



## Two Plain City Homes Smashed By Careening Freight Cars As Train Jumps Track in Village Broken Axle Blamed For Rail Pileup

Merchandise Strewn Over  
Surrounding Area;  
Third House Damaged.

**(Columbus Dispatch – November 11, 1949)**

More than a score of loaded Pennsylvania railroad freight cars plunged from the Chillicothe St. crossing in Plain City Monday morning into a row of family dwellings.

No one was reported injured in the crash, which occurred about 10:30 a.m., but one home was virtually demolished, another was torn from its foundations and a third damaged.

Mrs. Ruby Armentrout, 32, and Miss Ellen Wilson, 36, occupants of the wrecked homes were being treated for severe shock.

**Investigating officers blamed a “hot-box” and a resulting broken axle in one of the freight cars for the accident, in which loaded boxcars and flatcars were thrown into a tangle of wreckage over an area of nearly 300 yards.**

State highway patrolmen, estimating that at least 23 cars were in the pile-up, were checking the possibility that someone might have been caught under the cars as they plunged from the rails.

Most severely damaged was the two-story frame dwelling of Mr. and Mrs. Orville Wilson of 204 S. Chillicothe St. located about 50 yards from the crossing. The entire front part of the house, including the front porch and living room was torn away, leaving the second floor hanging precariously above the wreckage.

One wall of the Wilson home knocked loose by the impact was flung against the side of the H.C. Meade home, causing minor damage to the dwelling.

On the other side, five twisted railroad cars lay in the front yard of the home occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Armentrout.

The entire front porch of the Armentrout home was sheared away and the impact of the cars twisted the home several feet from its foundation and damaged the interior.

“I had gone back into the kitchen to finish washing, and had the two boys (Neal, 4, and Charley, 3) with me.” Mrs. Wilson said. “There was a terrible noise and the house started to shake. I didn’t know what happened. I grabbed the two boys and ran into the backyard. I’m still pretty excited. I can’t tell you just what happened. It was too awful.”

Four other Wilson children were in school when the crash occurred. Both Mrs. Wilson and Mrs. Armentrout were suffering from severe shock and were taken to the home of neighbors to be treated by physicians.

**Showing evidence of the terrific impact, the derailed cars were twisted out of shape; many with the wheels sheared off, some standing on end or completely overturned.**

Spilling over the crossing area were the contents of the cars – corn, wheat, fertilizer, soybeans and farm equipment including at least one tractor. Tons of coal lay along the right-of-way and down both directions into Chillicothe St.

At least one utility pole along the right-of-way was torn down, and the hot wire, lying in front of the damaged homes, created an additional hazard as officers sought to search the wreckage.

Railroad officials said it would be well into Monday night before complete repairs could be made. Besides the wreckage of the cars and their contents, some sections of the road bed were ripped out.

Highway Patrolmen J.H. Ray and Donald Roof of the Delaware station, who were investigating the accident, said all members of the train crew had been accounted for. The patrol was on hand to guard the property until the wreckage could be cleared away