

IN RE INVESTIGATION OF AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON THE
CLEVELAND, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO & ST. LOUIS RAIL-
WAY AT MANSFIELD, ILL., ON AUGUST 23,
1917.

On August 23, 1917, there was a rear-end collision between a passenger train and a freight train on the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway at Mansfield, Ill., which resulted in the death of one trespasser, the serious injury of 1 employee and 8 passengers and the slight injury of 36 passengers. After investigation of this accident, the Chief of the Division of Safety reports as follows:

The sub-division of the railway on which this accident occurred, which is known as the Third District of the Peoria & Eastern Division, extends 95.2 miles from Peoria, Ill., east to Urbana, Ill. It is a single-track line, over which train movements are governed by time-table and train orders, supplemented by a manual block system. At night a permissive block is in use and a train may follow a passenger train from an open station ten minutes after its departure.

The collision occurred while eastbound passenger train No. 44 was standing at Mansfield station. Approaching Mansfield from the West the track is straight for 3.7 miles, while the grade is slightly descending for eastbound trains. There was nothing to obstruct the view approaching the point of accident and at the time the weather was clear.

Just west of Mansfield station the tracks of the Wabash Railway Company cross the tracks of the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway Company at grade and an interlocking tower, known as MJ Tower, is located here to protect the crossing. On the morning of the accident this interlocking plant became inoperative, and an order was issued requiring all trains on both roads to stop before crossing in either direction and not to proceed until they received proper signals by hand from the operator stationed on the platform of the station.

Eastbound passenger train No. 44, known as the "Night Express", consisted of locomotive 6903, 1 mail car, 1 baggage car, 1 smoking car, 1 coach and 3 Pullman sleeping cars in the order named, and was in charge of Conductor Clark and Enginemen Heller. This train left Peoria at 7.30 p.m., on time; at Lilly, a station 29.1 miles east of Peoria, it was delayed on account of the engine taking coal, and while standing there eastbound freight train No. 92 came up behind it and

was stopped by the flagman of train No. 44. Engineman McCown of train No. 92 was told locomotive 6903 of train No. 44 was having trouble in handling its train, and he said that he would look out for them. At C. & A. Junction, one mile west of Bloomington, train No. 92

was again stopped by the flagman of train No. 44, after which the locomotive of train No. 92 was cut off and used as a pusher to shove train No. 44 to Lean, a station 1.5 miles east of Bloomington, then returning to C. & A. Junction for its train. After stopping at the Wabash Railway crossing just west of Mansfield station, train No. 44 was delayed 3 or 4 minutes, because of the inability of the locomotive to start its train, due to low steam. The train finally reached the station platform, and after passengers were discharged and loaded a signal to proceed was given by Conductor Clark. Locomotive 6903 was again unable to start the train, and as train No. 92 was seen approaching, Flagman Smith hurried back with red and white lanterns and torpedoes to protect his train. He gave stop signals repeatedly to the approaching train, to which he received no reply; he then placed torpedoes on the rail and got off the track just as the locomotive passed by him, still working steam, and struck the rear end of train No. 44 standing at Mansfield station.

Eastbound freight train No. 92 was a manifest freight train consisting of locomotive 6649, 28 cars and a caboose and was in charge of Conductor Reiferman and Enginemen McCown. This train left Peoria at 6.45 p. m., on time. It was stopped by the flagman of train No. 44 at both Lilly and C. & A. Junction, and at the latter place its engine was used to push train No. 44 for a distance of 2.5 miles. The crew also had a copy of the order requiring all trains to stop before crossing the Wabash Railway at Mansfield. Approaching Mansfield, Engineman McCown failed to note the signals of Flagman Smith, failed to stop his train for the railroad crossing at Mansfield, and collided with the rear end of train No. 44, at about 11.58 p.m.

With the exception of its last two cars, all of train No. 44 remained intact on the track. The rear end of the next to the last car in the train had one truck off the track, and one end of the car was practically demolished, the front end of the last car being driven into it about 15 feet. The entire engine of train No. 92 and about half of the tender went into the rear end of the rear car. Both of the wrecked sleeping cars were of wooden construction with steel underframes. The engine and tender of the freight train were both derailed; the first five cars of the train remained on the track, the fifth car being slightly damaged, but the next ten cars in the train were thrown into the ditch by being buckled, four or five of them going to the south and the rest to the north side of the track. The remainder of the train was not damaged.

Engineman Heller of train No. 44, stated that the coal which was taken on at Lilly was poor and that on this account he had trouble starting from that point and also encountered further trouble at C. & A. Junction. He stated that he stopped before crossing the Wabash Railway at Mansfield and was unable to start again for about three minutes. He did not whistle out a flagman at this crossing nor

did he do so when he stopped at Mansfield station, as he expected to start as soon as he was ready. He thought about 10 minutes elapsed from the time he stopped at the crossing to the time he was ready to start from the station. Enginemen Heller further stated that he got off the engine at Mansfield and was just getting on again when he received a whistle signal from the conductor to proceed. The conductor then came running to the front end of the train calling out to him to get out of the way of the freight train and the fireman replied that they were trying to do, the collision occurring a short time later.

Conductor Clark, of train No. 44 stated that after his train stopped at the Wabash Railway crossing his enginemen had trouble in starting the train and he thought three or four minutes elapsed before they were able to pull up to the station. He said that he saw train No. 92 approaching when it was about four miles away and as it came nearer he thought from the flutter of the headlight that it was traveling at a pretty high rate of speed and he told his flagman to go back to flag which he did. Then after standing on the station platform for a minute or so the conductor got on to the platform of the smoking car and pulled the cord, giving the enginemen a signal to proceed. Because the train failed to start he got off on to the station platform and gave four or five signals to go ahead, but the train did not move and he then went to the locomotive and told the enginemen that he thought train No. 92 was not going to stop and that he had better get started right away. He said that the fireman told him that they had been trying to start ever since they received the whistle signal but that they did not have steam enough to do so. By that time train No. 92 was so close that he knew that they could not stop; train No. 92 struck the rear of his train under a full head of steam. Conductor Clark stated further that the flagman went back to protect the rear of the train as soon as he was told to; he did not know how far he had gone at the time of the collision but thought he was back about 800 feet. He knew that he was back further than the home signal which governed the interlocking plant. Conductor Clark further stated that the rear lights of his train were burning properly.

Fireman Hoosel, of train No. 44, corroborated the statements of his enginemen and conductor, stating that they had trouble with their locomotive on account of the poor coal which they received at Lilly, and in his opinion they were at Mansfield about ten or eleven minutes in all, before the collision occurred. He stated that the fire box and tubes of the locomotive were in perfect condition.

Rear Brakeman Smith, of train No. 44, stated that he flagged train No. 92 at Lilly on account of his train being unable to start and was told by the brakeman of that train that his enginemen would look out for them. He flagged train No. 92 again at C. & A. Junction, after which the locomotive of that train assisted his train to Dean.

He stated that his train stopped at the Wabash Railway crossing from three to five minutes and that a short time after they had recrossed the Mansfield station, his conductor told him to go back to flag train No. 22. He ran back swinging his lantern and just before the locomotive reached him he placed torpedoes on the rail. When the locomotive passed him he was working steam and he yelled to the fireman but received no reply. He stated that when the collision occurred he was just west of the caboose of the freight train.

Engineer McCown, of train No. 22, stated that he had a copy of the order requiring all trains to stop before passing the Wabash Railway crossing at Mansfield. He stated that he was awake while passing through Harris but that he must have "dozed off" after leaving Harris, although he did not know where. He thought the explosion of the torpedoes which the flagman had placed on the rails must have awakened him and he then applied the brakes in emergency although he thought he did not shut off steam. He further stated that his locomotive took coal at Lilly but that he had no trouble on this trip in getting steam. He also stated that his fireman has been accustomed to call out signals to him and that he insists upon this from every fireman he has. He further stated that prior to starting on this trip he was off duty from 2.30 a. m. to 6.00 p. m. and went to bed about 4.00 a. m., being called at about 12.00 noon to attend an investigation. This investigation engaged him until about 2.00 p. m., after which he went to the hotel at Peoria and stayed around there.

Lead Brakeman Selop, of train No. 22, stated that he did not see anything of train No. 24 after assisting it from C. & A. Junction to Peoria, until just immediately preceding the collision, although he was sitting on the front end of the car behind the engine man looking out for the markers all the way. He stated that he did not see the distant signal approaching Mansfield crossing; that he was looking out for this crossing but did not think they were as close to it as they were. Approaching Mansfield the fireman beckoned to him and he got down off the tank and went toward the fireman and just at that time the torpedoes exploded. He stated that he called to Engineer McCown and the air brakes were applied in emergency, the collision occurring immediately afterwards. He said that he knew of the order requiring his train to stop before crossing the Wabash Railway at Mansfield; he could not account for the fact that none of the engine crew saw train No. 24 in time to stop, nor could he account for the failure of the engine man to stop before crossing the Wabash Railway. He stated that the fireman had just put in a fire and may have been blinded on that account; if the engine man was asleep he did not know it as he was sitting up as firmly as usual.

Conductor Pieferman, of train No. 22, stated that he held a copy of the order requiring all trains to stop before crossing the tracks of the Wabash Railway at Mansfield; approaching Mansfield he

was working on his reports in the caboose and thinking that they must be pretty close to Mansfield, he went up into the cupola of the caboose to see where they were, the collision taking place shortly after he had reached the cupola. He did not see the markers of train No. 44 prior to the collision nor did he hear the explosion of the torpedoes.

Rear-brakeman Moor, of train No. 92, stated that he was riding in the cupola of the caboose at the time of the accident but did not see the rear end of train No. 44. He did not know of anything that would have prevented him from seeing the markers on train No. 44, unless it was the smoke blowing down from the locomotive. He stated that after the accident the flagman of train No. 44 was right close to the caboose. Rear-brakeman Moore also stated that he had seen a copy of the order relative to the condition of the interlocking plant at Mansfield but did not realize that his train was so close to Mansfield as it was.

Trainmaster Gibson stated that bad coal taken at Lily was the reason for locomotive 6003 failing to steam properly. He stated that this coal had been on fire and coked while stored at Millery, and that combustion had ensued and that the coal had to be re-riddled and considerable mud had been taken up with the coal.

This accident was caused primarily by Engineer McCown of train No. 92 going to sleep on his engine between Harris and Mansfield, resulting in his failure to come to a stop approaching the Washburn Railway crossing at Mansfield, as required by special train order, and by his further failure to observe and be governed by the stop signals of the flagman of train No. 44. Engineer McCown admitted that he went to sleep.

The failure of Fireman Hyatt and Head Brakeman Delay to remind Engineer McCown of the order to stop as he approached the Washburn Railway crossing is a contributing cause of this accident. They both had personal knowledge of the special order and knew also of the trouble with the locomotive of train No. 44. While no blame is attached to Conductor Sieferman or Rear Brakeman Moore, it is felt that inasmuch as they knew that the crossing stop had to be made at Mansfield, it might have been possible for them to have realized the situation and applied the air from the rear of the train.

Engineer McCown was employed as a fireman in January, 1896 and promoted to engineer in March, 1901. In April, 1905, he was suspended 10 days for not taking signal to stop at Pekin after having been notified what work was to be done. In September, 1915, he was suspended for 15 days for being responsible with another for disobedience of Rule 23, resulting in collision at Bloomington. In June,

1916, he was suspended for 60 days on account of exceeding speed limit, resulting in the derailment of 11 cars at Denver. Fireman Hyatt was employed as such in January, 1912, and was promoted to engine man in January, 1917, while Brakeman Daley was employed as a fireman in January, 1911, resigning in December of the same year and being re-employed as a brakeman in September, 1916.

At the time of the accident the engine crew of train No. 92 had been on duty 5 hours and 23 minutes, after a period off duty of 16 hours. According to Engineman McCown's statement he had had 9 hours' sleep during his off-duty period.

LWL.