

1910

Stevens Pass Train

Disaster

Created by Sonja Rasmussen, Kaelyn Van Duzer, and  
Morgan Bong

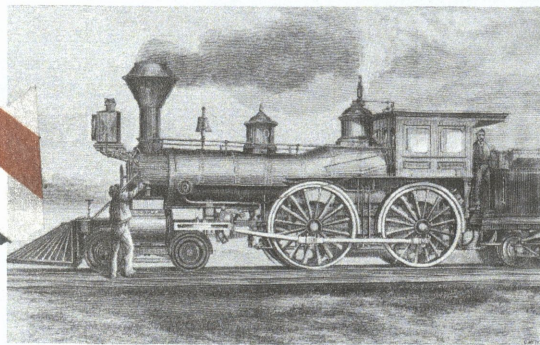
## The Journey to Seattle

On the bitter day of February 22, 1910, the Great Northern Spokane Passenger Train No. 25 and the Fast Mail Train No. 27 began their rough trek from Spokane, Washington to Seattle, Washington. As the trip went on, the trains faced some difficulties due to heavy snow, and these horrific weather conditions even forced the trains to stop near Stevens Pass at a town by the name of Wellington. To get the trains to continue moving, many passengers attempted to clear the snowy tracks, but it became clear that there was no way they could get through the dense snow that continued to pour from the sky. Consequently, the only option for the passengers aboard the two trains was to wait out the storm. And there they sat for six days, waiting for the catastrophe of the storm to blow over. Some passengers grew impatient and even walked to the nearest towns, and this decision saved their lives from the tragedy that lay ahead.



## • The Avalanche Calamity •

After nearly a week of waiting through what seemed to be a never-ending storm, a disaster hit. On March 1, 1910, in the midst of dreadful weather, a gigantic slab of snow, which measured a quarter of a mile wide and half a mile long, broke free from the mountains at two in the morning. The two unmoving trains and the passengers aboard them were swept into the nearby Tye River Gorge by the catastrophic avalanche. They fell 150 feet deep into the Gorge, smashing to the ground with upwards of 40 to 70 feet of snow and debris covering them. Many of the peacefully sleeping passengers on the trains were killed instantly.



This train, the Fast Mail Train No. 110, was similar to the Fast Mail Train No. 27, which was destroyed in the Stevens Pass Avalanche.

## • Fun Fact! •

The 1910 Stevens Pass Avalanche was the worst avalanches recorded in U.S. history.



## The Tragic Aftermath

Many people aboard the trains sadly passed due to this incident. It took workers and volunteers 12 days to clear the snowy tracks and since the trains wrecked in a remote location, it took nearly 21 weeks to discover all of the bodies of the passengers that had been buried in snow and debris.



This photo shows how powerful this avalanche really was; it not only destroyed both of the trains, but trees that were securely rooted into the ground!

## Fun Fact!

The town of Wellington was renamed "Tye" (the name of the Gorge the trains fell in to) in commemoration of the people who were killed in the disaster.



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## DEAD, MISSING AND INJURED IN AVALANCHE CATASTROPHE ORIENTAL LIMITED, GREAT NORTHERN'S CRACK TRAIN, DESTROYED BY FIRE

<b>THE DEAD</b> A. H. BARBER, Seattle, Wash. A. H. BARBER, Seattle, Wash. A. H. BARBER, Seattle, Wash. A. H. BARBER, Seattle, Wash. A. H. BARBER, Seattle, Wash. A. H. BARBER, Seattle, Wash. A. H. BARBER, Seattle, Wash. A. H. BARBER, Seattle, Wash. A. H. BARBER, Seattle, Wash. A. H. BARBER, Seattle, Wash.	<b>THE MISSING</b> W. H. BROWN, Seattle, Wash. W. H. BROWN, Seattle, Wash. W. H. BROWN, Seattle, Wash. W. H. BROWN, Seattle, Wash. W. H. BROWN, Seattle, Wash. W. H. BROWN, Seattle, Wash. W. H. BROWN, Seattle, Wash. W. H. BROWN, Seattle, Wash. W. H. BROWN, Seattle, Wash. W. H. BROWN, Seattle, Wash.	<b>THE INJURED</b> J. L. BROWN, Seattle, Wash. J. L. BROWN, Seattle, Wash. J. L. BROWN, Seattle, Wash. J. L. BROWN, Seattle, Wash. J. L. BROWN, Seattle, Wash. J. L. BROWN, Seattle, Wash. J. L. BROWN, Seattle, Wash. J. L. BROWN, Seattle, Wash. J. L. BROWN, Seattle, Wash. J. L. BROWN, Seattle, Wash.
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Scenes in Vicinity of Wellington Where Avalanche 1,000 Feet Wide Crashed Out Many Lives



A popular newspaper writes an article about the catastrophic event a few days after it happened.

### The Lives That Were Lost

Sadly, 96 lives were lost; the most tragic avalanche disaster in American history. There were 125 people on those trains; only 29 survived. The injured from the first part of the avalanche were taken to Wenatchee, even though it was a long trek, that's why they all of them didn't go in the first place.



## Fun Fact!

A woman accidentally went on the wrong train and was supposed to go on one of the trains that crashed. That mistake saved her life.



A graveyard were some of the people were buried.

## The People Who were Affected.

All these people had lives of their own; they're not just some tragic accident. Some of them were lawyers on their way to Olympia. Most of them were from Spokane starting a new life out west. All ages from just only three-years-old to sixty-three-years-old. All of them had their own lives and personalities and should be remembered.



## Starrett The Widow

Starrett was in the disfigured train car when it was tumbling down a ravine. Luckily, she was thrown out of the car before then. She awoke face down in the snow and felt a large object pressing down on her. She cried and yelled for help until finally, a rescuer came running to her rescue. Sadly, her infant son and her other young child didn't make it; but her seven-year-old was found alive.

Shows how much destruction that the avalanche brought.





• How Did People Immediately  
Stop This Disaster From  
Occurring Again? •

In 1929, a 7.8 mile-long tunnel was built to cover the tracks and prevent another build-up of snow. Workers also built massive concrete snow sheds at the entrance of the tunnels to further restrict any extra snow blocking the train tracks and so this horrible tragedy wouldn't happen again.



A picture of a rescue team searching for the bodies of the deceased weeks after the wreck.





An image from after the train wreck, the remains of the train cars that crashed into trees and rolled down the mountain killing over 90 people.



## How Did People Eventually Fix the Problem and Prevent it From Happening Again?

More recently, the old railroad tracks were turned into a popular hiking trail; it was named the "Iron Goat Trail" since locomotives used to be called "iron goats". In addition to the old tracks changing, workers made new, safer tracks in a more stable spot on the mountain. New rail lines were also added, along with establishing protective tunnels to cover the new tracks. The most up-to-date addition to the safety precautions is that if the weather is forecasted to have possible avalanche conditions, then Stevens Pass is practically shut down; train departures are canceled, the leisure activities on the mountain are called off, and finally, the roads to and from opposite sides of the mountain are closed so no one is swept away by the possible torrent of snow.



## Lessons Learned From This

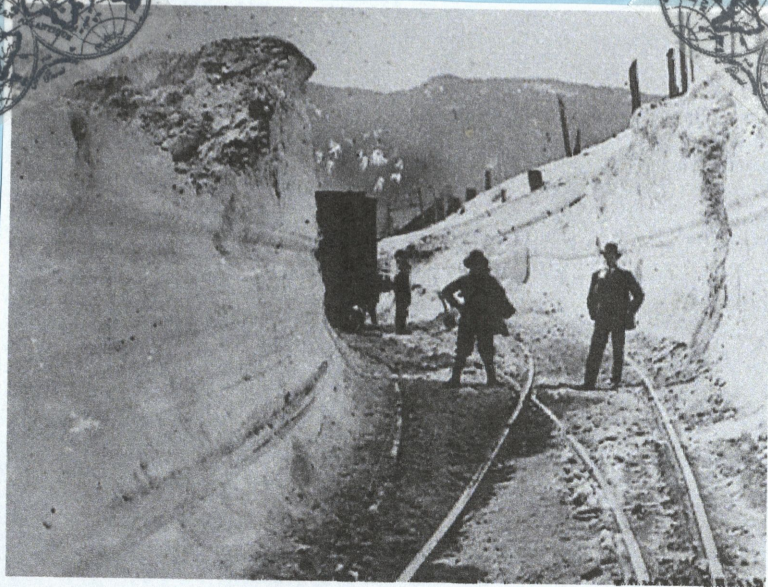
### Disaster

Some lessons that came out of this accident are that clear-cutting trees on mountains and hills (that are prone to receiving snow) above structures used by people is not a good idea; some think it was a partial cause to the avalanche. Another lesson that was learned is that if a late winter storm drops more snow on an already unstable snowpack, snow slides will most likely be large and have the potential to be able to ravage hillsides and roads. Authorities now know what to look out for in advance so they can close roads ahead of time in case an avalanche does occur.

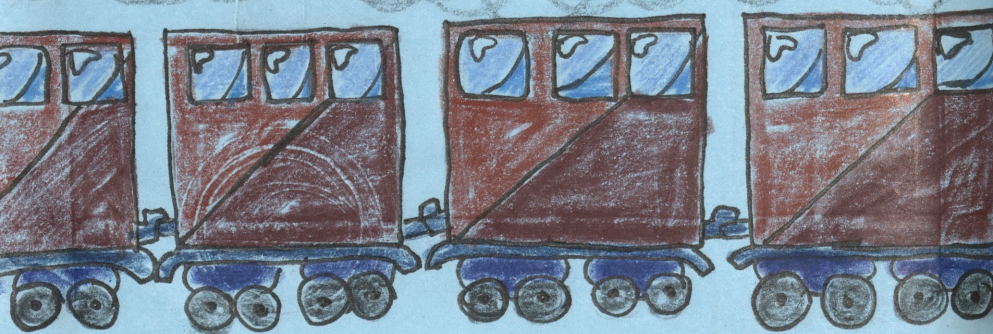
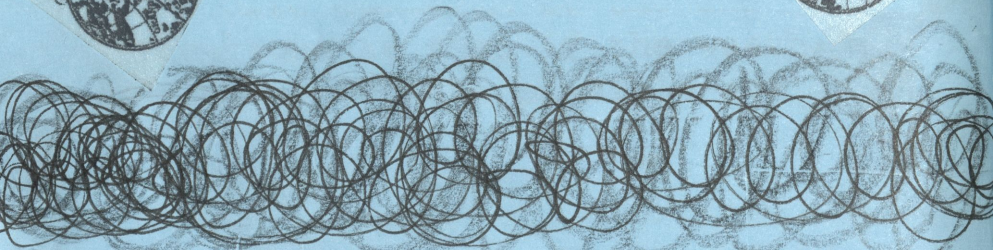
### Fun Fact!

As stated before, the town of Wellington (where the avalanche occurred) was renamed to try to forget the incident. They renamed it "Tye" after the Tye River Gorge. However, the town was renamed only shortly before another tunnel was created, eliminating the need for trains to pass through the small town.





This is an example to show how tall the snow was. In some parts it was even taller.





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### About the Authors:

**Morgan-** "I am at the terrible age of 13, and I enjoy history, so this project was actually made with some form of happiness. I really like pasta. That's not important. If Mrs. Arango is reading this (for some reason) you're the greatest History/English teacher I've ever had. Anyway, that's all. . . I'm not that interesting."

**Sonja-** "For the love of memes and art please give this a good grade, that would be gr8t, thank u. Also, u [Mrs. Arango] are 1 of the best teachers I've ever had."

**Kaelyn-** "I am 12 years old and I have a puppy. I like sleeping but eating is better. School is also important to me, so if I don't get a good grade on this I'll be sad (and try harder next time). Thanks for being such a great teacher Mrs. Arango!"

**\*\*THIS IS A JOKE PLEASE DO NOT TAKE IT SERIOUSLY. . . except for the "you're the best teacher" parts because those are true.\*\*** ☺