SLOSS, William Henry 26 May 1915

Designation	Accident Location	Accident Due to
Fuel Man	West Perth	Steam crane accident

William Sloss was 50 years of age when he was fatally injured by being caught and crushed in the mechanical parts of a steam crane at West Perth. William lived at North Perth with his wife Louisa and their eight children with the ages of 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 14 and 16. He was interred at Karrakatta Cemetery (PRESBYTERIAN/DA/0490).

RAILWAY EMPLOYEE KILLED.
CRUSHED BY A CRANE.
William Sloss, a middle-aged man met with fatal injuries early yesterday morning whicle engaged at his work on the coal stage of the West Perth locomotive department. The deceased at the time was working in company with James Aikman, the latter having charge of a steam crane employed in the emptying or coal trucks, while Sloss attended to the breaking of coal lumps etc. About 2.30 a.m. Aikman noticed the deceased putting some oil in a lamp from a tin that was kept under the floor of the crane seat. A little later when Aikman was attempting to swing the crane round to another position he felt the machinery jamming. He stopped it and reversed the gear immediately. On going down to discover the cause of the trouble he was shocked to find that his unfortunate fellow worker had become crushed in the under gear, presumably when returning the oil tin to its place after use. The General Brigade ambulance was at once telephoned for, and the unfortunate man, who was suffering from severe injuries to the lower part of the body, was hurried away to the Perth Public Hospital. From the first his condition was recognized to be serious, and yesterday afternoon, despite the closest attention by the hospital staff, he died.

The deceased was a married man with a family, and resided at North Perth.

An inquest will be opened this morning.

Source: *Trove/The West Australian (Perth) Thursday 27 May 1915 Page 9.*

A RAILWAYMAN'S DEATH.
STEAM CRANE ACCIDENT.
A DEFECTIVE LIGHT..
An inquest concerning the death of William Henry Sloss, a railway employee, who received fatal injuries while assisting in the operation of loading coal by means of a steam crane at West Perth railway yards on the 26th of last month, was held before Mr. T. F. Davies, P.M., yesterday Mr. C. A. Mayhall appeared on behalf of deceased's relatives. Mr. Philip Hunt represented the Amalgamated Society of Railway Employees, of which deceased was a member. Mr. Gibson was present to watch the interests of the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen’s Association.

James Aikman, a fuel man employed by the Railway Department, said he was acting as a crane driver at the locomotive yard at West Perth on May 26. The witness was warned by the Magistrate that if he should be asked questions the answers to which might incriminate him he was entitled to refuse to reply. Continuing his evidence, witness said the crane which he had been driving on the day on which deceased met his death was being used to load coal into engines from trucks. On the operation of transferring coal from the trucks to an engine the grab attached to the crane swung over a half-circle above the staging on which the crane rested, and the upper part of the crane revolved about its own axis. The duty of deceased, who was one of witness's two assistants, was to break up the lumps of coal in the tender of the engine thatwas being loaded. Just before 2 a.m., the

time of the accident, he had finished loading an engine. He saw Sloss coming from the fuel man's cabin with an oilcan in his hand, and did not see him again before the accident occurred. Another engine came alongside, and witness, preparing to load it, filled the grab and swung, it toward the engine. The machinery jammed and he swung the grab back again, and looking down saw the body of a man lying under the staging. Upon a closer inspection he discovered it was Sloss in a half-conscious condition. Witness summoned assistance and removed deceased, who was subsequent ly conveyed to the hospital in an ambulance. Witness was of opinion that, Sloss was crushed by the crane against the staging, while he was in the act of placing down the oilcan which was afterwards found resting on the floor of the staging. On this particular night the arc light which usually illuminated the crane went out before midnight and a hand lamp was used instead. It was not customary to give a signal when the crane was being turned, and on this occasion one had not been given.

To Mr. Mayhall: It was his duty to report, the failure of the light, and he did so, making an entry in a record book for the inspection of the local foreman when he came on duty. If the arc lamp had been in working order after 12 o'clock the accident might have been averted.

To Mr. Hunt: The light had gone out on the previous morning. He was not then in charge of the crane. It was a common thing for the light to fail in that way.

Dr. Sweet, Chief Resident Medical Officer at the Perth Public Hospital deposed that death in his opinion was due to deceased being crushed between two unyielding bodies, and the injuries were consistent with the theory formed by the last witness as to the manner in which Sloss met, his death.

At this stage the inquiry was adjourned to enable the jury to visit the scene of the accident. It will be resumed at 2.30 p.m., on the 11th inst.

Source: *Trove/The West Australian (Perth) Thursday 3 June 1915 Page 3.*

Death of a Railwayman.
THE JURY'S VERDICT.
IMPROVEMENTS SUGGESTED.
The inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the death of William Henry Sloss, a railway employee, who was the victim of an accident which occurred on May 25, at the steam crane used for loading and unloading coal at the West Perth railway yards, was resumed before Mr. R. Davies, P.M. and a jury yesterday afternoon. Mr. C. A. Mayhall appeared to watch the proceedings in the interests of deceased's relatives and Mr. H. Gibson on behalf of the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association.

Further evidence was given by Paul Goldsworthy, a fuel man, employed by the Railway Department, to the effect that on the night in question he was engaged in coaling engines at the steam crane in West Perth railway yards. Witness was walking across to a cabin when he noticed deceased standing on the coal staging filling a hand lamp from a tin. While inside the shed witness heard the crane whistle blow and upon coming out saw the deceased's body lying near the crane.

To Mr. Gibson: At the time of the accident the arc lamp, nearest, the crane was out. In witness, opinion the work performed at the crane was dangerous work to perform without an arc light. Witness had noticed the arc lamp out on previous occasions.

To the jury: If the arc lamp had been burning on this occasion there would have been no reason for the use of a hand lamp by deceased.

The jury returned a verdict that deceased came to his death from injuries received from being accidentally crushed by a steam crane at the West Perth coal stage.

They added the following rider: 'We consider that the place where the crane is working should be better lighted and that the crane itself should be protected by a fence.'

Source: *Trove/The Daily News (Perth) Saturday 12 June 1915 Page 1.*

FAMILY NOTICE.
SLOSS. -On May 26, 1915 at the Perth Hospital (suddenly), William Henry, the beloved husband of Louisa Sloss, and fond father of Ellen, Irena, Stewart, Erine, Marian, Jean, Ivy, and Colin Sloss, age 50 years. Deeply regretted.

Source: *Trove/The West Australian (Perth) Thursday 27 May 1915 Page 1.*