TORONTOIST

Historicist: Head-On Calamity

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BY KEVIN PLUMMER

Every Saturday at noon, Historicist looks back at the events, places, and characters—good and bad—that have shaped Toronto into the city we know today.

Derek Boles noted in Toronto's Railway Heritage *(Arcadia Publishing, 2009) that the accident occurred a mile west of the Sunnyside level crossing, seen here in 1907. City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, Item 1464.*

Just before daybreak on January 2, 1884, a young Parkdale resident named Goodwood was walking home from the Humber River through a snowstorm when he spotted the headlight of a Grand Trunk Railway freight train, barrelling eastbound down the grade at thirty miles an hour. From the other direction, Goodwood saw a suburban commuter train charting its leisurely path westward, approaching a point where a cluster of trees turned the track's gentle curve around the southern edge of High Park into a blind corner.

Realizing there would be a fearful collision on the single track, Goodwood ran to safety a short distance from the track. As the suburban train passed him, *The Globe* recounted, "He saw many of the men in the foremost car laughing and talking pleasantly together." They were on their way to work at the Toronto Bolt and Iron Works, a foundry near the east bank of the Humber. With the locomotives but twenty yards apart from a head-on collision—each sounding its whistle in futile warning—Goodwood closed his eyes in fright.

In a thunderous crash, the freight's heavier locomotive—carrying the momentum of a tender fully laden with coal and water—plowed through the cab of the suburban's locomotive, climbing onto the latter's trucks and pushing the suburban's boiler into the first passenger car. Escaping steam from the bursting boiler melted the drifts of snow around the crash and painfully scalded those passengers trapped inside.

"It was awful," James Hopewell, a farmer on his way to the city, told *The Mail*. "As soon as the shock brought both trains to a standstill every sound was hushed but that of the escaping steam which shrouded everything in a cloud of white."

The Mail described the carnage: "Bolts and rods, not of iron alone but wrought steel were bent and twisted like hair pins. The roof was splintered into kindling wood, and there was not a piece of it six inches square but was split or crushed." A moment later the wreckage was ablaze, fuelled by toppled fireplaces in the passenger car spilling onto the kindling.

2 THE GLOBE, TORONTO, THURSDAY, JANUARY 3, 1884.

TERRIBLE COLLISION.

Freight and Suburban Trains Meet at the Humber.

TWENTY-THREE WORKMEN KILLED

A Number Scalded and Severely Burned.

THE WRECKED CAR TAKES FIRE.

Horrible Sufferings of Imprisoned Victims.

HEARTRENDING SCENES AT THE MORGUE.

An Inquest Commenced Before Coroner Lynd.

HOW THE DISASTER OCCURRED.

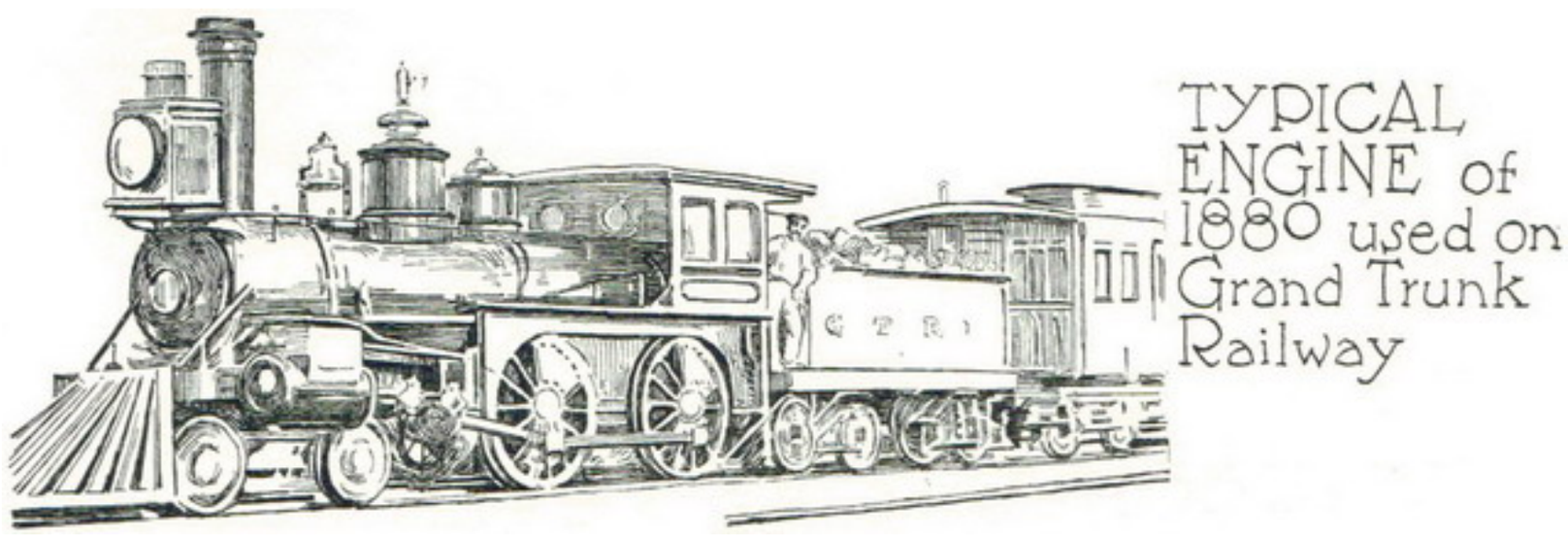
Coverage in The Globe*, January 3, 1884.*

Around 4:30 a.m. that morning, engineer Richard Jeffry pulled G.T.R. Engine Number 270 into Hamilton. Since leaving Port Edward at 7:13 p.m. the previous evening, the special freight train had passed through London, Woodstock, and, after a brief pause in Hamilton, was westbound for Queen's Wharf, the Grand Trunk's lakeside freight depot southwest of Fort York. Jeffry was, as *The Globe* later wrote, "A trained driver and…well spoken of." Nevertheless, he'd never previously travelled between Hamilton and Toronto. So, the Stratford native asked for a pilot, an experienced crewman, to act as a guide, pointing out variations of grade and the physical character of the tracks, to better allow him to make appropriate adjustments to the steam pressure settings.

The Hamilton station master did not provide one. Instead, Jeffry's conductor, George Barber, volunteered to act. Although Barber had travelled between Toronto and Hamilton frequently in his years of service with the Grand Trunk, performing such double-duty was highly unusual, and the station master should not have allowed it. But by this time, Barber and Jeffry had been on continuous duty for nearly twelve hours, and were likely eager to reach journey's end.

At 5:20 a.m., Special Number 146—running light with only the engine, tender, one empty baggage car, and caboose—set off

for Toronto through a howling snowstorm. A telegraph man signalled Toronto that Jeffry's freight train was on its way. The message was received but no action was taken.



From C.W. Jefferys, The Picture Gallery of Canadian History (Volume 3) *(Ryerson Press, 1950)*

At Hamilton, they'd been issued revised orders: "Run to Queen's Wharf, avoiding regulars." In this era, the vast majority of rail routes ran along single tracks. It was imperative, Hugh A. Halliday notes in *Wreck: Canada's Worst Railway Accidents* (Robin Brass, 1997), that only a single train at a time occupied a section (or block) of track between sidings. According to the G.T.R. regulations, specials had to avoid regular trains—which always had the right of way by virtue of travelling according to a published schedule. The conductor was supposed to give the go-ahead to travel on only after the train passed.

Although station personnel or semaphores might help them in their duty, ultimately, the conductor was responsible for the safe passage of his train. Knowing the Number 25, a daily train that delivered newspapers to southwestern Ontario, was due to cross their path at Oakville, Barber ensured the special freight train was safely on a siding at Bronte until it passed.

Barber, a man of twenty-nine who lived with his wife at 71 Esther Street in Toronto, was well experienced on this track and familiar with the commuter trains that used it. He was considered sober, steady, and one of the best conductors on the Grand Trunk by those who knew him. In giving Jeffry the go-ahead to proceed from Bronte, Barber was certain the next regular train didn't leave Toronto until 7:35 a.m., but his study of the timetable that morning was not careful enough. Among its figures and footnotes, he'd overlooked an earlier commuter train.

Around the same time, foundry workers on their way to the Toronto Bolt and Iron Works gathered at the second Union Station. Established in 1879, the Bolt Works had moved to the west edge of town (at the foot of present-day Windermere Street) in June, 1883. Many of their employees lived in downtown neighbourhoods, and at least sixty commuted by the Number 13 train each work day, which left Union daily at 6:40 a.m. with stops near the Bolt Works and Mimico.

The Second Union Station, as seen in 1888, from Wikimedia Commons.

On the morning of January 2, there were far fewer men in work clothes than usual on the platform. Perhaps the men commented on the absence of Mr. McIntyre and his son, who had never missed the morning train, but would have to walk to work today—a circumstance the McIntyres later considered a “providential escape.” Maybe the men bemoaned the return to work after the joviality of the holiday season, or complained that their train was late. The locomotive—a smaller engine-tender combination known as a “dummy”—was two minutes late coming from the roundhouse.

The men piled aboard the train’s two coaches, all but five of them selecting to sit in the foremost car, which was set aside for the exclusive use of the foundry workers. At 6:49 a.m., now nine minutes late, the dummy set off westward. John Kennedy was the engineer and James Gasken was his fireman. As the train passed the Exhibition Grounds at its moderate speed, conductor James Carter finished collecting tickets. There were forty-three men and boys aboard.

The freight train passed through Mimico unobstructed. At that early hour, the station—site of the last siding before the railyards below Bathurst—was still unmanned. Its semaphore remained unlit, offering no reminder to eastbound traffic of the commuter’s approach.

In the midst of the morning’s snowstorm, John Donovan stood at the Bolt Works. A bridge carpenter for the G.T.R., he was waiting for the westbound commuter to take him to Mimico. As the freight rattled past him on the single track, he heard the Number 13’s whistle at the High Park crossing. “As soon as I heard her whistle, I knew there was going to be an accident,” Donovan remembered. He took off down the tracks at a sprint.

THE RAILWAY DISASTER.

Public Funeral of Eighteen of the Victims.

IMPOSING FUNERAL PROCESSION.

An Immense Concourse of Sorrow-Stricken Citizens.

SCENES UPON THE ROUTE.

Services at the Homes and Cemeteries.

REFERENCES IN THE CHURCHES.

The funeral of the victims of Wednesday's disaster took place on Saturday. The day dawned brightly and pleasantly, and formed a striking contrast to the bleak, wild morning when the dead workingmen were hurried to the terrible fate awaiting them at the Humber. Snow still lay upon the ground, but the cold was far less severe than that of the preceding few days. Between one and two o'clock a crowd began to collect around the City Hall, from which place it had been decided that the procession should start at three o'clock. The crowd gradually increased in extent until it completely filled the large Market Square and the adjoining thoroughfares. Thousands of people were there of every age and condition of life, all anxious to witness the last sad scene of the Humber catastrophe. No idle or morbid curiosity was to be seen among the great mass of citizens. A deep and melancholy silence reigned among them, and a universal sympathy with the actual mourners was expressed in their countenances.

SCENE AT THE DRILL SHED.

From the hour of eleven o'clock those in charge of the armoury at the foot of the City Hall were busily engaged receiving the coffins from the houses of the deceased men. By one o'clock a dozen bodies had arrived. Services were conducted at the houses of a great many before the bodies were taken to the starting point of the public funeral.

Frederick Boothroyd was a member of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, and the pall-bearers were the following members of the Society:—J. Doyle, Edwin Haines, H. Dodgson, W. Myers, and T. Gammarson. Rev. Mr. Darling held a short service at the house of the deceased, 176 Strachan-avenue, before joining the public funeral.

Matthew Walker was a member of the Enniskillen Lodge of True Blues. Rev. Mr. Samson, of Little Trinity Church, conducted the service at the house. The pall-bearers were W. Mills, W. Howard, E. Haines, R. Hudson, J. Ingram, and Wm. Cuthbert, all True Blues.

The pall-bearers for George Prescott, a member of Loyal True Blues, were T. Kerford, Robert [illegible]

Every place of business was closed, and in many cases the fronts of the establishments were draped in black as an evidence of sympathy with the general mourning. The procession was of very great length and was nearly an hour passing a given point. It included representatives of almost every lodge of every secret society in the city, including Orangemen, Foresters, Sons of England, True Blues, &c., &c. The Bolt Works employees numbered considerably over a hundred, and included not only almost every man at present employed by the company, but also several who were recently discharged on account of slackness, but who, nevertheless, looked upon the dead as their late comrades and fellow-workmen. The following Grand Trunk Railway officials were in the ranks of the procession—viz., Messrs. E. Wragge, Local Manager; J. W. Lord, Freight Agent; W. Gormley, Passenger Agent; J. Earl, Assistant General Freight Agent; J. W. Edgar, Assistant General Passenger Agent, and J. Grant, Bridge Inspector, of Toronto; Messrs. C. Stiff, Superintendent; C. K. Donnelly, Mechanical Superintendent; J. Hobson, Chief Engineer, and Hall, Armour, and Little, of Hamilton; and Dr. Roger, Chief Medical Officer; J. Bell, Assistant Superintendent, and W. Crowther, Assistant Superintendent, of Montreal.

BREAKING OFF.

At Wellesley-street the procession divided, one portion turning off for St. James' Cemetery and the other keeping straight ahead for St. Michael's. The Mayor and Corporation dropped out at this point, and the body of police divided into equal parts, a force of twenty-five going to each cemetery. St. James' Cemetery was reached at about a quarter to five, or an hour after the time of starting, the distance being about two miles. The remains of Richard Mailman, the old Grenadier sergeant, were first taken into the burying ground, followed by the Grenadiers and their band. The funeral service was read by the Rev. A. H. Baldwin, Rector of All Saints, at the entrance to the vault, and at its conclusion three volleys were fired over the body of the deceased by his late comrades. The coffins containing the other bodies were then brought into the little cemetery chapel, followed by all the Bolt Works employees and as many others of those who had been in the procession as the place would afford admittance to. The burial service was read by Rev. Mr. Clarke, chaplain, assisted by Rev. Mr. Darling, of St. Matthias' Church. All the coffins were left in the vault beneath the chapel, where they will remain until they are interred in the spring.

At St. Michael's Cemetery Very Rev. Vicar-General Laurent and Rev. Father Sheehan read the funeral service, and at Mount Pleasant Cemetery and the Necropolis the clergymen who officiated were those who had held the services at the homes of the respective dead.

PROVIDENTIAL ESCAPES.

Leaving aside the families and relations of the killed, perhaps nowhere has the catastrophe created a more profound feeling of sympathy and bereavement than among the remaining employees at the Bolt Works. They who had travelled the fatal road together time and again before, and worked, laughed, and talked at the same benches and under the same roof, as those who were cut off feel the force of the terrible blow almost as much as do those who are actual mourners for the dead, though in a different way. Hardly a single workman there but personally misses some companion or friend who was among the slain, and considers it an intervention of Providence that he did not happen to take a passage on the ill-starred train. Many and curious are the incidents connected with the tragedy, in which men have escaped or been hindered from going on the train by unseen circumstances. A boy named Stanley from Seaton village, a brother of the young man Charles Stanley who was among the killed, made up to be devoted towards the relief fund. Other churches also made collections on behalf of the same fund.

LESSONS OF THE CALAMITY.

A sermon on "The Lessons of the Calamity" was preached by Rev. D. J. Macdonnell in St. Andrew's Church last evening. After reading the words found in Ecclesiastes ix.—"I returned and saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; neither yet bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all. For a man also knoweth not his time." He said: These words have received a striking illustration in the event which has been filling the minds and occupying the hearts of the citizens of Toronto for the last four days, and we rightly speak of such an event as a terrible calamity—a calamity which has carried away many, not of the useless, not of the worthless, but of the workers,

THE BREAD-WINNERS,

from many of our homes. We cannot but think of it as an evil; the question is, what use are we to make of such an event. For surely it is right that we should listen to God's voice, speaking to us by His Providence as well as speaking to us in His Word. Surely God has been speaking to this city, as well as to the desolate homes which have been especially concerned.

I am not going to touch at all the question of the responsibility of this one or the other; though I cannot help saying that it does seem to me that the one or two who may be specially responsible for the occurrence of this accident are deeply to be sympathized with, however much or little may be the measure of blame to be attached. Who of us is there that does not forget—that is not sometimes careless—that does not sometimes let things go easily instead of making careful investigation into all that we ought to be doing? Which of us is going to cast the first stone at a brother for his carelessness, if it be so? But I wish to look at the matter as one of those things which, springing from no matter what cause, becomes a part of the great whole which is under God's government and control.

Following out the line thus indicated the preacher said that it was a merciful provision that man "knoweth not his time." He considered that it would add most fearfully to

THE BURDEN OF LIFE

if each of us knew precisely the day and hour of his death. We were not to live in indifference or carelessness on this account, but to live as not knowing when our time might come—to live as knowing that we are responsible for making the best use of the present time. Further, it was a good thing that there should be calamitous changes in lives. No doubt each disaster as it came was from one point of view an evil thing; and yet, speaking as to general principles, it was a good thing that we should be dislodged from our pleasant hopes and plans. It was so easy for us to forget God that we needed to be reminded, in forming our plans, to say, "If the Lord will." It was a good thing for those families which had been desolated to know that it was not after all as sad as it looked—that it was a part of what God had ordered as His gracious purposes for them and others.

THE CHEERING POWER

of such a calamity as this was referred to by the preacher. He noticed the fact that Orangemen and Roman Catholics joined in Saturday's sad procession, and hoped that this spirit of brotherly love and mutual toleration and respect might continue. Again, it was a good thing for the citizens to have awakened in them the spirit of sympathy and brotherly kindness that had been shown in a great many ways. In concluding, the preacher said that the consciousness that we did not know when death might overtake us should teach us to be faithful, to use faithfully our powers, opportunities, and privileges, and not to delay the doing of

they could remember Samson slaughtering a thousand Philistines with an ass' jaw bone, and saying afterwards, "heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men." They would remember more recently the Ridgeway affair, and remember heaps of dead—youthful dead. Some were slain by the pursuit of wickedness, and others by the necessity of having to place themselves in the care of those who might sometimes be reckless. There were thousands put to death by the carelessness of others with whom they had to associate. Take the calamity which occurred here last week. How happily these men started away from the Station on their way to their work! And how quiet and unoffensively to their train they came! There take the conductor. He would never forgive himself. God might forgive, and the widows and orphans might forgive him, but he would never forgive himself. A grander class of men they could not find than these engineers, firemen, and conductors. It was all caused because their conductor forgot. And because he forgot the two trains plunged into each other, and the result was the heap of bodies he had seen in the morgue and at the hospital. Where persons had been suddenly taken from active life and compelled to lie upon a bed of sickness, they would say that they would spend their lives differently when they got better. When they began to get well again they would shake off the feeling that had come over them while sufferers. It was no very remarkable thing that these heaps of slain were found very often among them, for there were millions and millions slain every year all over the world. Some one had whispered that a certain workman had got drunk the night before the accident, and being unable to go to work next day so escaped the accident. This might be so; but, on the other hand, were not hundreds of men killed by drink every year? It is the duty of every young man to endeavour to be an example and a help to others.

Suppose a regiment of 1,000 men were to go into battle and only 100 come out uninjured, while 500 were killed and 400 wounded. When they recruited every one would join in the hope of being among the 100 uninjured. And so it was in life. It was a vain, false hope. They should remember that in a hundred years the pews they now occupied would be filled by other people, and Toronto's population would, with few exceptions—only sufficient to prove the rule—be entirely changed. They should take the lesson to heart, and prepare themselves for the great end.

NOTES.

Alexander Turriffe's condition is about the same; there are very slight hopes of his recovery.

Mr. Waugh Lauder has arranged to give a grand piano recital at Mason & Risch's warerooms on Saturday, January 19, at 2:30 o'clock. The proceeds will be devoted to the benefit of the sufferers by the railway disaster. A choice programme has been selected. The price of admission has been placed at 50 cents.

The suggestion is made that during Lord Lansdowne's visit a public performance for the benefit of the sufferers should be given in the Opera House. Mr. Manning would, no doubt, act with his accustomed generosity in the matter.

A strange circumstance is related in connection with the melancholy death of H. D. Kerman. He usually rode on the rear car, but on the fatal morning he expressed his intention of riding in the front car with the men for the sake of the company.

Brighton Lodge, S. O. E. Benevolent Society, at their last meeting voted $25 from the contingent fund towards the fund for the relief of the sufferers. This sum was augmented to $34 by the members present, and the amount will be handed over to the Mayor to-day.

The following telegram was received from Montreal by Mr. T. McGaw, of the Queen's Hotel, last night:—"Please pay to subscription fund of the late railroad accident, in Toronto on account

Coverage in The Globe*, January 7, 1884.*

In the cab of the commuter at 6:57 a.m., Kennedy strained to see through the blowing snow at the bend in the tracks south of High Park. Spotting the freight's oncoming headlamp only three hundred yards in the distance, Kennedy called for brakes and Gasken leapt to the switch. A moment later, both men jumped from the locomotive. To the passengers, Carter screamed, "Jump, boys, for your lives," as he jumped clear himself. But it was too late for anyone in the first passenger car. About half were killed instantly.

One of the passengers in the rear car remembered, "The first thing that alarmed me was the sudden shriek of the two engines. Then there was a great shock, and I was hurled from my seat over against the opposite side of the car." The Bolt Works' foreman, also in the rear car, recalled the moments after the crash: "The car stopped and my companions, who were all uninjured, and I got out. We saw such a sight then as I never wish to see again."

Along with Donovan, and others arriving on scene from Parkdale, they set about the grisly task of prying the injured and dying from the mangled wreckage. An impromptu bucket brigade tried to quash the flames.

By the time the press arrived, bodies on the scene had been haphazardly covered with blankets, and local doctors had arrived to treat the wounded. Nevertheless, reporters found no shortage of witnesses willing to share their view of the carnage. In an era of sensationalist journalism, sympathy for the misfortunes of others mingled with a morbid fascination with death and destruction. Newspapers breathlessly recounted every ghastly detail. One of the first residents of nearby Parkdale to arrive on the scene, Mr. Tolton, expressed his horror to *The Globe*: "Bloody fragments of flesh and detached limbs were lying about, and made a horrid sight."

The air was filled with the hiss of steam and the "shrieks and groans" of the injured, *The Globe*'s reported added. In the *The Mail*'s description, however, the victims were more stoic. One boy lifted out of the wreckage turned to his rescuer and said: "I feel I'm going, doctor; tell poor mother not to cry, I'm not suffering."

The commuter's crew were reasonably unfazed. The freight's crew was not as fortunate. Charles Thomas, the fireman, was killed instantly. Jeffry disappeared from the scene. Bleeding profusely from his head, he wandered towards town in an apparent state of shock. Overcome by a sense of guilt, Barber kept confessing to those on the scene that he'd plain forgotten about the Number 13. As soon as the scene had settled, County Constable Wise took the freight's conductor, Barber, into custody, pending a coroner's inquest.

The G.T.R. right of way past the Canada Bolt & Nut Company in Swansea on February 10, 1911. By this time, rail capacity had been expanded beyond the single track there in 1884. City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1231, Item 1018.

Once word of the accident (eventually) reached Union, a train was sent to pick up survivors. By 10 a.m., all the injured had been carried away, yet there were hundreds of people on the accident scene for the rest of the day, eager to survey the damage. With minimal damage done to the track, once the wreckage was cleared, regular rail traffic resumed at 11:30 a.m.
The scant facts of the catastrophe—embellished by rampant rumours—spread through the city. Had the freight train ignored its orders? If the commuter hadn't been running late, would it have already passed the Bolt Works and unloaded the vast majority of its passengers? And if Mimico had been manned, could the calamity have been averted? Had a grief-stricken Barber hanged himself in jail? Newspaper offices were swarmed by curious residents seeking the latest news updates.
Huge crowds gathered to watch, with blanched faces, as the injured were unloaded at Union Station. "Strong men wept, brushing their tears away with their mittened hands," stated *The Globe*'s colourful description. Mayor Arthur Radcliffe Boswell was among the first crowding into Toronto General Hospital, anxiously inquiring about the wounded.
That afternoon, between five and six thousand people visited the morgue. Many were friends and family seeking to identify the bodies of loved ones who were laid side by side in rows at opposite ends of the room. Others were merely curiosity seekers. "Oh, it's awful," one exclaimed to *The Globe* about the charred, disfigured remains. "Don't go near it—you can't recognize one of them." In the evening, the Bolt Works held a town hall meeting for its remaining employees, and decided not to reopen the foundry until the men had been interred.

CRIMINAL ASSIZES.

The Trial of Conductor Barber for Manslaughter.

A VERDICT OF NOT GUILTY.

Demonstrations of Approval in the Court.

The trial of Barber, the conductor of the freight train at the recent catastrophe at High Park, was commenced yesterday. Mr. E. Irving, Q.C., counsel for the Crown. Dr. McMichael, Q.C., for the prisoner. The following jurors were sworn in:—Thomas Gray, Thomas O'Brien, Wm. Jewett, R. Young, Owen Davidson, James Lyon, Richard S. Perry, D. W. Thompson, Peter Savage, Frank Armstrong, Hugh McTaggert, C. H. Coxwell, Dr. McMichael having previously challenged Mark Watson, John Kay, John B. Turner, G. G. Keifer, and George Paterson, who had to retire.

Mr. Irving, the Crown prosecutor, opened the case in a most lengthy address which occupied over an hour, and in which he related in detail the circumstances of the collision of the two trains, also reading the order that Barber had received and stating the regulations which should govern men in a position of such great responsibility as that which the prisoner held. The first witness called was Geo. Carter, conductor of the suburban train, who testified that he had been conductor on the suburban train for the past five or six years; it was usual for him to run five times each way during the day; there were three or four stopping places on the road, viz., Queen's Wharf, High Park, Bolt Works, Humber, and Mimico; the first train leaves at 6:10 a.m. and makes no stops until it arrives at the Bolt Works and carries no other passengers than the Bolt Works employees; they come back by a late train ordinarily; he remembered the 2nd of January, and ran on the first suburban train which left the Union Station that morning at 6:50, and which was 10 minutes later than the correct time; the reason of being 10 minutes late was on account of having to wait for the engine to come for the train; the train consisted of two coaches; they took on more passengers at the Queen's Wharf; they had no business to stop at the Queen's Wharf; stopped at High Park; shortly afterwards he heard the whistle which sounded to put on the brakes, and which was an unusual thing; he was in the hind car, and went out and looked ahead to see what the whistle was for; he looked on the lake side on account of the curve, and saw quite close, about the length of two engines, the headlight of an engine, and after shouting for the boys to jump off he jumped himself, and the collision occurred immediately; he could'nt say as to the rate of speed of the freight train; they were

GOING AT THEIR USUAL RATE;

they were allowed fifteen minutes to run from the Union Station to the Humber, a distance of 5½ miles; the immediate effect of the collision was that the dummy was driven right back into the second-class carriage, and the freight locomotive was on top of it, both on the same line; there was no time to do anything. The witness produced the time-table he was working under. On being asked why he ran right out of Toronto he replied that he had the time table to run by and that it did not apply to any other train running out of the city, the line should be kept clear. He stated that he did not get any orders at the Queen's Wharf, although he always enquires for them, and at times gets them, that is during the day. The orders generally relate to trains later in the day. On being cross-questioned by Dr. McMichael the witness said that the distance between the Union Station and Mimico was seven miles, and that the character of the orders he receives have reference to trains from Hamilton, and how to meet them; they do not meet anything between the Queen's Wharf and Mimico,

AS THERE IS NO SIDE TRACK.

In reference to the semaphore at that place, the witness said that it was used to stop trains coming in if required; he could not say whether there was a station master at Mimico that morning; he generally arrived there at seven o'clock in the morning, and a man was generally there. (In being questioned as to the instructions sometimes through Mr. Dawson, Assistant-Superintendent: he remembered Conductor Barber's special arriving at Hamilton about half-past four in the morning; Barber came in and booked his arrival; he entered the office again about 20 minutes past five to get his orders; he said, "I am ready to go to Toronto", on being asked if he had a train Barber said he had two vans; the witness drew out his orders(which on being produced he identified); the order read, "Run to Queen's Wharf, avoiding regulars"; thinking that Barber might be able to make Oakville he asked Barber

"CAN YOU MAKE OAKVILLE

for the newspaper train," to which he replied, "I guess I can," but did not reply as to whether he could make Bronte or not; twenty minutes later the Queen's Wharf asked witness if the other special had left, to which he answered, "yes, about 5:30;" Queen's Wharf called him up again to ascertain what she had, and he told them two vans; he heard later from Oakville that she had passed. In reply to Dr. McMichael, witness stated that he had been in his present position for six months, and was operator before in various places on the G.T.R.; there was no necessity for the train being despatched in a hurry; he stated that he was not able to communicate with all points on the line; he could, however, communicate with Mimico at seven o'clock; did not get a message from Mimico until 8 o'clock; he had power to stop the train at Oakville until the newspaper train had passed, but could not at Bronte because there was no operator there; he allowed the special one hour and fifty minutes to reach Mimico, and at that rate the suburban would have reached Mimico before the special; if Barber had been stopped at Mimico it would have been safer; specials are not called "wild cats" on our road, although they are called that on other roads; regular trains move by the time card and report, but regulars never call for orders. Witness first knew about the disaster about 8 o'clock. He stated, that the semaphore

WOULD PROTECT THE CONDUCTOR

any day entering Mimico. Time tables control specials, which are watched like any other train. In reply to Mr. Irving, he stated that the semaphore at Mimico did not stop all traffic when the suburban train leaves Toronto; he could not stop the special because he had given his orders to avoid regulars, and it was not necessary to warn Barber about the new-paper train, as his orders were to avoid regulars, of which the newspaper train was one.

Albert Smith, operator at the Queen's Wharf, testified that he was on duty on the morning of the accident; he called up Hamilton about 6 o'clock, asking if special had left, and ascertained that it had; this was before the suburban went out; he was not sure that he communicated the information to any one in any way; he searched for the information received, but found no record of it; the suburban appeared in due time; he gave no order to the conductor of the suburban, as he had no holding order from Hamilton to give him.

In reply to Dr. McMichael, he said he knew it was No. 420 from the telegraph operator from the Junction Cut, and telegraphed to find out when it had left; it was not necessarily his business to know, and he did not find out; he could not say when the Mimico man goes to work.

In reply to Mr. Irving witness stated that a special couldn't leave the Queen's Wharf without permission, and would stay on a siding until there was an order for it; the "consists" of the train are not always forwarded to the Queen's Wharf, and would not be reported to the witness; on the train in question the consists were destined for the Queen's Wharf; the train from Hamilton had started nearly half an hour before he was aware of it.

Charles R. Carmichael was next sworn. He stated that he was the train master at Toronto. He has been acquainted with Barber for some time and considered him a first-class man having been conductor for four or five years. He supplied Barber with rule book and time table. On his asking Barber if

HE KNEW THE ROAD

the latter replied in the affirmative. To Dr. McMichael he stated that he considered Barber a first-class conductor, sober, honest, and industrious; it was between the 20th and 27th of September that he furnished Barter with the time-table (No. 4); he said that Barber spoke of his acquaintance with the road as a fireman; they had formerly acted under the G. T. R. rules and latterly under the G. W. R., and the G. W. R. deal more in "specials" than do the G. T. R.; his duties were to prepare the men before starting.

In reply to Mr. Irving witness said the rule-book he furnished him with applies to the whole of the system over the Great Western division.

Alex. Ross was the next witness sworn. He stated that he was conductor of THE GLOBE train, which left Toronto that morning at 5:20, on time; got to Hamilton at 6:55; he did not stop anywhere, but

Coverage in The Globe*, January 26, 1884.*

Fifteen men had been killed instantly. Twenty-nine were killed in all. At least nine others were severely injured. It was, according to Derek Boles in *Toronto's Railway Heritage* (Arcadia Publishing, 2009), the worst train wreck in Toronto's history. As Halliday put it, the day's calamity had "an element of tragic concentration; all but one of the dead came from a single factory, and most of the families involved knew one another." Public response was strong.

The funeral took place on Saturday, January 5, at City Hall, with the crowd spilling out into Market Square and the adjoining streets. By 3 p.m., a funeral procession made its way along King and up Yonge Street, following a cartage of sleighs. Downtown traffic stopped, and the sidewalks were packed with mourners. Along the procession route, businesses were closed, many draping their shop windows in black as a sign of public mourning. At Wellesley, the procession split; some turned towards St. James' Cemetery while the remainder continued north.

The community also responded with charity, donating food and funds for the welfare of the widows and families affected. Even Barber's wife was granted fifty dollars by the Parkdale relief committee for her difficulties while her husband was in jail.

In the wake of the accident, blame was accorded quickly. By 2 p.m. on the day of the accident, a coroner's inquest was convened at the newly opened Park Hotel in Parkdale. After an adjournment, it met again at the Parkdale town hall nearly a week later.

After hearing hours of testimony, the verdict was announced on January 15. Barber and Jeffry were there, looking heartbroken. Jeffry's head was wrapped in a bandage and he could only walk with the support of two canes.

The jury attributed the accident to Barber and Jeffry's misreading of the timetable. However, their culpability was mitigated by Jeffry's refused request for a pilot, and the burdensome length of their work shift. The jury was also critical of the railway, calling for the G.T.R. to lay two tracks along such a busy stretch of road. Barber was remanded to await criminal proceedings on charges of manslaughter. That trial, which took place on January 25, was a mere formality. Having come through the shock of tragedy and a tremendous outpouring of grief, the public did not seem interested in disciplining the conductor for his honest error—even one as grave as this. Even the judge, instructing the jury as they were sequestered, cautioned: "There is a wide difference between forgetfulness and criminal negligence." The not-guilty verdict was a surprise to no one.

Other sources consulted: Mike Filey, I Remember Sunnyside *(Brownstone Press, 1982);* The Globe*, January 3, 7, 12 & 26, 1884;* The Mail*, January 3 & 16, 1884; and* The Telegram*, January 2, 25 & 26, 1884.*

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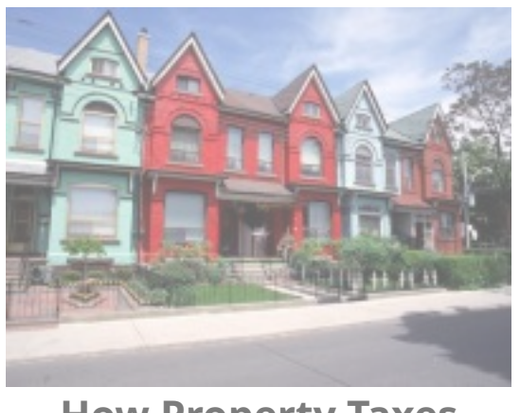

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