

JUMPED FOR THEIR LIVES

A DISASTROUS WRECK HAPPENS THURSDAY MORNING

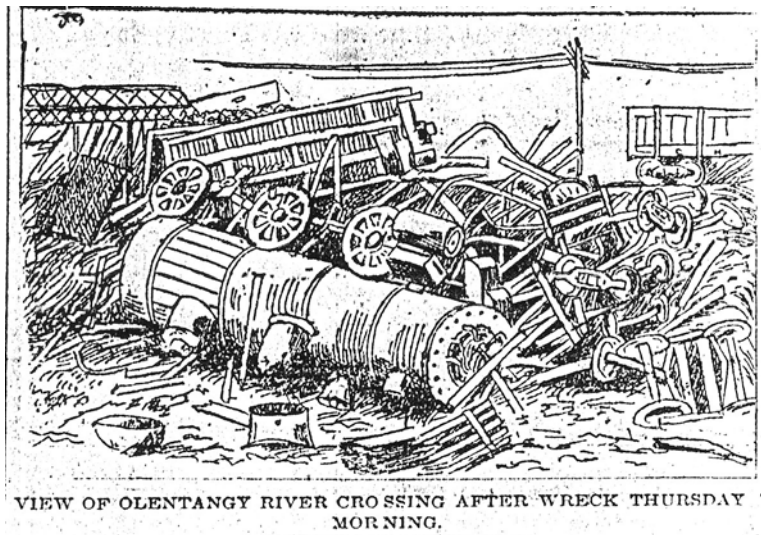
Pan Handle and Hocking Valley Freight Train Collide

At the Olentangy River Crossing With Serious Results.

Engineer and Fireman of Hocking Valley Train Narrowly Escape With Their Lives – The Details

(Columbus Post Press, May 20, 1897)

A disastrous wreck occurred early Thursday morning at the crossing of the Panhandle and Hocking Valley railroads about one mile west of the Union Station and within a few feet of the Olentangy river. The Hocking Valley train, which was southbound and heavily loaded with cracked stone and iron ore, ploughed its way through a panhandle freight train which was going over the crossing, causing the engine of the Hocking Valley train to be thrown down a thirty-foot embankment and breaking six cars into smithereens.



VIEW OF OLENTANGY RIVER CROSSING AFTER WRECK THURSDAY MORNING.

Engineer Jay Zimmerman and Fireman T.S. Adams, of the Hocking Valley train saved their lives by jumping from the engine when they realized that a collision was inevitable.

The debris of the wreck ascended into the air thirty feet, and a large part of the wreckage went over the embankment with the engine. The report of the crash and the noise of the escaping

steam from the engine as it lay in a helpless condition attracted hundreds of residents of that portion of the city and the wreck was soon being view by an immense crowd of people.

The crossing where the wreck happened is known as the Hocking Valley Junction and is located about twenty feet east of the Little Miami bridge and the joint bridge of the T&OC and Hocking Valley over the Olentangy river. The panhandle train, which consisted of 37 fright cars was westbound and was in charge of Conductor Ora Land. Walter Say was the engineer and P.E. Hunt the fireman.

The story of the wreck is told completely in the statements of the trainmen. The Panhandle train, which is known as No. 97 west, left the city at 6:30 a.m. and arrived at the target about fifty feet east of the crossing , fifteen minutes later. Engineer Say brought the train to a standstill at the target, as is usually the case and he was then given the signal to go ahead by Harry Thornton, the man in charge of the target. Before the Panhandle train had safely passed the crossing the Hocking Valley freight hove into sight and came down the track at a lively rate of speed. The engineer of the train, Mr. Jay Zimmerman, applied the air and whistled for brakes, but not withstanding the efforts of the trainmen the speed did not slacken, and the engineer and fireman, T.S. Adams, prepared at once to leave the engine. The fireman was the first to jump for his life and he was followed immediately by Zimmerman.

In a few seconds more the crash came and the engine ploughed its way clear through the Panhandle train and down the embankment on the other side. The cab of the Hocking Valley engine and two cars were splintered into thousands of pieces and four box car of the Panhandle train partly loaded with coke were damaged beyond repair. The engine, No. 94, [2-6-0] was stripped of all its projecting parts, and looked to be a total wreck, but the officials of the company say it can be put back on the track by an expenditure of \$250. The entire damage by the collision is variously estimated from \$800 to \$2000.

When seen by a reporter, Engineer Zimmerman, of the Hocking Valley train, said that he believed somebody had tampered with the angle cock of the air brake line on the train, as it absolutely refused to work when he applied the air. The train was supplied with air brakes seven cars back from the engine and Mr. Zimmerman said the train could have been brought to a standstill before the crossing was reached. Engineer Say, of the Panhandle train , stated that he applied the air to his train as soon as he saw that the Hocking Valley train could not be stopped in time to prevent a collision and when the crash came the speed of the Panhandle train had been slackened considerably, which fact alone prevented a much more serious wreck.

This crossing has been the scene of several wrecks and this last one demonstrates the necessity of an interlocking tower at that point. The fact that the river is only fifteen or twenty feet from the crossing, in case of a bad wreck, means death by drowning if not in the mix-up. The derailing switch, of course, would have to be curved a few hundred feet on both sides of the bridges but the end would certainly warrant the expenditure.

The Panhandle and Hocking Valley wrecking crews succeeded in clearing away the wreckage sufficiently in two hours to allow the regular trains to pass, but the movement of trains on both roads was affected all morning as a result of the wreck.

BAD CROSSING COLLISION

HOCKING ORE TRAIN PLUNGES THROUGH COKE TRAIN

Pan Handle Had the Target, but the Hocking Valley
Train Had the Fatal Momentum.

Engine Ditched, Cars Smashed and Crossing Blocked,
but Not a Soul Hurt.

(Columbus Dispatch, May 20, 1897)

A bad freight wreck occurred at the junction of the Pan Handle and Hocking Valley roads in the western part of the city near the Olentangy bridge at 6:40 this morning. A Hocking Valley ore train approaching the city from the north reached the crossing and the engineer, J. Zimmerman, found the target against him and a Pan Handle coke train passing westbound over the crossing.

The engineer of the Hocking train applied his air, but not quick enough and finding that the 20 cars of ore behind him on the grade and dewy track were too much for him called for brakes. The Pan Handle engineer also realized the danger and pulled up his train in a hurry, but the inevitable collision came.

The Hocking Valley freight train was hauled by engine No. 94, which was literally shoved through the Pan Handle freight by the momentum, crashing through a box car and stock car loaded with coke and rolling down the embankment to the south side of the track, with the engine on the side and the tender curled up on the bank behind.

The danger of a collision was apparent to Engineer Zimmerman and Fireman Adams, who jumped and escaped without injury. Adams rolling over and over down the embankment. The wreck crews of both roads were called out and worked all morning clearing the double track of both roads. The box and stock cars of the Pan Handle together with the end of a third car were wrecked, as was an ore car of the Hocking Valley and the engine and tender.

The wreck of the engine and tender was not complete, since the boiler is intact, the damage being to the cab and running board, with other outside accessories. An estimate of the damage is about \$1000. A singular feature was the fact that although the engine was stripped and on its side the glass in the water gauge was intact.

Passengers on the Chicago trains of both roads, which arrive at 7 a.m. on the Hocking and at 7:15 a.m. on the Pan Handle were either transferred or took street cars in reaching the city, using the Columbus Central from Montgomery street. One of the tracks on each road was clear in a hurry, so that departing passenger trains could get through, and by 12:30 p.m. all tracks were clear of coke and ore and open for business.
