

April 6, 1912.

IN RE INVESTIGATION OF ACCIDENT ON THE  
CENTRAL OF GEORGIA RAILWAY, January 26, 1912.

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TO THE COMMISSION:

On January 26, 1912, there was a head-on collision on the Central of Georgia Railway about two miles east of Leesburg, Ga., between east-bound passenger train No. 8 and west-bound extra freight No. 1362, resulting in the death of the engineman and fireman of train No. 8, the engineman and conductor of extra freight No. 1362, the injury of one employee not on duty, the newsboy on the passenger train, mail clerk and four passengers.

This accident was reported by telegraph by the Central of Georgia Railway on the date of its occurrence, and after investigation the Chief Inspector of Safety Appliances reports as follows:

This accident was caused by the failure of the crew of extra freight No. 1362 to keep their train clear of passenger train No. 8, a superior train both by class and direction.

The Central of Georgia Railway is a single track railroad, and trains are operated by the double train order system, no block signals being used on that portion of the road where the accident occurred.

On the date of the accident Central of Georgia passenger train No. 8, consisting of engine No. 1585, one combination mail and baggage car and two coaches, with Conductor Layfield and Engineman Taylor in charge, left Albany, Ga., at 5:20 A. M., passed Leesburg, Ga., at 5:45 A. M., and was on schedule time when the accident occurred.

Extra freight train No. 1362, consisting of twelve loaded and two empty cars, with Conductor Gassett and Engineman Lindsey in charge, left Smithville, Ga., its initial terminal, for Albany, Ga., at 5:20 A. M. The conductor and engineman signed for and received three train orders at Smithville at 4:45 A. M., one hour and six minutes before the accident occurred. None of these orders affected train No. 8.

This train should have taken the siding for train No. 8 at Adams, the first station west of Smithville, but it proceeded past that station to the point of collision, which occurred about 2-1/4 miles east of Leesburg at 5:51 A. M.

At the time of the accident the speed of the trains was approximately 30 miles per hour. The track is straight for several miles in both directions from the point of collision, but the range of vision was short on account of a heavy fog which prevailed at the time of the accident.

Both engines were badly damaged, but neither was derailed. The combination mail and baggage car on train No. 8 was completely broken up. The first day coach turned over at an angle of about forty-five degrees, and was but slightly damaged. The second day coach was not derailed, and suffered no appreciable damage. These cars were open platform cars of wooden construction.

One of the orders received by the conductor and engineman of extra freight train No. 1362 at Smithville was train order No. 8, reading as follows:

"No. 15, engine 1555, will run 30 minutes late Smithville to Albany."

It is supposed that this conductor and engineman, both of whom

were killed in the accident, misread or misunderstood this order, and assumed that the information it contained applied to train No. 8 instead of train No. 15. After extra No. 1362 had passed Adams, and just previous to the collision, the conductor, who was riding on the engine, stated to the engineman, in answer to a question, "We have fifteen minutes to make Leesburg for No. 8."

The flagman on extra No. 1362 stated that at Adams he asked the conductor where they were going for No. 8, and he replied, "We have 20 minutes to make Leesburg."

The conductor and engineman responsible for the accident each had six years experience on this division, were considered competent men, and were thoroughly familiar with conditions in that territory. They had been on duty at the time of the accident one hour and fifty-five minutes, and were off duty nine hours and fifty minutes prior to starting on this trip.