

June 27, 1917 Minonk Dispatcher (Front Page)

KILLED AT THE COAL CHUTES ON THURSDAY, JOHN PERONA, AN ITALIAN EMPLOYEE OF THE I.C. RAILROAD MEETS HORRIBLE DEATH. CAUSES OF ACCIDENT NOT KNOWN. DIED WHILE BEING BROUGHT TO TOWN FOR MEDICAL AID. CORONER COTTON HELD AN INQUIRE THAT NIGHT.

John Perona, an Illinois Central employee was killed at that company's coal chutes south of Minonk on Tuesday afternoon at 4:30 when in some manner he became caught between the arch bars of an empty coal car and the ground. He was rolled along like a ball, his neck being broken, all of the ribs of his right side were fractured, the left pelvic bone crushed, and the right ankle broken. He was otherwise cut and bruised. An engine was brought to Minonk, death taking place during the trip.

The remains were taken to the Wilcox undertaking rooms and at 7 o'clock in the evening Coroner W.C. Cotton of Benson, was on the scene and he formed a jury consisting of N.L. Davison, foreman, E.E. Schroeder, clerk, W.H. Ryan, R.W. McDonnell, John Hughes, and Ernest Hewitt.

The witnesses heard were Peter Perona, brother of the deceased, H.R. Auffenspring, Peter O'Rourke, Daniel Robertson, Dr. F.W. Wilcox, and Fred Phillips.

The story brought out at the inquest was as follows: the hopper at the chutes was about empty of coal and the men went to switch in a loaded car. Perona was warned and told to keep out of the way. "All right" he answered, and went over to the main track to shovel away some coal. That was the last seen of him alive. After the loaded car had been shoved in, Fred Phillips and Van Davis came along on the section gas car and saw Perona lying there. They shouted the information to the other men and the investigation that followed showed Perona tightly wedged between the arch bar of the empty car and the ground, and it was found necessary to scoop away the dirt from under him to free him from the squeeze.

Evidently he had failed to take notice of the empty car and when the loaded car was shoved against it and knocked ahead, he was caught. The verdict of the jury placed no responsibility for the accident.

John Perona was born in Italy on Sept. 14, 1868, but came to America 27 years ago during which time he had resided at various places in Illinois. For the past four years he had resided in Minonk and had worked as a common laborer.

He is survived by one son, Anton, who resides with his uncle in this city; three brothers Peter, Anton of Minonk, and Joseph of Benld, and by one sister, Mrs Mary Morello of Torino.