

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2695  
THE MISSOURI PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY  
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT  
NEAR SAGEFYAH, OKLA , ON  
APRIL 21, 1943

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SUMMARY

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Railroad: Missouri Pacific  
Date: April 21, 1943  
Location: Sageeyah, Okla.  
Kind of accident: Head-end collision  
Trains involved: Passenger : Freight  
Train numbers: Extra 6511 North : 191  
Engine numbers: 6511 : 2305  
Consist: 6 cars : 12 cars, caboose  
Estimated speed: 50 m. p. h. : 30 m. p. h.  
Operation: Timetable and train orders  
Track: Single; 1°05' curve; level  
Weather: Clear  
Time: About 4:56 p. m.  
Casualties: 3 killed; 125 injured  
Cause: Accident caused by failure to  
obey a meet order  
Recommendation: That the Missouri Pacific Railroad  
Company install an adequate block  
system on the line on which this  
accident occurred

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2695

IN THE MATTER OF MAKING ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORTS  
UNDER THE ACCIDENT REPORTS ACT OF MAY 6, 1910.

THE MISSOURI PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY

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June 9, 1943.

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Accident near Sageeyah, Okla., on April 21, 1943, caused  
by failure to obey a meet order.

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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

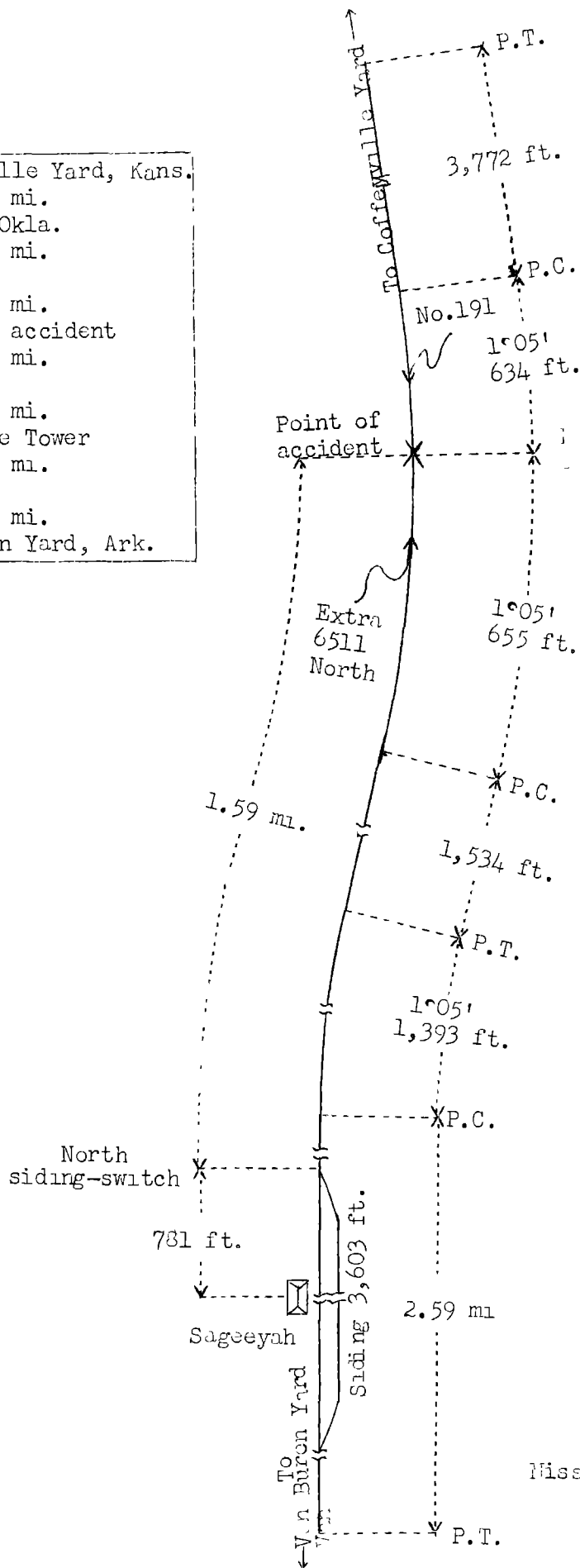
PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On April 21, 1943, there was a head-end collision between a passenger train and a freight train on the Missouri Pacific Railroad near Sageeyah, Okla., which resulted in the death of 3 employees, and the injury of 119 passengers and 6 employees.

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<sup>1</sup>Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Commerce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the Commission to Commissioner Patterson for consideration and disposition.

○ Coffeyville Yard, Kans.	22.64 mi.
○ Nowata, Okla.	18.08 mi.
○ Oologah	5.37 mi.
X Point of accident	1.74 mi.
○ Sageeyah	4.66 mi.
○ Claremore Tower	28.85 mi.
○ Wagoner	84.20 mi.
○ Van Buren Yard, Ark.	



Inv. No. 2695  
 Missouri Pacific Railroad  
 Sageeyah, Okla.  
 April 21, 1943

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Southern Kansas and Central Divisions designated as the Wagoner Subdivision and extending between Coffeyville Yard, Kans., and Van Buren Yard, Ark., 165.54 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. At Sageeyan a siding 3,603 feet in length parallels the main track on the east. The north switch of this siding is 781 feet north of the station. The accident occurred on the main track at a point 1.59 miles north of the north siding-switch. Approaching from the south there are, in succession, a tangent 2.59 miles in length, a 1°05' curve to the right 1,393 feet, a tangent 1,534 feet and a 1°05' curve to the left 655 feet to the point of accident. Approaching from the north there is a tangent 3,772 feet in length, which is followed by a 1°05' curve to the right 634 feet to the point of accident. At the point of accident the grade is level.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

14. Engine Whistle Signals.

Note.- The signals prescribed are illustrated by "o" for short sounds; "\_\_\_" for longer sounds. \* \* \*

Sound.	Indication.
* * *	
(n) ___ ___ o	Approaching meeting or waiting points. See Rule S-90.
* * *	

15. Communicating Signals.

Note.- The signals prescribed are illustrated by "o" for short sounds; "\_\_\_" for longer sounds. \* \* \*

Sound.	Indication.
* * *	
(1) _____	Approaching meeting or waiting points. See Rule S-90.
* * *	

S-89 (a). \* \* \*

At train order meeting points, the train holding the main track must stop clear of the switch used by the train to be met in going on siding, unless the train to be met is clear of the main track and switch is properly lined.

\* \* \*

S-90. On trains equipped with communicating signal system, the conductor must give signal 16 (1) to the engineman after passing the last station but not less than one mile preceding \* \* \* a point where by train order it is to meet, \* \* \*, an opposing train. The engineman will immediately reply with signal 14 (n). If the engineman fails to answer by signal 14 (n), the conductor must take immediate action to stop the train.

\* \* \*

Should engineman \* \* \* fail to prepare to stop short of fouling point, when required, the conductor must take immediate action to stop the train.

204. \* \* \*

Enginemen and firemen and, when practicable, forward trainmen must read train orders, check with each other and have a definite and proper understanding of their requirements. Conductors and, when practicable, trainmen, must read train orders, check with each other and have a definite and proper understanding of their requirements.

#### FORMS OF TRAIN ORDERS.

\* \* \*

#### S-A

Fixing Meeting Points for Opposing Trains.

(1) \* \* \*

No 5 Eng 58 meet Extra 95 north at B.

\* \* \*

Trains receiving these orders will run with respect to each other to the designated point and there meet in the manner prescribed by the rules.

\* \* \*

S-C

Giving Right Over An Opposing Train.

\* \* \*

(3) Extra 77 north has right over No 97  
Eng 75 F to A and wait at D until  
10 20 a m \* \* \*

\* \* \* The second named train must clear the time specified \* \* \* not less than five minutes.

\* \* \*

The maximum authorized speed for passenger trains is 55 miles per hour and for freight trains, 50 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

Passenger Extra 6511 North, a north-bound passenger train, consisted of engine 6511, one express-refrigerator car, two Pullman sleeping cars, one baggage car and two Pullman tourist cars, in the order named. The first car was of steel-under-frame construction and the remainder were of all-steel construction. At Wagoner, 33.51 miles south of Sageeyah, the crew received a clearance card and copies of five train orders, of which one was train order No. 237 reading in part as follows:

Psgr Extra 6511 North has  
right over No 191 Eng 2305  
\* \* \* Wagoner to Coffeyville  
Yard and wait at \* \* \* Oologah  
until 3 37 p m \* \* \*

Passenger Extra 6511 departed from Wagoner at 2:57 p. m., according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains. At Claremore Tower, 4.66 miles south of Sageeyah and the last open office, the crew received a clearance card and copies of train order No. 271 reading in part as follows:

No 191 Eng 2305 Meet Psgr Extra  
6511 North at Sageeyah \* \* \*

Passenger Extra 6511 departed from Claremore Tower at 4:46 p. m., passed the north siding-switch at Sageeyah where it was required to wait unless No. 191 was into clear, and while moving at an estimated speed of 50 miles per hour it collided with No. 191 at a point 1.59 miles north of the north siding-switch.

No. 191, a south-bound second-class freight train, consisted of engine 2305, 2 loaded and 10 empty cars and a caboose. At Nowata, 25.19 miles north of Sageeyah, the crew received a clearance card and copies of six train orders, of which one was train order No. 237. No. 191 departed from Nowata at 12:56 p. m., according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains, 2 hours 44 minutes late. At Oologah, 7.11 miles north of Sageeyah and the last open office, the crew received a clearance card and copies of three train orders, of which one was train order No. 271. This train departed from Oologah at 4:43 p. m., 5 hours 33 minutes late, and while moving at an estimated speed of 30 miles per hour it collided with Passenger Extra 6511 North.

From an engine moving in either direction, in the vicinity of the point of accident, the view of a train approaching from the opposite direction is restricted to a distance of about 1,400 feet, because of vegetation adjacent to the track and track curvature.

The engine of each train, the first two cars of Passenger Extra 6511 and the first, second and seventh cars of No. 191 were demolished. The third car of Passenger Extra 6511 was derailed and slightly damaged. The front truck of the third car of No. 191 was derailed. The eighth, tenth and eleventh cars were slightly damaged.

It was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 4:56 p. m.

The employees killed were the engineer and the fireman of Passenger Extra 6511, and the fireman of No. 191. The employees injured were the conductor, three brakemen and the engineer of No. 191, and the front brakeman of Passenger Extra 6511.

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident the average daily movement in the vicinity of the point of accident was 20.3 trains.



### Discussion

The rules governing operation on this line provide that at a meeting point the superior train must stop clear of the switch to be used by the train which is to enter the siding. On passenger trains equipped with a train air-signal the conductor must sound the meeting-point signal on the train air-signal after the last station is passed but not less than one mile before the meeting point is reached. In addition, the engineer must acknowledge this signal by sounding the proper signal on the engine whistle. If the engineer fails to sound the proper signal, or fails to prepare to stop the train short of the fouling point, the conductor must take immediate action to stop the train. Enginemen and trainmen must read all train orders affecting the movement of their trains and have a definite and proper understanding of the requirements of the orders.

The crew of each train held copies of train order No. 237, which gave Passenger Extra 6511 North right over No. 191 Wagoner to Coffeyville Yard, and train order No. 271, which established Sageeyah as the meeting point between Passenger Extra 6511 and No. 191. Passenger Extra 6511 was required to stop short of the fouling point of the north siding-switch at Sageeyah unless No. 191 was into clear on the siding. Passenger Extra 6511 passed the north siding-switch at Sageeyah and collided with No. 191 1.59 miles north of the switch.

As No. 191 was approaching the point where the collision occurred the speed was about 35 miles per hour. The enginemen and the front brakeman were maintaining a lookout ahead. Their view of the track ahead was restricted because of vegetation and track curvature. When the engine reached a point about 1,400 feet north of the point where the accident occurred the engineer saw the engine of Passenger Extra 6511 and immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position. The speed of No. 191 was about 30 miles per hour when the collision occurred.

About 10 minutes before the accident occurred the enginemen, the front brakeman and the flagman of Passenger Extra 6511 received copies of train order No. 271 from a train-order delivery-device as their train passed Claremore Tower, 4.66 miles south of Sageeyah. The front brakeman and the flagman read the order and understood that their train was required to stop clear of the fouling point of the north siding-switch unless No. 191 was into clear on the siding. The flagman said he sounded the meeting-point signal on the train air-signal when his train was about 1-1/2 miles south of Sageeyah, and the engine whistle-signal was sounded in acknowledgment. As his train was approaching the siding the speed was about 50 miles per hour. He saw a train on the siding, but when his train passed the vicinity of the north siding-switch he realized that the train on the siding was not No. 191. Then he became confused and he took no action to stop his train. The front brakeman said that when he determined that No. 191 was not on the siding he made an effort to apply the brakes by opening the conductor's valve, but the

collision occurred before he had reached the location of the valve. The conductor said he knew that copies of a train order had been received at Claremore Tower by the other members of his crew, but he was engaged in performing clerical duties and did not read the order nor have knowledge of its requirements. He was proceeding toward the rear car of his train to confer with the flagman regarding the train order when the collision occurred. The brakes had been tested and had functioned properly en route, but there was no application of the brakes in the vicinity of Sageeyah prior to the collision. The operator at Claremore Tower said he saw a member of the crew on the engine of Passenger Extra 6511 remove a copy of train order No. 271 from the train-order delivery-device. Why the enginemen failed to take action to stop their train short of the fouling point of the north siding-switch could not be determined, as both of them were killed in the accident.

In the territory where this accident occurred, trains are operated by timetable and train orders only. If an adequate block system had been in use on this line these trains would not have been permitted to occupy a block simultaneously, and the accident would not have occurred. This carrier has an automatic block-signal system in operation between Greenwood Jct. and Wagoner, Okla., 77.82 miles. The northern end of this system is 53.51 miles south of Sageeyah.

#### Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to obey a meet order.

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company install an adequate block system on the line on which this accident occurred.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this ninth day of June, 1943.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,  
Secretary.