

Charles Burnett - 1875-1906

Mattoon Journal - 12-27-1906

Charles Burnett Killed in an Interurban Wreck

Mattoon Young Man Meets Death This
Morning While Passenger on
Champaign-Danville Line

CAR STRUCK BY BIG FOUR ENGINE

MISHAP OCCURS AT 8:40 O'CLOCK
AT CROSSING OF LINES IN THAT CITY -
NO ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FUNERAL.

DEAD.

Charles Burnett, Mattoon.

INJURED.

Robert D. Tinkler, St. Louis, Mo.

E.M. Garver, conductor, of Champaign.

Elias Whatkins, Fithian.

Special to Journal-Gazette.

Danville Ill., Dec. 27.- In a wreck that occurred at 8:40 a. m. today at the crossing of the Big Four and Illinois Traction company Champaign-Danville line, between an engine and coach of the Big Four and an interurban car Charles Burnett of Mattoon was killed and Robert D. Tinkler of St. Louis so injured that he will die. Several other passengers on the interurban car were badly injured.

IS A MYSTERY

Just how the wreck occurred is a mystery that is now taking the attention of the officials of the Illinois Traction Company and the Big Four. The Champaign-Danville interurban line crosses the Big Four in what is known as Vermilion Heights or West Danville. An engine and one coach between Danville and Lyons, where the Big Four yards and the smelting works are located. The crossing is protected by an interlocker, and the mystery is that both the engine and coach on the Big Four and the interurban car could be occupying the crossing at one and the same time.

WITHOUT WARNING.

So far as can be learned, the wreck occurred without warning. The interurban car was east bound, having left Champaign at 7 o'clock a. m. The Big Four dummy train was on its return trip to Danville. The engine hit the rear end of the interurban car, plowing right through that portion of the car that was on the crossing.

BURNETT UNDER ENGINE.

Charles Burnett boarded the interurban at Champaign en route to Danville. Just where he was sitting in the car when the accident occurred is not known. After the crash Burnett and Tinkler were found under the pilot of the engine. Both men were unconscious. As soon as it was possible the injured men were taken to the hospital, but before the hospital was reached Burnett died without regaining consciousness.

HOW IDENTIFIED

No one on the car knew Charles Burnett, and the only means of identifying him was by letters that he had in his pockets, and the marks on his outer garments. The envelope on one letter bore his name and address, and the letter was signed "Helen," evidently being from his sister, Mrs. G. H. Cokendolpher, who lives at Mattoon. His outer garments bore the mark of the maker, M.L. O'Connor, a tailor in Mattoon.

OTHERS INJURED.

E.M. Garver. conductor of the Interurban car, badly crushed.
Elias Whatkins, Fithian, hand badly hurt.

Charles Burnett, one of the victims of the wreck at Danville was a Mattoon boy, being a son of Mrs E. N. Burnett, and a brother of Mrs. G. H. Cokendolpher, who resides at 1216 Wabash avenue, and Rolla Burnett, foreman of the machine shops of the Peoria division of the Illinois Central in this city.

For several years Burnett was a telegraph operator, being promoted to dispatcher in the Big Four offices in this city. After leaving the service of the Big Four he became an operator for commission firms. Until about a year ago he was located at Clinton and went from there to Champaign, where he had since held a position. He was in Mattoon on Christmas to visit his mother and other relatives.

Up to this time no arrangements whatever have been made for the funeral but it will probably be held from the Congregational church in this city and the remains interred at Dodge Grove cemetery.

G. H. Cokendolpher, a brother-in-law of Mr. Burnett, went to Danville at noon for the purpose of authenticating the news that came by telephone that the young man had been killed.