

IN RE INVESTIGATION OF AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON THE  
PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD, AT LOCKPORT, PA.,  
NOVEMBER 15, 1918.

January 4, 1919.

On November 15, 1918, there was a derailment of a freight train on the Pennsylvania Railroad at Lockport, Pa., which obstructed the adjacent tracks and caused the derailment of a passenger train which collided with the wreckage a few seconds later, resulting in the death of 1 employee and the injury of 3 employees. After investigation the Chief of the Bureau of Safety reports as follows:

The Pittsburgh Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad Lines East extends between Pittsburgh and Altoona, Pa., a distance of 115.8 miles. It is a four track line, upon which trains are operated by time table and train orders, supplemented by an automatic block signal system, with blocks approximately one mile long. Beginning on the south the tracks are numbered from one to four, tracks Nos. 1 and 2 being used for eastbound traffic and Nos. 3 and 4 for westbound traffic. The signals are of the semaphore type, three position, upper quadrant, located on bridges, each being over the track it governs. The night indications are red, yellow and green, for stop, caution and clear, respectively.

Proceeding eastward from a tangent one mile west of the point of accident, there is a 2-degree curve to the right, 1,340 feet long, followed by another tangent 2,300 feet long, leading to a 2-degree 15-minute curve to the right, 1,400 feet

long; the accident occurred about 1,500 feet from the west end of this curve. Approaching the point of accident from about one mile east, there is a 3-degree curve to the right, followed by a tangent 650 feet in length, leading to the 7-degree 15-minute curve on which the accident occurred.

The trains involved in this accident were eastbound extra freight train 3388, en route from Pittsburgh to Altoona, and westbound passenger train No. 5, en route from New York to Chicago. The extra was running on track No. 1 and the passenger train on track No. 7.

Extra 3388 consisted of engine 3388, the engine 3386 helping, 48 loaded cars and a caboose, in charge of Conductor Showalter and Engineer William and Moyer. It left Pittsalm Yard, Pittsburgh, at approximately 8.50 p.m. No trouble was experienced with the train until it came to Ridgeview Park, 47.1 miles from Pittsburgh, where the brakes applied, and on examination the brake pipe was found broken on the 75th car in the train. On discovering the trouble, the air was bled on the portion of the train to the rear of this car and the train proceeded to Gray Station, 3.3 miles distant, where the defective car was set off on a siding. At this time the entire train was carefully looked over and nothing found wrong with any other car, nor was there any indication of a hot box at any time. Leaving Gray Station, the train proceeded on track No. 1 at a speed of from 20 to 25 miles an hour until at Lockport a broken truck on the 18th car of the train derailed that car

and eight others, the cars being thrown across all four tracks and in front of passenger train No. 5, which was then approaching, on track No. 3.

Train No. 5, known as "The Pennsylvania Limited," consisted of a club car, parlor car and 5 Pullman sleeping cars, drawn by locomotive 3670, in charge of Conductor Delo and Engineman Brett. It left Altoona at 6.00 p.m., 1 hour and 10 minutes late and was running on clear signals at a speed of from 40 to 45 miles an hour when at about 9.30 p.m. it collided with the derailed cars of extra 3386 at Lookport.

The engine, tender and 5 coaches of the passenger train were derailed, the engine coming to rest on its right side north of track No. 4, the tender being thrown across track 4, while the coaches remained practically upright. The baggage-master of train No. 5 was killed in the collision.

Conductor Thewalter of extra 3386 stated that when his train passed around the curve at Boliver, 1.6 miles from Lookport, he got a good view of its entire north side and he saw nothing wrong with it, nor did he see any fire flyin from any of the trucks. Upon approaching Lookport station the air again applied, accompanied by a noticeable, but not a severe shock, and the train moved forward about 3 or 4 car lengths before coming to a stop. He thought an air hose had burst and told the flagman to protect all tracks, while he, with the brakeman, walked along side the train to the front end, one on either side; arriving at Lookport station, they found 8 cars of their

train wrecked and one derailed but undamaged, we learned that passenger train No. 5 had collided with the wreckage. The front portion of the train, consisting of the two engines and 11 cars, had run about 5 or 6 car lengths after having been separated from the rest of the train. He examined the track from the point of accident westward and found no marks indicating that anything had been dragging.

Engineer Williams, of extra 3280, stated that as his train was passing Lookport station he felt a slight jerk from the train and noticed the air gauge indicated that the train line was depleted. He shut off steam and allowed the train to come to a stop. Train No. 5 passed him on the opposite after he felt the jerk and when the front portion of his train stopped he looked back and saw that the train had started about 11 cars back from his engine and through the open space he could see the lights of the passenger train.

Engineer Moyer, of helper engine 2388, stated the train was moving at a speed of about 20 or 25 miles an hour passing Lookport station when he felt a jar or jerk from the train; looking at his air gauge, he noticed the train line pressure registered zero and immediately shut off steam. At that time, No. 5 was passing west on No. 3 track and the rear end of the train had passed his engine. After the front portion of his train came to a stop he got off the engine on the north side and saw the fireman of engine 3280 off his engine, going east to protect tracks Nos. 3 and 4, and noticed the flames of train

No. 5 coming east to protect his train.

Fireman Ceburn, of engine 3288, stated that, passing Lockport Station he was standing in the gangway of the engine, looking out on the left side and just east of Lockport station he noticed No. 5 approaching and passing his engine. Just about the time the rear end had passed the engine, his engineman called to him that their train had parted again.

Fireman Durga, of helper engine 2388, stated that his train was moving at a speed of about 15 miles an hour, running under clear signals, when at a point just east of Lockport station the train gave a jerk and he noticed that the train line pressure was gone, the train coming to a stop in a few car lengths. Just as he felt the jerk, train No. 5 passed his engine on No. 3 track.

Flagman Boredau, of extra 3288, stated that the speed of his train was from 20 to 25 miles an hour until reaching Lockport, where the train came to a sudden stop, but the shock was not a severe one. He rode the right side of the cabin of the caboose and the conductor the left side. They had no intimation of anything wrong with the train before the accident. He saw his side of the train on all the curves and saw nothing wrong and just a few minutes before the accident the conductor had remarked to him that everything appeared all right on his side of the train.

Brakeman Lucas, of extra 3288, stated that the stopping of the train at Lockport was not the same as that at

Ridgeview Park. He was riding 8 or 9 cars from the engine and said he had kept a careful lookout along the side of his train while rounding curves and at no time saw any fire flying or any indication of anything wrong.

Engineman Brett, of train No. 5, stated that his train had been drifting from New Florence. Approaching the point of accident he was running on clear signals at a speed of about 45 miles an hour. He did not observe the train on No. 1 track and said he knew tracks Nos. 3 and 4 were clear by the signal indications on the signal bridge. After rounding the curve east of Lookport he reached up to apply steam and noticed the engine starting to ride roughly and thought it was off the track. He immediately applied the air in emergency and very shortly felt the crash of running into cars and the engine turned over on its side on the north side of track No. 4. He extricated himself from the cab and met the brakeman and instructed him to go west and protect eastbound trains.

Fireman Barlok, of train No. 5, stated that his train approached Lookport at a speed of about 40 or 45 miles an hour. He was on the seatbox until they came in view of the automatic signal just east of Lookport and noted that it indicated clear; he called the indication to the engineman, who acknowledged it. He was working on his fire when he noticed the engine riding roughly and on looking out, saw the freight train on track No. 1. He was rendered unconscious by the accident.

Conductor Dele, of train No. 5, stated that he was in the baggage compartment of the club car and as the train was approaching Lookport, at about 1.30 p.m., the air suddenly applied and he realized that his train was wrecked.

Fireman Hook, of train No. 5, stated that approaching Lookport the train came to a very sudden stop, which indicated to him that they had collided with something and he immediately went back to the signal bridge, about half a mile east of the point of accident, to protect approaching trains.

Investigation developed that the rear truck of the 13th car in the freight train had broken and had been derailed between the switch and the frog just west of Lookport station, causing the derailment. An examination of the truck frame indicated defective metal in both its top and bottom members, and careful inspection revealed old fractures as well as several blowholes in the metal. Examination of the top member showed that it was an imperfect casting originally, while only a small section of the lower or tension member appeared capable of carrying its proportionate load, so that the factor of safety was greatly minimized or entirely eliminated. Marks on the truck frame showed that it was cast in March, 1914, but the defects were such that they could not have been discovered by ordinary inspection. The car, a steel underframe gondola of 46,600 pounds weight, was built in July, 1914, and on this trip it was loaded with 111,185 pounds of round and bar iron.

At the time of the accident the crew of extra 3398

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had been on duty approximately 4 hours and the crew of train No. 5 had been on duty about 8 hours, after sufficient periods off duty.

R.W.L.