

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

REPORT NO. 3382
ATLANTIC COAST LINE RAILROAD COMPANY
IN RE ACCIDENT
NEAR EAST LAKE, FLA., ON
DECEMBER 22, 1950

SUMMARY

Date: December 22, 1950
Railroad: Atlantic Coast Line
Location: East Lake, Fla.
Kind of accident: Head-end collision
Trains involved: Freight : Freight
Train number: Extra 460 South
Engine numbers: 819 : 460
Consists: 14 cars, caboose : 14 cars, caboose
Estimated speeds: 25 m. p. h. : 10 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable and train orders
Track: Single, tangent, level
Weather: Clear
Time: 7:46 a. m.
Casualties: 2 killed, 5 injured
Cause: Train occupying main track without authority

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO. 3382

IN THE MATTER OF MAKING ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORTS
UNDER THE ACCIDENT REPORTS ACT OF MAY 8, 1910.

ATLANTIC COAST LINE RAILROAD COMPANY

February 14, 1951

Accident near East Lake, Fla., on December 22, 1950, caused
by a train occupying the main track without authority.

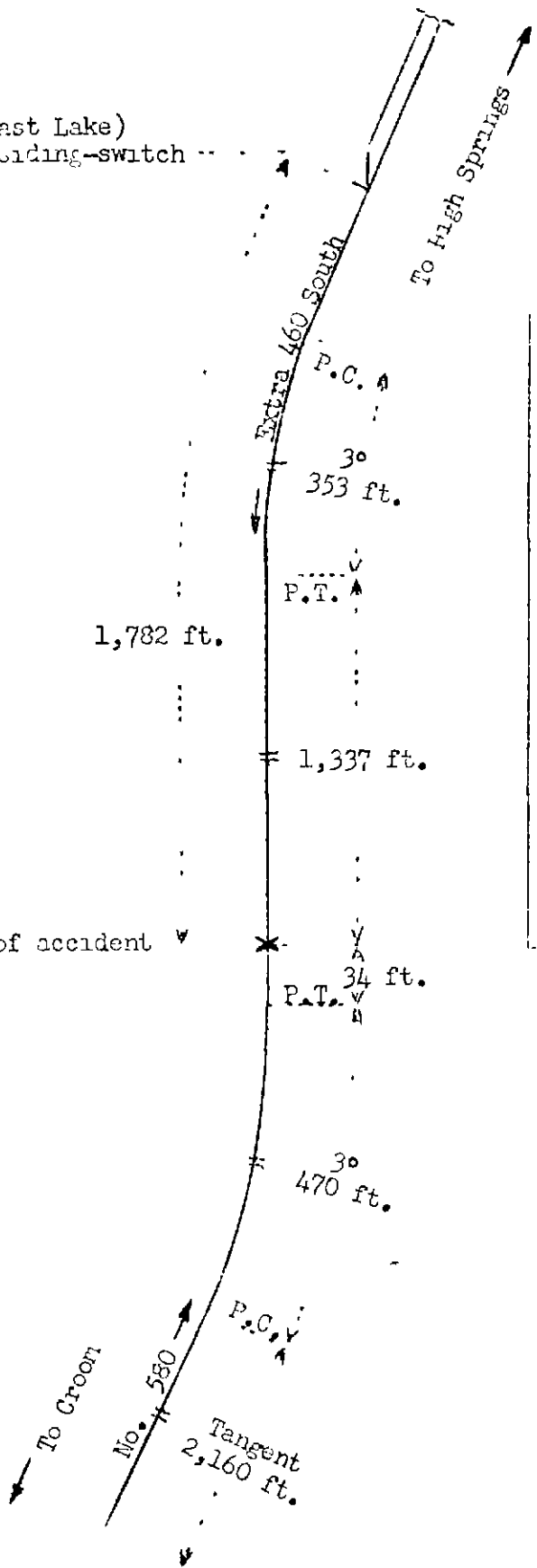
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On December 22, 1950, there was a head-end collision between two freight trains on the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad near East Lake, Fla., which resulted in the death of two employees and the injury of five employees. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the Florida Railroad and Public Utilities Commission.

¹ Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Commerce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the Commission to Commissioner Patterson for consideration and disposition.

(East Lake)
South siding-switch



o	High Springs, Fla.	63.2 mi.
o	Ocala	7.6 mi.
o	Welchton	6.3 mi.
o	Candler	3.0 mi.
o	Ocklawaha	2.5 mi.
o	East Lake	0.3 mi.
X	Point of accident	2.2 mi.
o	Icarsdale	8.8 mi.
o	Fruitland Park	3.6 mi.
o	Leesburg	30.2 mi.
o	Croom, Fla.	

Point of accident

Report No. 3392
 Atlantic Coast Line Railroad
 East Lake, Fla.
 December 22, 1950

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Southern Division extending between Croom and High Springs, Fla., 127.7 miles, a single-track line, over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. The accident occurred on the main track at a point 44.8 miles north of Croom and 1,782 feet south of the south siding-switch at East Lake. From the south there are, in succession, a tangent 2,160 feet in length, a 3° curve to the left 470 feet, and a tangent 34 feet to the point of accident and 1,337 feet northward. From the north there is a 3° curve to the left 353 feet in length, and then the tangent on which the accident occurred. From the south the grade varies between 0.21 percent and 1.63 percent descending northward throughout a distance of 2,608 feet, then it is level 51 feet to the point of accident and a considerable distance northward.

This carrier's operating rules read in part as follows:

DEFINITIONS

Regular Train.--A train authorized by a time-table schedule.

Extra Train.--A train not authorized by a time-table schedule. * * *

* * *

75. Extra trains are inferior to regular trains.

82. Time-table schedules, unless fulfilled, are in effect for twelve hours after their time at each station.

Regular trains more than twelve hours behind either their schedule arriving or leaving time at any station lose both right and schedule, and can thereafter proceed only as authorized by train order.

S-87. An inferior train must keep out of the way of opposing superior trains * * *

Extra trains must clear the time of opposing regular trains not less than five minutes unless otherwise provided, and will be governed by train orders with respect to opposing extra trains.

97. Unless otherwise provided, extra trains must not be run without train orders.

220. * * *

Orders held by or issued for, or any part of an order relating to, a regular train becomes void when such train loses both right and schedule as prescribed by Rules * * *

* * *

FORMS OF TRAIN ORDERS

S-E

(1.) No 2 En. 500 wait at P until 9 59 A M for No 1
Eng 503.

The train first named must not pass the designated point before the time given, unless the other train has arrived. The train last named is required to run with respect to the time specified at the designated point or any intermediate station where schedule time is earlier than the time specified in the order, as before required to run with respect to the schedule time of the train first named.

The maximum authorized speed for freight trains was 55 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

No. 580, a north-bound fourth-class freight train, consisted of engine 819, 14 cars and a caboose. This train departed from Leesburg, its initial station, 30.2 miles north of Ocala, at 11.05 p. m., 4 hours 5 minutes late. Switching was performed at Fruitland Park, 3.6 miles north of Leesburg, and it was then found that because of inferior coal adequate steam pressure could not be maintained for the engine to handle the train beyond that station. The engine was detached and, without cars, it proceeded to Ocala, 30.7 miles north of Fruitland Park, where a supply of coal was obtained. There was no open office between Leesburg and Ocala. At Ocala the crew received copies of train order No 15, which read in part as follows:

No. 580 Eng 819 wait at
Weirsdale until 701 A.M.
East Lake 730 A.M.
Ocklawaha 737 A.M.
Candler 744 A.M.
Welchton 759 A.M.
for Extra 460 South * * *

Weirsdale, East Lake, Ocklawaha, Candler, and Welchton are located, respectively, 8.8 miles, 11.3 miles, 13.8 miles, 16.3 miles, and 23.1 miles north of Fruitland Park. After the tender was supplied with coal the engine returned to Fruitland Park. No. 580 departed from that station about 6:40 a. m., 11 hours 30 minutes late, and arrived at Weirsdale about 7 a. m. Switching was performed at Weirsdale. At 7:37 a. m., 12 hours 7 minutes after the schedule leaving time of No. 580 and 7 minutes after the schedule of No. 580 had ceased to be in effect at that station, this train departed north-bound. No train order authorizing this movement had been issued. While this train was moving at a speed of about 25 miles per hour it collided with Extra 460 South at a point 1,782 feet south of the south siding-switch at East Lake.

Extra 460 South, a south-bound freight train, consisted of engine 460, 14 cars and a caboose. At Ocala the crew of this train received copies of train order No. 15. The train departed from Ocala at 6:37 a. m. and stopped on the siding at East Lake about 7:19 a. m. About 7:45 a. m. it entered the main track at the south siding-switch, departed southward, and while moving at a speed of about 10 miles per hour it collided with engine 819.

Engine 819, its tender, and the first four cars of the north-bound train were derailed. The engine stopped upright and in line with the track. The tender stopped with its left front corner against the boiler of the engine and its right rear corner about 15 feet west of the track. It leaned to the west at an angle of 45 degrees. The derailed cars stopped in various positions on or near the track. The engine, tender and third car were badly damaged. The first and second cars were destroyed. The engine of Extra 460 South was moved northward approximately 82 feet by the force of the impact. The engine, tender and first three cars of this train were derailed. The engine and tender stopped upright and in line with the track. They were badly damaged. The derailed cars stopped in various positions on or near the track. The first car was destroyed, the second car was badly damaged, and the third car was slightly damaged.

The engineer and the fireman of Extra 460 south
killed. The fireman of Extra 460 south, and the engineer,
the crewer, the conductor, and the front brakeman of the
north-bound train were injured.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which
occurred about 7:40 a. m.

Discussion

The rules of this carrier provide that a train not
authorized by a timetable schedule can proceed as an extra train
only when so ordered by train order. Timetable schedule,
unless fulfilled, is in effect for 12 hours after the time
at each station. A regular train runs then 12 hours behind
its schedule arriving at leaving time at any station.
is no longer authorized by its timetable schedule, and it
can be so ordered only if authorized by train order to
assume another schedule or to proceed as an extra train.
Extra trains are required to clear the time of opposing regular
trains not less than 5 minutes, and are governed by train orders
with respect to opposing extra trains.

When the engine of No. 520 was operated from Fruitland
Park to Ocala, the conductor accompanied the engine. After
the engine arrived at Ocala he informed the train dispatcher
as to the time at which he expected his engine to leave Ocala
and as to the amount of switching to be performed at each
north of Fruitland Park. The train dispatcher then issued
train order No. 15, which required No. 520 to wait at Weirsdale
until 7:00 a. m. and at East Lake until 7:50 p. m. on Extra
460 South. The schedule time of No. 520 was 7:50 p. m. at
Weirsdale and 7:35 p. m. at East Lake. The conductor said that
when he read this train order he noticed that the time specified
at Weirsdale was 11 hours 57 minutes later than the schedule
time of his train at that station. However, because he
could not see that his train would be ready to leave Weirsdale
at the time specified in the train order, he did not mention the
fact to the train dispatcher or to the other members of the
crew.

After the engine returned to Fruitland Park, No. 520
proceeded from Fruitland Park to Weirsdale. While switching
was being performed at Weirsdale the conductor and the front
brakeman heard the sound of the engine of Extra 460 South
as that train entered the siding at East Lake. When the switching
was completed, the train departed north-bound. The members of
the crew discussed the provisions of train order No. 15 and

they thought that Extra 460 South would meet their train at East Lake, but it did not occur to any of them that their train was more than 12 hours late and therefore had no authority to proceed. As this train was approaching the point where the accident occurred, the speed was about 30 miles per hour. The engineer and the front brakeman were in their respective positions on the engine, and the conductor and the flaman were in the caboose. Because of curvature of the track and vegetation adjacent to the track, the view of the point where the accident occurred from the cab of a north-bound engine was restricted to a distance of approximately 300 feet. The engineer and the flaman were too seriously injured in the accident to be questioned during this investigation. The front brakeman said he first observed Extra 460 South at a distance of about 100 feet. He called a warning, and the engineer immediately made an emergency application of the brakes. The collision occurred a few seconds later.

The crew of Extra 460 South received copies of train order No. 25 at Ocala. This train then proceeded from Ocala to East Lake and entered the siding at that point to meet No. 580. After the train stopped, the front brakeman heard the sound of the engine of No. 580 while switching was being performed at Weirsdale. At 7:40 a. m. the conductor instructed the front brakeman, who was in the caboose, to remind the engineer that No. 580 was more than 12 hours late and to advise him that their train should proceed. While the front brakeman was proceeding toward his engine he did not hear the exhaust of an engine at Weirsdale, and he said he assumed that the opposite train had entered the siding at that point. After he gave the engine the information as instructed by the conductor, he lined the south siding-switch for the movement of his train, then boarded the engine as his train entered the main track. As this train was approaching the point where the accident occurred, the engineer, the front brakeman, and the flaman were in the cab of the engine, and the conductor was in the caboose. The speed was about 10 miles per hour. The front brakeman said that the engineer called a warning and made an emergency application of the brakes a few seconds before the collision occurred. The engineer and the flaman were killed in the accident, and the fireman was too seriously injured to be questioned during this investigation.

The train dispatcher said that until after the accident occurred he overlooked the fact that No. 580 would be 12 hours late at Weirsdale at 7 30 a. m. He said that if he had consulted the timetable before he issued train order No. 15, he would have annulled the schedule of No. 580 between Fruitland Park and High Springs and then issued a train order authorizing the movement of the train from Fruitland Park as an extra train.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by a train occupying the main track without authority.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this fourteenth day of February, 1951.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.