

Source: The L'Anse Sentinel
L'Anse, L. S., Mi.
January 2, 1892

Saturday

A Fatal Wreck

About eight o'clock Saturday morning a fatal wreck occurred between Humboldt and Champion caused by a head end collision of east bound copper train No. 32 and west bound train No. 53.

No. 53 was late at Humboldt and asked the train dispatcher at Marquette for help against No. 32. Their proper passing place was Champion and by holding No. 32 there five minutes it would save No. 53 a half hour. When No. 32 pulled into Champion she did not stop at the depot, as the order board was not out, but went on down to the junction switch and took on some cars. Immediately after No. 32 passed the depot the Champion operator received word that orders were coming. He then threw out the order board and notified Marquette of the fact. Orders were then received to hold No. 32, as No. 53 would pass at that place.

Now before No. 32 passed out her crew should have looked back to see if the order board was out. They claimed they did and that the board wasn't out, or if it was, the storm was so dense they couldn't see it, so pulled out having the right of way as an east bound train over other trains of the same class.

William Reany, engineer of No. 32 says, that they were traveling along at a pretty rapid gait when something loomed up ahead of them. There was no time to jump so giving a cry of warning slid off from his seat.

The next instant he was flying through the air from the shock while his face was bleeding from cuts caused by flying glass. The case was about the same with Herrick, only he was scalded.

The others hurt were: Helliger was on No. 53's engine, caught between cab and engine, instantly killed. Payette and Van Oppen were found under the tender, one was unhurt and crying for help. The other Van Oppen, lay buried under the coal, having met instant death.

Two engines, three box cars, two gondolas, one or two flats and about 10 20-ton ore cars were mixed up in the crash. The remainder of each train escaping. The damage to the engine was the most serious feature of property loss, as the repairs will cost between \$3,000 and \$4,000.