

File No. 40
March 12, 1912.

MEMORANDUM TO COMMISSIONER McCHORD:

Relative to accident on the Central of Georgia Railway,
January 18, 1912.

Draft submitted by the Chief Inspector of Safety Appliances
as a basis for the report of the Commission:

On January 19, 1912, the Central of Georgia Railway reported
by telegraph a head-on collision which occurred on the morning of
January 18, near Jonesboro, Ga., between east-bound passenger
train No. 32 and west-bound freight train No. 35. This accident
was investigated by Inspector Cash, and a synopsis of his report
is given below.

Train No. 32 left Atlanta for Macon, Ga., at 12:43 a.m.,
January 18, 2 hours and 33 minutes late, with order No. 71
directing it to run 2 hours and 10 minutes late Hapeville to
Macon. The train was in charge of Conductor Harris. It con-
sisted of one combination baggage car, one day coach, and five
Pullman sleeping cars. It was hauled by engine No. 1600, in
charge of Engineman Collins. The collision occurred at a point
about 3100 feet east of Jonesboro Station, approximately 21
miles from Atlanta and 82 miles from Macon.

Train No. 35, running from Macon to Atlanta, left Griffin,
Ga., at 9:30 p. m., January 17. Griffin is approximately 40
miles from Atlanta and 82 miles from Jonesboro, the station
near which the collision occurred. There was no open telegraph
office between Griffin and Jonesboro on the night of the colli-
sion. Train No. 35 was in charge of Conductor Watson. It con-
sisted of 7 loaded and 23 empty cars and a caboose, all equipped
with air brakes. It was hauled by engine No. 1717, in charge
of Engineman Clark. Before leaving Griffin the conductor and
engineman of train No. 35 received orders Nos. 62, 63, 64, 65
and 66, as follows:

Telegraphic Train Order No. 62. Jan. 17, 1912.
Griffin, Ga., to C. & E. No. 35.

First (1st) No. 94 Eng. 1619 will run two (2) hours and
forty (40) minutes late Hapeville to Macon.

J.P.M.

Telegraphic Train Order No. 63. Jan. 17, 1912.
Griffin, Ga., to C. & E. No. 35.

Second (2nd) No. 94 Eng. 1620 will run three (3) hours
and twenty (20) minutes late Hapeville to Macon.

J.P.M.

Telegraphic Train Order No. 64. Jan. 17, 1912.
Griffin, Ga. to C. & E. No. 35.

No. 32 Eng. 1600 will run two (2) hours late Hapeville
to Macon.

J.P.M.

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Telegraphic Train Order No. 63.

Jan. 17, 1912.

Griffin, Ga., to C. & E. No. 33.

No. 34 engine 1716 will wait at Jonesboro until ten forty (10:40) p. m. and at Lovejoy until ten fifty five (10:55) p.m. for No. 33 Engine 1717.

J.P.M.

Telegraphic Train Order No. 64.

Jan. 17, 1912.

Griffin, Ga., to C. & E. No. 35.

No. 35 Eng. 1717 has right over 34 Eng. 1716 Griffin to double track Hapeville.

J.P.M.

These orders were all made complete at 9:15 p. m. They made it necessary for train No. 35 to take the siding at Lovejoy, a station 3-1/2 miles east of Jonesboro, to meet first and second 94 and train 32. Train No. 35 arrived at Lovejoy at 10:40 p.m. It met first and second 94 at that point as well as shock express train No. 34 and passenger train No. 3, and should have waited at that point for train No. 32, which, according to order No. 64, was due to pass Lovejoy at 12:55 a.m. After second No. 94 had passed Lovejoy, however, train No. 35 proceeded on its way and collided with train No. 32 about 1/2 mile east of Jonesboro, as before stated.

The accident caused the death of Engineman Clark of train No. 35 and three passengers and one porter on train No. 32. Injuries were sustained by the engineman, fireman and baggage-master of train No. 32, and the fireman and headbrakeman of train No. 35. The collision also resulted in heavy damage to both locomotives, and completely demolished the combination car of train No. 32. Considerable damage also resulted to several freight cars in train No. 35.

The collision occurred on a three degree curve near the foot of a half mile grade to the west. A 15 foot cut on the inside of this curve prevented the enginemen from seeing ahead a distance of more than four or five hundred feet. In his statement concerning the cause of the wreck Conductor Watson of train No. 35 stated that when second No. 94 passed his train at Lovejoy he thought it was No. 32, and that all the trains he was to meet at that point had gone. He states that he so told his flagman when asked if that was all. Engineman Clark must also have been under the same impression, as he immediately started the train toward Jonesboro as soon as second No. 94 passed, and Conductor Watson stated that he did so without any signal to go ahead.

Order No. 71, which directed train No. 32 to run 2 hours and 10 minutes instead of 2 hours late from Hapeville to Mason, was not received by the conductor and engineman of train No. 35, as that train left Griffin at 9:30 p.m. and order No. 71 was not issued until 10:25 p.m., and there being no open telegraph office between Griffin and Jonesboro the conductor and engineman

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of train No. 35 could know nothing about the annulment of order No. 64.

When train No. 32 was nearing Jonesboro, it being then 20 minutes late on order No. 71, Engineman Collins whistled for the semaphore, and the operator, not knowing that No. 35 had left Lovejoy, gave him a clear signal. The speed of train No. 32 through Jonesboro was but 10 miles per hour, but after passing over the principal street Engineman Collins began to increase the speed of his train, and was running at about 35 miles per hour when he saw the headlight of train No. 35. He immediately shut off steam, applied the air brakes in emergency, and jumped from his train. The speed of his train had been reduced to about 20 miles per hour when the collision occurred.

At the time of the collision the engine of train No. 35 was not working steam, but was drifting down the grade with the intention of stopping at Jonesboro for the purpose of taking water.

All the employees involved in this accident were experienced men and have good records. None had been on duty in excess of the statutory period, and all had had the required amount of rest prior to going on duty.

The division of the Central of Georgia Railway on which this collision occurred is operated under the train order system, and is not equipped with any kind of a block signal system.

The accident was caused by the failure of the conductor and engineman on train No. 35 to obey train order No. 64 and wait at Lovejoy until the arrival of train No. 32.

Respectfully submitted,

Chief Inspector of
Safety Appliances.