COLE, Bethel 12 July 1901

Designation	Accident Location	Accident Due to
Ganger	Werribee	PW Trolley / Wagons collision

Bethel Cole was 44 years of age when his trolley was struck by runaway wagons killing him instantly. Bethel had lost his wife, Ellen Jane (38), about eighteen months before the accident and as a result his six children were orphaned by his death. The Chief Civil Engineer circulated a subscription list to all railway employees for the support of the Cole children.

FATAL RAILWAY ACCIDENT.
A LENGTHSMAN KILLED BY RUNAWAY TRUCKS.
SEVERAL GOODS WAGONS DESTROYED.
An accident attended with fatal results to a lengths man, and terminating in the destruction of rolling stock, took place on the Eastern railway, near Werribee, yesterday afternoon about 2 o'clock. A goods train at that time was ascending an incline in the vicinity of the place mentioned. A gang of lengths men, consisting of Bethel Cole, John Hurley and Thomas Bass, who had been effecting repairs in the locality having awaited the passage of the train, placed their trolley on the line, and set off in the opposite direction. Before the train had surmounted the incline the chopper hook coupling two trucks in the body of the train gave out. The hook couplings yielded to the sudden strain placed on them, with the result that some six or eight trucks and the guard's van started on the down grade. The guard, Wn. Long, having put down the brake in his van, crawled from truck to truck applying the hand brakes. Meantime the lengths men becoming aware of the approaching runaway trucks, and anticipating disaster to them and the guard they knew was on board, checked their trolley, and strove to remove it from the rails. They had partially succeeded when the trucks with gathered speed struck the trolley. Cole was killed instantly. His companions were thrown violently to the ground, but happily escaped serious injury. The guard's van was practically pulverised by the following trucks, which mounting one on another were destroyed, so far as four of them were concerned, the balance being severely damaged. Guard Long was thrown off the trucks which he had reached, and though severely shaken and bruised was otherwise unhurt. Information was at once sent on to Northam, whence a breakdown gang was sent without delay. Meantime the goldfields passenger trains up and down were approaching. Proper safeguards were taken to stop them, and on their respective arrivals the direction of each was reversed after the transfer of passengers and freight, that going to the fields returning to Perth with the passengers from Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie, and vice-versa.

P.C. McNamara, who was returning from duty at Northam, and was in the train bound for Perth, took charge of the body of Cole, which he conveyed to the Morgue at Guildford, where a Coroner's inquest will be opened this morning.

A particularly sad feature attending the death of Cole is the fact that only last week he lost his wife, so that his children, numbering six, have within a few days been left fatherless and motherless.

Source: *Trove/The West Australian (Perth) Saturday 13 July 1901 Page 6.*

The Werribee Fatality.
We understand that on the initiative of the Chief Engineer for Existing Lines subscriptions are being taken up throughout the railway service in aid of the six orphan children of the late repairer, Bethel Cole, who was killed on the 12th inst. between Werribee and Wooroloo through the break away of a goods train.

Source: *Trove/The West Australian (Perth) Monday 22 July 1901 Page 4.*

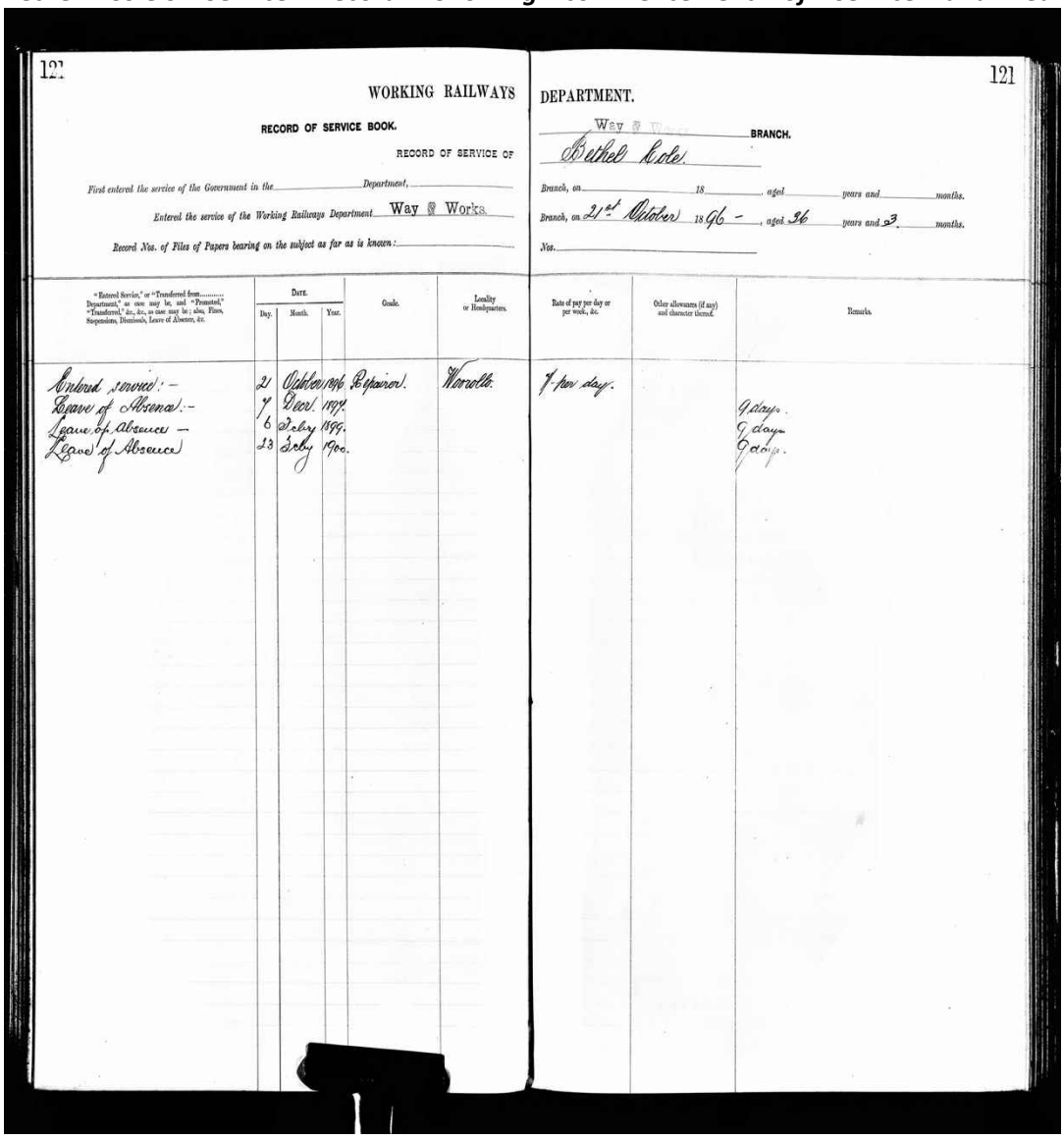
INQUEST

At an inquest regarding the death of a man named Bethel Cole on the Eastern railway, on July 12, the jury returned a verdict to the effect that Cole came to his death while in the execution of his duty by being struck by the brake van of a runaway train, and added a rider to the effect that "they were of opinion that the breakaway was caused by the use of a "chopper" consisting of inferior material and manufacture."

Source: *Trove/Western Mail (Perth) Saturday 17 August 1901 Page 46.*

Authors Note: *The following has been provided by Matthew Guppy, Bethel Cole's Great, Great, grandson it provides a comprehensive narrative of this family's connection with the early days of the Railways in WA. MM August 2016*

Bethel Cole's Service Record. Showing commencement of service and leave taken.



121

WORKING RAILWAYS DEPARTMENT.

RECORD OF SERVICE BOOK.

RECORD OF SERVICE OF Bethel Cole.

First entered the service of the Government in the ..... Department, ...

Entered the service of the Working Railways Department Way & Works

Record Nos. of Files of Papers bearing on the subject as far as is known: .....

Way & Works BRANCH.

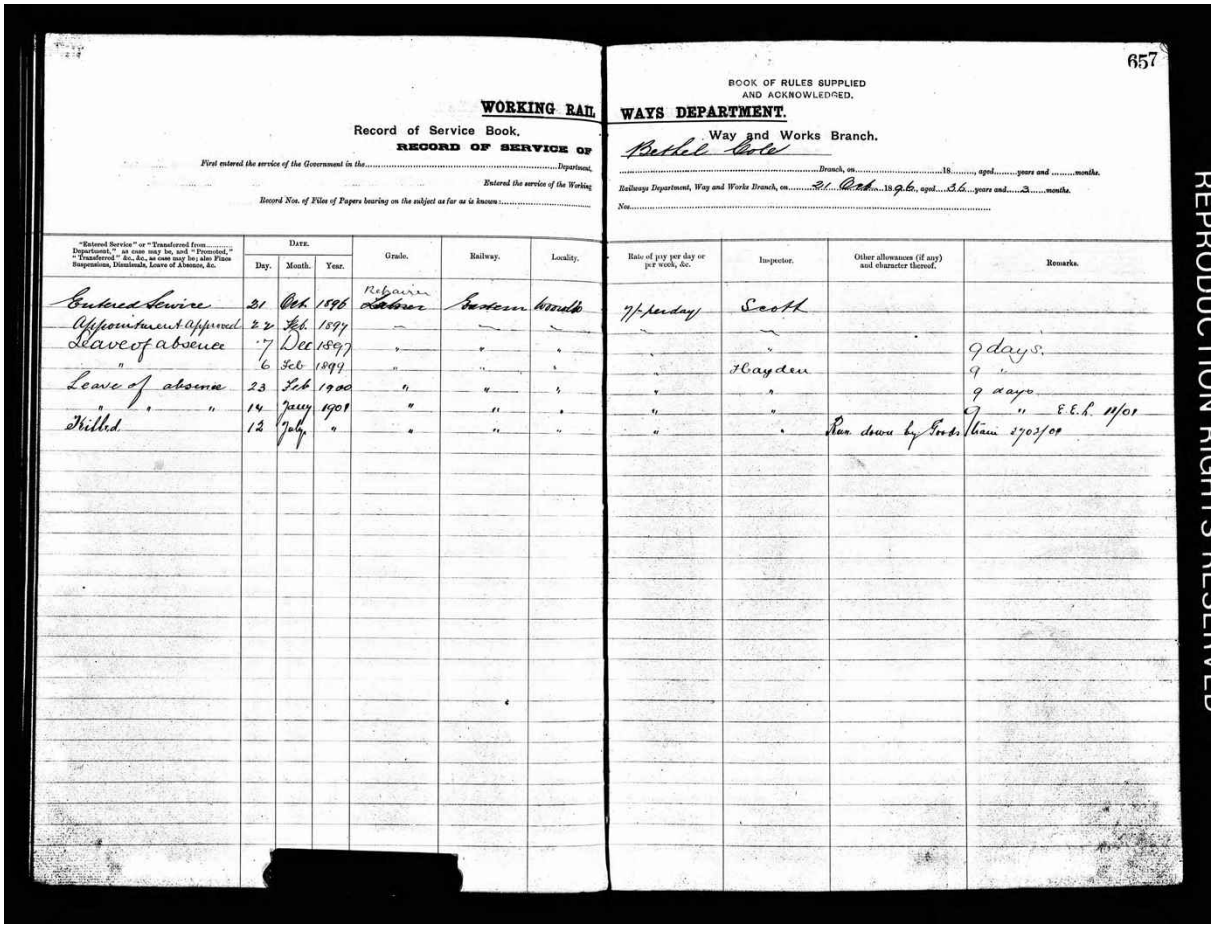
Branch, on ..... 18 ..... aged ..... years and ..... months.

Branch, on 21st October 1896 -, aged 36 years and 3 months.

No. .....

"Entered Service," or "Transferred from ..... Department," as case may be, and "Promoted," "Transferred," &c., &c., as case may be; also, Fines, Suspensions, Dismissals, Leave of Absence, &c.	Date. Day.	Month.	Year.	Grade.	Locality or Headquarters.	Rate of pay per day or per week, &c.	Other allowances (if any) and character thereof.	Remarks.
Ordered service: -	21	October	1896	Repairer.	Waroona.	7/ per day.		
Leave of Absence: -	7	Decr.	1897					9 days.
Leave of Absence -	6	Feby	1899					9 days
Leave of Absence	23	Feby	1900					9 days.

Bethel Cole's Service Record. Showing his service terminating when he was killed on 12 July 1901.



WORKING RAIL

Record of Service Book.

RECORD OF SERVICE OF

First entered the service of the Government in the ..... Department,

Entered the service of the Working

Record Nos. of Files of Papers bearing on the subject as far as is known: .....

657

BOOK OF RULES SUPPLIED AND ACKNOWLEDGED.

WAYS DEPARTMENT.

Way and Works Branch.

Bethel Cole

..... Branch, on ..... 18..... aged ..... years and ..... months.

Railways Department, Way and Works Branch, on 21 Oct 1896, aged 36 years and 3 months.

Nos. .....

"Entered Service" or "Transferred from ..... Department," as case may be, and "Promoted," "Transferred," &c., &c., as case may be; also Fines Suspensions, Dismissals, Leave of Absence, &c.	Date. Day.	Month.	Year.	Grade.	Railway.	Locality.	Rate of pay per day or per week, &c.	Inspector.	Other allowances (if any) and character thereof.	Remarks.
Entered Service	21	Oct.	1896	Repairer Labourer	Eastern	Moncton	7/- per day	Scott		
Appointment Approved	22	Feb.	1897	—	—	—	—	—		
Leave of absence	7	Dec	1897	"	"	"	"	"		9 days.
"	6	Feb	1899	"	"	"	"	Hayden		9 "
Leave of absence	23	Feb	1900	"	"	"	"	"		9 days.
" " "	14	Jany	1901	"	"	"	"	"		9 " E.E.R. 11/01
Killed	12	July	"	"	"	"	"	"	Run down by Goods Train 3703/01	

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS RESERVED

Bethel Cole with his wife and children.

