

SUBJECT:

**MEXICO NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY  
EL PASO SOUTHERN RAILWAY**

**TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT**

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CIUDAD JUAREZ, CHIH., MEXICO.

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MEXICO NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY  
EL PASO SOUTHERN RAILWAY

TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT

Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. **El Paso, March 7th, 1917.**

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Mr. J. J. Pruett, Gen'l Mgr.,

El Paso.

Dear Sir:

In compliance with your letter of March 5th, I have the following statement to make relative to personal experiences in Mexico.

On the evening of October 14, 1912, I arrived in El Paso, and left for Pearson on the morning passenger train of October 15th. The train was late and did not get into Pearson until about 7:00 p. m. That night Salazar burned out all the bridges, about 45 in number, between Corralitos, and Guzman, and also cut the wire in a number of places. After a few days, nothing having developed, Superintendent Gilmartin started on a hand car for Juarez, putting up the wire as he went, and in about a week or ten days, Mr. Myers, who was Assistant Superintendent at Pearson, received instructions from Mr. Gilmartin in Juarez to proceed to organize work trains, and rebuild the bridges, calling on the Madera Company at Pearson to cut the necessary ties and timbers.

In a few days, everything was ready, and Mr. Myers proceeded north from Pearson on the work train, and started in cribbing bridges, the first bridge being just north of Corralitos. After one day with the work train, Mr. Myers took the lineman and a hand car crew, and started north to repair the wire as the wire had gone down again, since repairing of the bridges had been ordered from Juarez. *He* got as far north as San Pedro on the night of November 5th, 1912, about 7:00 p. m., and the hand car men, becoming a little careless, and having their hand car speeded up too high, ran out on a burned bridge, where nothing but the rails ~~remained~~, and when the hand car got to the middle of the bridge, the rails spread and let the hand car, and the men, down about fifteen or twenty feet, to the bottom of the arroyo. There were large boulders lying in the arroyo, with the result that one of the Mexican hand car men had an arm broken, Mr. Myers had his left ankle sprained very badly, and one of the other Mexican men is supposed to have had two ribs broken. The others persons were skinned up and scratched pretty badly.

It being impossible to get any further, Mr. Myers had the lineman who was uninjured, cut in on the wire, and Mr. Myers being a telegrapher, asked for a train to come out to get him, and take him to Pearson. Knowing that it was necessary for some one to go along with the train I prepared to go and taking an engine, and car, and the Madera Company Doctor, a party named Howell, who had been on a protracted spree for about two weeks prior to this time, and had fallen off his horse, and battered up his face. He did not care to go, but I explained to him that it was very necessary as I explained to him that some of the men might be dying for want of medical attention, and he finally consented to go.

We left Pearson about 4:00 p. m., Conductor Kid Hill, Engineer Tom Holmes. At about 6:00 p. m. we arrived at the point where the work train, engine 64, with about 50 bunk cars and material cars was working, the work train being in charge of Superintendent of Bridges and Buildings, McLean. When we got to the work train, it was necessary to leave our train there and proceed from that point on hand car, which we secured at the work train. It being a considerable task to drag the hand car around the train of 50 or 60 cars, through the arroyos and rocks, we did not get started from the north end of the train until about 7:00 o'clock, and after traveling for about one hour we met Mr. Myers, and his traveling hospital, coming north on push car, the hand car that they had being disabled when it fell through the bridge.

By this time it was very dark, and Dr. Howell, and myself, assisted Mr. Myers around the burned bridges, it being necessary in some cases to go out into the fields, in order to get around the deep arroyos. However, the Mexican with the broken arm, and the one with the broken ribs seemed totally incapable of walking and insisted upon being pushed across the burned bridges on the push car. This was rather a ticklish job as dark as it was, with only one lantern, and was accomplished by a man remaining at each wheel of the push car, and maintaining his hold with his toes on the flanges of the rail, suspended where the bridge formerly was, and proceeding a few inches at a time until we finally got over. We accomplished the six or seven voyages over these bridges without any mishap and we finally arrived back at the train and got the men loaded at about 8:30 p. m.

We were just congratulating ourselves on our accomplishment and had settled ourselves down for a comfortable ride to Pearson, and the train had just started when we were rudely awakened by a volley of shots, something like 25 or 30 in number. At the first shot, the man with the broken leg and the other with the broken ribs, who stoutly maintained previously that they could not walk, were the first ones to get on the floor.

Mr. Myers, Assistant Superintendent, who afterwards stated that he never got off the couch, was known to have been at least the second one in reaching the floor. I cannot say definitely what time I made, but I believe that I was at least third, and I will admit that I did not want to stop on reaching the floor but wanted to get under the carpet. Dr. Howell was also quite agile in sprawling himself on the floor, regardless of his previous injuries.

Conductor Kid Hill, a very stout, rotund person, weighing about 250 pounds happened to be in the middle of the car, directly opposite me when the shooting started, and he fell in his tracks when the shooting started, and every time a shot was fired he would duck his head. However, as none of the shots entered the car, it soon became evident to us that they were not gunning for anyone in the car.

In a very few minutes, two brigandish looking persons appeared at the front end of the car, one of them very tall, by name, Enrique Portillo, and the other very short, by name Simon Acosta. Each had about two weeks growth of beard, and the viciousness of the smaller was greatly accentuated by having a badly crossed right eye. They immediately proceeded to give us a vigorous balling out in Spanish, for having had the temerity to disregard the general's instructions which they thought the Company had plainly understood, and which were that we must not under any circumstances start rebuilding the bridges without permission from the General.

We learned afterwards that both Enrique Portillo, and Acosta spoke excellent English. Portillo was afterwards captured at Juarez by Pancho Villa, on November 23rd, 1913, and executed. In about ten minutes more, General Salazar, himself, showed up and he felt it incumbent upon himself to deliver another ball down along the same lines as that delivered by his two lieutenants, Portillo and Acosta. Naturally, everyone was pretty well intimidated by this time, and did not know what the outcome was to be as the general appeared to be exceptionally angry. None of us could speak any Spanish, and Enrique Portillo did the interpreting.

Mr. Myers went on to assure the General that so far as he was concerned, Mr. Myers, he knew absolutely nothing about the General's instructions, that he was simply following the instructions of his superior in coming out there to build the bridges, and he hoped General Salazar would view it in that manner. By this time the General was cooling down somewhat, but he proceeded to business by saying that it was going to be necessary for him to burn everything, trains and bridges included. We expostulated with the General, showing him whereby if he burned all of the cars, that the Mexican women and children who were along with the laborers would be thrown out in the cold, and that it was fifty or sixty kilometers to any place where we could get shelter, and it would first of all put a great hardship on his own people.

He finally agreed to permit the bunk cars, with the Mexicans, the Engine 754, and the car Yaqui, to return to Pearson, but first of all he wanted to be shown where the commissary car was. As Mr. Myers was disabled, I showed the General where the commissary was, said car having been stocked two or three days before by the Madera Company with \$1500.00 worth of commissaries. The General immediately ordered his private soldiers, who remained on the outside of the car with their horses, to load up this stuff, and carry it off to the mountains, which they did in a crude fashion, and very expeditiously. This all occurred at Coyote, Kilometer 201, and for some reason unknown to me the General demanded that we back up the 754, the car Yaqui, and the bunk cars, to Corralitos, the first siding south of Coyote, or about 17 kilometers away.

The General made it very plain that it was going to be necessary for him to take stringent action in the way of personal punishment to anyone building bridges in the future without his authority. He went on to give quite an extended talk about his ideals, and so forth, his intention being to make every Mexican join either one side or the other, and if necessary to do this, he was going to make the entire country in the vicinity of Casas Grandes and Pearson a desert so that there would be no manner of means of the Mexicans obtaining a livelihood other than to fight for their country, either on one side or the other. His tendencies all seemed to be along a Socialistic plane. He rather sneeringly informed us that Mexico was not the only country where people went barefooted, but that he knew that many people in the United States went without shoes. Of course the General had it all his own way when it came to any arguments as we of course were very anxious to kindle within the said General a better spirit, towards us unfortunates.

In order to further this spirit of brotherly love, Mr. Myers donated a blanket to the General, and from some unknown source dug up a box of cigars, which seemed to have a very salutary effect on the General, and his compadres, and within an hour they were very congenial. In any event, the General stayed in the car until about 2:00 a. m., and he then said his business called him, and he found it necessary to take our engine 754, back to the work train, which was 17 kilometers away, but that he promised faithfully to return the engine.

It so happened that Engineer Abrams on engine 64, on the work train, when he heard the shots understood what was in the air, and he immediately filled engine 64's boiler with cold water, and it died within a short time, and when General Salazar arrived back at the work train he found that the 64 could not move itself. It developed that it was his intention to run the 64 into the bridge they were working on at the time. However, this did not deter the General, as he immediately set fire to the cars of material which included a car of coal loaded in a foreign car, a total of something like fifteen cars all together.

In the morning, early, he took the 754, coupled it up to the 64, set fire to all the bridges that had been built the day before, and turned the 754 loose. However, the large bridge he had intended the engines would be derailed in had not burned so it was weakened enough to go down under the weight of the engines, and while the engines careened badly, they passed over this bridge safely and proceeded about one kilometer where they derailed in a one span bridge.

This miscarrying of the plans of the General must have angered him as he took oil and poured it on the coal in the engine tanks and set fire to it, burning out all the coal, and the lining of the engine tenders, and also had the electric light system on the engine 64 burned. This was all related to me by Engineer Abrams who was kept a prisoner of the General until the next day when they were permitted to make their way on hand car to Juarez, about 200 kilometers away.

In the meantime we had waited rather anxiously at Corralitos for the return of the 754, and about 6:00 a. m., Mr. Myers and myself went to the summit of a neighboring small mountain and could see the bridges burning, and that it was evidently not the intention of the General to return the 754. We therefore, had linemen out in on the wire, and call up Pearson, and asked the dispatcher to send out another engine which got to Corralitos about 10:00 a. m. We immediately started for Pearson with the bunk cars, and the Yaqui, arriving there about 12:30 p. m.

When Salazar did the shooting on the previous night, in order to stop the train, they shot at the engine. One shot took effect about eight inches from the fireman's head, and the other shot ~~went~~ *went* through the engine tank.

On February 23, 1913, Superintendent Gilmartin, H. C. Aguilar, now Assistant Superintendent at Madera, Roadmaster John Morris, killed in the Cumbre tunnel, Gregory Reelins, Agent at Pearson, and myself, were proceeding south on motor car, having left Juarez the day before, February 22nd, and at a point near Urrutia, Kilometer 140, the four Mexicans we had ahead of us, on a hand car, which we were pushing with the motor car, jumped from the hand car down the bank, and started yelling; "Colorados!, Colorados!" At the same time, Roadmaster Morris, who was running the motor made a violent effort to stop same, doing so in record time, and got off down the bank.

As Mr. Gilmartin and myself were sitting with our backs to the others we had not seen the cause of the disturbance, but we did not stop to inquire until we were behind the bank. We then learned that three or four bullets had struck within 10 or 15 feet of us, coming from the right hand side of the track.

The shooting continued intermittently for some time, and in about five minutes, Sr. Aguilar, got up with a white handkerchief and signaled the gunners to stop shooting. In about five minutes more the bandits, about 25 in number, on horseback, a very fierce looking aggregation, arrived and encircled us. Mr. Morris, who spoke Spanish, entered into conversation with the leader, and learned that it was the said leader's intention to take us to the Urrutia ranch as prisoners, the Urrutia ranch being their rendezvous. Mr. Gilmartin became very wrathful at this announcement, and instructed Roadmaster Morris to inform the gentleman that he had never left the right of way, and did not intend to, and in addition used some rather strong language. As I was unable to understand Spanish at that time, I was unable to understand what Mr. Morris said to the bandit gentleman, but after parleying ten or fifteen minutes he decided to permit us to go on, provided we promised not to go further than Sabinal, 15 kilometers away, or at Kilometer 155-5.

While this was going on one of the party proceeded to build a bonfire against a bridge which happened to be close, and Mr. Morris remonstrated with him, but to no avail. He happened to have with us that day a copy of the El Paso Herald, giving an account of the assassination of President Madero, and although we told the gentleman that the Revolution was over, and everything would be fine, he insisted that his instructions were to burn these bridges, and he proceeded to do it. One of the party, in order to accelerate the work picked up a five gallon can of gasoline from the motor car, and very nearly got to the fire before Mr. Morris noticed him. The chances are that if he had succeeded in getting the five gallons of gasoline close to the fire, Yours truly, would not be here now relating the story.

Mr. Morris explained to the gentleman explicitly the dangerous nature of the fluid and notwithstanding this, he afterwards caught him in the act a second time. By this time we had permission to proceed south and we did so without any unnecessary delay. We stopped at Sabinal, and the bridge burners proceeded south 15 or 20 kilometers, and burned all the bridges. Previous to this time, or to be exact in December 1912, Salazar had burned the Sabinal station, and the only building left intact at Sabinal was the pumpers house. This consisted of one room about 14 feet by 16 feet, and the pumper and his wife and four children slept in one end of it, while Mr. Gilmartin and the rest of us, slept in the other end. The weather was rather cold and we put in a restless night, but got up early and started south, and were not molested any further on the trip to Pearson.

On June 13, 1913, I happened to be in El Paso, and several days before several bridges had been burned just north of Pearson by General Maximo Castillo, the same party who burned the Cumbre tunnel.

Mr. J. J. Fratt  
NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY  
EL PASO SOUTHERN RAILWAY

On June 13, the work train left Juarez and myself and Store Manager F. J. Farragut, accompanied the train. We got to Kilometer 259, the first burned bridge at about 2:00 p. m., and had just stopped when we noticed a heavy cloud of dust to the south in the San Diego pass, about three kilometers away. Also as the train stopped, up on the left hand side of the track on the mountain, we saw two men with rifles. Mr. Morris, Roadmaster, and myself walked over and Mr. Morris motioned to these armed men to approach, and talked to them, and they said they belonged to Castillo's army and had instructions not to permit any bridge building.

By this time what developed to be General Castillo's army of about three or four hundred men had gotten through the pass and were soon at the point where we had stopped, waiting for them, as there was no chance to get away. When Castillo came up he immediately ordered a bridge burned behind us which was promptly carried out. By that time I had gone back to the caboose, Conductor Colonel Lewis, and shortly afterwards a subordinate officer came along and told us that if we had any belongings in the car we had better get them out as he was going to burn the whole business. We piled everything out on the ground, and I distinctly remember that there was a pot of beans boiling on the stove, which I carefully concealed in the bushes, thinking that we might be a long ways from anything to eat.

An officer shortly came around and told us they had decided not to burn anything but the material cars. The engine cut off the caboose, and they then set fire to the material, something like 13 cars, including a foreign car loaded with coal. One of the men had some dynamite and he was in the act of putting it in the engine to blow it up, or down, whichever the case might be, when Mr. Farragut interceded with one of the officers, and the dynamite act was not carried out.

I made up a report of the occurrence, including the number of cars damaged and destroyed and sent it with Colonel Lewis to be sent when they reached the first telegraph station, which would be Casas Grandes. Mr. Farragut and myself secured the only hand car in that neighborhood, and proceeded south. We had to make a detour of at least a block to get by the fire as it was extremely hot. Castillo, after spending about an hour with us, proceeded on across the track, east towards El Valle. Mr. Farragut and I went on to Pearson, and encountered a number of stragglers from Castillo's army, most of them drunk and very troublesome, but we got by without any disagreeable incident.

Yours truly,

HCK:B

Cd. Juarez, March 18th, 1914.

Messrs. Bowen,  
Metzdorf,  
Gallagher.

Dear Friends:

Having received letters from all of you relatives the Tunnel Catastrophe, and knowing that you would no doubt be intensely interested in the details, I have deferred answering until such time as I could give you the dope in chronological sequence:

On February 3rd, Mr. Gilmartin was in the ~~office~~ office at Juarez, and he made arrangements for movement of the Ol on No. 1 to Madera on Feb. 4th. This was the first movement of Number one since Jan. 26th on which date Maximo Castillo and his band held up No. 1 at San Pedro, robbed the train and threatened to burn it. Bussing and Rutledge were on No. 1 date train was held up at San Pedro. No. 1 on Feb. 4th left about 9:30 Mex with the Ol occupied by Mr. Gilmartin and Mr. Scoffield, and it was their intention to go thru to Chihuahua, this being Mr. Scoffield's first trip south of Juarez. At about 2 p.m. the wires went down south of Casas Grandes, and No. 1 did not arrive C Grandes until 3 p.m. They proceeded on to Pearson, where Morris, who was not feeling well, ~~was~~ came down to train, not intending to go out, but due to fact that Mr. Gilmartin was on, he decided to go. Mr. Gilmartin tried to get McClanahan to go thru to Madera with them, but he begged off account of his shoes worn entirely out, and he declared the first trip he was going to take was to Juarez to get some shoes, account none available in Carach. Wire still down when they left Pearson about 4:15 p.m. and following parties we knew were on Train: McCutcheon, Engineer; J E Webster, Conductor; Tom Kelley Deadheading to Madera to take his run out south of there. Louis Williams of the Commissary Department, and a visiting friend from somewhere in Pennsylvania; Mr. Gilmartin, Mr. Scoffield, Mr. Morris, C H Marters, Ex. Route Agent, Juan Fernandez, rear Brakeman, Juan Uribe head Brakeman, then there were about 30 passengers, about all Mexicans. There was an Operator at Aguaje and one at Chico. Train must have arrived at Cumbre, which is about 200 feet north of Tunnel mouth, about 6 to 6:30 p.m., Feb. 4th. There was a Mexican who was watchman at Camp 2 who had a date with his father to meet him at Cumbre and this Mexican according got off at Cumbre, and met his father and they proceeded up the mountain, crossing directly over the Tunnel mouth on the way, and did not see anything unusual in the way of smoke issuing from mouth of tunnel; they saw Mr. Gilmartin and a tall man, ~~XXXXX~~ evidently Mr. Scoffield, get off at Cumbre and look around a little and then got on, and he then saw the train enter the tunnel with all on board. This same man had a cousin on the train who lived at Chico, and after he (the Watchman) had reached Camp 2, he found it necessary to go to Chico, and accordingly arrived there the next day the 5th, and found that his cousin had not reached home, nor had the train passed Chico, and this Watchman immediately proceeded back to the north end of tunnel, but by the time he reached there the smoke was coming out so fast that he could get in a distance of ~~XXXXX~~ to Aguaje and made his report.

this was on the 6th. On the same date, Clark at Madera not hearing anything of train and no wires took a 7 hundred engine and came north. It then developed that Maximo Castillo had held up Doubleheader south, engines 754-755, Conductor Gibson, engineers Flesher and Rinehart, at about Kilom 348, which is just out of the south Portal of Tunnel, -this at 11:am; cut off lead engine, put five men on her and proceeded to Chico, where the leader asked Operator what trains were on the road, and they were told that No. 1 was the only train coming south. I was unable to find whether or not the leader inquired if Mr. Gilmartin was on the train, as the Operator, I am led to believe, did not want to talk anymore than he had to. After learning the above, one man was left in telegraph office, while the others went out to Loui Hong's eating house, and after eating they came back, and the leader knocked the telegraph instruments out with the butt of his gun. They then told the Operator to "Beat" it south, which he did; then they pulled the eating house car and a car of coal onto a bridge just north of Chico and set on fire; proceeded a little further north and on a curve took out two rails; then backed up to where other engine and train was with the 22 stock cars, and backed seven stock cars and caboose into Tunnel and set them on fire, first turning the two engines loose down the hill under a full head of steam. The 754 landed 150 feet from the track down canyon and the 755 about 500 feet down Canyon. In meantime Conductor Gibson knowing that No.1 was coming asked for permission to go back and flag her, but instead he was placed under guard and taken down to one of the little log houses at foot of canyon used by Contractors when they were building tunnel. Gibson then asked for permission to go back and get his Train books and records, but instead they permitted the rear brakeman under guard of two soldiers to go back. All Train and enginemen were then rounded up and told to proceed south and keep going under pain of being shot. As Castillo left he stated to Gibson that he was going to "Take care of the passenger Train". Of course, the Train and enginemen all interpreted this as meaning that he was going to hold the train up in his usual manner, but it seems that instead of doing so, he proceeded on up towards Camp 2 and maliciously permitted the Passenger Train to run into Tunnel and onto the burning Train of stock cars. The passenger train consisted of engine 44, then box car of highclass freight, then ~~Express and Baggage~~ Express and Baggage, 2ndclass coach, 1st class coach and the Ol on rear. From the position of air Brakes on engine, it seems that McCutcheon was drifting down thru the tunnel at the usual rate of about 10 kiloms per hour and when the engine struck the caboose or rather the remains of it, which was nothing but the iron work, the pilot of engine turned slightly under, no doubt breaking the air hose and throwing brakes into emergency, precluding the possibility of McCutcheon backing out of tunnel, but the reverse lever was in the go-head position and therefore did not indicate that he tried to back her up, but of course when he found the brakes going into emergency, he no doubt, knew there was no chance to move the train and after lighting his torch probably got at once off engine and started back. The front pony trucks of engine were also found derailed. McCutcheon only got as far as the rear end of first-class coach, and there is charred bones were found, probably not over a half peck, and these were identified by a watch, knife, and other indestructible articles. The Mail Carrier was found in his end of Comb. car immediately over the trucks. Express Messenger found right at door of Express safe. Juan Uribe, head Brakeman found right about where ladder of the freight car would be, indicating that possibly he remained on top of car and got so full of gas and smoke that he was only able to drop off of car.

The first body found was that of Juan Fernandez, rear Brakeman, and he came nearest to getting out, arriving at a point 100 yards from the north end of tunnel. He had his lantern in his hand and his handkerchief in the other, holding handkerchief to his nose to assist in breathing and was leaning against the right wall. He was slightly burned. The next nearest man to get out, was what we suppose remains of Conductor Webster, found about 1000 feet from north end of tunnel, but we have not as yet been able to fully identify this man. The next bodies were eleven in number, found very close together in the Rock section of tunnel, which is about the middle of tunnel or about 1700 feet from north entrance. The only American in this group was J I Morris, and he was identified by his annual pass, and a bunch of time books which he had gathered and was taking to Yadera to have rolls made. It seems that the reason for these articles being preserved so that they were legible, was due to fact that he must have had them in hip pocket, and when he fell it was upon his back and as these 11 bodies were not entirely consumed like the previous ones mentioned, the fire had not reached the things mentioned. However, these bodies, or that portion that was not next to the ground, were charred and unrecognizable.

As the fire from the stock cars caught onto the passenger train, and the fire from the passenger Train communicated the flame to the timber section nearest the south end, the cave-ins commenced and there are some portions of the tunnel where the cave-ins are 35 feet high. There was a vast amount of timber used as filling and when this timber came down it charred and burned for about 4 weeks, and in fact, is still burning as only four days ago we had report that it was still hot and dangerous to enter the tunnel. I figure that Mr. Gilmartin and the others not accounted for, all being husky strong men, got nearer to the entrance than the 11 bodies found, and this would bring them under one of the timber sections, and therefore the remains will no doubt be found under one of the heavy cave-ins, and it may take weeks and months before the tunnel is finally cleared.

To make matters worse, 200 Federals under the Quevede brothers, Sylvestre and Rodrico, with whom you are duely acquainted succeeded in breaking thru the US Lines at Yslette, about 6 miles east of El Paso along the River, and on Feb. 25th to 28th they burned all bridges and cribs between 139 and 93, some 39 bridges. As all material we had on the Line ~~is~~ has been burned, the Company is not going to put in any more cribs, but we have again started today rebuilding, that is filling in and making shoooflys. This necessitated taking the bodies to Pearson, building a vault, etc to hold the bodies, also building of hermetically sealed caskets, until such time as we could get Line open north.

About four days after Castillo did the job at the tunnel, they succeeded in getting some troops after him and finally chased him so hard that he landed up on the US side, where he was promptly grabbed by US Soldiers, together with one ~~wench~~ wench, and four or five men, and they are now resting securely at Fort Bliss, the objects of much curiosity, and at the same time waxing fat and resting up for another ~~Buy~~ Grande Campaign of valiant bridge burning as soon as Uncle Sam gets thru feeding them; verily, the outlook is promising? Salazar is also at the Fort and he and his former Compadre in arms, are said to be on good terms, which I hope is better than when Castillo broke away from Salazar at Casas Grandes, all of which you of course remember.

The tunnel is about ruined, but we have been unable to get a fair estimate of damage as it is still dangerous to go, account of the cooling, and as it cools, naturally there is the contraction of the rocks, resulting in their loosening and falling. There are a party of about 12 or 15 Americans at the tunnel, including E B Eck and they declare they will stay until all bodies are recovered, - a total of about 51 bodies supposed to be.

There have been many theories as to just how the thing happened, but as there were no survivors, there will always be the element of doubt. At first no one believed even that the train ~~was~~ had gone in tunnel with the passenger aboard, but as time passed and not even one Mexican showed up, we knew that they must have gone in, as Castillo would certainly not feed Mexican Prisoners. McCutcheon knew that the doublehead extra was ahead of him, and if there was a little smoke issuing from north tunnel entrance when he went in, it was not unusual, and no doubt he had the front window closed, and the dense smoke inside did not arouse his suspicions, nor could he have smelled the burning stock cars. However, it must be remembered that the stock cars were set fire about noon or thereabouts and probably were entirely consumed when the passenger train hit them about 6pm and there was probably nothing but a few red embers to make light, and as the tunnel was no doubt densely packed with smoke, it is not to be wondered at that he did not see the cars before striking them. Just as soon as the train stopped, Juan Fernandez the rear brakeman would instinctively start back, and in fact, in addition to the lantern he had with him, a fusee was found about 12 feet further in from where his body was found, indicating that he was on the job and probably did not know exactly what had caused the train to stop as there could not have been much of a jar. If Mr. Gilmartin and the others in car 01 had started back immediately, I am of the opinion that they would have gotten out, as you know, they were much superior physically to Juan Fernandez, and I really believe that when the accident happened that they probably started ahead to ascertain what trouble was and were probably met by some of the passengers, and only then started to get out, when it was too late. The total length of the tunnel is 3811 feet, and judging from the number of freight cars and allowing for length of passenger train, they had to travel about 3200 feet, or over a half of mile, in the gas and darkness to get out. Mrs. Gilmartin and family left for Davis, WV on or about last of February. Mr. ~~Starr~~ Scofield folks were down, including his brother; Tom Kelley's father and brother, and others, besides we were received messages from all over the country for days after the accident, and believe me, I have been around accidents some, this business nearly got my goat, but I managed to get thru all right; what made it so hard, was the friendship for those in the accident, and especially Mr. Gilmartin.

Things are not very pleasant down here at present, especially for those who have to be out on the Line. on the 15th instant an American Watchman was murdered behind the Company store at Pearson; Old Man Harmon, who used to work in Store at Pearson was Murdered at Madera about two weeks ago by Operator (whats his name, cant remember) but he used to work at Chico. Then there were the Benton and Bauch cases about which no doubt you read. I could go on indefinitely, but for two reasons, - viz: that you are no doubt tired of reading, and also that I need a little nourishment, being about time to eat, - I will desist. Now I remember, The Operator who killed Harmon, is party by the name of Molina.

In the way of existing dope have to advise that F J Clark, is Asst. Supt. At Madera, and McClanahan is Asst. Supt. at Pearson. No Superintendent's have been appointed to take the places of Messrs Gil Gilmartin and Scoffield, although Mr. Rutledge is handling Juarez Terminal. No Roadmaster has been appointed to take place of Morris, and McClanahan ~~is~~ and L A White are handling the Maf W between the Tunnel and Juarez. W ACude is handling the MofW as Roadmaster between South Portal of Tunnel and ~~is~~ Chihuahua. T R Hager, W L Gray and Bill Hayden are doing the heavy dispatching act at Madera, and with the number of trains running, are necessarily working very strenuously? However, quite a number of trains are being run on the Chihuahua Division, and only few days ago we were some 150 cars short on orders for moving spuds, Corn and Frijoles, also lens. I am the Jefe in Mr. Pruett's office and am ably assisted by H Russeck. Lindauer, Jameson, Terrkell and Echols are still holding down their respective berths. Pat Gallagher got full of Bug juice about the time the tunnel trouble developed and resigned. Talked very strangely over the wire, and thru a recommendation of Glumas, J R Allen was appointed Chief Clerk at Madera. Fred Loucks is back at Pearson as Mechanical Foreman and at present has a FORCE of one hostler, who I believe is our erstwhile amigo, -Manuel, other name unknown.

The Pike has been divided at the Tunnel, and Jess Pruett is in this office, as timekeeper for MW and CT, while Hilario Aguilar is Timekeeper for MW and CT at Madera for Line Tunnel to Chihuahua. Alavarado is Operator in this office, and by the way, - he just told me the wire is open south at 1:00pm, and I expect something doing, -but then, nothing phases me now, as it seems to be part of the business. H G Rawlins is Traveling Auditor, just got in from a trip. Came out of Chihuahua on National, train was annulled and ordered back to Chihuahua and Sectionmen instructed not to furnish any hand cars; Rawlins and couple more Gringos hired a couple mules and a wagon and drove Overland to some point in Texas on the T&P and just showed up today; he was lost for three days and his wife going gray headed, -just seems to be one thing after another, and I expect if I were to sit here all day I could keep writing wabout some damned thing, but believe me, gentlemen, there is one thing that is not going to be registered if I can help ~~it~~ it and its the demise of HCM, as he is going stay aqui just as long as possible.

Its now time for me see if I can hunt up some work, so I will stop, trusting that the above will give some slight idea of the strenuousity of railroading in Mexico, I remain, as ever,

Your friend,

H. C. McMASTER

Cd. Juarez, March 31st, 1914.

John S. Gilmartin  
Renovo.  
Dear Friend:

Received yours few days ago and pleased to learn that you received the Timecard, etc.

There have no developments since my letter to Mrs. Gilmartin, copy of which I sent you; the gang is still working from the north end of tunnel removing the largest cave-in, which in the highest place is about 30 feet. Members of the party have been from one end of the tunnel to the other and found no evidences of further remains, indicating without doubt that Messrs. Gilmartin, Scoffield, Conductor Kelley, Express Route Agent Marters, and several other Americans were able to get farther north in the tunnel, or far enough, so that they probably fell exhausted beneath where the wooden section was overhead, and when the flames reached that part of the tunnel, the roofing was consumed and the debris, rocks etc. fell in on the remains, and while I may be mistaken, I doubt very much if anything other than indistructible articles ~~of~~ carried by the Americans will be found. However, something definite should be learned now within the next 30 days.

No one has been appointed to take place of Mr. Gilmartin and McClanahan, Asst. Supt. and Clark, Asst. Supt. at Madera are handling the situation, which of course, is very easily handled in view of fact that there is little business and no money being spent on track. However, the Chihuahua Division is operating all time, but the power is in such condition and so little of it left, that nothing much is being accomplished. We are moving some 114 cars of Lumber that was loaded at Madera, south to Chihuahua and then over the National Lines in here so as to keep the El Paso Milling Co. going.

Today there is a minature battle being pulled off at Pearson. Jose Orezco with probably 80 men for the Federals, and Colonel Talamantes with a like number for the Consti. have been scrapping since 6:30 and at noon the Federals were defeated and were "beating it" in any direction that they would be liable to find a hole to hide in. Three dead ones were found in Pearson Material Yard, but there will undoubtedly be quite a number more when they get time to go out and pick them up. The battle at Torreon is still on and no one knows the outcome so far, but it is believed that Villa has bitten off about as much as he can chew and is having a hard time of it. On this battle, in my opinion, depends whether or not this Pike will be able to operate, and you may know that we are placing our hopes accordingly, although we dont say much either way, as it is healthier to not talk much.

In regard to the telegrams, etc. that Mr. Crockett said he would send: No doubt, he has overlooked this, and I will speak to Mr. Pruett about it. Mr. Crockett has many troubles these times, ~~but~~ and I know that he has not intentionally overlooked sending them. Hoping this will find you well, and with best regards to your brother, I remain, Your friend,

Superintendent M. J. Gilmartin, in Private Car 01, was making a trip Juarez to Madera for the purpose of assuming charge of that portion of the line between Juarez and Pearson as Asst. Superintendent to Mr. M. J. Gilmartin, this in addition to his duties as Terminal Superintendent. The Private Car was attached to the rear of Mexico North Western Passenger Train Number One, leaving Juarez about 8:30 AM, Mexican time. The day was ideal for the inspection trip, excepting the wind was blowing to some extent and increased in velocity during the day.

We received report of the train passing Guzman station, 125 kilometers south of Juarez, which was the last report we ever received of the passenger train, until after its destruction, the wires having gone down about 11:30 AM; but we concluded the trouble was due to the wind storm - but as time advanced, and nothing was heard of the passenger train, I sent a message over the National wires around by the way of Chihuahua, to Madera, Superintendent Gilmartin's headquarters, and was advised in the same manner from Madera, that the wire was open North of them, but they had started parties North to ascertain cause. Late in the afternoon of February 5th, these parties returned to Madera, and advised that bandits had captured an empty stock train ~~xxx~~ moving south, at Cumbre tunnel, which train by the way was a double header - had cut off the leading engine, gone to Chico, first station south of Cumbre, destroyed the telegraph instruments, picked up two cars from the siding, moving them to a small bridge just North of Chico, setting them on fire. Had gone back to the tunnel and moved eight of the cars into the south portal, and set them on fire - uncoupled the engines from the train and started them down the mountain under full head of steam, where they were derailed at a curve probably half a mile of the Cumbre tunnel, both engines going to the bottom of the cañon. The bandits then informed the train crew of the stock train, they were going on to the North side of the tunnel and capture the passenger train and destroy it. The passenger train had left Pearson about 4:00 PM, which would permit them reaching Cumbre about 6:30 PM. As the mountain elevation begins at Pearson with a one per cent grade, continues up to Cumbre, reaching an altitude of over 7000 feet, climbing a 3% grade with 30 degree curves en route. This tunnel is approximately 3/4 of a mile in length and on a tangent, and from North to South is of the following construction: First 487 feet masonry, Second 1104 feet timber, Third 584 feet hard rock, Fourth 1073 feet timber; Fifth 454 feet hard rock; Sixth South Portal 109 feet masonry.

From a party leaving the Passenger Train at Cumbre station, which is not over 200 yards from the North portal of the tunnel, we learned Mr. Gilmartin, Mr. Scofield, Sup't of Express Mails and Roadmaster J. I. Morris, got off and inspected the station, and again got back on the train, and the train immediately proceeded into the tunnel with all passengers on board, and every soul perished.

We have recovered to date, the remains of ~~what~~ of small fragments of bones, of at least 20 passengers. We have been able to identify the remains of the Engineer, the Express Messenger, the Mail Clerk, the second Brakeman and the Roadmaster, and probably Conductor Webster, who was in charge of the train. Conductor Webster at the time was employed as Switchman in the Madera yard.