

**TRAIN ACCIDENT 1886**

**JUST BEYOND BAY VIEW**

**PETOSKEY, EMMET COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

## A SAD ACCIDENT -- 1886

On Monday evening the north bound freight collided with the Harbor Springs passenger train on the curve just beyond Bay View wrecking both engines and several of the freight cars. These were but few passengers on board, and notwithstanding the force of the shock tore the seats loose from the floor and piled them in the forward part of the car, none of them were seriously injured though all of them were badly shaken up and some bruised. Among the latter were Mrs. Skinner mother-in-law of Conductor Heath, and Robert Matthews, of Petoskey, who had a scalp wound. The engineer and fireman of the freight jumped from No. 2 and barely saved themselves. Reed, the engineer of No. 40 on the passenger, called to his fire man Charles Corner and jumped from the cab; but for some reason the latter clung to the engine and suffered injuries which resulted in his death this morning. He leaves a distracted wife whose presence is demanded at the bedside of her two children who are lying dangerously ill at Harbor Springs. We have examined into the cause of the collision with care and find it difficult to fix definitely the responsibility for the disaster.

Briefly stated, the facts are these: The second section of No. 9 which is the north bound freight, was in the yard north of the depot, and had got an order to go. Dell Phelps, the day operator, and a man well known for the careful and faithful performance of his duties, had relieved the assistant at the key to enable him to get his supper. The Harbor Springs train was at the Junction and Conductor Heath wired the train dispatcher for orders to run in. The dispatcher asked Phelps if No. 9 had gone yet, and the latter asked Mr. Griffis the night operator, who had just come in, to go out on the platform and ascertain.

Mr. Griffis stepped out and saw the work train which had just backed in on the siding above the depot, and supposing it to be No. 9 reported accordingly, which report was made to the dispatcher at Grand Rapids, and the latter sent the order to Heath at the Junction to run in.

The accident proves one thing clearly, and that is the necessity of a double track between the Junction and Petoskey. Thirty-four regular trains including the bath trains run over the track every day in the busy season, and on the mile between Bay View and Petoskey the number is increased to over 60 trains a day on the single track. Certainly the risks are very great with such an amount of traffic to handle from the Grand Rapids office, and there ought to be another track laid before the beginning of another season.

Extracted from Petoskey Record dated August 11, 1886.