

BAD WRECK ON RARITAN RIVER R. R.

Runaway Cars Crash Into Passenger
Train—No One Hurt

The worst wreck in the history of the road occurred on the Raritan River Railroad near Robert's Crossing on Tuesday morning and no one was injured. The wreck was a collision between two runaway freight cars and the road's passenger train and damages in excess of ten thousand dollars resulted. Traffic on the road was completely tied up while the wrecking crews labored twenty-four hours straight through to get the right of way clear for trains to pass.

Although the road is protected by automatic block signals the wreck occurred in spite of their protection. The signals were in good working order and the operation of them did prevent the accident being even more serious than it really was. And with these signals and the protection ordinarily given, if the cars had started their wild flight down grade just a few minutes earlier or even a few minutes later, there probably would have been no accident.

It seems that while a freight train was drilling cars from track to track at Sayreville Junction, two of them, an empty tank car and a loaded coal car, got away from the train crew and rolled down grade on a siding. A slip switch intended to protect the main track in just such an emergency was set wrong and the cars ran on out upon the main track. Gaining speed on the down grade of a mile or so the runaways had reached a speed of perhaps forty miles an hour when the crash into the locomotive of the passenger train ended the flight.

The passenger train in charge of Conductor R. E. Lee Morgan and Engineer James Yetman had passed the positive stop automatic signal just above Bergen Hill station before the cars got onto the main line. The next signal the passenger train met was near Robert's Crossing and this showed the stop and proceed with caution warning. The train came to a stop and then went on, that being the usual procedure. Firemen Stockton from his side of the locomotive saw the speeding runaways as the passenger train rounded the curve at what is known as "Red Cut." He shouted to the engineer, the latter applied the brakes and all but brought the train to a halt. Then both men leaped to safety just a few seconds before the tank car crashed into the engine. The front end of the locomotive and the tank car reared up in the air and rolled over to the side and off the tracks entirely. One of the trucks of the tank car was driven under the wheels of the locomotive and the tank car was practically destroyed so far as further usefulness is concerned. The coal car was also badly damaged but was rerailed and hauled out of the way. The tank car was simply rolled off the tracks to get it out of the way of the wrecking crews. The locomotive did not topple over entirely but stood at an angle of about thirty degrees and was almost at right angles to the rails.