

## WELLINGTON DISASTER

Ivan Doig, "When death wore white at Wellington," Pacific Search, IX (April, 1975) p. 8-10.

Train Number 27, the Great Northern's fast mail, eased to a halt at the Cascade Tunnel about 5:30 in the morning. Mail clerk Alfred B. Hensel later remembered that he peered from his mail car and saw snow coming down "like somebody was picking a chicken." It looked to Hensel as if the snow already lay eight or nine feet deep. Where workmen were shoveling snow off the roof of a nearby roundhouse, the bank they were slicing away loomed high above their heads.

Ahead through the storm and on the same track with the mail train sat Number 25, a passenger train of seven cars and a big 12-wheeled locomotive.

Both trains were westbound to the depots of Everett, Seattle, and Tacoma along Puget Sound. Since leaving Spokane about three hours apart the evening before, each train had clattered across the hill country of eastern Washington and up into the Cascade Mountains. Now they had come through Stevens Pass and were stopped just down the western slope from the summit. Between the trains and their depots sprawled a snow slide at Windy-Point, some five miles ahead.

Henry H. White, a paper salesman from Minneapolis, awoke in his sleeper berth on Number 25 after 9:00 that morning of February 23, 1910. He discovered that the train was at the east portal of the railroad's long Cascade Tunnel and probably would be there for awhile. He and the other passengers trooped through the swirling snow to a railroad cook shack for breakfast. They had no way of knowing it, but they would be eating their meals there the rest of that day and the next day as well.

Thirty-eight men, nine women, and eight children were passengers on Number 25. In the group were housewives, salesmen, lawyers, ranchers, an aspiring authoress, and a sprinkling of miners, shepherders, and other laborers. They had in common a growing exasperation with the winter storm and the railroad men who could not free them from the snow. Conductor J. L. Pettit soon began to hear their exasperation.

While the passengers fretted and grumbled, railroad men attacked the slide with rotary plows. James H. O'Neill, superintendent of the Cascade Division, was overseeing the attempt to buck through the slide which had come down at Windy Point sometime in the night of February 22. Each winter, O'Neill took his private rail coach into the Stevens Pass area and lived there to fight it out with the storms and snow slides.

He later pointed out that in his two and a half years in charge of the Cascade Division, he had put more than 4000 trains through the mountains in snowstorms - and before February 23, 1910, none of his trains on that run had been delayed more than 24 hours.

O'Neill had another run of history he was banking on as his crews slugged away at the snow slide. The Great Northern Railway, last of the historic lines to be built all the way across the West, began service through Stevens Pass in 1893. In the years since, railroad men had found that storms as fierce as this late-season blow were not unusual in the Cascades, but they

dwindled away after a day or two, probably three at the very most. O'Neill would explain that he thought the odds were in his favor that this day old storm was on its way out as his men moved against the slide at Windy Point.

Counting on unplugging the tracks soon and sending passengers and mail on their way to Puget Sound, O'Neill ordered his crews to bring the trains through the Cascade Tunnel. At the western portal was a triangular shelf in the mountainside where the trains could be moved off onto passing tracks parallel to the main line. Also at the site was a hotel where the passengers could be fed, and a few railroad sheds and bunkhouses. The little cluster of buildings was called Wellington.

About 7:00 pm on February 24, the passenger train at last was dug free from the drifts that had held it for more than a day and a half and steamed through the tunnel to its siding at Wellington. Around 11 pm, the mail train followed and pulled alongside on an outside track.

The two trains now stood together under a high, broad mountainside with a slope of approximately 25 degrees. As salesman White described it, "I don't know just how high the mountain is, but

it was one of those cases where you had to throw your head back to look up to see the top of it. It was some mountain, aH right."

Some mountain, and thick with snow. "It had the appearance simply of a big, immense blanket of snow," White said. "The mountainside was a very beautiful sight. The snow had fallen so long, and so much of it, that it had covered up all the blemishes or disfigurements, and it was just a big, solid mass of pure white snow. It was a sight that you could not pass without being attracted to; you would have to look at it."

The passengers did look at it and were uneasy. But bringing the trains through the tunnel was the first real movement in almost two days, and the optimistic could take heart from that.

Then one of O'Neill's rotary plows broke down when it hit a stump in the snow slide covering the tracks at Windy Point. The disabled plow had to be brought back to Wellington and another sent out. When the replacement plow reached Windy Point a fresh avalanche lay across its path.

And the storm was refusing to die. Not that night, nor the next morning. O'Neill's plow butted into the slide all day of February 25. Progress was slow, both because of the depth of the snow and because the plow had to return to Wellington to fill its boiler with water every four hours or so.

The passengers, now in their third day on the mountain, grew edgier. Several demanded that something be done with train Number 25 - back it into the Cascade Tunnel, do anything to move it from beneath the snow field on the slope above.

Their anxiety sharpened when they heard that the night before an avalanche had swept away the cook shack where they had eaten their meals at the eastern entrance to the tunnel. The cook and

his helper were dead. The passengers realized that had not the trains been brought through to the west end of the tunnel, some of them might be beneath last night's avalanche also.

The railroad men refused to move the trains. They pointed out that if Number 25 was backed into the tunnel and the locomotive kept under steam to heat the coaches, there would be danger of smoke suffocation. From Superintendent O'Neill on down, the Great Northern men then and later maintained that they believed the train was in the safest spot on the mountainside. No one could recall a slide precisely there in all the winters the Great Northern trains had been bulling through the Stevens Pass route.

Around 3:00 am on February 26, the weary rotary crew finally punched through the slide. O'Neill and his men returned to Wellington for the trains.

After refueling, the rotary lumbered back down the tracks to make sure the line was clear beyond where they had conquered the Windy Point snow mass. Passengers and train men at Wellington waited to hear when the trains could start down the mountain behind the plow.

Near noon, the rotary came back. The track at Windy Point was clogged again with yet another avalanche. The rotary again took on coal and water, and O'Neill led his crew back to the latest slide. They chewed into the packed snow with the rotary until late afternoon. Then the plow once more headed back toward Wellington for refueling. Before long, it stopped. Ahead sprawled still another avalanche.

Now the plow was bottled, an avalanche on either side, without the coal needed to fight its way out. O'Neill slogged into Wellington to call for help. There he found that the telegraph line had gone dead.

Twice in the past four days, the railroad men had broken through the snow and debris heaped on the tracks at Windy Point. But against their expectations, if either the storm nor the slides would let up. The plows were out of commission and the telegraph useless. And there still was a train in the snowdrifts at Wellington with 55 passengers aboard.

The next morning, February 27, O'Neill and two brakemen started for Scenic, the next section point on the line, to send for more plows and men. "We waded in snow up to our waists, and changed off breaking trail," O'Neill recalled. The trio fought their way the four miles through the drifts, and O'Neill telegraphed for two plows and 300 workmen.

Five male passengers decided to walk the four miles to Scenic as the superintendent and his men had. They made it in an exhausting, bruising effort. By now, railway laborers were walking out, too turning in their shovels in a wage dispute and slogging away from Wellington with their bedrolls on their backs. Others stayed on, fighting the snow by day and sleeping at night wherever there was available space on the passenger train.

That afternoon, passenger John Rogers witnessed an avalanche on one of the nearby mountains. The white slope rushed down as if instantly molten, snapping off trees and roaring onto the valley floor below.

The next morning, the 28th, Rogers set out on foot for Scenic with six other male passengers who preferred the risk of the hike to staying with the stalled train. Conductor Pettit, wanting to arrange for supplies to be packed in, took three railroad men and started out with the determined passengers. All made it except Pettit, who turned back.

The passengers remaining on the train harassed any available railroad official with demands that their train be backed into the Cascade Tunnel. The Great Northern men stood fast. They repeated that there never had been an avalanche where the train now stood. Clear of the guiches which chuted avalanches down the slopes and preferable to the discomfort and possible danger the tunnel would hold, the side tracks at Wellington still seemed to veteran railroaders the safest site.

After a wrangle with trainmaster Arthur R. Blackburn the night of February 28, passengers turned in for another tense night. Several, including some of the younger women, resolved to try to walk out through the snowdrifts in the morning. Train Number 25, beneath the cold snow cap of Windy Mountain a long warm burrow filled with nervous passengers and tired railroad laborers, was in its sixth night on the mountain.

In the night, the falling snow changed to rain, and a lightning storm crackled through the Cascades. Near 1:30 am on March 1, about 500 feet above the trains the snow mass slipped loose along a line as neat as if snipped by giant shears.

More than a quarter of a mile wide, the avalanche surged down the slope. The acres of snow roared over the Wellington siding gathering everything in the path. Both trains instantly were swept sideways over the mountain ledge on the crest of the slide; then the vast bulk of the following snow buried them.

The noise of moving snow ended. Under the avalanche at the bottom of the slope were the passenger train, the fast mail, Superintendent O'Neill's private car, a rotary plow, some boxcars and electric engines, and more than 100 persons.

Henry White, asleep in a berth nearest the mountain slope, recalled that he was awakened "by the impact of the snow against the side of the coach and the sound of breaking glass."

Mail clerk Alfred Hensel, asleep in the mail train between the passenger train and the drop-off to Tye Creek a few hundred feet below, remembered:

"When I came to, I found that I was pinned down with a timber or something over me in such shape that it was impossible for me to move any more than my head. After some difficulty I worked myself out of there, and I did get out on the top of the snow, and at that time all I could see, or the first thing I saw, was the lights up at Wellington, which kind of puzzled me, as before they were on practically a level with us, where the trains were, and at this time they were up the mountain....."

The railroad workers lucky enough to have been in the bunkhouse at Wellington instead of sleeping on the train descended into the ravine and started digging. A section man hiked to

Scenic and told O'Neill. O'Neill sent a message to the Great Northern office in Everett for a relief train and dispatched 50 men to hike up to the disaster scene.

They were the first contingent of a small army that would make the hard trip between Scenic and Wellington in the next several days.

Shovelers toiled into the mass of snow, wreckage, and tangled trees. Some avalanche victims quickly were found alive, including a woman deep in the snow beneath a large tree. A fortunate few had been spilled onto the top of the slide when the impact broke open their railroad coach. But mostly the searchers found bodies, more and more bodies.

Doctors and nurses hiked in and set up a field hospital in a shed at Wellington. Corpses were sledged out to Scenic. For eight days after the avalanche, the work was grim, slow, and entirely manual. The tracks were not opened until March 9, when a rotary plow broke through from the east.

By then, the statistics of the slide at Wellington were known. Of those who had been on the trapped trains the early morning of March 1, only 22 survived. The official toll of passengers and workmen, when the avalanche at last had been sifted by the shovelers, was 96 dead.

And finally, on March 12, the route to the west was forced open with blasting powder - 18 days after Superintendent O'Neill first sent a plow into the snow at Windy Point.

"Ivan Doig, "When death wore white at Wellington," Pacific Search. IX (April, 1975) p. 8-10.

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#### WELLINGTON WRECK.

Edgar I. Stewart, "The famous Wellington wreck," Washington Northwest Frontier. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1957. Volume II, p. 204-206.

On March 1, 1910, occurred the famous Wellington wreck one of the most spectacular railroad disasters in the history of the state, and for that matter probably in the history of the United States.

On the twenty second of February two Great Northern trains, Numbers 25 and 27, the Fast Mail and the Spokane Express, the latter a local running between Spokane and Seattle, left Spokane several hours behind schedule.

They proceeded as far as the town of Leavenworth where they were held for ten hours and then allowed to go on. This time they managed to get as far as the Cascade Tunnel at the summit of Steven's Pass, which was reached on the twenty-fifth.

Here they were held for two days and nights, and on the twenty-seventh were allowed to go through the tunnel to a point about four hundred yards beyond the station at Wellington, which was located at the west end of the tunnel, and where it was believed that they would be perfectly safe.

Here they were stopped because of trouble in the famous Horseshoe Tunnel which was just ahead. Here a snowplow had become disabled in attempting to clear away some of the debris from previous slides which had not only blocked the line but had destroyed a considerable section of the track as well.

At Wellington there were three banks, or rows, of tracks; the top or inside track and the one nearest to the mountain side being occupied by four locomotives and Superintendent's O'Neil's private car; on the middle track was the passenger local, with a sleeping car, two coaches, a diner, mail car and baggage car, while on the outside track and at the brink of the cliff were the four mail cars of the Fast Mail.

A great deal of snow and ice had accumulated during ten days of the worst blizzard the state had ever experienced. At times it had snowed at the rate of a foot per hour by actual measurement, and in the opinion of old timers of the region there had never been as much snow in the mountains before.

Both passengers and railway officials were aware of the danger from slides, and it had been suggested that the passenger train should be backed into the tunnel for safety, but officials expressed the belief that it was as safe where it was as anywhere,,and that in the tunnel there was the danger that it might be blocked by further slides.

Then a slide occurred behind the trains, and between them and the tunnel so that they could move neither backward nor forward. But **in** the meantime arrangements had been made to take the passengers to a place of safety. They were to be taken by trail one thousand feet down the mountainside to Scenic Hot Springs which was as far up the west side of the Cascades as trains could go.

Experienced mountain guides had been sent to Wellington to aid in getting the marooned passengers out, and two parties were taken out on the afternoon of the twenty-eighth. The beleaguered occupants of the trains had been eating two meals a day, since food supplies were running low, that the railroad boarding house at Wellington, and then returning to the cars to sleep.

On the night of the twenty-eighth of February, a terrific windstorm arose, accompanied by that rare winter phenomenon, a thunder and lightning storm, a pyrotechnic display that was characterized by the survivors as a grand and awful spectacle of the forces of nature.

The temperature was rising, and a great mass of snow and ice, possibly jarred loose by a stroke of lightning, swept down the mountainside at a quarter to two on the morning of the first of March.

This avalanche, which was over a mile in width, reaching from Wellington to a point beyond the first snow-shed, was about forty feet deep and swept all three trains off the narrow ledge on which the tracks had been built, hurling them like toys to the bottom of the canyon some two hundred feet below.

In addition, three locomotives, four large electric motors which were used to haul the trains through the tunnel, the depot at Wellington, the electric power plant, and a water-tank were swept down into the gorge, while the railroad boarding house was badly damaged.

The wrecked trains were piled on top of one another in the canyon and the wooden cars smashed to kindling wood. The snow, over forty feet deep, was packed like cement so that many of the bodies were crushed, some of them beyond recognition. The gorge was literally packed tight with snow, ice, trees, and boulders of enormous size and weight.

The snow and ice also covered the ledge on which the trains had stood and buried the wreckage so completely that it was six hours before the rescue parties succeeded in locating it. Rescue work was also hampered by the fact that the wrecking and rescue trains could not get beyond Scenic Hot Springs, and from there the workers had to make their way over a steep and dangerous mountain trail to the scene of the disaster.

The task, of rescue was also hampered by the presence of the inevitable curiosity seekers who always flock to the scene of any great disaster and seriously impede the progress of what is at best a difficult job. But in this case they were effectively checked after the first few days by the threat of being put to work if they remained.

The work of rescue went ahead steadily and courageously although the rescuers knew that they worked **in** constant peril of their lives since the threat of further slides could not be ignored.

The loss of life in this wreck has never been accurately determined. Although generally set at ninety-eight, it was probably greater. Weeks were required to rescue all of the bodies, one in fact was not found until the following June.

At the bottom of the gorge was a small stream, frozen over at the time of the wreck, but as the spring advanced and the snow and ice melted, became almost a raging torrent at times so that several bodies may have been swept down-stream and never recovered.

Among the dead were R. M. Barnhart, a former prosecuting attorney of Spokane County, Charles S. Eltinge, a well-known figure in state financial circles, and J. Brackman, the owner of a large wheat ranch, who was taking his first train ride in more than forty years.

Nor has the cost in money ever been determined, but it certainly ran well into the millions of dollars and in addition a great deal of United States mail was either lost or destroyed.

In order to blot out as far as possible all memory of the wreck, the Great Northern Railway changed the name of the station from Wellington to Tye. More important the wreck revived the idea of constructing a tunnel at a lower level with the western portal at Scenic, and the eastern at

Berne, thus eliminating several miles of dangerous trackage, including the famous Horseshoe Tunnel which had been counted such a great engineering achievement when it was originally constructed.

The idea of a lower tunnel, which had been under consideration for a number of years, had been pronounced feasible by both American and European engineers, but its construction was delayed by the outbreak of World War One, and not brought to a successful conclusion until the decade of the twenties.

Edgar I. Stewart, "The famous Wellington wreck," Washington Northwest Frontier. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1957. Volume II, p. 204-206.

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Research opportunities in Washington State.

On March 1, 1910 a snow avalanche at Wellington, Washington (near Stevens Pass) engulfed two Great Northern Railway trains.

Ninety six people died In this disaster.

The purpose of this paper Is to provide researchers with information on where to look, In Washington State, for the historical records about the event.

February 1996

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Records

Evergreen Cemetery

Everett, Washington

Seven of the Wellington train men are buried in this cemetery.

The Evergreen Funeral Home also seems to have made arrangements for four other victims. Train men buried are:

Sidney H. Jones, John E Kelly, Earl R. Longcoy, Francis S.

Martin, John K. Parzybok, Joseph L. Pettit, Louis G. Walker

The marker for Sidney H. Jones is more modern than the grave.

It says on the stone "GNRR Wellington Avalanche"

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Mount Pleasant Cemetery

Seattle, Washington

Eighteen of the Wellington dead are buried in the cemetery, including 6 unknowns. The Burial Record book for 1903 - 1934 shows that the following train men were buried after the slide. Peter Bruno, G. Christy, Luigi Cimmarusti, William Corcoran, J. D. Fox, Milton Hicks, Gus Liebert, Stephen E. Lindsey, Peter Nino, Porlowlino, Carl Smith, Vasily Suterin, Unknown #53, Unknown #62, Unknown #76, Unknown #77, Unknown #83, Unknown #90

Lindsey and Fox are buried in family plots. Both have large gray markers. All the rest were buried in Section 132 IOOF. This section is listed as owned by the "G N Railway" on the plot card on file in the office. Cimmarusti has the only marker in the GN plot from the Wellington dead.

In Section 132 is a black marker with Japanese pictorial writing on both sides and a list of 24 Japanese names in English. Mr. Edwards, the cemetery owner, says this is related to a tunnel construction accident and is not related to the Wellington slide.

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King County Medical Examiner

Seattle, Washington

The Coroners Death Record book for 1909 - 1910 has a page for each of the dead. The records for Wellington start on page 457 with G. W. Begle. Each page has the name, description of the body, home town and who the body was sent to. This book is located in a conference room to the right as you enter the lobby. Not all the staff realize this book is in the conference room. It is a large leather bound book with pages about 11 x 17 inches.

Edward W. Topping is on page 488. This is the father of William Topping (he was 2 years old at the time of his fathers death) who had the court case Topping vs The Great Northern filed on his behalf.

On Page 533 is the record for John Brockman. Also on this and the next page is the verdict of the Coroners Inquest Jury. The pages contain the verdict, list of the jury, all the people interviewed by the jury and an itemized list of the costs.

The Coroners Inquest transcript has not yet been located in King County or Washington State Archives files. This document is a typed, verbatim record of the questions and answers posed to each witness called for the inquest.

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Court Records:

King County Superior Court

King County Court House

Seattle, Washington

Court Case # 94511 - Topping vs The Great Northern

The microfilm files contain many documents dealing with topics such as: moving the trial from Spokane to Seattle, instructions to the jury, lists of witnesses, various motions, the judgment for \$20,000 in favor of Topping and details on the cost of the trial etc.

The verbatim transcript for this case is not on record in the microfilm library. The transcript was prepared for the Great Northern Railway appeal to the Washington Supreme Court.

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Washington State Supreme Court

Olympia, Washington

Court Case #1 1949, Topping vs The Great Northern

The remaining records of the Supreme court case are stored here. The records need to be delivered from a warehouse so an appointment is necessary. The records consist of one legal size file folder. In it are several 5x7 inch soft cover bound briefings presented to the court by the lawyers for both sides. There is a total of about 1100 pages.

There are letters in the file from researchers asking about the availability of additional evidence such as photographs, drawings etc. In reply letters to them they are informed that these have been destroyed. The court staff said it was common practice to destroy exhibits, 50 years after the verdict.

Washington Reports, Volume 81, page 166

This document contains the verdict of the Supreme Court  
in favor of the Great Northern.

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University of Washington Library

Special Collections

Seattle, Washington

In addition to newspapers from the time period there are

two photo collections.

The Curtis Collection with 25 photographs taken March 10, 1910 at Wellington.

The Pickett Collection has a few negatives that deal with Wellington.

The library also holds an album of Great Northern photographs, several are from the Wellington area.

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Washington State Archives

Olympia, Washington

The state archives have Wellington related documents in the correspondence collection of Governor Hay. The Railroad Commission report of 1910 has a description of safety actions that were being taken by the GN. There seems to have been an extensive report completed by the Railroad Commission, however, it is not in the archives.

The collection also contains two short telegrams to the Governor concerning Washington National Guard units volunteering to go to Wellington to assist. Also in the collection is a surveyors field book documenting the engineering detail of a survey of the site in September of 1910.

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Washington State Archives - Puget Sound Branch

Burien, Washington

This state regional archive holds extensive King County records. Relating to Wellington are items such as voting Pole Books 1920 - 1930 and precinct lists of voters eligible for jury duty. In the Assessors Tax Records are negatives for five photographs taken at Wellington in 1940. There are also Probate records and School District 116 student census data.

A microfilm copy of King County Superior Court case # 94511 is also filed here. Records indicate that the Superior Court Statements of Fact and the Coroners Inquest transcript for the Wellington investigation were transmitted to the archives, however, they can not be found.

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Libraries/Museums

Everett Public Library

Everett, Washington

The Northwest Room contains a collection of J. A. Juleen photographs. These photographs were taken shortly after the avalanche. He may have been working for the Great Northern. Other photographers from the west side were not allowed into Wellington as fast as Juleen. The collection has 12 photographs.

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## North Central Washington Museum

Wenatchee, Washington

The Oliver L. Chappel collection contains several unique items. There is the blanket that Raymond Starrett was wrapped in when he arrived at Wenatchee. He was the 7 year old who had a cut on his forehead as a result of the slide. In the collection are several letters between Basil Sherlock, a telegraph operator at Wellington, and Starrett.

Newspapers in the collection include a copy of the Seattle Daily Times of March 3 and 11, 1910. There are approximately 40 photographs in the collection. The Spring 1988 issue of the museum quarterly journal contains a personal description of how passenger L. C. Jessep walked to Scenic prior to the slide.

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## Museum of History and Industry

Seattle, Washington

Several photograph collections dealing with Wellington are in the library:

The McDonald Collection

The Webster & Stevens collection

The Wilse Collection

The J. D. Wheeler Collection

There are over 50 photographs dealing with Wellington.

A map, 22 feet long, of the Great Northern Railway between Stevens Pass and Skykomish is in the collection. This was drawn in 1894 by A. B. Wilse. The first few feet provide a detailed drawing of the switch back route and locations near Wellington. The collection also contains a portion of the Great Northern Railway, Legal Department file on the avalanche. This file contains 13 photographs taken by J. A. Juleen.

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## Washington State Historical Society Museum/Archives

Tacoma, Washington

The research library holds the Asahel Curtis negative collection. The Wellington photographs are well classified and easy to find. There are also some other unique photographs of the west side switch backs.

There is a copy of a 28 page typed letter from Basil Sherlock that provides a personal description of what he remembers happened after the slide. Sherlock was a telegraph operator at Wellington. He sent this description to Ruby El Hult in 1960. He describes his personal remembrances about the conditions and what he did to help in the first 24 hours after the slide. As with many personal recollections, there seem to be statements out of context with known facts. Ruby El Hult has written a paper pointing out many of the inconsistencies.

Also in the collection is a 3 page transcript of notes and two letters written by Mrs. M. A. Covington. These notes and letters were found with her body at Wellington.

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Washington State Library

Olympia, Washington

The state library does not have any primary documents dealing with Wellington. However they have an extensive microfilm collection of newspapers. It is very easy to see what was being said in the press about the event. The collection is easy to use and copies are easy to make.

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Washington State University, Historical Archives

Pullman, Washington

These archives contain the personal papers of Ruby El Hult, the author of the book Northwest Disaster. The first half of the book is devoted to the Wellington snow slide and is titled "White Death in the Cascades". Ruby did her research in the mid 1950's and the book was published in 1960. There are 38 boxes of papers in the collection that relate to her various books.

Two boxes deal with Northwest Disaster. In the collection are the draft manuscript for the book and two notebooks she used for information collecting. There are extensive notes from newspapers, court documents, personal interviews and coroners reports. Also there is correspondence and edited sections of the draft manuscript and book promotional materials.

The original letter from Basil Sherlock to Ruby, in 1960, is in this collection. (this letter is described in the entry for the Washington State Historical Society) There are no photographs.

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## Photographs

There are photographs of Wellington and the aftermath of the disaster on file in several of the institutions mentioned in this document. Private collections also contain a number of unique Wellington photographs.

The J. D. Wheeler photographs released as postcards seem to have been taken starting the day after the avalanche. These postcards are in museums and private collections. A group of collectors is working to compile a complete Wheeler inventory.

J. A. Juleen took photographs soon after the avalanche. He may have been working for the Great Northern. His photographs were also found in the Great Northern Legal Department files.

Asahel Curtis went to Wellington on March 10, 1910 and took a series of photographs. His negative collection is at the Washington State Historical Society in Tacoma, Washington.

A. B. Wilse took photographs in the Stevens Pass/Wellington area in the early 1890's and as late as 1900. He was employed by the Great Northern Railway to make a detailed map of the line between Stevens Pass and Skykomish which was issued in 1894.

J. A. Turner photographed Wellington in the mid 1920's.

Public institutions with photographs are identified below.

Everett Public Library, Everett

Museum of History and Industry, Seattle

North Central Washington Museum, Wenatchee

University Of Washington, Seattle

Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma

A database with over 200 photographs of Wellington has been compiled by several historians and collectors. Copies are available form the author.

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## People Who Know About Wellington

There are a great number of people in Washington State who know about Wellington. Many are willing to discuss Wellington with interested people. In doing this research the author has met many wonderful people who are interested in sharing information.

Several individual projects are underway that will increase the awareness of Wellington. The Iron Goat Trail will reach Wellington in 1999. If you have a specific interest in Wellington please contact the author for a appropriate referral.

### People Who Were at Wellington

Many people tell stories about a relative or friend who had a relative or friend at Wellington at the time of the avalanche. These stories can get very confusing and it becomes hard to understand who was involved at Wellington on March 1, 1910.

The author has created a Wellington Who's Who with over 350 citations. The document was developed from peoples names being cited in various publications. These documents include court records, books, telegrams, letters, cemetery records etc. Each time a person was mentioned a entry was made in the database.

If a person was cited more than one time they are entered each time they were cited. Various spellings may have been used and the spellings and other inconsistencies have not yet been resolved.

Copies of the database are available from the author.

### Telegrams

There are a number of telegrams about the event in collections.

The majority are held by individuals.

The telegrams deal with the conditions prior to the event, the announcement of the event, requests for aid and status of the rescue effort. Most of the telegrams immediately after the event are in code. Many of the copies available are in poor condition and hard to read. A list of 50 telegrams, documented by a group of historians, is available from the author.

### Telegram Codes

Starting on March 1, 1910 many of the telegrams issued by the

Great Northern are in code.

### Telegram Example:

Code:

"...the Sagittateary and taints prophesised causes were up on the  
comfit turf ..."

De-coded:

"... the rotary and the superintendents private car were up on the coal track ..."

A group of historians has worked to document the code.

Words and code have been identified from copies of telegrams that have been decoded in the past and from research by several individuals. There are many inconsistencies that have not yet been accounted for. A copy of the code list is available from the author.

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Skykomish District Office

Mount Baker - Snoqualmie National Forest

Skykomish, Washington

The Cultural Research Locker has extensive information on the history of Stevens Pass. There are over 50 photographs and other documents dealing with Wellington. These materials were assembled by a former employee who lived at Stevens Pass for many years. In the collection is a 1993 letter from a granddaughter of Julius D. Kerlee, a train man who survived the slide.

Her letter contains a family genealogy. Also research documents completed for the Iron Goat Trail will be helpful in locating individuals with information on Wellington. An appointment is needed to use these materials.

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Washington Books/Publications

Cascade Division, by Martin Burwash, Copyright 1995

ISBN 1-884831-001, This book contains a chapter titled

"The Ghosts of Wellington"

Newspapers

There are a number of Washington newspaper collections dealing with the Wellington slide. The State Library in Olympia has a microfilm collection of newspapers that is comprehensive and

easy to access. These resources can provide the press reports of the day and follow on feature reports 25 or 50 years after the event.

Northwest Disaster: Avalanche and Fire, by Ruby El Hult, Binfords & Mort, Portland, Oregon Copyright 1960 ISBN 0-8323-0021-7. This book tells the Wellington story best of all.

Northwest Rail Pictorial, by Warren W. Wing, Copyright 1983, ISBN 0-915713-06-3. Contains several photographs of Wellington.

Rails Across the Cascades, By Eva Anderson, World Publishing Company, Wenatchee, Copyright 1952. A compilation of Wenatchee newspaper articles, many dealing with Wellington.

The Confluence, North Central Washington Museum, Wenatchee, Washington

Volume 1, Number 2: James J. Hill Empire Builder

Volume 4, Number 4: 1910 Wellington Tragedy Recalled

Volume 5, Number 1: We Escaped the Wellington Disaster

Washington Reports, Volume 81, page 166

This document contains the verdict of a Washington Supreme Court case in favor of the Great Northern Railway. Available in law libraries.

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### Wellington

The site of Wellington (later Tye) is accessible by a county road and a short walk. There are only two structures remaining that were in place at the time of the disaster. The west portal of the old Cascade tunnel and the concrete bridge wing walls for Haskell creeks access under the mainline to Tye creek.

A small concrete block structure is located at the point of the old Haskell creek bridge. (This structure is used to mount cannons for winter avalanche control on Highway 2 above the valley.) The county road to the site follows some of the old switch back route.

Special Note: Bush whacking and bugs are part of any field trip to Wellington.

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THE WELLINGTON DISASTER.

"Two trains buried on mountain side; over a score killed," The Tacoma Daily Ledger. March 2, 1910.

Avalanche Sweeps Down on Great Northern Marooned Passengers at Cascade Tunnel.

TWENTY BODIES RECOVERED; 25 PERSONS ARE MISSING

Three Locomotives, Four Electric Motors and Superintendent O'Neill's Private Car Among the Wreckage - Railroad's Big Power Plant Also Reported Swept Away.

EVERETT, March 1. - (Special) - The following persons were killed or injured in the Wellington disaster:

Identified dead:

TRAINMASTER A. R. BLACKBURN, Everett, leaves wife and baby.

E. R. LONGCOY, secretary to Superintendent O'Neill.

LOUIS WALKER, Everett, porter of O'Neill's private car.

Seriously injured:

Fireman J. D. Kurdee.

Mail Clerk A. B. Hersell.

A. Smith, porter.

L. Anderson, porter

Brakeman Ross.

Trainman W. Harrington, Everett.

Slightly injured: Engineer Osborne, Seattle; Engineer S. Martin, Everett; Engineer Carroll, Engineer Janigan, Firemen Gilman, Jenks, Mauk, S. A. Bates, Fred Nelson, Engineer D. Tegtmier, Conductor M. O. White, Everett.

EVERETT, March 1. - Twenty-three are known to be dead, 25 are missing and a score are injured as a result of the avalanche that swept down the mountain side above Wellington, at the west side of the Cascade tunnel, early this morning and crushed two Great Northern trains, one the west bound Spokane Express and the other an overload mail train, off the narrow ledge of the high line, hurling them to the bottom of the canyon, 200 feet below.

Coupled to the Spokane Express was Superintendent J. H. O'Neill's private car. This was carried over the precipice with the rest of the train. Three locomotives, four powerful electric motors used to haul trains through the Cascade tunnel, the depot at Wellington and a water tank were also carried away by the slide and buried under tons of debris.

Cries of Distress Heard.

Seventy people were aboard the Spokane Express when the slide struck it. Forty of these were passengers who were sleeping in the Pullmans. The others were workmen who had been engaged in a battle against the snow blockade and who were using the day coaches for bunk cars.

The last report received tonight from Scenic says that the rescuers are still struggling with ice and snow endeavoring to release the imprisoned passengers and recover the remaining dead. Reports that shouts and cries for help have been heard coming from the mass of wreckage give rise to the hope that many of those imprisoned are still alive.

Several undertakers left for Scenic tonight. It will be necessary to embalm the bodies, as the snow blockades between Wellington and Everett have shut off all traffic except by foot. If the bodies are brought out soon they will have to be transported on sledges.

EVERETT, March 1. - The snowslide at Wellington is authentically reported to the Great Northern officials to be about one mile in width, reaching from the water tower south of Wellington to the first snowshed fully a mile distant, past the four sidings that are capable of holding 70 cars each.

The equipment carried down the steep slope is the rotary plow, with its crew, all of whom sleep in the rotary's bunkhouse.

All communication with Wellington was cut off in the first slide last Thursday and since then the Great Northern wires have been working only as far as Skykomish and there the messages are transferred by telephone to the first siding south of Scenic, the nearest approach to the scene of the disaster. No report that Wellington was swept away is substantiated. The depot is still there which is believed to mean the town is safe.

Most of the dead are believed to have been passengers on the westbound Spokane express, which has been stalled in the mountains since February 24. The other train was a fast transcontinental mail. It carried no passengers.

The names of the passengers on the stalled train are not known here and wire trouble in the mountains has interrupted communication with the scene of the disaster. The two trains were in charge of Conductors Parzybock and Petit, both of Everett. The fate of the train crews is not known.

It is feared that A. E. Longcoy, Superintendent O'Neill's private secretary, is among the dead. He was in the private car which was buried and the messages received here make no mention of his escape. Superintendent O'Neill, who has been directing the work of fighting the snow blockade for the last 10 days, was not in the car when the slide occurred and escaped injury.

#### Victims Were Asleep.

The avalanche swept down the mountainside shortly after 4 o'clock this morning. It was half a mile long and the snow, loose stones and uprooted trees were piled several feet deep. Most of the passengers on the train were asleep and received no warning of the danger.

The trains and locomotives were completely buried by the debris from the mountainside and it was six hours after the avalanche before the rescue parties made up from workers sent to attack the snowdrifts, located them. Willing hands at once proceeded to the task of rescuing the living and removing the bodies of the dead.

An appeal was sent at once to Everett for help and a trainload of physicians and rescuers was started for the scene. Owing to previous slides which have blocked the line and carried out sections of track the rescue train can go only as far as Scenic.

Wellington is at the west portal of the Cascade tunnel and is 1,000 feet above Scenic and almost directly over the little resort. If the rescuers follow the tortuous windings of the railroad as it climbs the mountain they will have to walk 10 miles but by taking a mountain trail they can cut this distance to three miles. A second rescue train containing a wrecking outfit and additional workers and undertakers, left Everett at 8 o'clock tonight.

#### Power House Reported Gone.

Reports received here tonight say that the Great Northern's power house, which furnishes electric power to operate trains through the Cascade tunnel, the depot and the water tank were swept away by the avalanche, and that the railroad boarding house was badly wrecked. A number of the dead and injured are railroad men and residents of Wellington.

The Spokane express has been stalled at Wellington since last Thursday. The passengers have been eating at the railroad boarding house and at nearby cottages, but have returned to the Pullmans to spend the night. Two days ago several of the passengers, fearing a catastrophe of this kind, asked Superintendent O'Neill to have the train moved back into the Cascade tunnel

where it would be protected. Mr. O'Neill is said to have declared that the train was perfectly safe on the siding at Wellington and decided to leave it there.

Reports as to the number of passengers marooned on the train vary. The railroad company claims that there were only 30 people on the train, but men who tired of the delay and walked out over the snow to Skykomish where they could get a train, say that there were more than 60 people on board.

Dead and Injured.

Communication with Scenic, the nearest point to the scene of the disaster, was established late tonight and the names of a few of the dead and injured were received. Those reported dead are:

TRAINMASTER A. L. BLACKBURN, Everett, Wash.

A. C. LONGCOY, secretary to Superintendent O'Neill, Everett, Wash.

LEWIS WALTER, Everett.

Seriously injured:

Fireman J. D. Kurdee.

Slightly injured:

Engineer Osborne, F. S. Martin, Carroll Jergensen and D. E. Tegtmier of Everett; Fireman Gillmen, Bennington, Jinks, Meuk, E. A. Bates and Fred Nelson, Conductor M. A. White, Brakeman Ross, Mail Clerk A. H. Hurdell, Porters A. Smith and L. Anderson and Trainmaster W. Harrington.

Messages from the rescuers at work have to be carried on foot from Wellington to Scenic and are brief. None of the passengers had been identified when the last message was received there and their names are not known. From reports received at the Great Northern office here it is evident that the greatest loss of life was among the passengers on the Spokane local.

Trains Piled on Each Other.

The wrecked trains lie piled on top of each other 200 feet below the siding upon which they stood when the avalanche swept over them. The cars were crushed into kindling wood and no one on the trains escaped injury. The slide filled the shelf upon which the track at Wellington are laid and rolled over the edge on down the mountainside into the valley below.

The danger from slides is not over. Warm weather in the mountains is melting snow and frequently an avalanche is heard thundering down the mountains. Not far from the scene of the disaster a slide four miles long rushed down into the canyon this afternoon. The snow is 18 feet deep on the level and in the canyons it is piled up in drifts more than fifty feet deep.

E. A. Sherber, East 616 Erminas Street, Spokane, one of the passengers of the ill-fated train left Wellington yesterday noon and walked to Skykomish, arrived in Everett tonight. He reports that 54 passengers remained with the train when his party left.

Among those on the train were John Mackle, Moyie, B. C.; Alec Chisholm, Rossland, B. C.; G. Heron, Vancouver, B. C.; Mrs. William Starrett and three children, Victoria B. C.; Mr. and Mrs. William May, Chemanius, B. C.; Mr. and Mrs. G. L. Beck and three children, Pleasanton, Cal,; Rev. A. Thompson, Bellingham, Wash., and Mr. Davis and child, Seattle.

Names of Mail Clerks

SPOKANE, March 1. - The following mail clerks were on train No. 27:

John D. Fox, Seattle, married; Richard C. Bogart, Spokane, single; George Hoefler, Spokane, married; John C. Tucker, Spokane, married; Alfred B. Hensel, Spokane, single; Lee J. Ahern, Spokane, single.

Train No. 25 carried these mail clerks:

Hiram Fowler and Fred Bohn, both of Seattle.

Some of the Passengers

SEATTLE, March 1. - The following are known to have been on board the Great Northern Spokane express which was overwhelmed by the avalanche at Wellington this morning:

James McNeny, Seattle; A. G. Mabler, Seattle; R. H. Bethel, Seattle; Mrs. M. A. Covington, Olympia, Wash.; Geo. F. Davis, Seattle; Charles S. Eltings, Seattle, Mr. and Mrs. Beck and children, residents of Northern Washington, on the way to California; Mrs. Starrett, three children, her mother and father, all of Vancouver, B. C.; - Johnson, stockman of Trinidad, Col.; - Cohn, everett, Wash.

Who of these are among the dead is not known.

"Two trains buried on mountain side; over a score killed," The Tacoma Daily Ledger. March 2, 1910.

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"Eighty-four are believed dead in Wellington slide," The Tacoma Daily Ledger. March 3, 1910

Railroad Men Think That But Few of Those Unaccounted For Will Be Found Alive

PASSENGERS TO BLAME FOR TAKING TRAIN OUT TUNNEL

## Feared The Landslide Would Block Opening and They Would Be Suffocated--Three Survivors Reach Everett and Tell Graphic Story of Their Experiences

SPOKANE, March 2. -- It is rumored in Spokane's that a second avalanche, at Scenic Pass, covered the rescuers engaged in taking out bodies, thus causing further loss of life. The rumor, though persistent, cannot be verified.

(SPECIAL TO THE LEDGER)

EVERETT, Wash., March 2. - Eighty-four dead is the largest conservative estimate of the loss of life in the slide at Wellington. Nineteen injured are in a sheltered bunk house at Wellington. All except one woman are expected to fully recover, but it may be two weeks before it is safe to move them.

Drs. Cox, Chisholm and Howard returned tonight with two survivors of the wreck. These were firemen, F. A. Bates, who went down the gulch in his cab, and Matt Gilmore, who went over with a rotary.

According to Bates, the slide occurred at 1:40 a.m. The avalanche was preceded by a thunder storm. When the snow engulfed the train the mass moved almost noiselessly and could scarcely be heard 50 feet distant.

All available figures show that not less than 105 people were involved in the tragedy. As part of Wellington was destroyed there may have been more.

Gangs of men are still at work recovering the dead. It is perilous work for the relief party, as further slides seem likely to occur in many places. There is still much snow above Wellington, but the bunk house where the injured are is considered out of danger.

Among the first people into Wellington the morning of this disaster were two nurses, one Mrs. Garvan of Everett. These women, dressed in men's clothing, climbed 1,200 feet up the slope, risking their lives at every step.

EVERETT, March 2. - The Great Northern railroad tonight gave out a list of the known dead, missing and rescued in the avalanche at Wellington, from which it appears possible that the total number of dead may reach 84. Eight passengers and nine railroad employees are known to be dead and 38 passengers and 29 railroad employees are missing.

A comprehensive story of the extent of the disaster and the circumstances attending it has not yet been obtained. Several men have arrived at Scenic Hot Springs from Wellington, but they were hysterical from the horror of the avalanche and the perils of their descent of the mountain and were unable to describe the scene at the summit and the work of recovering the bodies of the dead.

While some of the missing may be found alive, the fate of the majority, railroad men believe, has been death. Many of the missing are laborers who were at work trying to clear the track. All the

injured are being cared for at Wellington, owing to the difficulty in getting them 12 miles down the slide-swept slope to a point where trains can reach them. The rescue party that left here on last night's special did not reach Wellington until noon today.

#### Feared to Stay in Tunnel.

While there is no official information on the point, it is understood at the local offices that train No. 25 was not kept in the tunnel because of the pleas of passengers who feared being blockaded there with the resulting risk of suffocation. The passenger coaches are still completely buried. The day coach and smoker have entirely disappeared, being literally smashed to bits. One woman was rescued from the Pullman after 12 hours imprisonment.

Brakeman Duncan and Conductors Purcell and Clary, who were in a car that was reduced to splinters, escaped with slight bruises and in bare feet did heroic rescue work.

The physicians who accompanied the relief trains report that all the injured are doing well and it is believed all will recover. There are plenty of people to take care of those needing assistance and an abundance of provisions. Rotaries are working from both directions, making good progress and doing everything possible to clear the track.

#### Survivors Reach Everett.

The first news direct from the scene of the disaster was received here tonight when Dr. Cox, one of the Great Northern physicians, who went up on the first relief train, returned from Wellington, accompanied by three of the survivors, Ray Forsyth, R. M. Lavelle and Firemen S. A. Bates. Dr. Cox says that none of the injured is in a critical condition. Many of the injured were only slightly hurt. When the party left Wellington 16 were in the hospital in charge of Dr. Rockwell.

Forsyth and Bates estimate that not more than 20 of the 110 people who were carried into the canyon by the avalanche escaped serious injury. Eleven passenger cars, three locomotives, four electric motors, one rotary snow plow, the rotary shed and the sand house were swept away by the slide.

A member of the first relief party who returned to Everett tonight said that when he reached the scene all the cars were completely buried. Much of the wreckage was covered by 40 feet of snow, and all that could be seen was one partly buried electric motor, two locomotives and the wreckage of the rotary. All that could be seen of the coaches was a steel pipe sticking out of the snow where a Pullman car was twisted around a stump, and a curtain that lay on top.

#### Fearful Storm Raged.

Ray Forsyth, one of the injured passengers, was in a car in which there were five women and seven children. Three women and two children escaped, but the others undoubtedly perished. In telling of the experience Forsyth said that it seemed as if the car was lifted bodily from the tracks and was held poised in mid air. Suddenly, it toppled over the edge and rolled down the steep embankment. Instantly the air was filled with the shrieks of the injured. A fearful storm was

raging. A high wind was blowing and there was a spectacular electrical display. The first men to extricate themselves from the mass of wreckage set to work at releasing those less fortunate. They had no lights and carried on their work by the flare of the lightning, which was almost incessant.

This morning the severed hand of a woman was found. On a finger was a ring bearing initials which lead the workers to believe that it belonged to Miss Katherine O'Reilly of Spokane, who is listed among the missing. Men returning from the scene of the disaster hold little hope that any of the missing will be recovered alive. This tends to strengthen the estimate that the total number of dead will ultimately reach 84.

### Buried Six Hours

Fireman S. A. Bates, one of the injured, was buried under snow six hours. Other survivors heard his shouts and dug him out before the first party of rescuers arrived.

Trainmaster A. R. Blackburn, who was sleeping in Supt. O'Neill's private car, was taken out of the wreckage alive. His only words were "Look out for the others." Then he lapsed into unconsciousness.

Station Agent Flannery of Wellington dug Blackburn out of the snow and started to carry him to a place of safety. A small slide struck them and Flannery was knocked down. Blackburn's body slipped from his grasp and was carried into a small stream, where it disappeared from sight.

Latest reports indicate that the avalanche swept down the mountain above Wellington at 1:45 a.m. instead of at 4:30.

This is the statement of the survivors and it is borne out by the finding of watches stopped at that hour.

### Car Tossed About Like Feather

Ira Clary and H. Purcell, conductors on the rotary plows, give vivid accounts of their experiences. They were asleep in one of the vacant mail cars which were swept off the ledge, but escaped without serious injury.

"I thought the end of the world had come," said Clary, in describing his experiences. "The car in which I was asleep appeared to be picked up and tossed about like a feather. Then it began to roll over and tumbled down the mountain side. Suddenly it hit a big tree which stood in our path and the car popped open like an egg shell. When I came to my senses I found myself buried under six feet of snow. I was clear of the wreckage and was able to dig myself out.

"I heard Purcell calling and hurried to his assistance. I dug him out and then we started to get out the others. We got out several who were unhurt and did what we could to assist those pinned beneath the wreckage."

According to the story of the trainmen who survived the disaster, the place where the trains were standing at Wellington was believed to be the safest on that part of the line. In former years no snowslide had ever reached that place and it was selected for that reason.

"Eighty-four are believed dead in Wellington slide," The Tacoma Daily Ledger, March 3, 1910

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#### TACOMA DAILY LEDGER

"Avalanche kills six men at Cascade," The Tacoma Daily Ledger.

March 4, 1910

Section Hand Reports That Station at East End of Tunnel Is Wiped Out.

#### SNOW FALLING AGAIN

Forty Eight Bodies Recovered at Wellington - Some of Cars Are Under 70 Feet of Ice, Trees and Rocks.

OLYMPIA, March 4. - (Special) - Governor Hay will call for volunteers to go to Wellington to aid in the rescue of the entombed victims of the avalanche who lie buried in the wreckage of the two Great Northern trains. Senator A. J. Falconer of Everett telephoned Gov. Hay today that the Great Northern railway officials are unable to get men to go to work at the scene of the disaster, and that only 30 men are now engaged in the rescue.

On the receipt of this message the governor telephoned the chief dispatcher at Everett to obtain his view of the situation, telling him - that if Supt. J. H. O'Neill deems it advisable the National guard will be called upon today to go to the scene of the catastrophe.

SEATTLE, March 4. - Six laborers are reported to have been killed by an avalanche that destroyed Cascade, a small station east of the Cascade tunnel. The report was brought to Seattle by Ed Clark, a section man, who has been working in the mountains. He said that he walked through Cascade this morning and that everything had been wiped out but a cook shack. Two men at the scene told him of the death of the six laborers, whose names are not known.

Tells of Wellington Disaster.

Clark was at Wellington at the time of the disaster Tuesday morning and gave a graphic account of his experience.

"On that night about 40 of us, all Americans, were asleep with our clothes on in the bunk house just above Wellington," he said. "Suddenly I heard a noise I can't describe, and then Charley Anderson, the section boss, rushed in.

"'Boys, for God's sake, get up,' he shouted. 'Get out of this quick, men, or you'll be cleaned out.' With that he ran out to tell others."

"The lightning flashes were blinding and the thunder kept up an awful racket when we jumped out, and it was as dark as pitch when the lightning didn't blind us. We heard a faint moaning down the gulch and made a break for it. There were only two or three little railroad lanterns for light. All around us we could hear trees snapping and other slides tumbling down. We didn't know how big they were, but we stumbled and rolled down into the gully where we could hear the cries.

"Some had grabbed up what axes there were when they first ran out and then the lanterns showed a row of hands beckoning in every little hole and opening in the coaches. We started chopping between the outstretched hands and so began to take them out.

"We had worked all day and were pretty well played out, but we all set to work, each man for himself and none leading. We could hear the passengers crying for water, and some were crying for nothing at all. We got some of them out alive, but some of them died before we could get them, although they were alive when we reached the spot."

#### Forty-eight Bodies Recovered.

WELLINGTON, Wash., March 4. - Forty-eight bodies have been recovered from the wreckage brought down by Tuesday morning's avalanche, and of this number 41 have been identified. Three bodies were exposed by workmen late this afternoon, but were not extricated from the wreckage. They will be taken out tomorrow. The body of G. R. Jenks, a fireman, was the last to be identified today.

Coroner Snider has taken charge of \$10,000 worth of jewelry and other valuables which he will hold pending identification by relatives of the victims.

#### O'Neill's Car Pound.

Supt. O'Neill's private car, containing the bodies of Trainmaster A. R. Blackburn and Secretary Lingcoy, was found today. The searchers are working in the daytime only. The Great Northern railroad today sent in 15 Alaskan sleds on which the bodies will be taken to a train at Skykomish, to be carried to Everett and Seattle. All the railroad men's homes were at Everett. Donald Cameron Filmore, fireman, aged 32, whose body has been recovered, was formerly a West Point cadet, and his mother is a prominent resident of Santa Barbara, Cal.

All the wounded in the temporary hospital here are recovering today. They will probably be taken to the big hotel at Scenic Hot Springs tomorrow.

Of 700 sacks of mail carried away by the avalanche only 150 have been recovered. There is no trace whatever of one mail car and seven clerks and weighers. In some places cars are known to be under 70 feet of trees, snow, earth and rocks.

The Great Northern is using all the resources at its command to open the track. Every man and every plow that can find a place to work are busy night and day. Supt. O'Neill estimates the actual loss to the road by destruction of property at \$1,000,000. The four electric motors now lying demolished under the snow were valued at \$250,000. The only salvage from the wreck will be of old metal.

Cold rain and increasing fear of snowslides added to the gloom of Wellington today. Two bodies were sent down the trail and the others, wrapped in blankets, are lying in a railroad building. Among the arrivals today were a number of friends and relatives of victims, a few of them women.

Every courtesy was shown to these anxious people, but they contributed nothing to the cheerfulness of the camp. The recovery of bodies will be slow until the locomotives arrive to pull away the giant trees whose trunks and branches are interlocked above the dead. The rain falling on snow already packed so tight that a shovel will not enter it, is turning it to ice.

#### Corpse Robber Caught.

The working force in the avalanche now consists of 150 men, Americans. Three of the Greek and Slavonian laborers stole clothing from the ruins, but they did not actually rob the dead bodies. The misconduct of these men aroused such indignation that the railroad sent all the 75 foreign laborers away.

The corpse robber who was caught in the act of taking a watch from the body of Sol Cohen, of Everett, gave his name as Robert Roberts to the disgust of Deputy Sheriff John Roberts, who arrested him.

#### First Bodies Brought Out.

EVERETT, March 4. - (Special.) - The first bodies to be brought from Wellington arrived at 8 o'clock tonight, when Undertaker Challacomb came down with those of Sol Cohen, an Everett tailor, and A. T. Bethel of Seattle. The body of the latter was taken on to Seattle.

SEATTLE, March 4. - The body of R. H. Bethel of Seattle, the first avalanche victim to be brought down from Wellington, arrived here tonight. He was formerly a prominent civil engineer of New York and the body will be taken there for burial.

#### (SPECIAL TO THE LEDGER)

EVERETT, March 3. - An order of 15 Alaskan toboggans was placed in Seattle by the Great Northern today and these will be used in hauling bodies up the slope to Wellington and bringing

down such of the injured as can stand the journey to Scenic. Dr. H. K. Stockwell, in charge at the Wellington emergency hospital, reported this afternoon that all the injured were improving.

Now come stories of the sordid side, Deputy Hill of Seattle held up an Italian suspiciously bundled up leaving Wellington. The deputy at the point of a gun found clothing, silk stockings and lot on the foreigner.

It is reported that one Italian had a woman's hand covered with diamond rings. These men were roughly handled and chased out of the vicinity. The railroad has dispensed with the services of a gang of that class of laborers.

The inevitable undertakers' battle for bodies seems to have started. Marion Briggs, assistant to Undertaker Jerread of this city, returned tonight with the statement that Deputy Coroner Bostwick of King county refused to allow any one but Butterworth of Seattle to touch the bodies.

Jerread of Everett was ordered by the railway company to take charge of the bodies, but has been unable to touch those belonging to this city. Bostwick proposed to have all the bodies taken to Seattle and an inquest held there. Coroner Snyder of King county passed through here today and said the bodies belonging in Everett would be left here and the others taken to Seattle. Briggs said that Bostwick was having bodies stripped of clothing and sewed in sacks with labels, but that they were not embalmed as the Seattle men had little material. Embalming fluid was sent up from Everett, but it has not been used on account of Bostwick's alleged interference.

"Avalanche kills six men at Cascade," The Tacoma Daily Ledger.

March 4, 1910

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"Ten persons alive in car buried by Wellington slide," The Tacoma Daily Ledger, March 4, 1910

One Man Entombed in Snow Sixty Hours Rescued in Half-Demented Condition.

**BODIES MAY BE CARRIED OFF BY FLOOD IF THAW COMES**

SEATTLE, March 3. - A special to the Post-Intelligencer from Everett says:

One car at the Wellington slide has been excavated and ten persons found in it alive.

The report last night that A. R. Blackburn's body was lost in another slide is denied tonight. Blackburn and Supt. O'Neill's private secretary were both in the superintendent's private car when it went over. That car has not been found and there is a faint hope that the occupants may be alive.

One man entombed sixty hours has been dug from the snow. He was half demented.

WELLINGTON, Wash., March 3. - Thirty-one of the thirty-five bodies of avalanche victims recovered have been identified, among them being Bert Matthews of Cincinnati and F. W. Topping of Ashland, Ohio, whose bodies were found this afternoon.

A fearful storm is raging here tonight, and snow is falling and is being whirled into drifts by a furious wind. The change in the weather will make the trail from Scenic difficult and will hamper the men who have been digging for bodies.

The snow plows working on both sides of Wellington made good progress today. A rotary on the west side is four and a half miles from Wellington, between Korea and Alvin. On the east side of the Cascades another rotary is near Gaynor, eight miles from Wellington. The tunnel being open, there is a good prospect that the line to the east will be opened first, in which case the dead and injured will be taken to Spokane.

WELLINGTON, Wash., March 3. - A list of passengers, trainmen and postal employees who were carried down by the avalanche that destroyed two Great Northern trains Tuesday morning and who are dead or missing, contains 36 names. Statements of the number of laborers engaged in fighting the snow and who were sleeping on the ill-fated trains varies from 20 to 30. Consequently an estimate of 100 dead seems conservative. No one who had looked at the wreckage has the slightest hope of finding any of the missing people alive. The explorations have uncovered only dead and some of these shockingly mangled.

An avalanche of dry snow might have covered its victims alive, but the gorge at Wellington is packed tight with wet snow, ice, huge trees and glacial boulders of enormous weight. Two of the bodies recovered today were those of electricians who were living in a cabin at the edge of Wellington and who were carried with their home 300 feet down the slope.

All day a stream of men with packs strapped to their backs wound up the mountain path from Skykomish to Scenic and Wellington reminding Alaskans of the caravans that crossed the Chilcoot trail in Klondike days. The men carried food and supplies for the injured and some went up to dig for the bodies of friends or relatives. A few were sight-seers, and these were told that they were not wanted.

Looter Forced to Leave.

A laborer was caught taking trinkets from a dead woman's body and was compelled to start down the trail at once.

One hundred and fifty men dug for bodies in the avalanche debris today. Among the bodies found today were those of former Prosecuting Attorney R. M. Barnhart, of Spokane; Conductor J. L. Pettit, who, after a trip on foot to Skykomish, went back to his post of peril, and Mrs. M. A. Covington, of Olympia; who left Spokane to celebrate in Seattle today her golden wedding anniversary.

If the searchers locate the Pullman cars intact in the snow they may take out many bodies in a short time, but it is likely that the dead are strewn all through acres of debris. At the present rate of progress it would require weeks to recover all the bodies. After the track is open engines and tackle will lift the huge trees and boulders.

There are no coffins at Wellington, and the dead, wrapped in blankets, lie on the snow, well preserved.

Snowplows and wrecking trains, working eastward from Skykomish made good progress today.

Supt. O'Neill of the Great Northern today said he expected the railroad to be in operation about April 1.

The Great Northern's costly experience with snow in the Cascades this winter has caused renewal of discussion of the project of building a tunnel at a level of 1,000 feet lower than the present one, and whose west portal would be at Scenic Hot Springs. The tunnel was figured out years ago and passed upon as feasible by European engineers.

Trace Blood Stains in Snow.

Workers searching for bodies frequently find victims by following blood stains throughout the snow. The melting snow has carried the stains from the mangled bodies down to the stream at the bottom of the gulch. Men with shovels upon finding one of these crimson leads, start at the edge of the stream and tunnel through the snow until they come to the body of the victim. The snow is packed like cement and the bodies that were not mangled by the wreckage of the cars, were horribly crushed by the weight of the icy mass.

It is feared that many of the bodies will never be recovered. The warm weather and rains of the last three days have turned the little mountain stream that flows through the canyon into a raging torrent and the water is fast undermining the snow which was carried far out across the bottom of the gorge. It is believed that many bodies were carried clear across the gulch and buried under forty feet of snow. As the stream rises and the water undermines the debris there is danger of the bodies dropping into the river and being carried away by the swift current.

Blizzard Again Raging.

The rain which has been falling for three days turned into snow tonight and a fearful blizzard is raging. The addition of new snow to the covering that lies eighteen feet deep on the mountainsides increases the danger of more slides, and adds to the peril of the rescuers who are laboring night and day at the task of removing the bodies of the dead.

Owing to trouble with foreign laborers who attempted to loot the bodies Supt. O'Neill has sent all of them from the camp and is employing only American workmen.

Crawled Out of Hole Naked.

H. H. White, of 510 Broadway, Seattle, a traveling salesman for the American Paper company, who is confined to the hospital with a chest injury, says:

"Things happened so fast it is hard to remember what took place. I heard a crash like thunder, then I felt myself going through a window or the roof in my pajamas. Crawford, a surveyor, followed as though shot from a catapult.

"Brakeman Ross climbed through a hole without his nightshirt or underclothes. Crawford warned me to keep cool till the snow stopped moving. There was a heavy wet snow and a strong wind was blowing at the time.

"I pulled out Porter Al Anderson from among the debris and then got two blankets, wrapped his feet in one and gave the other to a naked brakeman named Ross.

"I heard a woman crying and trainmen from Wellington worked like nailers and rescued her. They are deserving of great credit for their bravery and untiring efforts.

"A number of big trees was among the debris that struck our car."

Lucius Anderson, the negro porter of the sleeper, is the only survivor out of nineteen in the car.

"Ten persons alive in car buried by Wellington slide," The Tacoma Daily Ledger, March 4, 1910