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In Their Own Words

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Railroad Wreck *from May 21, 1921 Eagle Quill, EHS Newsletter, Fall 1991*

Railroad Wreck Claims Life of Bernard Marsh

On Saturday afternoon at about 2 o'clock, a disastrous railroad wreck occurred three miles west of Eagle. The train was the regular way freight which left Eagle at 1:48, west bound, and contained sixteen cars loaded with merchandise and other freight. When about three miles west of Eagle, a tank car containing oil left the track and ran along on the ties for 20 rods when the car ahead and ten cars following left the track and plunged down the embankment on either side of the road bed in a tangled mass. Cars were tipped upside down and the heavy steel rails were twisted like wire.

Bernard Marsh, head brakeman, was riding on top of one of the cars and when he saw the inevitable, he jumped, only to be struck by the car on which he was riding and be hurled to his death. People residing nearby who witnessed the accident phoned to Eagle, and soon Drs. Fitzgerald and Schmidt arrived at the place, but Mr. Marsh was dead when he was taken from the wreckage, having sustained a broken neck, collar bone and thigh, and was bruised about the face. Conductor Raymond, Engineer Bonham, Fireman Frank Rodgers, and Brakeman Connolly escaped injury. A tramp who was riding on one of the cars ahead of the tank car also escaped injury.

One car was loaded with cattle being shipped by Sol Engle from Genesee to Whitewater, and all but one escaped injury. A wrecking crew soon arrived, and Sunday morning trains were running over the track as usual.

Bernard Marsh was born in Caledonia, Wisconsin April 12, 1890, and was a son of Joseph and Lena Marsh. The family moved to Eagle and owned and occupied the farm now owned by Sam Engle. Here Bernard grew to manhood and here attended school and later became interested in railroading. When the family moved to Milwaukee a few years ago, Bernard went with them and made his home there.

Twelve years of his life were spent as brakeman and conductor on the Prairie du Chien division, passing through Eagle, his boyhood home. Bernard was a model young man, of quiet disposition, and had many friends here who mourn his untimely and accidental death.

The body was brought to the Mealy undertaking rooms and then sent to Milwaukee, to the home of his parents. The funeral was held Wednesday morning. There were many floral tributes from relatives and friends and those in the railroad service.

He leaves surviving him, besides his parents, one sister, Mrs. Fred Zunker, five brothers, John, Herman, Alvin, Lawrence, and Joseph, all at home.

The Quill extends sincere sympathy to the bereaved family in the loss sustained by the untimely and sorrowful death of their beloved son and brother.