

THE LATE
CAMDEN AND AMBOY RAILROAD ACCIDENT:

A REVIEW

OF THE

Camden and Amboy Company's Report

ON

THE ACCIDENT OF THE 29th OF AUGUST, 1855.

BY

A BURLINGTONIAN.

Why "place the responsibility elsewhere and upon persons much less interested"?—REPORT, p. 10.

BURLINGTON, N. J.

1855.

The testimony, quoted in this Review, is chiefly that published in the *New York Times*, that being the report of the testimony most convenient at the time of writing. The author has not, intentionally, misstated a single fact. What testimony may hereafter be produced, he knows not. His remarks are made in view of the testimony hitherto made public, or furnished by the Company.

The name of the author is not printed, simply from the motives which control usage under similar circumstances. If any person wishes to ascertain the author's name, it may be ascertained from the Mayor of the City of Burlington.

September 24th, 1855.

ACCOUNT OF A TERRIBLE ACCIDENT ON THE CAMDEN AND AMBOY RAILROAD.

It appears that the 10 o'clock A.M. train from Philadelphia proceeded as usual on the way until they got about a mile above Burlington, N. J., when they discovered the train from New York coming down at full speed. The eastward bound train then attempted to back on to a sideline to let the New York train pass, when the track was crossed by a carriage and two horses, driven by Dr. Heinakin, of Columbus, N. J. The horses were caught by the hindermost car, knocked down and crushed to death. The Doctor was thrown out and made a very narrow escape, the carriage being shivered to pieces. This collision caused the rear car to be thrown off the track and dragged some distance, breaking it up, and dragging it after the emigrant car, which was smashed to pieces. The major part of the passengers in the rear cars were instantly killed or seriously injured.

The scene that ensued baffles all description. The consternation was so great, that a panic of horror seized on all who survived the awful calamity. Twenty-three persons were killed, and about seventy wounded most shockingly—some so badly that recovery is almost impossible. That night the remains of the dead were carefully deposited in coffins, furnished by the authorities of Burlington. The spectacle at the Town Hall was of the most painful character, fifteen coffins being arranged around the centre of the room. Almost every house in Burlington contained one or more of the sufferers by this terrible catastrophe. During the entire day that usually quiet town was the scene of the wildest excitement.

Four of the cars were smashed to pieces. In some cases the mutilation was horrible. One man had his arm torn off in a fearful manner. Another had an arm also torn off and thrown some distance up the embankment, and his legs separated from his body, his heart and viscera strewn along the track for a great distance. One or two others were buried in the sand, and others were crushed to death between the sleepers. One man had his scalp taken off; another had his thighs broken. Several others had arms broken and were lacerated and bruised in the most dreadful manner. The women and children on board of the train appear nearly all to have escaped. We have but four or five females reported among the dead.

The killed and wounded are as follows: Died on the spot, 19; at Bordentown, 1; at Burlington, on Saturday, 1; at Philadelphia, 1. Total 22. Not likely to live, 1; critical 3; left for home, 4; doing well at Burlington, 20; injured, but returned to their respective homes, 51. Total killed and wounded, 101.

The total number of passengers on the train is said to be 193; so that more than half were either killed or wounded.

THE ACCIDENT AT BURLINGTON.

YESTERDAY we visited the scene of carnage. Crowds of workmen were engaged in clearing away the broken fragments of the ruined cars, and searching among the ruins for the numerous valuables of which the concussion had despoiled the ill-fated passengers. Of the four cars thrown off the track, not one is worth repairing—the wreck has been total. We have never witnessed many railroad accidents, but we can hardly conceive of any so overwhelmingly destructive of car-work as this.

The accident occurred a short quarter of a mile above Burlington, at the first road which crosses the track—the same crossing where a man was killed in his wagon a year or two ago, while attempting to pass the track. The train, with Mr. Van

Nostrand as conductor, was backing down towards Burlington to avoid a collision with the train from New York, then close at hand. In doing so, it came in contact with the horses of Dr. Heinakin, who was attempting to cross the road. How far the Doctor was guilty of gross carelessness in thus exposing his own life and the lives of those in company with him, as well as those in a large train of passenger cars, we cannot now say. This contact with the horses threw the rear car, now the first advancing one of the train, off the rails. Here it ran for some distance without injury, until the embankment, about five feet high, commenced shelving off. The wheels outside the rail of course followed this downward curve until the car was entirely off the track. The second car was thrown directly across the first, and the third went completely through that, and stopped diagonally across the road. The fourth car followed, and plunged headlong into the third. The way car was also very much injured, but none of the passengers in it were killed. It is to this remarkable jumbling up of the cars that the enormous loss of life is to be attributed.