

# TWENTY-FOUR KILLED ON JERSEY CENTRAL

## Royal Blue Express in Col- lision Near Graceland.

### TRAPPED VICTIMS BURNED

#### Some Pray to be Put Out of Their Agony — Imprisoned Man's Leg Severed to Free Him — Flames Sweep the Wreckage.

WESTFIELD, N. J., Jan. 27.—Twenty-four persons were killed and a score were injured in a rear-end collision on the Central Railroad of New Jersey tracks near Graceland station this evening. Many persons are missing, but it is impossible to give any authentic list of the missing. It would consist of scores of men and women who are now at home safely.

The Royal Blue Line express, which left Jersey City at 6 o'clock, crashed into a combination local and express train, which had started from the terminus fifteen minutes in advance.

The train that was run into was scheduled to run as an express to Bound Brook, making stops at Elizabeth, Westfield, and Plainfield. Beyond Bound Brook it was to run as a local. The Royal Blue train made no stop except at Elizabeth, and there only to take on passengers. Its higher speed permitted of its overtaking the slower train just beyond Graceland. The slower train's running orders were to switch from Track 3 at Graceland on to Track 4 and to permit the Royal Blue to pass. After that the slower train was to swing back on to the express tracks.

A freight train was blocked upon Track 4 this evening, and the slower train received orders to proceed on the express track to Dunellen and there take the outside or No. 4 track. Soon after receiving these orders the train had to stop for a hot box under one of the cars. That delayed it so that when it got under way again it was due at Dunellen. It was moving slowly forward when the Royal Blue, traveling apparently at full speed, which at that point usually approximates sixty miles an hour, crashed into the rear end.

The heavy engine of the Royal Blue tore its way into the rear car, and at the same time drove the forward end of that car into the rear end of the car ahead, which in turn was driven into the third car, and that was forced into the fourth car from the rear. The fourth car was only partly wrecked, but the last three of the train were torn in pieces.

As the Royal Blue plowed her way into the train ahead the engine of the Royal Blue left the rails and turned over on its side. The engineer and firemen had not left their posts, and went down in the wreck. They are now in the Muhlenberg Hospital at Plainfield, and the engineer is not believed to have a chance of living. The passengers of the Royal Blue, with one exception, escaped without a scratch, but were badly shaken up.

They say the engineer applied the brakes hard just a minute or so before the wreck. The train ahead had sent a flagman back, but he was recalled when the train got under way, and, although he left torpedoes the Royal Blue did not heed them or else was going too fast to stop in the short distance remaining. The man who went back to flag the train had just swung onto the rear end of his train and was among those killed. It is supposed he was crushed just as he was entering the rear car.

The engine and the three worst wrecked cars were piled into a heap. From it came fearful screams for aid. A minute later the situation became more awful, for the wreck caught fire from the overturned locomotive. The screams of the injured were intensified as the flames added to their agony.

The passengers in the two forward cars of the first train and all the men from the express and every one in the neighborhood started work at once in trying to get out the injured before the flames could reach them. At times while some of the rescuers were in the wreckage trying to take out the injured the flames reached them and their clothing took fire, but they put the blaze out and worked on in constant danger of being killed themselves.

Some of the injured were burned to death in sight of the would-be rescuers, who stood by them as long as possible, but the flames soon gained complete mastery of the two last cars.

One of the rescuers plucked an experience which startled him. He had climbed on to the worst wrecked coach. The fire was burning below him. There were two men there. One of them begged for a drink, and a bottle of whisky was passed in. The injured man grasped it eagerly and began to drink. While he clutched the bottle he died. The rescuer dragged the bottle from him and passed it to the other man, but although he had been alive a few minutes before, he was then dead.

The rescuer then started to get out as it was getting too warm. He started out by a way he had not entered, intending to drop out of a window. As he was climbing for the window he knelt on a body and found it to be that of a child. He determined to take the body with him, and reached down for it. He was startled to find the child alive. The little one was got out apparently uninjured, and is now in a house at Westfield.

One of the hardest workers at the rescue was a boy about nineteen years old. He worked as if frenzied, and would not tell his name. He threw off his coat and vest and sprang into the face of the flames again and again in efforts to rescue some unfortunate.

Quick work was made in furnishing a train for the handling of the dead and injured. When it was decided to transfer all to Plainfield a train which was sidetracked at Dunellen was pressed into service. On its way to the scene the railroad men tore out the iron frames of the seats and then laid the cushions in two rows along the sides of the cars. These were later supplemented by pillows and mattresses from the Pullman coaches of the Royal Blue.

The engineer of the express, John S. Davis, was not the regular engineer. He was a "relief" engineer for the fast train, and had been put in the absence of the regular man, who had a day off. He was, however, perfectly familiar with the running

of the train, as he ran it at least once a week, and always ran express trains, being held on relief for that purpose.

Twelve of the injured were taken to the house of Mrs. F. B. Hankinson. After them came a lot of persons who wanted to see who was there. Many of them had the excuse that they were searching for friends. They were in the way of the doctors and were ordered out, but did not obey. Mrs. Hankinson then ordered them out, and they still refused to go, and even more pushed in. Mrs. Hankinson secured her husband's revolver and at its point drove all out.

The firemen from Westfield were summoned by telephone, and reached the scene within a short time. They came too late, however, to save the lives of most. Doctors were called for from Elizabeth, Westfield, and Plainfield and there was a score on hand.

The only person hurt on the Royal Blue train was walking in the aisle of one of the cars when the crash came, and the impact hurled him up in the air, then sideways across the heads of several persons in chairs, and finally through a window. One of his hands was cut and he was bruised. He said he was a son of John Wanamaker of Philadelphia. He did good work later on after his hand had been bandaged.

Dr. Sinclair of Westfield went into the wreck itself, and there bandaged and treated the injured even before they were released. Some of those he treated were afterward suffocated or burned to death.

The parlor cars of the Royal Blue Line train were converted into temporary hospitals. The dead, as they were taken out, were laid in a row alongside the train until means could be found to convey them to the morgue at Plainfield.

Just as the wreck occurred an east-bound train was approaching on Track 2. Before it could be stopped the engine crashed into the wreckage which had been hurled on to the track, but it was light stuff and the engine brushed it aside and crushed part of it under the wheels. The train ran its own length beyond the wreck, stopped, and after ascertaining it had sustained no injury itself, proceeded toward New York.

Mrs. Dr. Breck, whose house stands close to the scene of the wreck, heard the crash, and looking out of her rear window, saw what had taken place. She ran up stairs, grabbed the blankets and sheets from her beds, and the linen from her sideboard, and with them in her arms ran to the scene. The linen and blankets were used later as bandages. She so stripped her home that she had to borrow bedding from neighbors.

A Mrs. Hopkins, who lives close by, also furnished sheets for bandages. She also took many of the injured into her home and did what she could to make them comfortable.

Men could be seen in the wreckage before the flames were extinguished, pinned fast amid the timbers of the cars and struggling to be free. The rescuers were helpless to aid them, as they had already been injured in the fire before desisting. One of those who tried to take out a man pinned in found that he was held down by one leg near the ankle, and seeing it would be useless to do anything else, is said to have finally severed the man's leg and then carried him to one of the parlor cars. Both rescued and rescuer were burned, but it is said the doctors said the rescued man's life would be saved. The names of the men concerned could not be learned in the general excitement about the wreck.

The list of known victims is as follows:

#### The Dead.

CHANDOR, ROLAND, 17 years old, Plainfield.  
CUMING, THOMAS, 30 years old, real estate agent, Plainfield.  
FLYNN, EDWARD, Plainfield.  
HAND, HARRY G., Plainfield.  
PATTERSON, HARRY, Dunellen.  
REED, GEORGE E., Scotch Plains.  
SAYER, C. G., Paterson, agent for the National Express Company, Broadway and Liberty Streets, New York.  
THAYER, C. F., Secretary to Thomas C. Platt, Watchaug Avenue, Plainfield.  
WILLIAMS, EDGAR W., 44 years old, lawyer, with offices at 135 Broadway, New York; East Sixth Street, Plainfield.  
Several unidentified charred bodies.

#### The Injured.

APGAR, RAY, Dunellen, N. J.; seriously injured about head.  
ABBOTT, MILDRED, 22 years old, Somerset Street, Plainfield; internal injuries.  
BELCH, Mrs., both legs broken and body crushed.  
BROKAW, E. M., West Second Street, Plainfield; slightly cut and bruised.  
BROKAW, Miss CORA, his daughter. Slightly injured.  
CANAVOE, FANNIE, Mauch Chunk Avenue; body and face cut.  
CHANDLER, GEORGE, spine injured.  
CLARK, EDWARD, 22 years old, East Ninth Street, Plainfield; both legs cut off below knee; will die.  
CORRINE, JAMES, Plainfield; cut about head; not serious.  
CUTTER, LIZZIE, Sanford Avenue, Plainfield; cut about head.  
CUMING, Mrs. D., Somerset Street, Plainfield; injured on head and body.  
DUNHAM, CHARLES, Lincoln, N. J.; face cut; not serious.  
DUNN, WILLIAM, Norwood Avenue, Plainfield; right leg broken and face cut.  
DAVIS, CHARLES, engineer on Philadelphia express; will die.  
FORCE, GEORGE, twenty-three years old, East Pleasant Street, Plainfield. Cut about head.  
FREEMAN, J. H., badly injured about head and body; will die.  
FIREMAN on Philadelphia express, name unknown. Both eyes destroyed.  
FREDRICKS, WILSON, Dunellen, N. J. Badly scalded about body.  
GEDDIES, WILLIAM, of Dunellen; both legs broken.  
GEORGE, EDWARD, nineteen years old, Craig Place, Plainfield. Bruised about face and body.  
GEORGE, H. R., forty-five years old, father of Edward George. Leg broken, scalp injured.  
IRVING, PERCY, Dunellen; legs crushed.  
ISING, A. M., fifty years old, Plainfield. Internal injuries.  
KANNEN, FREDERICK K., Mauch Chunk Avenue, Plainfield; leg crushed; body badly cut.  
LOCK, FRANK, twenty-eight years old, Fairview Avenue, Plainfield. Slight bruises.  
LONGWORTHY, CHARLES, injured all over body.  
QUOLEAN, Mrs., bruised about body and head.  
RADFORD, ROY, twenty-three years old, Park Avenue, Plainfield. Cut about face.  
REIGHTON, EVERETT, both legs cut off.  
RYAN, MARY, injured about head.  
SAMPSON, WALTER, twenty-one years old, East Fifth Street, Plainfield. Cut and crushed about body.  
TANGBORN, HARRY, twenty-two years old, Lincoln Avenue, Plainfield. Injured internally serious.  
VAN VENTER, WILLIAM, cut about body and face.

When the engine ploughed into the rear car it partly split the car open and at the same time lifted it up. In this manner those in that car, besides being crushed, were scalded and burned by the steam from the engine. This car was the first to take fire, and most of those in it are dead. Some of them are believed to be beneath the overturned engine.

Those who were in that car suffered less than the others, although more were killed. Their end was, in most cases quick, and when the fire started they soon were suffocated.

Those in the car ahead, which was lifted on to the rear car, were those who suffered the greatest agony. For ten minutes before the flames reached them from the



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car below and behind them they were enveloped in smoke and steam, and it was there that the worst sights were witnessed. The imprisoned ones begged for death to end their agonies. They besought those who were laboring to get them free to crush in their heads with the axes. Some begged for water, others raved, more prayed, while some cursed and prayed alternately.

Some of the women from the Royal Blue Line went into hysterics, and more fainted at the awful sights. Later they made their way into Westfield, and were cared for. Some of them had to be sent to Plainfield and Elizabeth for medical care, as there was no doctor available, all being at the wreck.

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