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IN THE MATTER OF ACCIDENT ON THE SOUTHERN RAILWAY IN
MISSISSIPPI, April 2, 1912.

TO THE COMMISSION:

On April 2, 1912, there was a derailment of a passenger train on the Southern Railway in Mississippi near Moorehead, Miss., resulting in the death of the engineman and fireman, and the injury of one mail clerk, one mail weigher and one section laborer.

The Greenville District of the Southern Railway in Mississippi, where this accident occurred, is a single track line. Trains were operated under the train order system, no block signals being used.

Train No. 11 runs between Birmingham, Ala., and Greenville, Miss. It consisted of engine No. 3861, one mail car, one combination baggage and express car, two day coaches and one Pullman car.

Train No. 11 left Itta Bena at 8:55 P. M., three hours and fifteen minutes late, with an order to run three hours late, Itta Bena to Greenville. It also had a bulletin order reading:

"Account heavy rains over entire division run carefully and do not attempt to make up time."

This train arrived at a switch know as "Cotton Mill Switch," 11 miles west of Itta Bena and 3,000 feet east of Moorehead, about 9:17 P. M. When passing over this switch, at a speed of about 30 miles per hour, the engine entered the siding and the entire train was derailed with the exception of the last two cars.

The switch where the accident occurred is on straight track, and there is nothing to obscure the view for a distance of six miles in the direction from which the train approached. The engine was equipped with an electric headlight which was burning brightly. The weather was clear and warm, and the moon was shining.

The conductor and other members of the train crew, as well as the track foreman in charge of the section where the accident occurred, examined the switch shortly after the accident and found a pin or bolt missing from the rod which connected the switch stand to the switch points. The cotter pin (a piece of No. 10 wire) which retained the bolt fastening this rod to the switch stand was broken, and the broken pieces were lying on the ground nearby. The break in this wire appeared to be a fresh one. The switch light was burning brightly, and showed clear for the main line. The track at the place of the derailment is level and on a slight fill.

This accident was caused by the throw rod of a facing point switch being disconnected, and it was the opinion of Superintendent Wise and other employees of the railroad company that some person had disconnected the moving rod of this switch, intending to derail the train.

The fastening used was not at all suitable to insure the security of a main line switch. The use of a heavy bolt, retained by a nut instead of a cotter pin, with the bolt head riveted over, would be a much safer arrangement than the one that was used.

The employees in charge of the train were experienced men with good records. They had been on duty a few minutes over nine hours at the time of the accident.

H. W. BELNAP,

Chief Inspector of
Safety Appliances.