



Centerville, Pa.- April 2, 1920, Train No. 544 - Baltimore Bound

April 2, 1995  
Good Friday

#### The Centerville Train Wreck

Today, after a period of 75 years, I am reminded of an incident that happened on this date in 1920. It involved a Pennsylvania Railroad train numbered 544, Baltimore bound.

This incident remains very vivid to me, when as a 7 year old at that time, I can recall just where I was when the message was received in notification of the happening. I was standing at one of my favorite spots in the Telegraph Operators office, near the semaphore signal operation levers in the station at Hanover Junction. The operator on duty this evening, for the middle trick (4:00 P.M. to Midnight) was Edward C. Henry, receiving the message that train No.544 had derailed and plowed into the bank just north of Centerville.

The train passed Hanover Jct. at 4:54 P.M. and was due to stop at Glen Rock at 5:01 P.M. However, it didn't make it to Glen Rock.

Our family had to change their minds as to planned activity for this GOOD FRIDAY evening. Most Friday evenings usually meant a train ride to Glen Rock to do some grocery shopping at the local Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company store. This was accomplished by using train No. 994, 5:34 P.M. at Hanover Jct. and returned on train No. 995, 8:07 P.M. to Hanover Jct.

Why train usage? No family car as yet. This particular Friday provided no grocery shopping trip, for 994 made no appearance this evening. Seems that there was an obstruction preventing 994's passing the scene.

On this fatal date, No. 544 was double-headed with engineer Walter DeHuff in charge of the lead engine. He met his death in this wreck. Engineer Charles Wilson was in charge of the second engine.

A passenger aboard the train that evening, Millard L. Kroh, a personal acquaintance of mine, told of the two engines lying on their sides, the Baggage car sideways across both tracks and the passenger cars blocking both tracks, with the Pullman cars still in an upright position.

Historic records indicate there was only one passenger on the injured list.

Lacking specific information as to the cause of the accident, it is commonly agreed by officials that a piece of the lead locomotive broke, falling to the rails, causing the derailment of the locomotive.

Roger E. Shaffer