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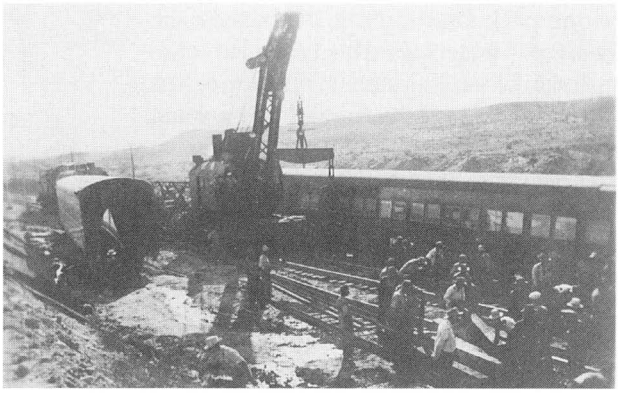
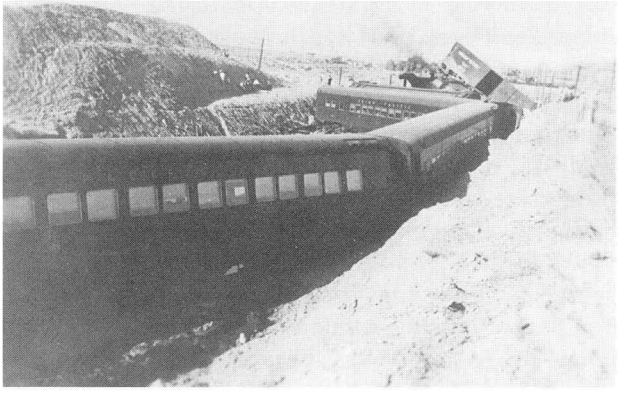
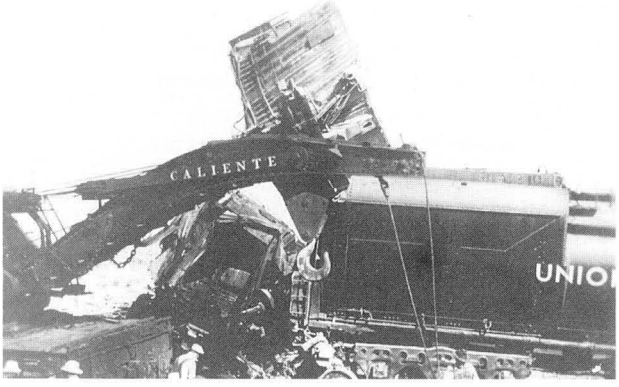
The final wreck described here was at Carp, on July 13, 1943, and involved the eastbound Streamliner "City of Los Angeles", Train #104, the hottest hot-shot train on the U.P.; anybody who delayed the train could be in serious trouble. Some background information here will set the stage.



Wrecker picking up cars of Train #8 at Moapa, Aug. 20, 1942. Photo by Tom Anderson.



Wreck of Train #8 at Moapa, Aug. 20, 1942. Photo by Tom Anderson.



Caliente wrecker picking up Train #8 at Moapa, Aug. 20, 1942. Photo by Tom Anderson.

Centralized Traffic Control was being installed in 1943, but it had not yet reached Carp. The railroad in that area still operated on train orders and automatic block signals. The system normally provided enough warning to keep two trains from colliding.

Each signal mast had an arm at the top, with three colored glass lenses that moved past a light. With the arm straight up, a green lens was in front of the light, saying the track ahead was clear. (Even in daylight, it was called a "green block".) When the arm moved so it pointed outward from the mast at 45°, a yellow lens moved in front of the light; a yellow block was a warning that certain precautions were to be taken because some sort of traffic represented a possible hazard. When the arm was horizontal, pointing straight out from the mast, a red lens moved in front of the light; a red block meant that something was so close ahead that an immediate stop was required. A train would normally have been traveling in a yellow block before coming to a red block, and the speed was supposed to have been reduced enough to allow a complete stop before any part of the pilot of the engine passed the red signal.

A train had to stop for a red block, but under some

circumstances, it could proceed against the block. For example, a train that was only a short distance from a siding might be able to get into the siding and thus clear the main line. The movement against a red block was allowed only if a flagman was sent ahead with a red light and a red flag to stop any oncoming traffic, and if the train moved no faster than the flagman could walk. That maneuver was called "flagging the block" or "leading it in".

Now comes the day of the Streamliner wreck. Extra 3825 west, a freight that was pulled by Challenger-type articulated steam engine 3825 (widely but incorrectly called a Mallet), broke an air hose about 2 miles east of Carp and was delayed while a new hose was installed. The train got rolling again after midnight. The eastbound Streamliner was due at Carp at 1:24 am.

Dan Curran was engineer on X3825, making his first trip as engineer in the district. A.J. Brimacombe, an engineer who knew the district, was riding with him as the pilot. Curran was reportedly advised to run on into Carp to meet the Streamliner. Because Curran was facing a yellow block, he could proceed at reduced speed; the Streamliner would be stopped at Carp by the red block that would be thrown by Curran's train. The flaw in the logic lay in the fact that the Streamliner had been exempted from the rule concerning entry into a red block, and it could proceed at reduced speed against a red block after making the required full stop. The events of the next few minutes led to deletion of that exemption.

Anatole Mallet, a Frenchman, got the idea in 1874 for a locomotive made up of two engines connected in tandem by a pin under the boiler, with the engines working in compound expansion. That is, the steam exhausted from the rear engine went to larger cylinders on the lead engine to be used again. This locomotive was powerful, and it was flexible for use on sharp turns. We adopted his idea, but in time the principle of compounding was abandoned in favor of simple expansion. We commonly call all articulated steam engines "Malleys", though the term is incorrect if they are simple expansion. His name was pronounced "mall-ay", but we turn it into "malley".

Art Wengert, engineer of the Streamliner, was a long-time engineer on steam engines on that road, now trained to operate diesel engines, and his sense of caution made him uneasy as he approached Carp in a yellow block. He expected to see the order board (the semaphore) at Carp set against him, directing him to stop there for orders. However, the order board was clear, and he eased on past the depot.

Dale Hunt was in helper service out of Caliente, and he was waiting at Carp with orders to help an eastbound freight that was following the Streamliner. Most of the rest of this account is based on first-hand information from him and from Art Wengert.

Hunt had his engine at the west end of Carp siding, to be ready to couple onto the rear of the freight train when it stopped at Carp. The Streamliner went

by, right on time, and he expected to be on his way to Caliente soon. But he was surprised to see the Streamliner stop, and Max Patterson, brakeman on the Streamliner, hurrying back down the track; he had to flag the freight train that was following. Hunt asked him what was wrong, and he replied, "I don't know, but I think we hit something".

After Patterson had stopped the eastbound freight, he came back up the track, and Hunt said, "Jump on, and I'll run you back". When they approached the depot, they saw the Streamliner standing there, with people milling around the telegraph office. Bert Ayers, Traveling Road Foreman, who had been on the Streamliner, was talking by phone with someone in the head office in Omaha.

This is what had happened:

The east end of Carp siding is close to the steel bridge over the creek, with block signals at the west end of the bridge; when Wengert got there, the signal for the Streamliner was red, because X3825 was so close.

Wengert brought the Streamliner to a full stop, as required. He started forward and had crossed the bridge when he saw the bright light of an oncoming locomotive swing around the bend about a quarter of a mile away. He thought it might be a helper trying to sneak into Carp ahead of him, so he stopped his train again so he could back up and let the helper into the siding. As soon as the Streamliner passed the signal, the signals for X3825 also turned red, but the engine had already passed the last signal before Carp.

And then things happened in a hurry. His diesel was rocked by a terrific crash, and he was thrown to the floor. He tried to get up, but he was thrown down again. He tried again, and was thrown again.

Dazed and rattled, he concluded he had been derailed, and his only thought was to blow his air horn to warn the "helper", but the air horn didn't work. He managed to climb out through a door, and he was amazed to see the big steam engine standing on the tracks above him. The diesel was in the borrow pit below the grade.

His next thought was to blow the whistle of the steam engine to warn the freight train that was following him, but its whistle wouldn't blow, either. The leading unit of the Streamliner's diesels had ridden right up over the pilot and air pumps of the steam engine and then on top of the boiler, shearing off the bell and whistle. Then it rolled off, bouncing off the engine and the roadbed and finally coming to rest, headed back toward Carp.

As reported in the *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, July 13, three cars of the Streamliner were derailed, and two of the three were jammed together and had to be set out at Carp. Seven cars of the freight train were derailed, six of them being piled up in the railroad cut. Only one car was damaged beyond repair. The freight that followed the Streamliner came on into Carp siding for

water and oil, then it backed down to Vigo to clear the main line.

A war was on, and the railroad was burdened with heavy traffic in war materials and troop movements. Every hour's delay in clearing the tracks added to the backlog of trains waiting to get through or being diverted to other railroads that were equally busy. The wrecker trains from Caliente and Las Vegas were rushed in to start picking up the pieces. (For a good look at life with a wreck train, although not on the Union Pacific, see Dougherty's "Call the Big Hook".)

The force of the impact broke many rails under the cars of the freight train. A tank car of lard turned over, and lard ran out on the ground. The workmen who picked up the wreck said they rendered the lard out of their clothes every night.

The wreckage of the diesel had cleared the tracks, and the Streamliner was pulled back into Carp siding so the Las Vegas wrecker could reach the wrecked freight train. The wrecker was derailed twice during the morning of the 13th because of heavy sideways pulling without enough blocking. (Dougherty describes the limit of lateral pull that could be tolerated without wrecking a wrecker.)

The crews worked all day and through the night, throwing wrecked and damaged equipment to either side, and about 4:30 am, July 14, the track was cleared. The rails were gauged and spiked, and trains began to move just after 5:00. Steam engine 7019, a 4-8-2, took the Streamliner out of Carp. The other passenger trains began to move, and then the freight trains. Hunt says he was away from Caliente about 52 hours, "just to make a 40-mile help on a freight train".

About 15 passenger trains and 12 freight trains were tied up. Gene Anderson was on the diner crew of Train #38, the eastbound "Los Angeles Limited - Pony Express". The train was held at Las Vegas, parked in the freight yard. The air conditioner picked that July day to quit. People on the train sweated there all through the day; they were the first train into the yard and the last one out. Late that night they left Las Vegas and were held several hours near Carp. Early in the morning they began moving again; they were 27 hours late at Caliente.

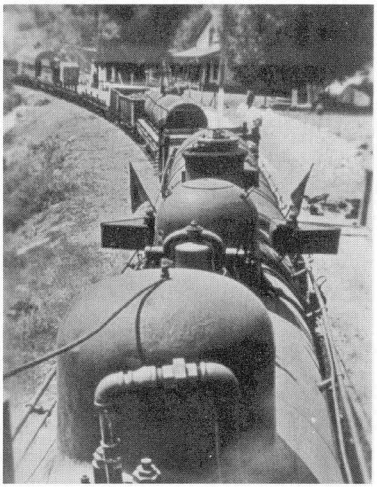
What about the people who were involved? According to the newspaper articles on July 13 and 14, no passengers were injured; some were shaken up, and some slept right through the crash. The injuries were to crew members, as follows: Fireman Charles Keene, of Engine 3825, jumped just before the collision and broke his ankle. Engineer Art Wengert had cuts about the leg and minor abrasions. Bert Ayers, Traveling Engineer and road foreman on the Streamliner, had a sprained back. He said he was walking toward his seat in the engine, and when he next saw his seat, it was bent and broken. Conductor Gergen, of the Streamliner, had a severely bruised hip. Fireman Price and

brakeman Max Patterson, of the Streamliner, had slight cuts and bruises.

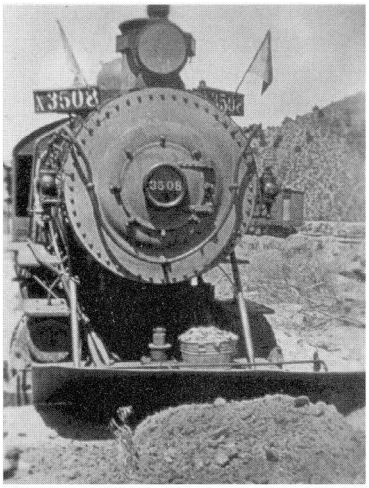
Two of the passengers were Dr. A. Schroeder, of Los Angeles, and Miss Florence Twomey, a Registered Nurse at White Memorial Hospital. They treated the injured people and went through the train to check on the passengers. Union Pacific physician Dr. Hale B. Slavin was sent out on a special train with railroad officials and work crews. He brought the injured back to Las Vegas on the special train.

The article on July 13 concludes, "The tiny depot at Carp was jammed with passengers for several hours, as they stood inside the little vestibule delivering messages to be wired to relatives to notify them that they had escaped injury in the crash of the trains".

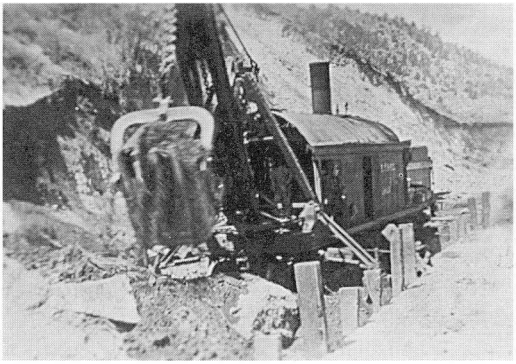
We heard stories and claims about the things that happened and why they happened and who was to blame. As I recall, the most persistent questions were, "How fast was the freight train going, if it was to head in at Carp?" and "Why did Brimacombe let Curran proceed that way against traffic, and especially against the Streamliner?" Art Wengert continued his career as the engineer of the Streamliner, and Dan Curran continued running steam engines; A.J. Brimacombe was pulled out of service.



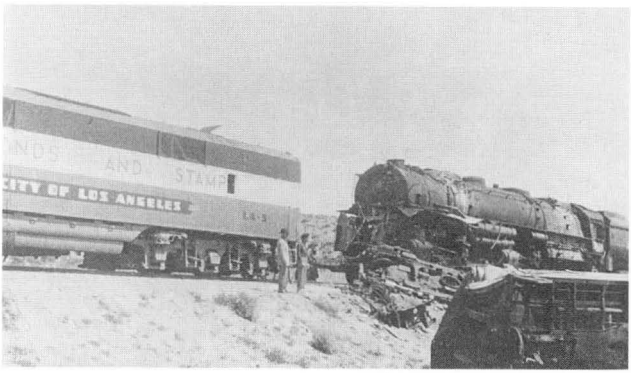
Work train, Big Springs, 1917. Photo from T.C. Himstreet.



Extra 3508 at Big Springs, Clover Creek Canyon, 1917. Note X3508 and white flags of an extra. Photo from T.C. Himstreet.



Steam shovel at Islen pit, Clover Creek Canyon, 1917. Photo from T.C. Himstreet.



Streamliner wreck at Carp bridge, July 13, 1943. Eastbound "City of Los Angeles" collided with westbound extra 3825 that was running in a red block. Demolished leading engine of the Streamliner is looking back the way it came. Photos by Dale V. Hunt, engineer of a helper engine at Carp when it happened.