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IN RE INVESTIGATION OF AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON THE  
MISSOURI KANSAS & TEXAS RAILWAY, NEAR BAYARD, KANS.,  
ON DECEMBER 8, 1918.

January 25, 1919.

( On December 8, 1918, there was a head-end collision between two freight trains on the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railway near Bayard, Kans., which resulted in injury to 4 employees. After investigation the Chief of the Bureau of Safety reports as follows:

The Kansas City Division of the Parsons District on which this accident occurred extends between Kansas City, Mo., and Parsons, Kans., a distance of 134.8 miles, the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway being used between Kansas City, Mo., and Paola, Kans., a distance of 43.1 miles. The division is a single-track line over which train movements are governed by time table and train orders transmitted by telephone, no block system being in use. Northbound trains are superior by direction to southbound trains of the same class.

The trains involved in this accident were No. 81 south and No. 84 north.

( Train No. 81, consisting of engine 817, 44 loaded cars and a caboose in charge of Conductor Tucker and Engineer Jacobs, left Kansas City at 7.45 p.m., one hour and fifteen minutes late. At Paola it received order No. 50 reading as follows:

No. 81, engine 817 has right over No. 84 engine 818 Paola to Moran, and right over No. 82 to MK&T crossing and wait at Kincaid until 1.20 a.m. Mildred until 1.35 a.m. for No. 84.

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At Kincaid, the last open train order office north of the point of accident No. 81 received order No. 2 reading as follows:

That part of Order No. 50 reading "No. 81 wait at Kincaid until 1.20 a.m." is annulled.

No. 81 left Kincaid at 1.14 a.m. and proceeded south. According to these orders No. 81 should have waited at Mildred until 1.35 a.m. for No. 84. Instead of waiting, this train passed Mildred without stopping and at 1.27 a.m., while running at a speed estimated by the conductor at 6 or 8 miles an hour, collided with No. 84, 1.7 miles south of Mildred or one-half mile north of Bayard.

Train No. 84, consisting of engine 812, 34 loaded and 8 empty cars and a caboose in charge of Conductor Barker and Enginemen Miller, left Parsons, Kans. at 10.02 p.m., two hours and seventeen minutes late, passed Moran, the last open train order office south of the point of accident, at 1.10 a.m., and while traveling at a speed of about 15 miles an hour, collided with No. 81, six miles north of Moran or one-half mile north of Bayard. The weather was dark and very foggy.

Both engines had their front ends crushed in and were badly damaged but remained on the rails. Thirteen cars were derailed, the wreckage caught fire and seven cars were burned up. Five other cars were destroyed in clearing the wreck. The track was damaged for a distance of about 75 feet.

Approaching the scene of the accident from the north there is a 4200-foot tangent followed by a 3 degree 18 minute curve to the left 600 feet long, and a tangent 3350 feet long

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leading to the point of the collision.

Approaching the scene of the accident from the south there is a tangent 2400 feet long, then a 1 degree 8 minute curve to the right 300 feet long followed by a tangent 1040 feet long leading to the point of collision. The grade is approximately 1% ascending for northbound trains.

Enginemen Miller on No. 84 stated that he received order No. 50 at Moran and the dispatcher had said that No. 81 would be waiting at Mildred. As his train came around the curve south of Bayard he saw a light which he took to be No. 81's headlight up about Mildred. After passing the station at Bayard he saw a light on the straight track ahead but the fog kept it from showing up as a headlight usually does and he did not realize that this light was a headlight until only about ten or fifteen car lengths distant. He immediately shut off the engine, applied the air in emergency and jumped off, the collision occurring almost immediately.

Fireman Cotton on No. 84 stated that his train left Moran about 1.10 or 1.12 a.m., expecting to go to Mildred for No. 81. He said when near Bayard and running about 10 miles an hour he saw a light which he took to be an automobile on the public highway which parallels the track. He put in a fire, looked out again, and then realized that the light he saw was No. 81's headlight. The engineman and brakeman realized this fact about the same time. The brakeman and fireman jumped. The engineman applied his brakes in emergency

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and followed the fireman.

Engineman Jacobs on No. 81 stated that he received at Paola order No. 50, quoted above, and at Kincaid received order No. 2 cancelling that part of order No. 50 relating to the wait at Kincaid. He said that he understood the orders perfectly, that he had read No. 50 aloud to his fireman and he thought to the head brakeman, and they all understood it. He stated that the brakeman picked up order No. 2 from the operator at Kincaid and read it aloud to him and the fireman and that he then took it and read it aloud to the fireman and brakeman, and there was absolutely no misunderstanding on his part. He stated that he fully understood that he was to wait at Mildred until 1.35 a.m., but he simply forgot it and the fireman apparently did the same thing. He said the matter was not mentioned by either of the engine crew after leaving Kincaid, and that there was no trouble with the engine or in handling the train that would take his mind off the orders and he stated that he cannot explain why he overlooked the wait order at Mildred. He said he did not even think of it when he saw No. 84's headlight, and in fact did not remember the order until after the engines struck. He stated that he did not realize that he was meeting a train on the main track until No. 84's engine rounded the curve at Bayard, and appeared on straight track, just a short distance away. He immediately applied the air in emergency and applied the sand. Just about the same time the fireman also saw the headlight and called a

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warning. The engineman immediately jumped off. He stated that he did not think the air had been applied from the engine prior to that time as his gauge showed normal pressure of 70 and 90 pounds. He is positive that he received a proceed signal given by lantern from the rear end of the train at Mildred and that he answered this signal with two short blasts of his whistle. He said that on account of the fog he could not see the signal clearly and admitted having passed six stations without having received a proceed signal, saying it is customary to keep going when the signal cannot be seen.

Head Brakeman Bahl on No. 81 stated that just before leaving Paola he was busy fixing a hot box and did not hear the engineman read his orders to the fireman, but after he got on the engine he asked the engineman where No. 81 was to meet No. 84, and the engineman told him that No. 81 had right over No. 84 to Moran. When No. 81 reached Kincaid order No. 2 was received. Brakeman Bahl read this order aloud to the engineman and fireman, then the engineman took it and read it aloud. The brakeman again asked where his train was going to meet No. 84. The engineman told him Moran. The brakeman had not read order No. 50 and knew nothing about the wait at Mildred. He stated that they passed Mildred at about 20 miles an hour and that he was looking back at the time but on account of the dense fog and smoke he could see only two or three car lengths back. He said that he does not believe a signal from the rear end at Mildred could have been seen.

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South of Mildred the fireman thought he saw a headlight, but the brakeman looked and assured him that it was an automobile at Bayard. About this time the engineman made a service application of his brakes, but released them almost immediately afterwards. The fireman continued to watch and as his train rounded the curve and got on the straight track insisted that the light he saw was a headlight. An instant later they realized it was a train approaching. The engineman applied his brakes in emergency and jumped off. The brakeman followed him and got off about six car lengths from the point of collision. The fireman went back over the tender.

Conductor Tucker on No. 81 stated that he thoroughly understood the orders he had received, and that when he read order No. 2 to the brakeman they remarked that there was still the wait at Mildred. He said that when the caboose of No. 81 passed Mildred he was standing up in the cupola looking out for No. 84, thinking perhaps it was a short train and was in clear waiting for them. As soon as he discovered that No. 84 was not there he called to the brakeman to light a fusee and flag the engineman down. The brakeman signaled from both sides of the rear platform but the signals were not noticed by the engine crew. Finding that the engineman did not heed the stop signals the conductor applied the air from the emergency valve in the cupola. This did not appear to check the speed of the train in the least and he then ran to the rear end of the caboose and opened angle cock to train line. About

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that time the collision occurred. No. 81 at that time was traveling about 6 or 8 miles an hour. The conductor stated that he understood thoroughly that his train was to wait at Mildred until 1.35 a.m., and that he did not forget this at any time. He said the mistake he made was not applying the air when passing through Mildred, but that he refrained from doing this fearing that it would tear up the train and feeling that he could stop the engineman by signaling. He stated that he told the brakeman to use a fusee thinking the engineman would be more likely to see this than a white light. He is positive that his rear brakeman did not give a proceed signal at Mildred, and stated that the usual practice is if it is desired to stop the train the engine crew is signaled with a fusee. The absence of a signal is considered a proceed signal.

Rear Brakeman Jones on No. 81 stated that his train approached Mildred at about 20 miles an hour and did not reduce speed passing it. He said that just as the caboose passed the station the conductor struck a match. They both looked at their watches and the conductor remarked that they had still ten minutes to wait. They were both confident, however, that No. 84 was waiting for them on the passing track as the engineman showed no intention of stopping. As soon as they passed the south switch and found No. 84 was not there the conductor ordered him to signal the engineman with a red fusee. He signaled from both sides of the rear platform, but the signals were not observed on the engine. He said the fog was so dense

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that he does not think the signals could have been seen from the head end. The conductor then opened the emergency valve in the cupola and the angle cock on the rear end, but the train did not stop and the brakeman said he did not believe they got the effect of an emergency application.

This accident was caused by the failure of train No. 81 to wait at Mildred until 1.35 a.m., as required by train order No. 50, for which failure Engineman Jacobs is primarily responsible. Conductor Tucker is also responsible for the collision on account of his failure to take more prompt measures to stop his train. Had he taken measures to bring the train to a stop promptly when he saw the train was passing Mildred at undiminished speed and train No. 84 was not there, the accident no doubt would have been averted.

Rule 84-a reads as follows:

Enginemen of freight trains must get a "proceed" signal from rear end of train before passing any station or side-track that is designated on time-table. Brakemen must not give "proceed" signal without instructions from conductor.

Engineman Jacobs claims to have received a proceed signal at Mildred, but his statement is at variance with the statements of other members of the crew; and he admits passing six stations without receiving a signal from the rear end. This admission together with the evidence from other members of the crews involved indicates that this rule is not being strictly observed on this division. Had this rule been complied with, the accident probably would not have occurred.



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The members of these crews were all experienced men. The crew of No. 81 had been on duty 7 hours and 27 minutes after 13 hours and 45 minutes off duty. The crew of No. 84 had been on duty 4 hours and 27 minutes after being off duty for more than 21 hours.

A.H.C.