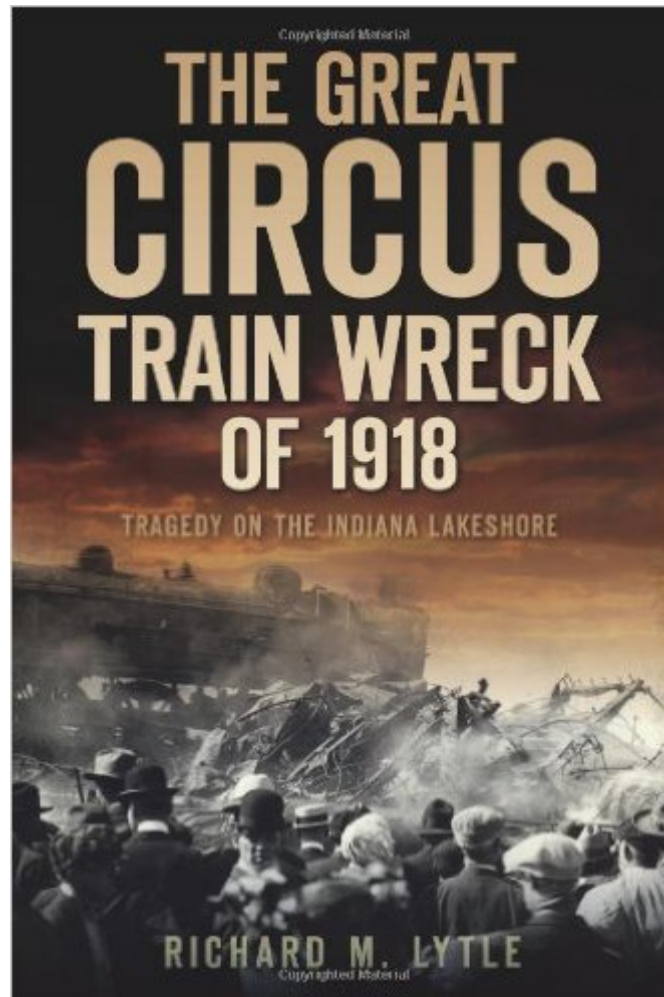


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# The Great Circus Train Wreck Of 1918:: Tragedy On The Indiana Lakeshore (Disaster)



## Synopsis

In the cool, pre-dawn hours on a June night in 1918, a train engineer closed his cab window as he chugged toward Hammond, Indiana. He drifted to sleep, and his train bore down on the idle Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus Train. Soon after, the sleeping engineer's locomotive plowed into the circus train. In the subsequent wreckage and blaze, more than two hundred circus performers were injured and eighty-six were killed, most of whom were interred in a mass grave in the Showmen's Rest section of Chicago's Woodlawn Cemetery. Join local historian Richard Lytle as he recounts, in the fullest retelling to date, the details of this tragedy and its role in the overall evolution and demise of a unique entertainment industry.

## Book Information

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Local

## Customer Reviews

I really liked this book. It was a very quick read, I couldn't put it down, I finished it in a day. Not only is the book about the train wreck itself, but it also gives a good background and history of the people involved. Living in the northwest section of Indiana myself, the book was of particular interest to me. I grew up in a town very close to the Woodlawn Cemetery in Illinois and I remember riding in the car as a kid, seeing the elephant statues and my Father telling me how the circus people who died in a train wreck were buried there. I always wondered what happened. The book is sad too, thinking of all those people who seem to have been forgotten. The only reminder is those stone elephants. I too would like to find the exact location of the wreck and go there. My next book is going to be Mr.

Reeder's book, which our local library has. I am glad now to know the story. Thanks Mr. Lytle.

This tragic tale of a circus train catastrophe seems to be relatively unknown outside the area in which it occurred. It's a very short book and the actual train accident only accounts for a few pages. The beginning of the book is heavy on detail about the rail system and the budding towns alongside the railway. There is of course some history about the forging of this particular circus and the reader learns a little about the circus members themselves. The last portion of the book describes improvements in rail cars since the accident. My rating of a 3 is really more generous than I'd typically give a book that only superficially discussed the event itself. However, it would seem callous to judge a book about the horrific loss of life and the devastation of countless families on quality of writing alone.

This book was very interesting and well researched. It is about a part of Lake County Indiana history that many people do not have much knowledge about. The author's writing made it very easy to understand what the circus was like at the time of the crash and how, exactly, this crash happened. I learned a lot and enjoyed reading it which is all you can ask for.

Warren Reeder's "No Performances Today", from about 1970 is a vastly better treatment of this subject -- in particular what happened to the survivors, and to the estates of those killed or maimed for life, in the decade-long aftermath. This shows me a highly biased slant in favor of the Michigan Central railroad, and an indefensible court/jury decisions. You can read Reeder's book via intra-library loan from the library in Dqallas, Texas.

I got this book for my father he loved it and still looks through it to this day..he wanted this book bc his father and grandfather were part of the circus and he thinks they may have been at this.. thanks it did take a lil longer then i expected to get here but other then that five stars!!!!

this is a great book for history buffs.I personally spoke to the author before this book was written(to get information on the exact location of the wreck .what a nice guy we talked on the phone for an hour,very helpful and knowledgable.well written book.

A tragic story, and a must read for those who loved/love the circus. It is incredibly touching and a book that will hold your interest from beginning to end.

Great review of a forgotten piece of history.

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