

ENGINE BLOWS UP

Sad Accident Occurs on the Hocking Valley

TWO MEN ARE KILLED

Bodies are Badly Mangled and Scalded.
Accident Occurs Near Powell, North of Columbus
Cause of the Explosion May Never be Known.

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By the blowing up of the boiler on engine 242 of the Hocking Valley Railroad at Powell station, 16 miles north of Columbus, at 1:30 o'clock Sunday morning William Wetterman the engineer aged 42, whose home is at 145 McDowell street, and fireman M. H. Baus, aged 31, of 865 West Rich street, were instantly killed. Both bodies were terribly mangled by explosion and scalded by escaping steam and water.

The boiler was blown from trucks and buried itself in the turf of a field 60 feet distant, badly shattered. The trucks of the engine remained on the track and were only slightly damaged by the force of the explosion.

The cause of the sudden bursting of the boiler is somewhat of a mystery. Prevailing opinion is that the water was low resulting in a strain on a faulty boiler and a blow up.

This theory is scouted by many railroad men who knew Wetterman as an engineer of 25 years' experience, one thoroughly acquainted with everything about an engine and very methodical while at the throttle. The cause probably never will be known for a certainty.

Engines Nos. 242 and 243 coupled to a long train of loaded coal cars pulled out of Columbus soon after midnight. Two engines are used on a heavy pull because of the steep grade from here to Powell station. At that station the "helper" takes the switch and is run back to Columbus, the other crew taking the train on to Toledo. Engineer Wetterman and Fireman Baus were in the "helper" a first class four-wheel driver [2-8-0]. In the second were Engineer Neafer and Fireman Craig. The grade was made without difficulty and the double-header pulled into Powell about 1:30 o'clock.

The two engines were still coupled together and Engineer Wetterman was in his seat with hand on the throttle to await the signal to run to the Y switch. Fireman Baus was close at hand in the cab. Suddenly, without a moment's warning, a terrific explosion tore the boiler from its fastenings, ripped open its sides, shattered the timbers into match-wood and drenched all in a torrent of hissing steam and boiling water. The engineer and fireman did not have time to

jump, but were caught under the wreckage and were picked up on the platform which leads from the engine to the tank. The boiler was hurled into a nearby field from which the wreck crew, which arrived two hours later, removed it with difficulty and loaded it on a flatcar.

The dead men were brought to Columbus and taken to the undertaking rooms of R.E. Jones to be prepared for burial. Examination showed that Watterman had received several injuries from broken glass, had a broken right arm, his left leg broken below the knee, his skull fractured, the bones of his face crushed and his body scalded from head to foot. Fireman Baus' skull was fractured, both back and front; his left leg broken below the knee, his left arm broken. Baus' watch was still going, but Wetterman's had disappeared.

Strange to relate the crew of the second engine were not injured, nor did the tender of the first engine suffer from the explosion to any great extent. The battered boiler was brought to the West Mound street roundhouse by the wreck train, where it was the object of curious gaze on the part of spectators all yesterday.

Sadness pervades the homes of the dead engineer and fireman. At the Wetterman home the widow refuses to be comforted. Two children survive David, aged 21 and Lillian, aged 18. Two sisters, Mrs. Pauline Kuntz of 503 West Chapel street and Mrs. Nellie Blactner of 540 West Town street, also are overcome by the news. The body was taken home last night and the funeral will be held at 2 o'clock tomorrow afternoon, conducted by Rev. S. K. King. Mr. Wetterman was regarded as one of the most expert engineers on the road. He had pulled the throttle for 25 years, 16 years of which were spent on the Hocking Valley road. He was very genial and was popular among railroad men.

Fireman Baus has been firing on the Hocking Valley only a year. He was unmarried and had been living at 865 West Rich street with his brother, P.F. Baus, freight conductor on the Hocking. Another brother Frank Baus of 75 White, brother, P.F. Baus freight conductor on the same road. Two sisters Mrs. Elizabeth Hennick of 124 West Rich street and Mrs. Katie Merritt of Forsythe avenue live in Columbus. Mrs. C.D. Martin, Mrs. Durbin Walker and Miss Margaret Baus of Lancaster also are sisters. Burial will be in Lancaster where Mr. Baus was born.