

OBITUARY

Smith Deremer

The Hackettstown Gazette
January 9, 1891

DEAD AND BURIED.

The remains of Morris Lunger and Smith Deremer, the two victims of the railroad accident at Paterson on New Years, were brought here on the 9:40 passenger train on Saturday night and taken to their late places of residence on Railroad Avenue and Church Street, from whence their funerals took place on Tuesday morning, and their bodies were conveyed to their last earthly resting place. Mr. Lunger being taken by a special train to Phillipsburg and Mr. Deremer to Hackettstown. The funeral services of Mr. Deremer were conducted by Rev. William D. Smith, of the Baptist Church, and those of Mr. Lunger by Rev. C. D. Nott, of the Presbyterian Church. The funerals were attended by a large number of people. Morris Longer, the engineer, was formerly a member of our Common Council and leaves host of friends in this community. He was about 90 years of age and leaves a wife and two children to mourn his loss. Smith Deremer, the fireman, was 35 years of age and had been a resident of this place about 7 years. He also leaves a wife and two children. There is something unusually sad about the affliction this family has been called to pass through. Only a few months ago the father of Mrs. Deremer was instantly killed by the explosion of a powder mill at Mount View not far from Paterson. - *Washington Correspondent*

The Warren Republican
January 9, 1891

ACCIDENT ON THE D. L. & W.

Engineer Morris Lunger and Fireman Smith Deremer Killed.

Last week's issue contained a short account of the railroad wreck near West Paterson last Thursday night. Below we give the full particulars

The ill-fated train was No. 7 express to Binghamton, N. Y., which left Hoboken at 7:45 o'clock. The accident Was caused by the train jumping a switch near the turntable. The train was in charge of Conductor Burt McCappell, of Binghamton, N. Y., and consisted of engine 134 and five cars, one baggage, one combination, one passenger coach and two sleepers. They left Hoboken on time, and were running at the rate of about thirty-five miles an hour, when the engine jumped a switch about half a mile above the West Paterson depot.

A number of fiat cars loaded with pig iron were side-tracked on this switch, and Into these the engine crashed, smashing two of the cars to fragments and sending the bars of pig-iron flying in all directions. The engine jumped the track, but the cab and the rest of the train were thrown bodily off the rails and dumped into the turn-table.

The accident occurred so quickly that none of the train hands or the passengers had time to jump for their lives. Engineer Morris Lunger and Fireman Smith Deremer, both of Washington, were carried along with the engine, and the moment it left the track they were caught in the falling ironwork, and before they could extricate themselves there was a rush of escaping steam. The engineer's left leg was crushed below the knee by a portion of the demolished cab falling on it. The fireman escaped any broken bones, but he was considerably bruised about the head and body and he also sustained a slight cut on the back of his hand.

The men cried for help, but before any one could come to their assistance they were being slowly scalded by the escaping steam. The cars were filled with passengers and the first knowledge they had of anything wrong was when the locomotive struck the obstructing flat cars and they were given a terrible shaking. The wildest scene of confusion ensued. Fortunately the two sleepers and the passenger cars were

in the rear of the train and escaped demolition, but the combination and baggage cars next to the engine were reduced to splinters.

There was a number of passengers in the smoker, which was thrown over on its side. Instantly there was a lively scramble to get out, the people jumping through the windows in their anxiety to reach terra firma. Brakeman Bernard Foster, of Scranton, was in this car, and in jumping out he struck his head against the corder of one of the flat cars, inflicting an ugly gash. The only occupant of the baggage car was the baggage master, James Scanlon, of Binghamton, N. Y., and he sustained a bad injury to his thigh by being struck with a heavy trunk. Conductor McCappell, who was in one of the sleepers at the time, escaped injury.

The cries of the engineer and fireman attracted the attention of the uninjured trainmen and passengers, who ran to their assistance, and by dint of considerable work extricated the sufferers, but not before they had been scalded. Engineer Lunger is a grizzled veteran railroad man, and he was by far the worst injured, his left leg being completely smashed just below the knee. Fireman Deremer had no bones broken, but the steam had peeled the skin off his face and body until the flesh was raw. The engineer was even worse than his fireman, great patches of skin hanging loose upon his forehead, neck and breast. The wonder is that they were not killed outright.

The injured men were carried into one of the sleepers and cared for temporarily. The locomotive was simply a huge mass of twisted iron, the woodwork having been all destroyed. The turn-table was filled with charred timber, all that was left of the upper part of the cab. The trucks of the smoker and baggage cars stood on the tracks, but the rest was splintered wood piled up in a confused heap. The frightened passengers gathered in the passenger car, but none of them were injured, although they all received a good shaking up. Fireman Deremer talked freely of the affair. In answer to a question as to why he and the engineer did not jump and save themselves, he said:

"That's alright for fake heroism, but with a train running at thirty-five miles an hour, it's a different thing altogether. We were sweeping along serenely and before we knew that we had missed the track we were pinned down with the debris and the steam was scorching the skin off us."

The switch which caused the disaster was clogged with ice, thus allowing the train to jump it and dash into the flat cars. After midnight the injured men were removed to St. Joseph's Hospital. Engineer Morris Lunger, of the ill-fated train, expired about midnight on Friday, and Fireman Smith Deremer, who was not thought to be seriously injured, died at two o'clock Saturday morning. Engineer Lunger had his left leg badly mangled, but it was not amputated as it was not thought that he would be able to survive, but early Friday evening both he and Deremer were getting along nicely and were expected to recover. They were both married, and their wives and families were at the hospital and saw them pass away. The dead trainmen resided at Washington. James Scanlan, the injured baggage master, is expected to be out in the course of a few days.

Engineer Lunger was a large man, weighing 265 pounds, and was one of the best engineers on the Lackawanna road. He was a good Christian, and spent the greater part of New Year's day previous to the accident in the Y. M. C. A. rooms at Hoboken. The deceased was in the prime of life, about sixty years of age, and was renowned among the employees of the road as being full of courage. He was the first one pulled out of the ruins of the wrecked locomotive, and when informed that his fireman was still missing told his rescuers to look for him, remarking that he himself was good for a few hours yet.

The men received the best of medical attendance at the hospital and everything possible done towards their recovery. County Physician Johnson was informed of the death of the two injured men and ordered Coroner Browne to hold an inquest in the case. The Coroner empanelled a jury on Saturday and they viewed the bodies previous to their being sent to Washington.

The remains of Smith Deremer whose father and three brothers reside in this place, were brought here for interment on Tuesday afternoon. Mr. Lunger was buried in Phillipsburg at the same time.