

A THRILLING SCENE.

AT THE NORTH APPROACH OF
THE RAILWAY TRESTLE.

A Freight Train Knocks Down an Electric Pole.

And Live Wires Strewn on the Ground in the Vicinity.

Miraculous Escape of People Drawn by the Accident.

An Exciting Runaway Caused, Which Resulted in a Collision.

(Columbus Evening Dispatch, December 5, 1891, page 6)

There was a thrilling scene at the north end of the street railway trestle near the Big Four freight depot, between 9 and 10 o'clock this morning, and it is almost a miracle that several people were not killed or badly injured.

One of the poles of the electric road was knocked over and the live wires laid on the ground for the greater part of a half an hour, the deadly current escaping into the earth, running down poles and anything that would serve as a conductor for electricity. There were a number of narrow escapes and thrilling incidents, some of which would have been very ludicrous, had it not been for the danger.

Shortly after 9 o'clock two laborers, P. Maher, white, and Harry Huston, colored, were at work clearing the tracks on the north approach of the trestle. They were about opposite the two Big Four tracks south of the freight depot. Glancing up Maher saw a freight train backing up at a rapid rate on the second track and a brakeman about three or four cars from the end swinging his arms to the engineer to stop. His signals were of no avail, however, as the train struck the bumpers with a crash, wrecked them and struck an electric pole, to which was attached the wires on the trestle. The pole was broken off at the ground like a twig and it fell toward the trestle. When the two workmen heard the crash, they made a dash for safety, but were unable to get away before the wires came down around their heads. They managed to get out of the way, however, without coming in contact with any of the wires, but their escape was miraculous.

The scene that followed was one that will be long remembered by the bystanders. One of the trolley wires lodged in the iron pole at the tunnel, while the other was near the ground. The ends of the wire used as supports were on the ground in several places. The wreck and the excitement soon drew an immense crowd of people, who

were very careless about their crowding near the wires. Policeman John Lee, stationed at the south approach of the trestle, went to the scene and endeavored to keep the people back, but unaided he could not do so. He called upon the conductors and motor men to assist him, but they would not do so. Finally, when he saw that he was needed at the Naghten street crossing, where he is stationed by the city, he returned to his post. There were no other policemen present during the excitement, although they were badly needed.

There were several narrow escapes. The people, with a daring that was much out of place, walked all around and over the live wires lying on the trestle and the sidewalk, from which the electric current was flowing. The wires were writhing and twisting and were dangerous to human life, but the people did not seem to care for this. The wire on the iron pole made it a dangerous post and the current ran down it to the ground. While the pole was still charged a dog came in contact with it and received a shock that sent him howling away. A woman, whose glove probably saved her, when passing a wire, took hold of it to push it out of her way and received a shock that nearly lifted her off of her feet. The end of one of the wires was in a pool of water. A coal wagon was driven through it and when the horse felt the current he probably thought his time had come or that he was walking on needles, as he got out in double quick time.

The employees of the road were on the scene as soon as possible to pick up the wires and straighten out the difficulty. They handled the wires with rubber and soon had the impediment to the traffic removed. Cars were stopped at the trestle for fifteen or twenty minutes, although there was no interference with travel at other points.

A view of the vicinity after the wires were far enough away to cease to be dangerous, showed that the live wires had left their marks. There were holes melted in the iron rails where the wires had touched them and marks on the fence at the trestle and on the iron pole. The Scioto Valley freight car that struck the bumper and the wooden electric light pole was resting on its end on the ground., the trucks were out from under it and the draw bar broken off. The car was badly damaged and a wrecking crew will probably be required to clean up the track. It was the remark of many of the bystanders that the escape of several people was miraculous.

The crash caused by the wreck was so loud that a horse attached to a bakery wagon owned by William P. Stelzer, corner of Mound and Fourth streets, was frightened and ran away while the driver, Adam Doerson, was in a saloon. The horse ran south at a rapid gait until the corner of Spring and High streets was reached, when it collided with a kindling wagon belonging to a man named Humphreys. The bakery wagon was completely demolished, being broken entirely in two across the middle. The horse was stopped and was not injured. The kindling wagon was only slightly damaged. Bread and cakes were thrown in all directions by the collision. The loss will be nearly total on the wagon.