

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 3156
ATLANTIC COAST LINE RAILROAD COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
NEAR PIDCOCK, GA., ON
JANUARY 11, 1948

SUMMARY

Railroad: Atlantic Coast Line
Date: January 11, 1948
Location: Pidcock, Ga.
Kind of accident: Derailment
Train involved: Passenger
Train number: 11
Engine number: 1516
Consist: 8 cars
Estimated speed: 60 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable and train orders
Track: Single; tangent; 0.11 percent
ascending grade westward
Weather: Clear
Time: 4:37 a. m.
Casualties: 68 injured
Cause: Broken rail

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 3156

IN THE MATTER OF MAKING ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORTS
UNDER THE ACCIDENT REPORTS ACT OF MAY 6, 1910.

ATLANTIC COAST LINE RAILROAD COMPANY

February 10, 1948

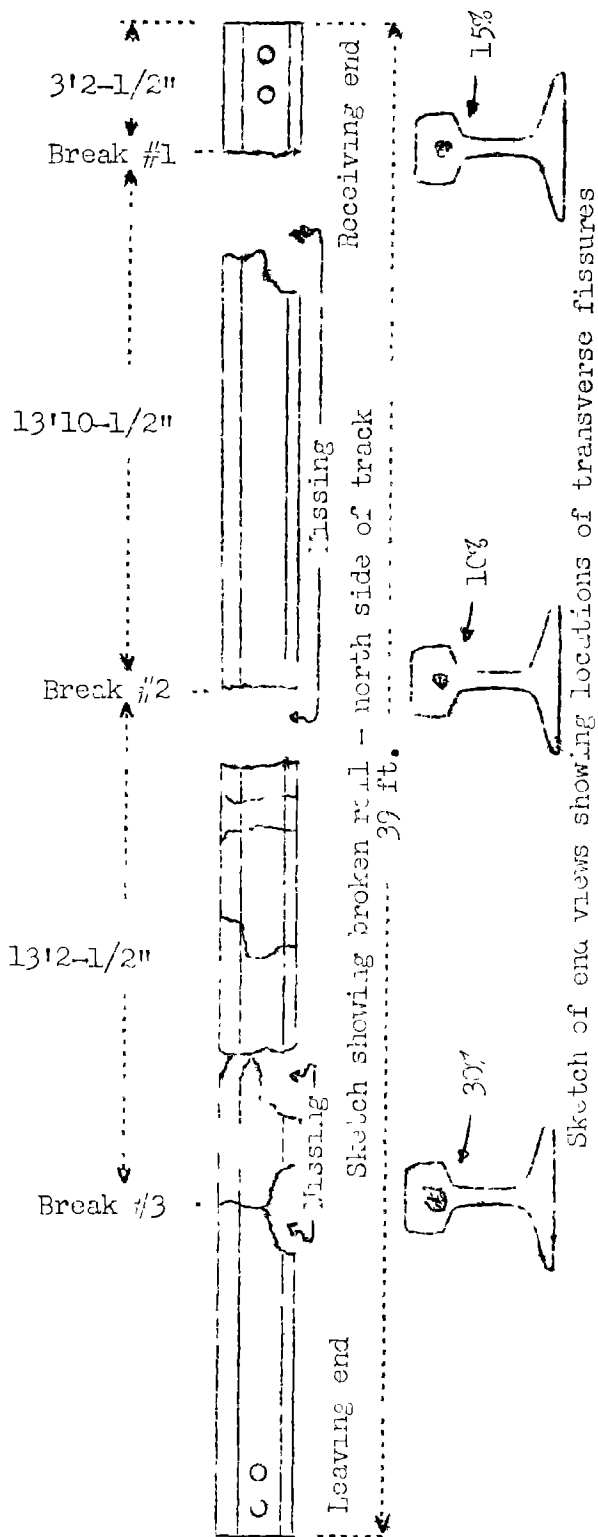
Accident near Pidcock, Ga., on January 11, 1948, caused
by a broken rail.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On January 11, 1948, there was a derailment of a passenger train on the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad near Pidcock, Ga., which resulted in the injury of 50 passengers, 7 coach attendants, 10 dining-car employees and 1 train-service employee.

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.



← To Thomasville

To Waycross →

No. 11

Tangent 3.77 mi.

Point of accident

To Pidcock 0.69 mi.

Tangent 5.92 mi.

o	Waycross, Ga.	60.60 mi.
o	Valdosta	25.91 mi.
X	Point of accident	0.69 mi.
o	Pidcock	16.80 mi.
o	Thomasville, Ga.	

In. No. 215C
 Atlantic Coast Line Railroad
 Pidcock, Ga.
 January 11, 1943

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Waycross District extending between Waycross and Thomasville, Ga., 104 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 36.51 miles west of Waycross and 0.69 mile east of the station at Pidcock. The main track is tangent throughout a distance of 3.77 miles immediately east of the point of accident and 5.92 miles westward. The grade is 0.11 percent ascending westward.

In this vicinity the track structure is laid on a 7-foot fill and consists of 100-pound rail, 39 feet in length, laid during 1930 on an average of 24 treated ties to the rail length. It is fully tieplated, single-spiked, provided with 4-bolt 100-percent joint bars and an average of 8 rail anchors per rail length. It is ballasted with a mixture of slag and crushed stone to a depth of 8 inches. The involved rail section was manufactured by the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company in March, 1930. The number was 820559, Letter C, Ingot No. 21.

The maximum authorized speed for the train involved was 60 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

No. 11, a west-bound first-class passenger train, consisted of engine 1516, one combination coach and baggage car, two coaches, one dining car and four coaches, in the order named. All cars were of all-steel construction. This train departed from Valdosta, the last open office, 25.91 miles east of the point of accident, at 3:53 a. m., 1 hour 10 minutes late, and while it was moving at an estimated speed of 60 miles per hour the rear truck of the second car and the third to eighth cars, inclusive, were derailed.

Immediately after the derailment separations occurred between the second and third cars, between the third and fourth cars, and between the fifth and sixth cars. The engine and the first two cars stopped with the front of the engine 2,087 feet west of the point of derailment. The third to eighth cars, inclusive, stopped, practically upright, north of the track and in line with it, with the west end of the third car and the east end of the eighth car, respectively, 639 feet and 116 feet west of the point of derailment. The derailed equipment was considerably damaged.

The flagman was injured.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred at 4:37 a. m.

Discussion

No. 11 was moving on tangent track at a speed of about 60 miles per hour, in territory where the maximum authorized speed for this train was 60 miles per hour, when the derailment occurred. The brakes of this train had been tested and had functioned properly en route. The headlight was lighted brightly, and the engineer and the fireman were maintaining a lookout ahead. The conductor and the baggageman were in the first car and the flagman was in the rear car. The first that any of these employees knew of anything being wrong was when the enginemen heard an unusual noise under the tender, then the brakes became applied in emergency. Prior to the time the derailment occurred, the engine and the cars were riding smoothly, and there was no indication of defective equipment or track, nor of any obstruction having been on the track.

After the accident occurred, a broken rail was found on the north side of the track. This rail was broken into many pieces, eight of which were recovered. At breaks Nos. 1, 2 and 3, which occurred at points, respectively, 3 feet 2-1/2 inches, 17 feet 1 inch, and 30 feet 3-1/2 inches west of the receiving end of the rail, there were transverse fissures which covered, respectively, 15 percent, 10 percent, and 30 percent of the cross-sectional area of the head of the rail. None of these fissures extended to the surface of the rail. The failure of the rail occurred when the front portion of the train passed over it, then the broken pieces became displaced, and the derailment followed.

The track in this vicinity was last inspected by the section foreman from a motor-car about 14 hours before the derailment occurred, and no defective condition was observed. The rail in question was last tested by a rail-detector car on November 3, 1947, and no defective condition was indicated.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by a broken rail.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this tenth day of February, 1948.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.