

Coroner's Inquest Resumed To-Day

Evidence Relating to the Sad Event Being Taken at the City Hall— What Was Brought Out

The inquest into the accident at Stephens Crossing was resumed at the city hall this morning by Coroner F. L. Sutton and the jury. There were a number of spectators present, who followed the proceedings closely.

The first witness called was Guy Terry, fireman on the Erie engine which stood at V N tower when the Shawmut train passed on the night of the accident. He testified that he was in the tower and distinctly remembered the Shawmut train passing the tower, about 7:20. His attention was called to it by the crossing signal of the engine whistle, which he distinctly heard. The signal post was about 10 car lengths from the tower. He did not hear the bell ring. He knew nothing of the accident until they reached Canaseraga. They left 30 or 40 minutes after the train passed. It was snowing slightly at the time.

Map of the Crossing

Arthur L. Northrup, of Olean, civil engineer of the Shawmut, was the second witness called, and produced a blue print map of the crossing made from surveys and observations taken by him since the accident. The map shows the Erie tower to be 1,800 feet from the crossing and the whistling post 1,333 feet distant. Lines of vision from observations and measurements taken by him and the coroner's jury the second night after the accident show that a headlight can be seen 2,217 feet up the track at a point 50 feet from the crossing. Here there is nothing at all to interfere. At a distance of 150 feet it can be seen 1,244 feet, at 300 feet 714 feet up the track, and from that to Emery's house a distance of 500 feet. There are some bushes along the track, but the headlight can be seen through them at any of these points. There is no depression of over 2 feet 5 inches between the crossing and Emery's house. The crossing is at an angle of 26 degrees.

Several Ladies Testify

Several of the ladies who were occupants of the first sleigh were then called and gave considerable testimony. Most of it was corroborative of that of previous witnesses, and a few new points of importance were brought out.

Mrs. Stephen Thomas was the first witness called. She had sat with her back to the team and was caring for her daughter, who was ill. She did not see the headlight, but heard some conversation about it. Was not looking for it as she relied upon the driver. Did not know of the train on the Shawmut until it had passed them. Could see back to the other sleigh and did not think it was over five sleighlengths behind, when they reached the crossing. Mrs. Smith and others stood up to warn the second sleigh. Did not remember that there was any response. Could not say if driver whipped up horses but did not think they changed their gait, as she could see them plainly. Did not see them jump into the air until sleigh was struck.

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Mrs. Roy Hackett

Mrs. Roy Hackett testified that she was sitting second from the driver's seat with her back toward the direction the train came from. She did not notice the distance between the two loads. There was some talk about a train when they were near the track but she did not notice it until they were near the crossing. She was not clear about what happened after that until the other sleigh was struck. She remembered Mrs. Smith and others calling back to the second load. There was a light snow falling. She did not hear the whistle or bell on the Shawmut train.

Mrs. Charles Hackett

Mrs. Charles Hackett sat fourth from the driver with her back toward the approaching train. She did not hear about a train or look for one until they were at the crossing. She then saw the headlight and switch lights. They were quite a ways away and she was not frightened. A few flakes of snow were falling. Did not see the other load until just before it was struck. She did not hear a whistle or bell signal for the crossing. She heard several people call back when the second load was very near the track. Did not notice the horses.

Miss Alice Hackett

Miss Alice Hackett, the next witness, sat in the rear of the sleigh with her back toward the second load and facing toward Hornellsville. She thought the second load was some distance behind when they reached the crossing. She did not look for a train or hear any thing of it until they were near the red barn. When others called back she also called, but did not see how near the open sleigh. She did not hear the whistle or bell of the engine.

Miss Jennie Worden

Miss Jennie Worden, who sat facing the approaching engine and in the rear of the sleigh, was next called. She thought the second load was not very near them after they passed Webb's Crossing. She did not look down the track until they were on the crossing, and then saw the headlight. After they had crossed she noticed the other load near the crossing and feared they would be struck. She did not hear the whistle or bell.

Mrs. Elsie Wilson

Mrs. Wilson sat third from the driver and facing the approaching train. She heard some talk about the train and heard Mrs. Smith speak of it. The driver said he thought it was a switch engine. She saw the headlight just before going on the crossing. The other load was five or six lengths behind. Nothing was said to them about stopping until after crossing the Erie tracks. The driver said he guessed they were coming and started up his team to get out of their way. The ladies called out to them after crossing the Erie tracks. They did not appear to hear. She did not hear the whistle or bell, although she was listening for signals. The horses seemed to jump just before they went onto the track. Their load stopped to see if the others got across. No one spoke of going back to stop them. No one tried to do so. Mr. Petty was the chaperone of their load.

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An Adjournment Taken

As there were no other witnesses read, an adjournment was taken a few minutes before noon, until 1:30 p.m.

Afternoon Session

The investigation was resumed this afternoon pursuant to adjournment. There was again a large gathering of spectators, including a number of ladies.

The first witness called was John Triftshauser, who was operator in V N Tower on the night of the accident. He testified that he remembered the Shawmut train passing the tower but did not remember hearing the train signal for the crossing. Had observed at different times during the past two years occasions when the Shawmut trains had not whistled for this crossing. Did not know whether they signaled on this occasion. He was receiving orders and paying no special attention to the Shawmut train. They frequently whistled right back of the tower.

H. Myers, the driver of the first sleigh, was then recalled. He testified that when he was half way between the sluice and the crossing he looked up and down the track for approaching trains. He did not see anything. Later on he saw a headlight. Did not see two headlights until he was on the Erie. Did not hear anyone ask him not to cross before reaching the Shawmut tracks. Did not stop the team until he reached the red barn. Did not think there was time for anyone to go back and stop the second sleigh after his team had crossed the Erie track.

Charles E. Petty was recalled. He saw both headlights first when they were on the Shawmut track. Mrs. Smith called attention to the train and the driver said he thought it was a switch engine. Could see other lights and the lights of the city. The Shawmut headlight was nearly as far beyond the other engine as the latter was from the crossing. Did not stop until they reached the red barn. Slowed up over the Erie crossing and anyone could have gotten out but could not have reached the second sleigh in time to stop it.

To Take Depositions

A short time before 3 o'clock a recess was taken while the coroner, district attorney, stenographer, Foreman Hollands and Juryman Van Orsdale went to take the depositions of the injured women, Mrs. Rowley, Mrs. Clark and Mrs. Bond, and Driver Elisha Quick.

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