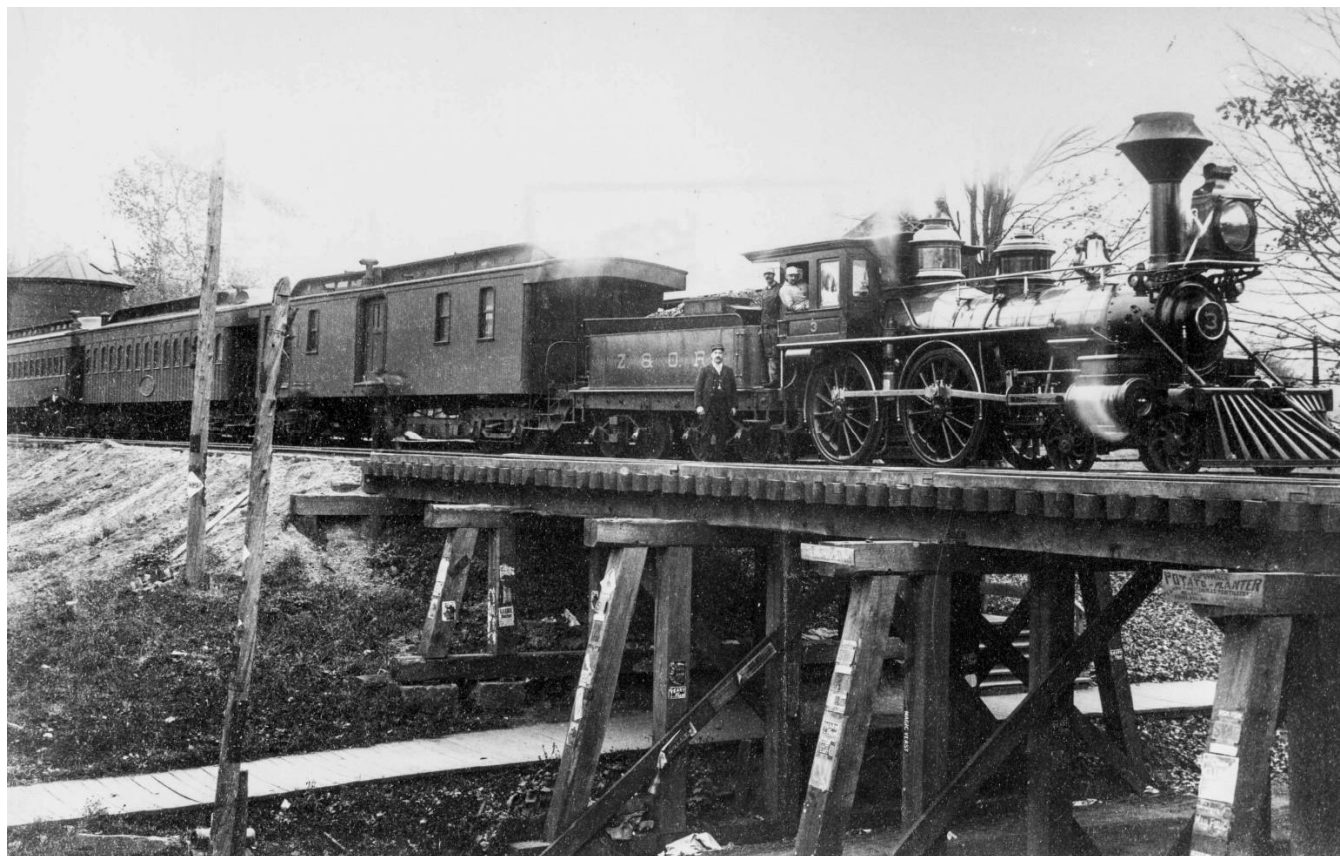


The Tallow Light



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Cover photo: Zanesville & Ohio River Railroad train. S. Durward Hoag Collection, Marietta College Special Collections.

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Band Excursion Ends with a Bang

By William J. Showalter

“The ‘Marietta Band’ has been engaged to give a concert at ‘Gant’s Park,’ Zanesville, Sunday afternoon, July 25th, and for the occasion Z. & O. R. Ry. will run a special train leaving Marietta 7:30 A. M.; returning leave Zanesville 7 P. M., arrive home 10 P. M. The rate will be \$1.00 the round trip.” – *The Marietta Times*, July 21, 1897

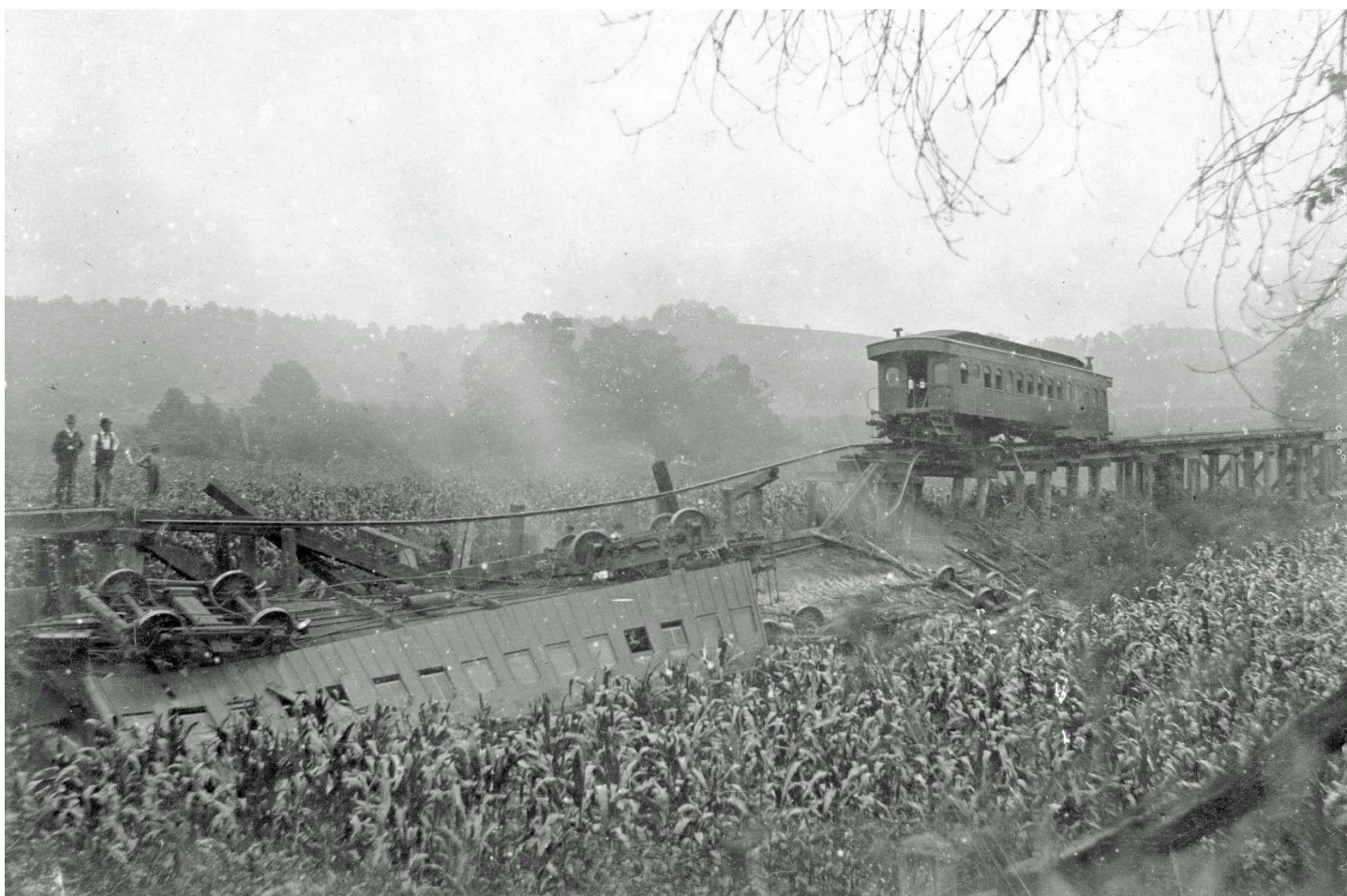
Announcements such as this one caused a great deal of interest in Marietta for the band concert in Zanesville. This type of excursion was a popular way to spend warm summer days. The day before the concert it was reported that a “large party of excursionists” was expected to depart the Union Depot in Marietta the next morning. One newspaper pointed out, “The trip up the Muskingum is not

long enough to be fatiguing, is made in daylight and through one of the most beautiful valleys in the country. Gant Park is a delightful resort at which to spend a day.”

The Marietta band was no stranger to Zanesville and was expected to “call out a big audience in that city.” Mariettans were encouraged to not lag behind “outsiders” in appreciating the local band.



Zanesville & Ohio River Railroad train. S. Durward Hoag Collection, Marietta College Special Collections.



Unidentified wreck on the Zanesville & Ohio River Railroad. From newspaper descriptions, this appears to be the wreck at Fearing's trestle in July 1897 of the excursion train returning from Zanesville. S. Durward Hoag Collection, Marietta College Special Collections.

Local newspapers did not get a chance to report on how much those going to Zanesville enjoyed the day – train rides, band concert, picnicking, and other activities. Presumably, it was quite an enjoyable excursion...until the train neared the city on its return trip.

At about 9:30 p.m. the train “met with a mishap on Fearing’s trestle” about three and half to four miles above Marietta. This would put the train in the vicinity of present Oak Grove.

When the train crossed the Fearing trestle, the engine, baggage car, and two coaches safely passed onto the trestle. But some timbers of the north end of the trestle had rotted and gave way under the weight of the train. The last two coaches fell from the collapsing section of the trestle about 15 feet into a corn field. Both

landed on their roofs and the third coach caught on fire almost immediately. It was quickly consumed, leaving just ashes and the metal carriage on which it ran. The fourth coach initially caught fire from the flames of the other coach, but this was quickly extinguished.

Miraculously, no one was killed. Most of the passengers in the two coaches escaped with just scratches and bruises, although a few did have broken bones, deep cuts, and other more serious injuries.

The rear truck (wheel assembly) of the second coach was derailed but the car stayed on the trestle, though it could not be immediately moved.

People in the undamaged cars instantly came to the assistance of those in the derailed cars. All passengers were extracted from the

two coaches, including the burning car. After a brief survey of the wreck, the engine crew drove the engine to Marietta to summon Dr. Willis, who served as the surgeon for the railroad. The doctor took other physicians with him on the returning engine to attend to the injured. Many other people came out from town to see what had happened and give what help they could.

In the light of day on Monday morning, the cause was confirmed as timbers on the northern end of the trestle being rotten and breaking under the railroad ties. The Zanesville & Ohio River line had already begun to repair it. Expectations were that the entire trestle would have to be rebuilt after the accident.

The wreck was the first passenger train accident on the Z. & O. R. Railway since it was built, though the financial loss from this accident was expected to be heavy. Local calls for a railroad, as an alternative to slower steamboat service, led to construction of the Z. & O. R. up the Muskingum River valley. The railroad company promoters were helped in their efforts by large subscriptions of money and grants of rights of way by valley residents. The railroad entered Marietta on July 1, 1888.

Unfortunately, the Z. & O. R. suffered "numerous vicissitudes" over its history as an

THE Z. & O. R.
RAILWAY.
—
THE SHORT LINE TO
ZANESVILLE, COLUMBUS,
CHICAGO,
ST. PAUL, MINNEAPOLIS,
—AND—
ALL POINTS WEST!

Time card in effect May 13, 1895.
Central Time

Going North.		Stations.	Going South.	
No. 72.	No. 70.		No. 71.	No. 72.
5.40pm	9.20am	Zanesville...	7.50am	2.55pm
4.33	8.11	.....Malta.....	8.50	3.58
4.10	7.48	....Stockport....	9.12	4.24
3.35	7.15	... Waterford ...	9.43	4.58
3.13	6.53	.....Lowell.....	10.04	5.19
3.06	6.46	.... Rainbow....	10.11	5.20
2.40	6.20	.....Marietta....	10.40	5.55

All trains daily except Sunday.
Nos. 70 and 72. both make close connection
at Zanesville with the B. & O., and Pan Handle
trains for Columbus, Chicago and the
West.
J. C. HARRISON, Gen. Pass. Agt.
HOPE SUTOR, Receiver

Zanesville & Ohio River Railroad advertisement; *The Marietta Times*, July 21, 1897.

independent rail line. It was finally merged into the Ohio & Little Kanawha Railroad, but that did not end its troubles. Those were solved in 1902 when the Baltimore & Ohio purchased the line and made it part of the B&O's Newark Division.

Many in the area in later years knew this as the line on which the doodlebug ran from Parkersburg, West Virginia to Zanesville, Ohio, for many years, providing regular and frequent passenger and freight service all up and down the Muskingum River valley. Regular train

service was also offered on this line for year, and today freight service is still provided on the remaining stretch of the railroad up to the industrial facilities on the site of the former

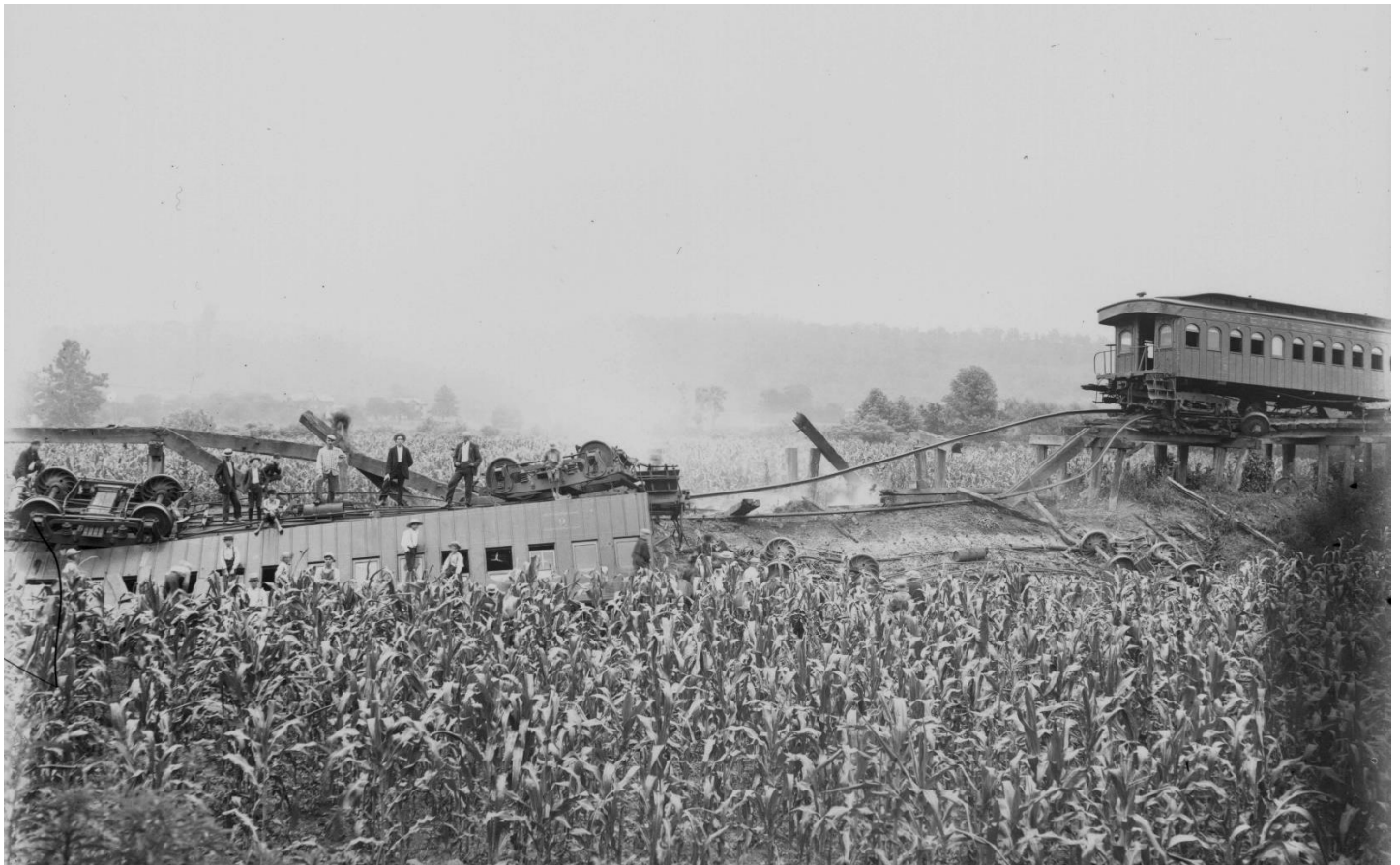
Muskingum River power plant above Beverly and Waterford, Ohio. The track above that location was removed years ago after regular service to Zanesville ceased. □

Sources:

Marietta Daily Leader; July 24, 26, 27, & 28 1897.

The Marietta Daily Times; July 21 & 28, 1897.

History of Washington County, Ohio; H. Z. Williams & Bro., Publishers; 1881.



Another view of the unidentified wreck on the Zanesville & Ohio River Railroad that is presumed to be the July 25, 1897 wreck of the returning band excursion train. S. Durward Hoag Collection, Marietta College Special Collections.