

LOOKING BACK

100 Years Ago From The Pages of The Walton Reporter

100 YEARS AGO,
SATURDAY, MARCH 31, 1923

THE WEEK IN WALTON

**What We Are Talking About at
the County Hub**

DELAY PHONE HEARING

**Green Wood Causes Fires—
Home Bureau Leader Resigns—
Power Co. Has New Manager.**

The thermometer went down to three degrees below zero Wednesday night, Mar. 28.

Chicken thieves have been busy at West brook recently. Saturday night the chicken coop of Adelbert Groat was entered and about thirty of Mr. Groat's choice Wyandottes stolen.

Robert Flynn and Edwin Piper have received their discharges from the U. S. navy. Both have been stationed on the Pacific coast, Flynn on the U. S. S. California and Piper on the U. S. S. Oklahoma.

Wednesday evening, April 4, at 8 o'clock the annual meeting of the Walton fire department will be held in the firemen's quarters in Walton Hall. Officers for the ensuing year will be elected at this time.

A representative of the state tax commission will be at Walton Hall from Saturday, March 31, to Wednesday, April 4, to assist taxpayers in making out the state income tax forms. Returns must be filed and the tax paid by April 15th.

Miles Wood, an employee of the Beerston acetate factory, recently got some hot ashes in his eye and has been incapacitated from work. Dr. Smith attends him. Charles Hooks, another Beerston man, while cutting sap wood Saturday cut a bad gash in his leg with the axe. Dr. Gould dressed the injury.

Members of the village and firemen's boards met in Walton hall on Wednesday evening with representatives of various companies who have pump engines for sale. The merits of the American-La France, Stutz, Mack, Childs and F. W. D. were given by the agents present. No action in the matter of purchase will be taken without further investigation.

With a view to having a revised time table effective Sunday, April 29, the trainmaster's office of the O. & W. in Middletown has prepared the tentative changes which will be submitted to J. H. Nuelle, general manager for final endorsement. The time table will be changed to set some of the trains one hour ahead to agree with daylight saving time.

L. V. Rose of Oneonta has been appointed superintendent of the southern division of the Southern New York Power company. The division comprises the electric plants in Walton, Deposit and Hancock. Mr. Rose was formerly assistant to Fred Haverly, who recently resigned as general manager of the company. He will move his family to Walton about May first if he can find a suitable house to rent in Walton.

Mrs. Delilah Bucknam has resigned as Home Bureau leader for Delaware county to accept a similar position in Tioga county with headquarters in Owego. Mrs. Bucknam has been the Home Bureau leader in Delaware county since 1919. She is an indefatigable worker and the success of the work in the county has been largely due to her efforts. A meeting of the Home Bureau executive committee will be held Saturday in Walton to choose Mrs. Bucknam's successor.

The burning out of chimneys and stovepipes caused by the continued use of green wood during the winter resulted in the calling out of the Walton fire department on three occasions this week, twice on Tuesday and the third time on Thursday morning. The first call

came Tuesday noon from the former co-operative creamery building on West street. In the evening an alarm was sent in which brought the firemen to the double house at the corner of Townsend and Union streets, owned by Mrs. I. D. Smith and known as the Wood property. About 7:30 o'clock Thursday morning the firemen were called to the Engert house, near the novelty works. No damage was done in any instance.

At the request of A. G. Patterson, attorney for the Walton People's Telephone company, a further adjournment of the hearing in the matter of the proposed increase of telephone rates was granted by Commissioner Charles G. Blakeslee of the Public Service Commission in Binghamton Monday. The date for the hearing was fixed at 11 a. m., Monday, April 23, when the telephone company will present the data upon which it asks for the increase. The village and Chamber of Commerce, which filed objections, will be given time to prepare and present their evidence. Mr. Patterson also asked for a modification of the order suspending rates to permit of the installation of four-party lines at the same charge as for the present two-party service, \$21 a year. In objection it was stated that following the suspension order the company had proceeded to change patrons from two to four-party service without their consent until stopped by an appeal to the commission. This Mr. Patterson denied, declaring that the total changes since December numbered only about twenty and were made only where necessary and with the consent of the telephone users affected. Commissioner Blakeslee directed that an order modifying the suspension of rates be entered to permit the installation of four-party service where the written consent of the telephone patron was secured.

BRAKEMAN KILLED IN WRECK WHEN TRAINS MEET HEAD-ON

**Utica Flyer Crashes Into Way
Freight When Orders are
Disregarded**

**Failure of Flyer to Wait at Niles' Switch Results in Collision
in Front of Sidney Center
Creamery, Causing Death of
Brakeman Mason and Injury to
Six Others**

The Utica Flyer, south bound, and train 161, the wayfreight, north bound, came together in a head-on collision near the Maywood station Saturday evening, causing the death of one man, the serious injury of six others, and slighter injuries to a score or more of passengers on the Flyer. George Mason of Sidney, head brakeman on the wayfreight, had his life instantly crushed out. He was coupling the air hose between the fourth and fifth cars behind the locomotive of the wayfreight when the impact sent the engine and head box cars on the freight hurtling back up-on him.

The Severely Injured.

The men seriously injured are: George E. Boyd, 166 Linden avenue, Middletown, left hand mangled making necessary amputation of the member near the wrist.

John H. Brown, Sidney, fireman on the wayfreight, both legs fractured near the ankles.

George McCoy, Norwich, baggage-master on the Flyer, injured about the back and bad scalp wound.

George H. Goodrich of Third brook, Walton, injured about the hips and back when thrown against a seat in the Flyer.

Rev. John Taylor of Bible School Park, Binghamton, head painfully cut when thrown down the aisle.

J. E. Fitzpatrick, mail clerk on the Flyer, severe bruises and contusions. He remained on duty with his car until relieved early Sunday morning when he returned to his home in Hamilton.

Passengers on the Train.

A score or more of passengers on the Flyer received bruises more or

less severe when thrown about by the impact of the collision. A partial list of those on the train follows:

Walton: Mrs. I. D. Nutt, Mrs. Mae Malley, Miss Lucia W. Nutt, Mrs. Alfred Fellingner, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Felter, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph M. Conrow, Edgar A. Wills, Ray Brazee, Bruce Palmatier, who was returning from Schenectady, William Taylor of Union street, Floyd Sutcliffe, Miss Inez Harvey, Miss Jessie Stewart.

Sidney Center: Mrs. N. H. Walley and two daughters, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Pomeroy, Mrs. E. W. Finch.

Merrickville: Marcus Benedict, Clyde Johnston, Frank Johnston and Mrs. E. V. Teed.

Franklin Depot: Fred B. Wilber, Mrs. Albert King and two daughters, Mrs. William Stilson and daughter, Hester.

Other passengers included Fred Scott, Oneonta; Mrs. Arba Morse, Albany; Attorney Henry B. Sewell of Sidney; Dr. and Mrs. Harry Hodges, of Owego, who were en route to Sidney Center; Attorney Arthur F. Curtis, Delhi; Mrs. R. J. Graham of Rummerfield, Pa., who was on her way to Walton to visit her son; Mrs. Oliver Johnston, Utica; Mrs. Izora Caldwell, Seneca Falls, N. Y.; E. F. Jester, Oneonta; W. J. Gilbert, 18 Division street, Oneonta; James C. Aitken, Andes; Mrs. Dora Rowe, Ithaca; William Marshall, Norwich; Charles J. Gannon, Delhi.

Engineer Forgot His Orders.

The Utica Flyer Saturday evening was running nearly on time, leaving Sidney about four minutes late. The train was made up of engine 22, a combination baggage express and mail car, and two coaches. Both passenger coaches were well filled, there being six or eight men in the smoker and about forty persons in the day coach. The collision occurred about 8:06 p. m.

The train was in charge of Engineer George W. Obenauer of Norwich and Conductor Byron A. Ducolon of Utica, who was doubling from Norwich to Delhi in place of Conductor Gould. At Sidney orders were given Conductor Ducolon that the Flyer should hold the main track at Niles' switch, just north of the Maywood station, until the wayfreight took the switch. Copies of the order were given by Ducolon to Engineer Obenauer and Baggage-master McCoy, it is stated.

The blame for the accident seems to rest upon Engineer Obenauer, who forgot his orders and ran past Niles' switch, and upon Conductor Ducolon, who under the rules should have noticed that fact and applied the air brakes. At the south end of Niles' switch, some forty-six rail lengths north of the Maywood station, is a caution signal. At the inquest Wednesday Engineer Obenauer admitted that the signal was set against him but his orders to hold the main had completely slipped from his mind.

As the Flyer left the rocky cut between Niles' switch and the creamery at Sidney Center, or Maywood as the railroad station is called, Engineer Obenauer saw the wayfreight directly in his path. The freight had been cut in two places and was coupling up preparatory to starting ahead to take the switch as the members of the crew were anxious to reach their homes in Sidney.

Brakeman Caught Between the Cars.

There was no escape. Obenauer applied his brakes but too late. Brakeman Mason was making a coupling four cars behind the engine on the freight and as the two locomotives met headon with a crash of steel he was caught between the freight cars as the engine and head of the freight train was hurled back. Brakeman Boyd, who had been helping Conductor Titus couple a car back of the engine, had his left hand caught and severed below the fingers. Dr. Lee of Sidney Center dressed the injury and stopped the loss of blood, but later in the Norwich hospital amputation further up the arm was deemed necessary.

Passengers state that apparently the Flyer had slackened its speed but little for the stop at Maywood station. Those who were standing in the aisles, or moving toward the door to alight were thrown headlong and those in their seats were

pitched forward against the seats ahead. Had the wayfreight been moving ahead fatalities among the crew and passengers on the Utica Flyer would have been certain, but the give of the freight lessened the force of the impact felt by the Flyer passengers, severe though it was. None of the cars of either train left the rails. Only the pony trucks on the locomotives were torn loose and the fronts of the engines battered and smashed.

Conductor Charles Titus of the wayfreight was standing a few rods away from the point where Mason was killed and was talking to F. B. Anderson, the Sidney Center feed dealer, when Anderson saw the Flyer approaching. Anderson shouted at Mason, who was connecting the air but the latter did not hear him or failed to realize his danger in time.

Fireman Pinned Fast.

Fireman John Brown of the freight was at work at his fire and was caught between the engine and tender. He was held tightly after the accident and it was some fifteen minutes before a jack was secured and the engine moved enough to free Brown. Brakeman Boyd was coupling near the wayfreight engine. His left hand was caught and severed.

Trainman Thrown Down Aisle.

Engineer Elmer Robinson of the freight and Engineer Obenauer and Fireman H. F. Paden of the Flyer were not injured. David O'Brien, trainman on the Flyer, had just opened the smoking car door to call the Maywood station when the shock came. He was hurled headlong down the aisle and was cut about the face.

Conductor Ducolon had been talking with a passenger near the center of the day coach. At the inquest in Sidney Wednesday he testified that he noticed that the train had run past Niles switch but could not reach the cord to apply the air without getting upon a seat and as these were all occupied he started to the front of the car where the cord was in reach but the collision came before he could apply the emergency brakes. He was thrown and struck on his head, being badly dazed for a few minutes after the accident. Rev. John Taylor, a student in Bible School Park, Binghamton, who preaches at Sidney Center, had arisen in readiness to leave the train. He was thrown and sustained a serious scalp wound.

Thrown Over Two Seats.

Attorney Henry B. Sewell of Sidney took the Flyer to Sidney Center where he planned to spend Sunday. Mr. Sewell states that he had arisen and was standing in the aisle when the impact came. Trainman O'Brien had opened the door of the smoker and shouted 'Maywood' when the trains came together with a crash. Mr. Sewell was thrown over the backs of two seats and struck on his shoulders against the third, breaking the back of the seat. He suffered no broken bones but was severely lamed and bruised.

Mrs. Dora Rowe, an aged woman, who was returning to Sidney Center from Ithaca, was painfully injured. She was taken to the home of W. A. Gifford Saturday night and Sunday was moved to the home of her son, John Rowe, in Sidney.

Walton Passengers' Stories.

Mrs. I. D. Nutt, Mrs. Mae Malley and Miss Lucia W. Nutt, all of Walton, were seated near the center of the day coach. They had a seat turned and Miss Nutt was riding backwards. The shock of the collision snapped off the top of the steam pipe which ran under one of the seats and threw it into Miss Nutt's lap.

Ray Brazee of Walton was a passenger in the smoker. He had the seat ahead of him turned over and was resting his feet upon it. He was thrown forward so that his knee struck the back of the seat. Looking around he saw Trainman O'Brien picking himself up while his hat lay in the aisle where he had fallen. Brazee was one of the first passengers to leave the train and he hurried up ahead. The two engines were standing about twenty feet apart. Mason's body was found lying just ahead of the forward trucks of a freight car with his head resting on the rail. Brazee and another man carried the body to the station.

F. B. Anderson, who had been standing near Conductor Titus, told the Walton man that when he hurried to Mason's side after the smash the brakeman called him by name, but death must have followed immediately as Mason was badly crushed about the abdomen. In the crash Brakeman Boyd's left hand was caught and crushed in such a way that the fingers and part of the hand were severed. Both Boyd and Fireman Brown showed great nerve in spite of their suffering. Brown was pinned down in such a way that it required about fifteen minutes to extricate him. A jack was finally secured and the locomotive and tender pushed apart sufficiently to permit of his release. Both of the fireman's legs were broken near the ankles.

McCoy Buried Under Trunks.

In the combination baggage and express car trunks and express boxes were hurled about like baseballs. Ralph Charles of Walton, the express messenger, has no recollection of the actual shock of the collision. He was laid out by a blow on the head and recovered consciousness to find himself on the floor of the car and heard J. E. Fitzpatrick calling to him asking if he was hurt. Charles could not answer for a minute and then managed to get up and look for Baggage-master George McCoy who was working in the front of the car. The 180-pound safe and all the express matter had been thrown past Charles against the trunks in the front of the car and McCoy was buried under the trunks and boxes. A heavy trunk lay across his back and a jagged gash was laid open on his forehead. Mr. McCoy is one of the oldest men on the road having years of service behind him and the shock of the accident as well as the actual physical injuries received told more upon him than would have been the case with a younger man. J. E. Fitzpatrick, the mail clerk, suffered painful bruises and contusions. He remained in the mail car until after five o'clock Sunday morning. He has been off duty since to recuperate from his injuries.

Had Plenty of Doctors.

Dr. Lee of Sidney Center rendered first aid to the wounded. He doubtless saved the life of Trainman Boyd who was fast bleeding to death from the wound on his hand. The physician worked quickly and with efficiency. The Boy Scouts were also on hand to help. In a short time physicians arrived from Sidney and Unadilla. The special train from Walton carrying Drs. Morrow, Smith and W. R. Gladstone and Miss Mildred Mathewson, Red Cross nurse, did not reach Sidney Center in time for the physicians to be of aid as before their arrival the injured with Dr. Loomis in charge, were taken to Norwich by a special train. Two coaches were taken from Walton on the special train and the passengers who wished to proceed were transferred to these, the train reaching Walton after midnight. The wrecking crew from Norwich had the tracks cleared so that trains could pass about five o'clock Sunday morning. Engine 22 made the trip to the Norwich shops under her own steam while No. 161 was side-tracked in Sidney.

George Mason's Funeral.

George Mason, the dead brakeman, was 34 years of age. He leaves a wife and two sons. Silas Mason of Walton is a brother. Mr. Mason was a member of Sidney Lodge, No. 801, F. & A. M., and was its senior deacon at the time of his death. The funeral services were held from the M. E. church in Sidney, Tuesday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock, conducted by Rev. A. D. Finch. Mr. Mason was formerly of Union Grove, Delaware county. He went from there to Middletown, where he was employed at the state hospital for a time, but had been engaged as brakeman on the O. & W. railroad since November, 1907.

Both Engineer Obenauer and Conductor Ducolon have records of long and blameless service.

Dr. Grover A. Silliman of Delhi held a coroner's inquest in Sidney Wednesday morning. Representatives of the interstate commerce commission and the public service commission have also been investigating the accident.