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## TERRIBLE WRECK ON THE SEABOARD

### Two Trains Plunged Down Into A Deep Ravine.

### NEAR CATAWBA JUNCTION.

### No. 41 En Route to Atlanta, Encounters Sinking Bridge—Rails On One Side Widen—Freight No. 646, Which Was Running Not Far Behind, Adds to Horror of The Catastrophe by Piling Down Upon the Passenger Coaches.

(Special to The Observer.)

CATAWBA JUNCTION, S. C., September 9.—Five dead and several in a dying condition is the result of the catastrophe which took place at six minutes past 1 o'clock this morning, when the Seaboard passenger train No. 41 sped across a sinking bridge 300 yards south of the Catawba river and two miles from Catawba Junction, and then plunged from the tracks down a steep embankment about 30 feet high, only to be followed by an extra freight engine, No. 654, with a caboose attached, mingling the two flyers in a mass of wood, steel and iron with about 40 pieces of human cargo. There was not a single soul among them that escaped unhurt.

It was said by trainmen of long experience that a more complete demolishment of railroad equipment could scarcely be imagined. So thoroughly ruined were the engines and the coaches that the trainmen were on the point of setting fire to the debris, but the authorities of York county stopped them. The scene at the bridge beggars description. The engines lie overturned—huge, shapeless monsters of iron, with their helmet-shaped sand boxes and other parts scattered within a radius of 100 feet. The coaches are like crushed wooden shells, with their red plush seats in indescribable confusion; trucks, wrenched loose from the bottom of the cars, are scattered around; about the only part or parcel of the railroad equipment remaining intact are the two red lanterns swinging from the rear of the Pullman.

#### CAUSE OF THE DISASTER.

There were many theories advanced to-day as to the cause of the accident. The railroad men fell in line with the opinion of Mr. George S. Fitzwater, chief detective of the Seaboard Air Line, that the collapse of the bridge and the tearing loose of the right hand rails, were the result of the work of some malicious person or persons. Mr. Fitzwater showed six spikes and several angle-bars which he picked up near the wreck and said that they bore the marks of having been tampered with. Upon this theory, it was concluded that the passenger train had struck weakened spots on the lower half of the bridge. A speed of 40 miles an hour had enabled the train to carry itself almost over the sinking structure, but the rails had widened; the Pullman, which did not quite clear the chasm, acted as a drawback, the engine careened, tearing from their fastenings the rails on the right hand side going south, causing the train

to be hurled over the embankment. What motive there could be for anyone to bring about such slaughter, and who the guilty persons might be, neither Mr. Fitzwater, nor the other railroad men attempted to explain. A close examination of the rails, ties, road-bed and bridge was not productive of much light on the subject; all appeared to be sound and solid. The rails on the side where the train toppled to destruction were twisted to an arc shape. The track is not a curve in the vicinity; it stretches straight-away for perhaps a mile.

#### THE DEAD AND WOUNDED.

The killed are: Engineer E. Y. Barksdale, Abbeville, S. C.; Fireman Ed Roberts, (colored) Atlanta, Ga.; Mrs. T. F. Black, of Ohio; Mrs. T. S. McManus, of Wilmington. The injured: Mrs. James Clay, Oakland, Tenn., fractured jaw; T. C. Jerome, Atlanta, Ga., slightly bruised; Mrs. T. C. Jerome, Atlanta, Ga., shoulder and head injured; Dr. Edward Banks, Athens, Ga., back injured.

Mrs. Sidney Herbert, Maitland, Fla., foot amputated; may die. Mrs. Jerome Silvey, Atlanta, bruised. C. W. Hinson, Lenox, Ga., jaw injured. Tom Mitchell, colored, brakeman, Abbeville, S. C., head and shoulders injured.

O. S. Coleman, Bon Air, Va., arm dislocated, head and chest injured. Pink Carpenter, Monroe, porter, head and body injured.

V. S. Elerby, Atlanta, Ga., colored Pullman porter. J. G. Carpenter, Atlanta, Ga., Pullman conductor.

G. H. Mears, Monroe, engineer; bruised and wounded on the head. J. J. Duncan, Abbeville, brakeman, badly wounded on the head and shoulders.

H. H. Chapman, Abbeville, S. C., conductor; head seriously hurt. G. H. Davis, Atlanta, Ga., express messenger.

W. Fairman, Atlanta, Ga., mail clerk. B. F. West, Monroe, conductor; slightly injured.

F. C. Topleman, Henderson. Tom Jefferson, fireman for No. 646; bruised on the head and shoulder.

F. C. Topleman, address unknown. T. C. Horton, address unknown. T. F. Black, Ohio; Norfolk and Western Railroad telegrapher.

Robert Siegle, address unknown. Mollie Griffin, Tuskegee, Ala. A number of colored laborers also were slightly hurt.

#### HOW THE TRAGEDY OCCURRED.

No. 41 left Monroe with an express car, a mail car, two day coaches and a Pullman. Starting 15 minutes behind, was light engine No. 646. The wreck at the bridge was 28 miles distant from Monroe. After No. 41 had rucked across the bridge and fell, going, the engineer said, at 40 miles an hour, she became enveloped in total darkness. The engine plunged and rolled from the track, carrying the entire train with it, so that there was not a single bit of it upon the rails. Every sign of it was below the level of the track. The engineer of No. 646, following about six minutes behind, according to an eye witness, could not consequently, have had the slightest intimation of any trouble ahead. The

freight's search-light was an oil burner which did not cast its rays very far, No. 646 took the front of the bridge with a rush and then sailed through the empty space above the collapsed part of the structure, grazing the top of the Pullman and crashing into the side of the rear passenger coach with frightful force, laying its iron nose full in the middle of the coach.

Interviews with a number of the survivors were ghastly. They, one and all, concurred in the essentials of the affair. Most of them were sleeping. There were 16 negro laborers in the first passenger coach, next to the mail car. In the smoking compartment of the second passenger coach there was no one except Mr. C. S. Coleman. In the coach itself there were Mr. and Mrs. Black, Mrs. McManus, and several others. In the Pullman were Mrs. Herbert, Mr. and Mrs. Silvey, Mrs. Clay, with her six-months-old baby and two or three men. The crash over the embankment killed the fireman, who was a negro named Edward Roberts, and Mrs. Black. Engineer G. H. Mears said this morning that he felt the bridge sinking beneath the engine as it neared the farther side; then came the plunge downwards. He says

the Pullman no one was hurt very badly, for only the light caboose had struck it with force. Mrs. Clay was sitting quietly nursing her child when the freight came. It threw her against the glass cutting about the face. There was not the least scratch inflicted on the child, which she held all the while in her arms. Engineer Barksdale, of the freight, was probably killed instantly. At about the noon hour his body was recovered from the cab of his engine, with a few bruises and a bad wound on the head. His watch was running on schedule time when the dead engineer was taken from his post of duty. His fireman, Tom Jefferson, escaped with inconsequential wounds on the head and shoulders.

According to the testimony of several of the passengers I talked with, a brakeman was heard to shout out just before the freight arrived; "My God, the freight is coming on us!" It was impossible, however, for any one of the trainmen or passengers to flag it down in time to avert the added disaster.

#### HEROISM AND FORTITUDE DISPLAYED.

Mr. Black, with his young wife dead beside him, stuck to the coal and was

freight was upon us. It was disheartening. I remember that the screams and the groans subsided after the train crashed into us. My principal worry was about my wife, and so I got up this morning that I was getting all right. And so I am, though my wounds are very painful."

#### THE CHIEF DETECTIVE'S POSE.

Chief Detective Fitzwater fortunately was at Monroe when the accident occurred, and he went with the first relief train, taking an energetic and painstaking part in alleviating the distress and in keeping order all through the day. After he discovered the spikes and bolts and angle-bars which he believed showed mischief, he sent a joint telegram to Superintendent E Berkeley, at Atlanta, and Claim Agent Santley, at Portsmouth, the company's headquarters, telling them that he had discovered evidences of malicious work and expressing his belief that some scoundrel had disconnected the joints in the lower half of the bridge. Then he said to me: "I have sent for the two best detectives we have, and I expected to pursue this evidence of foul play to the bitter end."

It may be that the track will be in condition for travel by to-morrow night, and the crew and general laborers are making strenuous efforts to accomplish this. All day long crowds came from all over York and adjoining counties to view the scene of the disaster. As afternoon came on, it seemed that they would fill the fields bordering the locality. The bridge spanned a marshy ravine, on each side of which the bluffs about 30 feet high, rise rather precipitously. At Rock Hill and nearby towns there was a deep sense of awe to be observed. People remembered the disaster, somewhat of a similar nature which took place on the Southern Railway at Fishing Creek, about the same distance from Rock Hill as is Catawba Junction, and it happened just about the same time of last year. To-night the wounded who had been in the farm houses near the wreck were removed to the hospital at Rock Hill. Crowds of people were at Catawba Junction and at Rock Hill when the train arrived.

ROBERT E. FOLLIN.

#### HAPPY HOME WEDDING.

### Mr. Gilliam Marries Miss Fortune At Broad River.

(Special to The Sun.)

STONE MOUNTAIN, September 17.—Mr. J. V. Gilliam, of Old Fort, and Miss Maggie M. Fortune, of Broad River, were married Sunday, 4th, at the home of the bride, Mr. J. L. Fortune, one of Broad River's best citizens. We congratulate Mr. Gilliam on making so excellent a choice. The bride and groom left for Hendersonville to spend their honeymoon. We wish them a happy future.

Mr. J. L. Fortune will move to Old Fort in the near future.

Mrs. J. A. Flack is teaching our school at this place. We think Mrs. Flack an excellent teacher.

Mr. James W. Whiteside and sister, Miss Annie, of Roosevelt, passed to-day en route for Old Fort, where they will visit their sister, Mrs. Flack.

We are having some fine weather after the long wet season. We are sorry to lose Mr. Lowrance Fortune, of this place, who has moved to Henderson county recently. He will work in the mercantile business at that place.

— Mr. J. N. Yelton, one of Bridgewater's best citizens, called and renewed his subscription Friday.

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19. The paper that is called and recognized the best weekly in North Carolina.

#### SLIGHT INJURIES OF MAJORITY.

The express messenger and the mail clerk escaped with a few slight bruises. They quickly got out from the wreck and built a fire on the track ahead, but not until after the freight had come with its deadly work. The negro laborers, who were bound for Georgia to work on the Seaboard's projected line westward from Atlanta, sustained comparatively slight injuries, but everyone carried some mark of the disaster, and one of them, James Eggleston, 56 years old, was badly cut about the face and generally bruised. Mr. Coleman, in the smoker, was thrown violently against the sides, but was able to get to his feet. Things were so topsy-turvy that in the darkness he could not tell which way to turn. He finally managed to find a window and was getting ready to crawl from it when he saw the light of the coming freight looming near. He quickly drew back and barely escaped death, for the freight engine fell upon the coach not far from him. Mrs. McManus had not been hurt very badly by the fall of the passenger train, and two men in the coach had helped her to a reclining posture on the right and upper side of the coach. She was resting there when the dread black mass came tumbling forward through space, crushing her fearfully. Mrs. Black had her neck broken from the first mishap. In the darkness her husband struck a match and saw her lying across a seat dead. In

the last of all the men to make his way out. Then he proved the stuff he's made of, for, in a bruised condition, and stricken with grief, he walked the cross-ties two miles to Catawba Junction, got in the telegraph office and sent word to Monroe for a relief train. Black is tall and dark and his naturally melancholy cast of features was haggard with misery as he returned to the scene and sat with his hands clenched about his knees and waited for the crew to get the body of his wife from the wrecked coach. He is a telegraph operator for the Norfolk & Western Railway, and stationed in Ohio. He is a native of South Carolina and was on his way to Atlanta, Ga., to testify in a damage suit. His wife was a native of Kentucky and only 22 years old. At about 12 o'clock a wrecking train arrived on the scene from the company's shops at Abbeville, S. C. A large force of hands were at once put to work on the track and the wreck. The dead bodies were removed to another train that had been brought from Monroe and were taken there in the afternoon. That of the fireman was lying on the ground almost entirely exposed, part of head and his left arm being pinioned under the overturned engine. Many of the wounded have been taken to Monroe, early in the morning.

The first man to arrive on the scene after the wreck was the express agent at Van Wyck, a little town nearby. He had heard the sound of the first trouble and hastened towards the station just as the freight came along. He said that he had no time to stop it. He estimated that it was about six minutes behind the passenger train.

Mr. Coleman, Conductor Chapman, Flagman Duncan and the old negro, Eggleston, were taken to the Allison place several hundred yards from the wreck, where they were put to bed and received medical attention. Mr. Coleman though in a weakened condition, talked of the tragedy. He said: "I have as the principal impression the horrible feeling that came over me as I realized that the

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