

**In re investigation of accident on the
Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, near Callahan,
Florida, on January 30, 1916.**

On January 30, 1916, there was a derailment of a passenger train on the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad near Callahan, Florida, resulting in the injury of 26 passengers and one Pullman porter.

The derailed train was southbound Atlantic Coast Line train No. 86, known as the "Florida and West Indian Limited," enroute from New York City to points in Florida. Conductor Williams and Engineman Lodge were in charge of this train. It consisted of Pacific type engine No. 204, one mail car, one combination coach and baggage car, one coach, one dining car, and five Pullman sleeping cars, in the order named, the cars being of all-steel construction and having six-wheel trucks.

The Savannah District of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad on which this accident occurred extends from Savannah, Ga., to Jacksonville, Fla., a distance of 153.9 miles. Between Savannah and Folkston, Ga., a distance of 112.4 miles, the line is single-track; between Folkston and Jacksonville, a distance of 41.5 miles, the line is double-track and is equipped with automatic block signals of the three-position, upper-quadrant, semaphore type. The derailment occurred at about the middle of this double-track portion of the road.

The track is straight for about 12 miles north and 1-1/2 miles south of the point where the accident occurred, and for about 1-1/2 miles north and 3 miles south of this point it is practically level. In this vicinity 33 foot rails of 66-pound section are used, single-ribbed inside and out; the ties are of pine and cypress, averaging about 19 to the rail length. On treated pine ties which had recently been installed tie plates were used. The joints are made with six-hole angle bars. The roadbed is of clay and sand, with two or three inches of gravel ballast. At the time of the accident the ties were well filled in with gravel and the surface and alignment were good.

On the date of this accident train No. 86 left JUMP, Ga., a station about 56 miles from Savannah, at 11:03 a.m., 23 minutes late, and passed Hilliard, the last telegraph office north of the point of derailment, at 12:40 p.m., 12 minutes behind schedule time. The derailment occurred at 12:50 p.m., at a point about 8.2 miles south of Hilliard, and two miles north of Callahan, while the train was running at a speed of approximately 55 miles per hour.

The rear truck of the dining car and all five Pullman cars were derailed. The knuckle of the coupler on the rear

and freight trains by both electric motor and steam locomotive. The movement of trains is governed by time-table and train orders, the latter being transmitted by telephone.

The track is tangent for a distance of 1,700 feet west of, and 3,000 feet east of the point of accident and the view is unobstructed. The point of accident was at the bottom of a sag, on a 15-foot fill, there being a grade of 2.6%, 1,350 feet in length on the west, and of .93%, 1636 feet in length on the east.

There was a dense fog at the time of the accident.

Conductor Jacobs of the freight extra stated that at Georgetown, he received by telephone an order to run extra Georgetown to Lake Allen, which he did not write down. The dispatcher did not give the time the order was made O.K. His train left Georgetown about 6.34 a.m., made a stop at Bethel, and departed from that point about 7.45. As the train crossed the bridge near Burlington, .82 miles east of Fair Oak, he looked at his watch and it was then 7.59. At that time he expected that his train would reach Wiltsee, 1.69 miles west, about 8.03, and take the siding for No. 2 which was due to leave there at 8.04. At the time of the accident he was riding in the caboose and had no warning of the impending accident until the engineman whistled for the brakes a few seconds before they collided. As soon as he could get himself together, he looked at his watch and it was then 8.08. He stated that he has been in the employ of the Cincinnati, Georgetown and Portsmouth R. R. for a total of about four years, and during that time he has not seen a book of rules, had never been examined on them, and further, that he had never known of an instance, during that period, where an inferior train cleared a superior train five minutes.

He stated that it is the general practice to proceed against a superior train without clearing them as required by rule, and sometimes the superior train is found to be ahead of time. He mentioned one instance in which Superintendent of Transportation V. M. Loudon was riding on a train which was six minutes ahead of time by Loudon's watch and four minutes by the watch of one of the crew. He further stated that his watch had never been examined or tested and that he did not know of a watch inspector. Before starting out on Sunday night he compared his watch with the standard clock at Carrol St., and at that time it was about one-half a minute fast. Sometime during his trip, but at what point he could not say, he compared watches with the

The track section on which this accident occurred comprises five miles of double track and a short spur. Section master Smith was in charge of this section, having a crew of five laborers. He stated that on the day of the accident and on the preceding day he and his men were working on the southbound track between milepost 150 and the point of accident, renewing ties and aligning and leveling the track. Milepost 150 is about 2000 feet north of the point of derailment. Section master Smith and members of his crew stated that on the day of the accident no new ties had been put in; on the day before, new ties had been put in and after spiking all but two or three of these new ties they had run out of spikes. The section master also stated that in this track the joints were tight and he was preparing to change a rail. He thought the derailment was caused either by the rails buckling or by something falling from the forward part of the train.

On the date of the accident the section crew was working at the point where the derailment occurred as train No. 85 approached, and the men were standing on the northbound track directly opposite this point when the train was derailed. The engineers of the two preceding trains stated that the section crew was renewing ties at this point on the date of the accident, and the fireman of train No. 85 stated that as the train approached he saw the sectionmen driving spikes. Passengers stated that the section crew was at the point of derailment, and there were ties, tie plates and tools lying about. An inspection of the track disclosed that there were 44 of the 451 new ties between mile post 150 and the point of derailment in which spikes had not been driven. There were no slow orders in effect on this part of the railroad, and no flagman had been sent out to protect this point.

At the time of the accident the weather was clear and warm, the temperature being about 75 degrees. The inspection of the track also disclosed that the joints were tight, but this condition was not serious enough in itself to have caused the derailment.

This derailment was caused by failure of Sectionmaster Smith to have the rails properly spiked to the ties before the passage of this train, as well as his failure properly to protect this point while tie renewals and track repairs were being made.

Sectionmaster Smith had been employed as a track laborer and relief foreman for about two years and as a foreman for about a year and a half.

Greater destruction of property, with probable loss of life and more serious injury to passengers and employees, was undoubtedly averted by the use of steel cars in this train.