

Figures Show Local Territory

JINX TO SEABOARD

4 Wrecks In 3 Years Near City

Wednesday night's disastrous wreck on the Seaboard Railway near the city limits brings to a total of four the number of wrecks that have occurred within a ten-mile radius of the city within a little over a three-year period.

Although last night's wreck was by far the most costly, both from a monetary and loss-of-life standpoint, the others which have happened near the city cost well into the thousands of dollars and it was considered miraculous that they were not attended by loss of life.

The Seaboard obviously hit their streak of hard luck in the local area when early in the morning on Saturday, April 1st, 1939, a Norfolk-bound freight train ran through an open switch near Thelma. The switch throwing was obviously the work of freight train hi-jackers, tho an extensive investigation on the part of police and railway detectives did not materialize in any arrests.

1939 WRECK COSTLY

In the 1939 train wreck a large twin-cylinder engine of the latest type was overturned, 27 freight cars smashed, several hundred yards of track torn up and one of the cars struck a nearby building, demolishing it. Jake Matthews, Roanoke Rapids automobile salesman, was sleeping on the second floor of the building, but was uninjured. Wrecking crews were able to have traffic moving as usual over the line within 24-hours or so after the wreck, tho it required five days to remove all of the wreckage. Damage was estimated at \$40,000.00 in that wreck. W. C. Hofer of Raleigh, engineer of the ill-fated train, suffered a fractured leg when the huge engine overturned, and it was necessary to cut off a part of the engine to move it to the tracks.

WRECK IN CITY LIMITS

The next railroad disaster occurred in the city limits of Roanoke Rapids when a Seaboard "shifter" ran through a "cocked switch" on the spur line near the old canal

here on Monday, March 24th, 1941. Three freight cars were derailed and piled up as a result of this accident though no one was injured.

No delay to through traffic was suffered in this mishap as it happened on the spur track maintained by the Seaboard to serve Roanoke Rapids industrial plants located on the Roanoke River.

WRECK AT SUMMIT

The Seaboard then encountered more hard luck in this area when two freight trains collided just below Summit in broad-open daylight on the morning of Tuesday, December 2nd, 1941. Fog hindered the wrecking crew and it was more than 24-hours later that traffic on the main line was moving as usual.

Crews of the two trains miraculously escaped with their lives when they jumped, and only the fireman on the engine which was derailed along with five freight cars was hurt. One of the cars caught fire and burned.

In the Summit train wreck both freights were headed the same direction. A "highball" freight plunged into the rear of a local freight going onto the siding at Summit to let the other pass. Fog and probable miscalculation of the speed of the train ahead is believed to have caused the wreck. The local freight was only about three-fourths on the spur line when the engine coming up behind crashed into the caboose. The conductor and several other members of the local freight's crew jumped when they saw what was about to happen, as did the engineer and fireman of the other train.

The engine of the rear train jumped the track, and plunged down the embankment to halt headed across Highway 158, where it stopped upright after plowing up a large part of the shoulder of the new section of highway, though comparatively little damage was done to the concrete slab. The coal tender turned on its side and the freight car immediately behind it overturned, caught fire and was

New Lines Drawn For Fishermen

An order from the Department of Conservation and Development changing the lines originally set for fishing in the Weldon vicinity on the Roanoke River, to a point below the old river bridge below Weldon, has been revoked by R. Bruce Etheridge, Director of the Department of Conservation and Development, Julian Allsbrook, local attorney, stated yesterday.

The department several days ago changed the line which had been at the new river bridge at Weldon to a point below the old bridge. This change brought dissatisfaction from fishermen along the river and the matter was taken up with Etheridge by Attorney Allsbrook.

Early last week an order came through from Etheridge changing the newly formed line to allow fishing some 300 yards above the new bridge at Weldon, an extension of the original line by some quarter

of a mile. A couple of other cars were derailed, and about 25 yards of track torn up.

Huge throngs of sightseers were attracted for miles about the area to view the wreckage in the Thelma and Summit smash-ups.

of a mile. It was also learned that Etheridge has instructed game and fish wardens along the river to refrain from enforcing the order given to change the lines from their original status.

685 People Now In Civil Defense Group In City

The Roanoke Rapids Office of Civilian Defense today released some figures showing the number of Volunteer Workers in the Citizen's Defense Corps and the number taking some sort of training. Actually the Citizens' Defense Corps needs 775 men, women, and youths. To date 685 persons have been assigned to duties. Of this 379 are actually taking training and another 147 have completed all of their training.

These figures, however, do not represent the total number of folks taking Civilian Defense training. There are many hundreds of other men and women employed in the local industrial plants who are taking similar training to those in Civilian Defense, but whose primary job during air raids will be protection of the industrial plants themselves rather than the general civilian section of the town.

According to F. M. Sherry, Local Defense Corps Commander, progress in training is outstanding considering the tremendous job of

giving instructions to so many workers. Sherry highly praised Shearod Crumpler and his co-instructors in their training work. Some of the outstanding training jobs to date are the Auxiliary Police, a large part of whom have completed all of their training; the Utilities Repair crew, who have also completed their basic training; the Emergency Food and Housing Corps who have completed a 20-hour Nutrition Course and a 10-hour Canteen Cooking Course and who will shortly begin their final 7-hours of instruction. Large classes are being rapidly pushed through their final course of instruction at Roanoke Mills No. 2 and Rosemary Mfg. Company, while the Control Center Operators, in addition to their regular weekly 4-hour vigilance at the Control Center, are brushing up on their Gas Mask and General Subjects courses.

For all Civilian Defense workers who might be unable to complete their Fire Defense Course-A, covering the control of incendiaries, and Gas Defense Course-A, use and care of the gas mask, the special large classes to be held at the High School Auditorium on Friday and Sunday of this week and Friday and Sunday of next week, are recommended.

Lieutenant Allan T. Dotson, Jr. of Company D of the 30th Engineering Battalion, has been assisting the local Defense group, particularly in giving courses of instruction on care and use of the gas mask and his lectures are extremely interesting.

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