



Train wreck, Ringdale, 1905

April 1, 2020

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . . while dusting

Transcribed from the Hughesville Mail newspaper on Oct. 12, 1905:

“On Friday the citizens of this place were startled by the intelligence of an accident having occurred on the Williamsport and North Branch railroad near Ringdale. David Davis, the engineer, having been killed and Cleon Karschner, Fireman, seriously injured.

“The accident was the explosion of the boiler of engine No. 16 attached to train no 326 southbound from Towanda to Halls.

“The train had just passed Ringdale when the passengers were startled by a heavy concussion, followed by the sudden stoppage of the coaches.

“When the train stopped the passengers hastened to the platform to learn the cause of the trouble, and were greeted with calls for help, and following in the direction from which they came found a man lying alongside the tracks, who proved to be Fireman Karschner, terribly scalded.

“The engine was found completely blown to pieces, portion of it being thrown many hundred feet distance, cutting down trees in its pathway.

“At first nothing could be found of engineer Davis, but after an hour's search in the darkness, the accident occurring about 7:30 o'clock, his lifeless body was found several hundred feet beyond where the train stood.

“Mr. Karschner was conscious when found, although suffering terribly from his injuries, and stated that he was at the tender firing when the explosion occurred, and was unable to account for the accident.

“Physicians from Laporte and Dushore were hurried to the scene of the accident by special conveyances and gave the injured man attention.

“A special train was sent from this place and the passengers and train crew as well as the dead and injured men were brought away from the scene of the wreck.

“The train ran through to Williamsport, taking Mr. Karschner to the hospital in that place, where he was given attention, but his injuries were such that he died about 3 o'clock Saturday afternoon.

“The remains being brought to this place on Sunday morning [illegible] undertaker Houghton.

“Mr. Davis was aged 50 years and is survived by his widow and three children. He had been in the employment of the company for a number of years, having been previously employed by the Reading company, and was considered a careful and efficient employee.

“Mr. Karschner was aged 30 years, and leaves a widow and three small children.

“The wrecked engine was one of the best on the road, having been overhauled at Baldwin's Locomotive Works a year ago at an expense of almost \$3,000, and had been inspected within the past 60 days by an expert inspector.

“Odd coincidences have arisen in connection with the violent death of engineer Davis. Thirteen years ago on Oct. 5 – an anniversary within a day – John Getzinger, of Catawissa, his brother-in-law, was instantly killed, his engine through a misplaced switch, going up a coal dock at Catawissa, and tumbling to the ground, pinned him beneath the wreckage, and scalded him to death. Nine years ago John Chambers, brother of Davis' wife,

Nellie Chambers, whom he married in Catawissa twenty-six years ago, was killed at Delano, on Coxe railroad, by the explosion of the boiler of the engine of which he was engineer.

“The funeral of Mr. Karschner was held on Tuesday morning, the services being held in the United EV Church, conducted by Rev. M>M>Mummy, and was largely attended, Washington Camp, P.O.S. of A., of this place attending in a body.

“In the afternoon services over the remains of Mr. Davis were held in the M.E. church conducted by Rev. L.M. Brady, the attendance also being very large. A delegation of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, of Sunbury, of which the deceased was a member, attended the services.

“Many handsome flor offerings covered the caskets of the deceased.”

We’ve written before about the tragedies of the occupations of old so that here is just another example. To see more about the railroads of Sullivan County or simply visit the museum, you can make an appointment by phoning 570-946-5020 or emailing [museum@scpahistory.com](mailto:museum@scpahistory.com). Also, visit our web site at [www.scpahistory.com](http://www.scpahistory.com) and please like us on Facebook.