

John E. Thrush (- 25 Oct 1892)

Thrush. Suddenly on October 25, 1892, at 6:45 a.m., John E., beloved husband of Columbia G. Thrush in the 27th year of his age. Funeral from the residence of his father-in-law, No. 412 8th street southwest, Thursday, October 27, at 3 p.m. Friends and relatives invited to attend. (Baltimore papers please copy).

The Evening Star, October 26, 1892

A Railroad Tragedy

The Inquest Today in the Case of Brakeman Thrush

Deputy Coroner Schaeffer today held an inquest at the fourth precinct station in the case of John Thrush, the brakeman who was killed early yesterday morning by being struck by a locomotive on the Pennsylvania road between the Navy Yard tunnel and the Pennsylvania avenue bridge.

The first witness called was the engineer of the train which struck Thrush, Henry Boyer, who gave his residence as 137 D street southeast. The witness testified to being engineer of train 304 of the Baltimore and Potomac road and to having left the depot here at 6:36 yesterday morning with the passenger train north. Midway between the Navy Yard tunnel and the Pennsylvania avenue bridge, said the witness, is a block signal station right on the curve. The station is somewhat difficult to see.

"Yesterday morning," said the witness, "I was looking out for the signal and when I saw that the block was all right I pulled open the throttle and at almost the same time I saw a man standing right on the track almost twenty or twenty-five feet from us. We were going about twenty or twenty-five miles an hour. He was standing sidewise to us and facing a train on the opposite track. I applied the brakes and pulled the whistle."

"At the first blast the man raised his head and made an effort to get off the track, but we were too close and he was struck, almost immediately. I judge he was struck by the bumper on the left side."

The witness testified that the air brakes were in good condition and that at the rate he was going it was impossible to stop inside of 200 or 300 yards.

He did not know whether he had really struck the man until he saw him lying in the ditch. He stopped his train, backed, and reported the accident to Wilmington, leaving the body with the crew of the freight.

What Mr. Fenton Saw

The second witness was Engineer Fenton of the freight train of which Thrush was a brakeman. He said he was on the Pennsylvania avenue siding and just pulling out for Washington. Just as he was getting out of the siding he saw the conductor of his train (Sheets) and Brakeman Thrush standing together. As he passed the conductor jumped on the train. "Just about this time," said the witness, "I heard the approaching train blowing a danger signal. I looked out of the window and saw Thrush standing on the north bound track. Almost instantly the other engine struck him. He was thrown almost thirty-one feet, right up against our train." Witness did not know why Thrush was standing on the track, probably, however, to get aboard the end of the train. So far as he knew the dead man was perfectly sober.

H. Swan, a flagman, and Chas. Sheets, conductor of the freight were also examined.

Several jurymen and the coroner asked the witnesses questions in an effort to bring out the reason for the curve on the railroad at this point. Witnesses did not seem to know, except to get the road into the city.

The Verdict.

The verdict of the jury was of accidental death, that is "that the said John Thrush came to his death about 6:45 a.m., October 25, 1892, on the track of the Baltimore and Potomac railroad, of concussion of the brain, the result of being struck by a locomotive. From the evidence we believe that the accident was unavoidable and not due to neglect on the part of the engineer or the employees of the road."