

October 17, 1912.

**Derailment on the New York, Chicago & St.
Louis Railroad near Erie, Pa., on September
10, 1912.**

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On September 10th, 1912, there was derailment on the New York, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad near Erie, Pennsylvania, which resulted in the injury of 28 passengers and 3 employees. After investigation of this accident, the Chief Inspector of Safety Appliances reports as follows:

East-bound train No. 6 consisted of one express car, one combination mail and baggage car, one smoking car, one coach, one cafe car, one Pullman car, one coach, and the private car of the general manager, all of wooden construction with steel platforms, and hauled by engine No. 150. The train was in charge of engineman Taylor and conductor Braden. It left Erie, the last station previous to the derailment, at 12:39 p.m., and was derailed at 12:45 p.m. at Fagan's Crossing, two and one-half miles east of Erie, while running at a speed of about 35 miles per hour.

The forward pair of wheels on the first truck of the tender and the forward trucks of the express car were derailed but they remained upright on the track, while the next four cars were derailed and thrown down a ten-foot embankment. The forward trucks of the sixth and seventh cars were also derailed, but the cars remained upright.

Engineman Taylor stated that when within about one mile of Fagan's Crossing he shut off steam, on account of seeing a force of section men at work on the track. When near the crossing he discovered that the wheels of the front tender truck were running over the ties and at once applied the emergency air brakes, stopping the train at a point about 700 feet beyond the first indication of the derailment, as shown by marks on the ties 237 feet west of the highway crossing. Additional marks on the ties 90 feet west of the highway crossing and 147 feet east of the first marks indicated where other wheels were derailed.

This division of the New York, Chicago & St. Louis Railway is a single track line. There is a slight curve about 900 feet west of the point of derailment, but for a distance of about one mile there is nothing to obscure the vision of approaching enginemen. The track is nearly level, and is laid with 75-pound rails on oak ties, there being about 20 ties under each rail. The track is ballasted with cinders. From Fagan's Crossing west the track had recently been re-ballasted with cinders, and a number of new ties put in; the work had not been completed at the time of the derailment. Old marks on the ties showed that in places the rails had been moved from one-fourth to one-half inch to provide proper gauge of track. There were no slow orders issued to train No. 6 notifying them that the track was being repaired, nor were there any slow boards installed indicating that slow speed would be required.

Superintendent Watterson, who was riding on the train at the time, made a careful examination of the track and equipment and stated that occasionally there was a tie that was not spiked, while the ballast was a little soft and spongy and the track was a little out of line. His statements were corroborated by Supervisor of Track Shea.

East-bound freight train No. 455 passed safely over this section of track at about 12:30 p.m., less than one-half hour in advance of the passenger train.

The equipment of the passenger train was carefully inspected, while the wheels of the front tender truck were gauged and otherwise examined. Nothing was found, however, which could have contributed to the derailment.

While it is impossible to determine with certainty the cause of this derailment it is believed it was caused by the fact that the track, which was undergoing repairs, was not in condition to permit of the safe operation of this train at the speed at which it was running.

As a preventive of such accidents it is recommended that in all cases where the track is not safe for high speed notice of the slow speed required shall be given engineers by train orders, and slow boards shall be installed to indicate to the approaching train the location of the place where such slow speed is required.