

**IN RE INVESTIGATION OF AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON THE  
MISSOURI, KANSAS & TEXAS RAILWAY OF TEXAS AT GRANGER,  
TEXAS, ON JANUARY 10, 1918.**

**February 18, 1918.**

On January 10, 1918, there was a rear-end collision between two passenger trains on the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railway of Texas at Granger, Texas, resulting in the death of 3 passengers and injury to 12 passengers, 1 employee on duty and 2 employees deadheading. After investigation, the Chief of the Bureau of Safety reports as follows:

The San Antonio Division of the Smithville District, on which this accident occurred, extends from Bellmead to San Antonio, a distance of 194.3 miles. With the exception of 10 miles of double track between Bellmead and Hewitt, it is a single-track line, over which train movements are governed by time-table and train orders. Three-position semaphore type of automatic block signals are in use from Waco to the north end of the Granger yard, but the collision occurred outside the automatic block signal zone, about 3,000 feet south of the last signal and about 105 feet south of the last bonded rail.

Approaching the point of accident from the north the track is tangent for a distance of 1.84 miles, for which distance the view of engineers is unobstructed. The grade approaching the point of accident from the north is generally slightly descending. At the time of the accident the night was dark and it was a little hazy and cool.

The passing track at Granger is located on the west side of the main track and extends north of the station for more than 3,700 feet. The north end of this track is known as the "Lake Track." There is a cut-off from this track to the main track, located about 550 feet north of the station, or opposite the coal chute. Trains en route to San Antonio use this cut-off, moving on to the Lake Track from whence they then divert to San Antonio.

The trains involved in this accident were the first and second sections of train No. 5, known as the "Katy Flyer," which runs daily from St. Louis, Mo., to Galveston, Texas. On the date of the accident it was running in two sections from Waco to Granger. When there are two sections of train No. 5, the first section diverts at Granger and runs to San Antonio as train No. 25, or 1st No. 5, while the second section runs as train No. 5 from Granger to Galveston. It is customary for San Antonio trains to take coal at Granger but not customary

for the Galveston trains to do so at that point.

Train 1st No. 5, in charge of Conductor Carney and Engineman Garrett, consisted of locomotive 387, 1 all-steel baggage car, 1 steel-underframe coach, 1 steel-underframe chair car, 1 all-steel Pullman sleeping car and 5 steel-underframe sleeping cars, in the order named. It left Hillsboro on time at 10.20 p.m., and upon arriving at Bartlett, 6 miles north of Granger, took the siding and met extra 235 and train No. 26. Train 1st No. 5 then left Bartlett at about 1.50 a.m., about 22 minutes late, and at about 2.06 or 2.07 a.m. stopped at the coal chute located about 550 feet north of Granger station; while standing here its rear end was struck by train 2d No. 5.

Train 2d No. 5 was in charge of Conductor Welker and Engineman Mooney and consisted of locomotive 389, 2 all-steel baggage cars, 1 steel-underframe coach, 1 steel-underframe chair car and 2 steel-underframe sleeping cars. This train left Hillsboro at 11.00 p.m., and upon arrival at Bartlett took siding and met extra 235 and train No. 26, the same trains that train 1st No. 5 met at Bartlett. Train 2d No. 5 left Bartlett about five or six minutes after the first section and at about 2.09 a.m., while running at a speed variously estimated at from 10 to 25 miles an hour, collided with the rear end of train 1st No. 5.

The front end of locomotive 389 of train 2d No. 5 buried itself into the rear end of the rear sleeping car of train 1st No. 5 up to about the drawing room door of the latter. The underframe of this car overrode the underframe of the car ahead, telescoping it for more than two-thirds of its length. The front truck of the rear sleeping car was torn loose and was jammed back against the rear truck, the front and middle pairs of wheels being derailed. The remainder of the cars of train 1st No. 5 sustained little damage. The front end of the locomotive of train 2d No. 5 was crushed, the pilot was broken off, the front engine frame was broken, the headlight was broken off, while other minor damages were sustained by the locomotive. The remainder of this train sustained practically no damage.

Engineman Garrett, of train 1st No. 5, stated that as his train passed the north end of the Lake Track at Granger, he noticed southbound freight train extra 235 occupying it and saw one of the brakemen of that train give him a proceed signal with his lantern. He stated that his train stopped at the coal chute north of Granger station between 2.03 and 2.05 a.m. and had been standing there not over three minutes when the collision occurred.

Fireman Miller, of train 1st No. 5, stated that upon arrival of his train at the coal chute, he got off the locomotive and started loading the tender with coal; at that time he saw the reflection of a headlight coming from the north and knew that train 2d No. 5 was approaching. He also noticed at that time that the markers on the rear end of his train were burning. Fireman Miller further stated that his train had been standing at the coal chute between 2 and 4 minutes when struck by train 2d No. 5.

Conductor Carney, of train 1st No. 5, stated that his train arrived at the coal chute between 2.06 and 2.07 a.m. and the rear brakeman got off immediately with his white and red lanterns and started back, while he in the meantime attended to the duty of discharging and letting on passengers. He stated that the train had been standing two or three minutes when it was struck by train 2d No. 5 and he thought his flagman did not have time to get back more than 4 or 5 car lengths. He said the markers on the rear of the train were burning brightly and he could see no reason why they should not have been seen by the engine crew of train 2d No. 5 in time to avoid the collision.

Rear Brakeman Card, of train 1st No. 5, stated that on the night of the accident his train met extra 125 and train No. 6 at Bartlett and that he saw train 2d No. 5 behind them at that time. Just as soon as his train stopped at the coal chute at Granger, he started back to flag and again saw the reflection of the headlight of train 2d No. 5. He also noticed that the automatic block signal at the north end of the yard was in the caution position and saw it change to red when train 2d No. 5 entered the next block to the rear. He stated further that he gave stop signals to the engine crew of the following train as he went back and when he had reached a point about 4 telegraph poles from his train, the engine-man of train 2d No. 5 answered his signals with two blasts on the whistle, train 2d No. 5 then being 6 or 8 telegraph poles from his train. He estimated the speed of train 2d No. 5 as it passed him to be 35 or 40 miles an hour and he stated that he called out to the engine-man but could not see him at all. Rear Brakeman Card further stated that he is very particular about having his lights burning brightly and he is sure that on the night of the accident the markers on the rear of his train, as well as his hand lanterns, showed plainly.

Engineman Mooney, of train 2d No. 5, stated that leaving Bartlett he found the first block signal at caution, and saw it change to clear before his train passed

it; he found all of the other signals between Bartlett and Granger in the clear position. He stated that coming into Granger he saw extra B53 ahead, the headlights on the locomotive of that train being out and he did not remember seeing any red light on it. He said that had he seen a red light on the locomotive he would have brought his train down to a low speed until he could see whether or not it was on the side track. He thought, however, that his locomotive was on the side track, but was just about to apply the air brakes when he received a proceed signal from a member of the crew of the extra. After passing the man who gave him the proceed signal, he saw a red lantern and made a service application of the brakes. He stated that the red lantern was handled in such a way that he understood it as a slow signal instead of a stop signal. He said he saw no markers on the rear of train 1st No. 5, that his electric headlight was burning poorly and that if the markers had been burning, they would have shown up better on account of the poor headlight. He further stated that the flagman of train 1st No. 5 was close to the rear of his train but while he did not see the train until not more than 150 or 200 feet from it, he saw the red lantern held by the flagman when about 30 car lengths from it and in plenty of time to stop had the signal been properly given. He further stated that the speed of his train at the time of the collision was between 20 and 25 miles an hour. Engineman Mooney also claimed that he did not know it was customary for San Antonio trains to take coal at Granger.

Fireman Barnett, of train 2d No. 5, stated that upon entering the Granger yard, Engineman Mooney made a service application of the brakes. He stated that he himself was busy shoveling coal approaching the point of accident, but looked up when about 5 car lengths from the rear of train 1st No. 5 and saw that the markers were burning. He did not know why Engineman Mooney failed to see them unless it was because the glass was smoked or because they were burning dimly. He also said that he thought the flagman of train 1st No. 5 was about 4 or 5 car lengths back from the rear of his train, but did not see the manner in which the stop signal was given. Fireman Barnett estimated the speed of his train at the time of the collision at 10 miles an hour.

Conductor Walker, of train 2d No. 5, stated that he knew nothing of the impending accident until the brakes were applied in emergency just before it occurred. He said that the speed of his train at that time was about 20 or 25 miles an hour.

Rear Brakeman Barrell, of train 2d No. 5, also estimated the speed at about 20 miles an hour at the time the emergency application of the brakes was made.

Engineman Hawkins, of southbound extra 835, standing on the Lake Track at Granger at the time of the accident, stated that about 3 minutes elapsed between the time train 1st No. 5 passed him and the time train 2d No. 5 passed. He noticed that the rear markers on train 1st No. 5 were burning at the time that train passed. He said that there was a red light on the tank of his locomotive and that as train 2d No. 5 approached, Brakeman Cole of his crew gave Engineman Mooney a proceed signal in order not to cause him to make an unnecessary stop on their account. He thought the speed of train 2d No. 5 as it passed was about 35 or 40 miles an hour. Engineman Hawkins further stated that after passing him, Engineman Mooney sounded the whistle in answer to some signal, but he did not know to what signal.

Fireman Gunn, of extra 835, stated that he noticed that the markers on the rear of train 1st No. 5 were burning at the time that train passed him. After train 1st No. 5 stopped at the coal chute and after train 2d No. 5 passed, he looked to see if he could see the markers on the rear of the first train, but on account of the electric headlight shining on them, he could not tell whether or not they were burning.

Brakeman Werner, of extra 835, stated that he noticed that one of the markers on the rear of train 1st No. 5 was burning at the time it passed his train, but he did not notice whether or not the others were.

Brakeman Cole, of extra 835, stated that because of the red light on the rear of the tank of his train, he gave proceed signals to the engine crews of both trains 1st and 2d No. 5, so as to counteract that light. He said that about 5 or 6 minutes elapsed between the time the two trains went by and he judged the speed of train 2d No. 5 as it passed to be 45 miles an hour. Brakeman Cole also stated that the rear lights on train 1st No. 5 were burning.

This accident was caused by the failure of Engineman Mooney of train 2d No. 5 to operate his train under control within the yard limits of Granger, as required by rule 98-b and special time-card instructions. Rule 98-b reads as follows:

"When more than one section of a passenger train, all but the first section must approach and pass all water tanks and coal chutes, and all stations that are regular or flag stops for such trains, completely under control so that under no circumstances whatever shall it be possible for

it to strike the preceding section. Responsibility for safety at such points rests with the approaching section. A passenger train stopping at a station not shown on time-table as a stop or flag for such train, must protect against following section."

The special time-card instructions referred to read as follows:

"All trains must move under control between Kign and San Marcos, and through Granger, Smithville and Houston yards."

When Engineman Mooney found the block at caution leaving Bartlett, he knew the track was occupied by some train. When he got to Tidewell, which is 3.3 miles south of Bartlett and 2 miles north of Granger and found no train there, he should have known that train 1st No. 5, or some other train was immediately ahead and should have approached Granger under control. While it shows to the contrary in his statement, yet Engineman Mooney has been working on this district long enough to know that it is the practice of San Antonio trains to take coal at Granger. Engineman Mooney's statement that he misunderstood the signal given by Brakeman Gurd as a slow signal does not excuse him. A red light is a stop signal and it was his duty to stop. His statement that had he seen a red light on the rear end of the locomotive standing in clear at the north end of the Lake Track, he would have reduced speed until he could have seen whether or not all was clear, indicates that he has not made it a practice strictly to observe this most important signal. Unless signals are strictly observed, such unfortunate, and wholly avoidable accidents may be expected to occur.

Rear Brakeman Gurd, of train 1st No. 5, had been in the service only about 8 weeks and had no previous railroad experience. A more experienced flagman would probably have used a fusee in addition to a red lantern to flag train 2d No. 5, which might have prevented the accident.

The accident might also have been prevented if the block signal system in use on a portion of this line had extended through Granger yard.

Engineman Mooney entered the service of the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railway Company of Texas in March, 1899 and had a clear record. At the time of the accident he had been on duty 8 hours and 10 minutes after a lay-over at Hillsboro of 4 hours and 50 minutes.