, separating the baggage, express and postal divisions. These partitions, with all the goods, baggage, and other contents slid down, and so far as possible out of the rear end of the car. Mr. Davis at once looked for the baggage master, but could neither see nor hear him; he then considered what best to do.

In the meantime he was seeing the flames blaze he first threw them out. Then seized his axe and dragged it toward the front of the car. The car stood at an angle, one end in the stream, the other against the abutment. As the car fell Mr. Davis removed two axles and a wheel, which with his right arm helpless, finding himself unable to do so, he used the incline, with the use of his left arm only, he tilted it out into the river. He then climbed out himself.

His first sight after this was the engine, in whom there were signs of life. The fireman came up, at this juncture, and, though the latter had a badly wounded arm, he at once got the engine up on them. By this time the entire train was blazing fiercely. Mr. Davis heard cries for help from the cars in the stream, but no help was possible. He says the voices calling for help were all male voices.

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