

October 28, 1912.

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**Collision on the Northern Pacific Railway near
Hot Springs, Washington, on August 30, 1912.**

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On August 30, 1912, there was a collision on the Northern Pacific Railway near Hot Springs, Wash., which resulted in the death of 2 engineers and 1 fireman, and the injury of 45 passengers and 7 employees. After an investigation of the circumstances surrounding this accident the Chief Inspector of Safety Appliances reports as follows:

East-bound passenger train No. 6 was en route from Tacoma, Wash., to St. Paul, Min.. It consisted of 1 baggage car, 1 smoking car, 1 coach, 1 tourist car, 1 dining car, and 3 Pullman sleeping cars, hauled by engine No. 2199. This train was in charge of Conductor Fisher and Engineman Stever. It is scheduled to pass Humphrey, the last night telegraph station previous to the point of collision, at 9:52 p.m., but on the night in question was a few minutes late, passing there at 9:59 p.m. The train passed Maywood, 3.9 miles beyond Humphrey, at about 10:06 p.m., colliding with west-bound extra freight train No. 1599 at about 10:13 p.m., at a point about 3 miles east of Maywood, or two miles west of Hot Springs.

West-bound extra freight train No. 1599 was bound from Ellensburg, Wash., to Seattle, Wash. It consisted of 41 loaded cars, 4 empty cars, and a caboose, hauled by engines Nos. 1599 and 1611. This train left Lester, the first station east of Hot Springs and 2.1 miles distant therefrom, at 9:47 p.m., colliding

with train No. 6 at the point previously mentioned. The speed of each train at the time of the collision was about 25 miles per hour.

All three engines were quite badly damaged. The body of the baggage car of the passenger train was destroyed, as well as the forward end of the smoking car. The coach, tourist car, and dining car were slightly damaged, while the three sleeping cars escaped uninjured.

The division on which the accident occurred is a single track line. Approaching the scene of the accident from the east side there are several curves, while the accident occurred in a cut on a curve of $9^{\circ} 32'$. On the inside of this curve the wall of the cut is about 25 feet high, limiting the vision of approaching engineers to a distance of less than 200 feet. The grade is ascending for east-bound trains.

At the time of the accident it was very dark, and raining hard.

At 3:55 p.m. extra west-bound freight train No. 1522, consisting of 45 cars and a caboose, went into the west-bound siding at Maywood to tie up for rest under the hours of service law, the engine and caboose remaining in their respective positions.

at 9:46 p.m. the crew of train no. 6 received train order No. 739 at Kanaskat, 15.6 miles west of Maywood. This order read as follows:

"westward siding at Maywood blocked with cars."

At Humphrey the crew of train No. 6 received train order No.

191 by hoop, the train not stopping at that point. This order read as follows:

"No. 6 Eng. 2199 meet Extra 1599 west at Maywood."

At Humphrey this train also received a block clearance card stating that there was an order for it; that the block was not clear, and that the train should be governed by block signal caution card No. 99, which provided that caution should be used, as train No. 6 and extra west No. 1599 would meet at Maywood as per train order No. 191.

Head Brakeman Linberger, of train No. 6, states that after the engineman sounded the station whistle for Maywood he signaled the engineman by sounding three blasts on the air whistle signal, according to rule No. 16(d), which reads in part as follows:

"This signal will also be used by conductors to indicate the approach to a meeting point with train of same or superior class, or a meeting point made by train order".

This signal was acknowledged by the engineman by three short blasts of the whistle, as per rule 14(h) which provides in part as follows:

"When train is running, answer to 16(d)".

It therefore appears that both the engine and train crews of train No. 6, when approaching Maywood, were thoroughly aware that they had to meet a train at that station, as provided by train order No. 191. When the train reached Maywood the conductor and head brakeman were on the right side of the train facing the west-bound passing track, and supposed that the train in the

siding was extra No. 1599, when as a matter of fact it was engine No. 1522, which had tied up for rest. The enginemen and fireman, both of whom were killed, undoubtedly were also of the opinion that the train in the siding was extra No. 1599, as no attempt was made to stop, the train continuing on its way to the point of collision.

In his statement made while in the hospital at Tacoma, Conductor Fisher of train No. 5, stated that when coming into Maywood he was on the front platform of the smoking car leaning over the head brakeman, who was standing on the lower step. There was an engine on the west-bound siding and the brakeman said "I got the 15--", and the conductor replied "That was all I saw; but it must be them", meaning extra No. 1599. Even after the collision he was sure that he had met extra No. 1599 at Maywood, since he had no order concerning any other train. He stated that he did not remember seeing any lights in the caboose of the train on the siding at Maywood. He did not show his orders to his rear brakeman, as required by rule No. 856. He said that it was not customary to do so, on account of it being so much trouble to take them back to the rear end of the train. He also stated that he had often experienced difficulty in identifying engine numbers. He admitted that he mistook engine No. 1522 for train No. 1599. Head Brakeman Linbarger testified to signaling the engineman

when approaching the meeting point at Maywood as previously described. He corroborated the statements of the conductor as to seeing the "15" of the engine number, and to supposing that the train was extra No. 1599. He stated that there was a white light on the front end of the engine, and a green light on the rear end of the caboose, and he therefore supposed that it was a live train instead of one tied up, as was the case. He stated that his train passed the freight train at a good rate of speed.

Rear Brakeman Roberts of train No. 6 stated that it is not customary to show him the orders, and he did not know that his train was to meet extra No. 1599 at Maywood. Going by that point he saw the train in the siding, and saw the figure "1" of the engine number, together with a white light on the front end of the engine and markers on the end of the caboose, which made him think that the train was not tied up.

The crew of extra No. 1522, the train which was tied up at Maywood for rest, stated that their train tied up in broad daylight at about 3:30 p.m., at which time the classification lights and flags on the engine and caboose were taken down. At no time had the markers been burning before taking them down, since the train had tied up in daylight. When night came on, the engine watchman put a white light on the front end of the engine in order to keep any train from heading in on the siding. This light was placed on the step used to reach the headlight. No other lights on the engine were burn-

ing. When train No. 6 passed Maywood the members of the crew of extra No. 1522 were asleep, and knew nothing of the accident until called to resume duty at 11:30 p.m.

The green lights seen at the rear of the freight train by the crew of train No. 6 were probably the switch lights.

All of the employees involved were experienced men, and none had been on duty in violation of the provisions of the hours of service law.

This accident was caused by the failure of the crew of train No. 6 to obey train order No. 191 and to meet extra No. 1599 at Maywood, due to mistaking engine No. 1522 for extra No. 1599, which latter train was the train mentioned in the train order.

Had the crew of this train kept in mind train order No. 739, which stated that the west-bound siding at Maywood was blocked with cars, it is possible that the train would have been run through Maywood at a lower rate of speed, which would have enabled them to positively identify the train in the siding and would have prevented the collision.