

COLLIDED

Did Central Cars.

Five Persons Are Hurt, Two of Them Seriously.

Frightful Midnight Accident to Cars Returning from Minerva Park.

Car No. 333, Manned by Motorman Meeks,
Dashes into a Car Ahead
William DeVere Most Seriously Injured.

(Columbus Dispatch, June 15, 1900, page 5)

About 11:20 last night five persons were injured in a rear end collision on the Minerva Park branch of the Columbus Street Railway, near Windsor avenue. The casualties were as follows:

William DeVere, musician, hip dislocated and several ugly wounds on left limb, also numerous other bruises.

S.E. Morris, musician, hand cut and body bruised.

W.S. Powell, musician, sprained ankle.

John Heer, traveling man, ankle sprained and foot crushed.

Frank A. Miller, student, shoulder hurt.

The first car to leave the park after the evening performance was No. 330, in charge of motorman Robert Gray and Conductor Thomas Flannigan. The car was crowded with anxious passengers and lost no time in getting under headway.

About three minutes after its departure, Car No. 333 operated by Motorman M.G. Meek and Conductor P.S. Bonnett, was sent on its homeward journey. The car was loaded down, in fact, both the rear and front seats were occupied and several passengers were compelled to remain standing for want of room.

No time was lost by either of the cars bound south. Motorman Meek threw the handle into the loop and the car shot south at its best. The speed will be better understood when it is stated that the car traveled with its human freight from the park to Windsor avenue in the remarkable short space of about 20 minutes or, at the rate of about 20 miles an hour.

The passengers commented freely on the rapidity with which the car moved along, not for a moment dreaming of what was to occur. Mr. Heer, one of the injured, had just remarked to his friend, Miller, who was seated next to him, that in case anything happened, he was going to jump through the window in the rear of the motorman, and which separates that official from the passengers. When the crash came Mr. Heer attempted to execute his well laid plan but only succeeded in catching hold of the window frame and partly raising his body off the seat.

Windsor avenue is immediately south of Seventeenth avenue and runs east from Cleveland. The conductor on the first car was given the signal to stop here and when the car had come to a standstill Mike and Carl Ruh brothers, residing east of the C. A. & C. tracks, alighted. They got off on opposite sides of the car and had turned around preparatory to start for home.

As the first car was brought to a standstill car 333 came dashing into the switch at full speed. Motorman Meek commenced to apply the brake as quickly as he could, but the speed of his car was more than even the brakes could control so it sped on. After working frantically to stop Powell and Morris, the two musicians, jumped from their seat and helped to tighten the brake chain but to no avail, and the next moment the accident had occurred.

The old Central summer cars are built somewhat different from the others in service. In the front and rear they have seats next to the motorman and conductor. The front seat of car No. 333 was occupied by DeVere, Powell, Morris, Heer and Miller and everyone of them received injuries.

As soon as the cars hit, the women folks commenced to scream and the people to jump off the car. The lights were out as a result of the trolley pole flying off. Nearly every passenger on the car was thrown forward against the seat in front.

The bumpers crashed together and the iron dash of the second car was mashed back with the controlling box upon the unfortunate men on the front seat. Powell, DeVere and Heer were pinioned between this mass and the partition above referred to. Miller and Morris succeeded in jumping, just in the nick of time, while Motorman Meek was standing on the seat with his hands on the brake.

For a few minutes everything and everybody was full on excitement. One woman fainted and several cried out nervously as the moaning of the injured was pitiful. Heer and Morris were soon extricated but the well-known, all around musician, DeVere was wedged as fast between the debris as he could be. For ten minutes at least he stood the awful torture, as no one, street car employee or layman knew what to do.

The controller in the second car was broke, rendering the car useless, while the second car was fastened by some mysterious means to the first car. DeVere suffered in this manner until Inspector Harry Lawson arrived on the scene and under his supervision the cars were unfastened and the injured man removed.

All the injured were able to proceed on the cars except DeVere and Heer. The last named is a travelling man for Crossett's Novelty company at North Abington, Mass. He resides with his parents at 316 West Fifth avenue, and is one of the gamest little men seen for some time. He took his fate with calmness, although suffering untold pain and

after stretching himself out on the floor of the car remained in this position until a cab arrived to take him home.

When the disabled car arrived at the Central barns it was backed in and ambulances called. In six minutes from the time the message was sent to Pletcher's their ambulance whirled around the corner, followed by patrol wagons 3 and 1.

DeVere was placed in the ambulance and a hurry run made for the Protestant hospital. Drs. Shultz, McGaven, and Walker of the hospital assisted Dr. W.U. Cole in making the examination of the wounded man. Where the broken chair and other debris rested against his left limb there were three deep cuts. The left hip was badly dislocated and beside this several other bruises were found about the body.

The injured member was set and the patient made as easy as possible. Dr. Cole and the attending physicians said it would be impossible to predict the time it would lay the musician up. On the way down from the scene of the accident a by stander suggested that DeVere be given a stimulant. Hearing the remark, he said:

"Don't give me any whisky, I'd rather die first. I haven't touched it for fifteen years, and I'm not going to start again."

Herr objected to riding in the patrol wagon and was taken home in a hack, accompanied by this friend Miller, who had injuries of his own, but never said a word. The latter is a university student and resides at 1157 Neil avenue.

MOTORMAN MEEKS

**Refused to State His Name or Anything else –
A "Foxy Quiller."**

After the excitement had subsided somewhat a dispatch representative accosted Motorman Meeks and asked him his full name.

"I can't talk," said Meeks

"How did it happen?" Asked the reporter.

"I won't say a word." Was his answer.

"Say, how long have you been on the road?" The reporter thought from the answers he must have been born in a street car belonging to the street railway company.

"I ain't allowed to say anything." Retorted the foxy official.

"You'd better explain why you came down from the park at that break neck speed and smashed into another car and injured several passengers. People in the rear of the car say that you were making up time?" It had no effect, he only looked wise.

Meek, it was learned at the street railway office, was placed on duty early in the spring and has been considered a competent man. The rule of the company is that the

cars shall be kept between one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet in the rear of the car in front while traveling through the suburbs.

Meek was allowed to retain his position, pending a complete investigation, which is being conducted.

DeVERE TALKS

Tells How the Accident Happened – He Thought the Collision Would Be Averted

On his way to the barn Mr. DeVere was asked how the accident happened.

“Well, the two cars just bumped, that’s all and I’m one of the unhappy victims. The car was going at a fast rate of speed when we struck the switch. The motorman discovered that the car in front had stopped but not until it was too late. I believe it was Powell, who helped him to tighten the brake.

“I thought the car was going to stop, and I remained in my seat. Even when we got right on to it, I never thought about jumping – I wish I had. Powell and Morris managed to get off some way. I don’t [know] how.”

“Do you think the motorman was to blame?” was asked.

“I’ll have to give him credit for trying to stop; his car, that’s about all I can say. I don’t think he should have run so fast and I further believe that he would have stopped the car if he had known the car in front was at a standstill.

“I guess I’m ‘all in’ for the rest of summer. Before I left the house, I felt as if something was about to happen.”

ON TIME.

Meeks Says He Was in the Official Report.

(Columbus Dispatch, June 15, 1900, page 7)

Motorman Meeks made his report of last night's accident to Adjuster Davis this morning. In substance he stated that the car left Minerva park on time and arrived at Windsor switch at 23½ minutes afterwards, the time allowed.

He could not account for the accident except that he had misjudged the distance between the two cars and the uncertainty of car 330, being at a standstill, until his car arrived at the end of the switch, when he claims he did everything in his power to prevent the accident but, it was impossible.

One of the officials of the company claims that had the two cars been of the same design, the accident would not have happened. One was of the Dayton make and the other a Cleveland firm. There is a difference in the elevation of the bumpers of several inches, and instead of coming together the rear bumper on the front car smashed in the front of car No. 330.