

**In Re. Investigation of Accident which occurred
on the Mobile & Ohio Railroad, near
Lawly, Ala., June 29, 1915.**

On June 29, 1915, there was a head-end collision between a passenger train and a light engine on the Mobile & Ohio Railroad near Lawly, Ala., which resulted in the death of the fireman of the passenger train and the injury of 24 passengers and 3 employees. After investigation of this accident, the Chief of the Division of Safety reports as follows:

Southbound passenger train No. 107 consisted of 1 combination mail and baggage car and 2 coaches, hauled by locomotive 205 and was in charge of Conductor O'Connor and Enginemen Connell. It was en route from Tuscaloosa, Ala., to Montgomery, Ala. It left Tuscaloosa at 7.20 a.m., on time, passed Centerville, the last open telegraph office and 10 miles north of the point of accident, at 8.34 a.m. and at 8.55 a.m. collided with northbound extra 167 at a point about 3 miles north of Lawly, while traveling at a speed estimated to have been about 40 miles per hour.

Northbound extra 167, a locomotive running light, was in charge of Engineman Troy and Fireman Hopkins. This locomotive was returning from Naplesville to Tuscaloosa after having helped a freight train to Naplesville. It left Naplesville at 7.30 a.m. and after receiving a train order at Lawly, left that point at 8.50 a.m. and collided with

train No. 107. Train No. 107 was due to leave Trio, the first station north of Lawly and 6.7 miles therefrom, at 8.45 a.m., 5 minutes before extra 167 left Lawly.

Both locomotives were derailed and badly damaged while the forward end of the observation car was telescoped by the tender of locomotive 206 a distance of about 21 feet. Neither of the 2 coaches was derailed and they sustained only slight damage.

This part of the Mobile & Ohio Railroad is a single track line. No block signal system is in use, trains being operated by train orders and time-card rights. Approaching the point of collision from the north, the track is on a tangent for a distance of about 3500 feet, followed by a curve to the right approximately 1170 feet in length; then there is another tangent about 1800 feet in length. The collision occurred on the curve about 320 feet south of its northern end. The grade is descending for southbound trains, varying from one-half to 1 per cent. On account of the curve being in a cut of about 10 feet, with thick woods on the inside of the curve, the range of vision of the engine crews was limited to about 600 feet.

Engineman Troy of extra 167 stated that just as his engine was passing the office at Lawly, the operator displayed the train order board. He stopped, backed up, received a train order to meet another train and asked the operator if that was all, the operator replying that it was. He stated that he then

proceeded north, entirely overlooking train No. 107. He estimated the speed of his engine at the time of the accident to have been about 35 miles per hour.

Fireman Hopkins stated that when leaving Lawly he did not think about train No. 107. He was busy working on the fire, but shortly after leaving Lawly he remembered train No. 107 and asked Engineman Troy where they were going to meet that train, and at about this time he looked ahead and saw it approaching around the curve..

This accident was caused by extra 167 occupying the main track on the time of a superior train, for which Engineman Troy is responsible.

As previously stated there were no block signals in use on this part of the Mobile & Ohio Railroad and therefore there was nothing to remind the engineman of extra 167 that he had overlooked a superior train. Extra 167 was being operated light from Maplesville to Tuscaloosa, a distance of 56 miles with only the engineman and fireman in charge. On many railroads it is the practice to require a conductor or pilot to accompany a light engine on a movement over the line, evidently as a check upon the engineman and to insure its protection and proper operation. Had such a requirement been in force on this railroad, it is not probable that train No. 107 would have been overlooked both by the engineman and the conductor or pilot.

Engineman Troy was employed as an engineman in 1905, after 6 years' experience as an engineman on other roads.

Fireman Hopkins was employed as a fireman in 1908. At the time of the accident they had been on duty less than five hours.