

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

REPORT NO. 3645
BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAIL ROAD COMPANY
IN RE ACCIDENT
NEAR WELLSTON, OHIO, ON
JULY 25, 1955

SUMMARY

Date: July 25, 1955

Railroad: Baltimore and Ohio

Location: Wellston, Ohio

Kind of accident: Head-end collision

Trains involved: Freight : Freight

Train numbers: Extra 649 West : Extra 983 East

Locomotive numbers: Diesel-electric : Diesel-electric
unit 649 : units 983 and
983X

Consists: Caboose Caboose

Estimated speeds: Standing : 10 m. p. h.

Operation: Timetable and train orders, yard
limits

Track: Single; 3° curve; 0.34 percent
ascending grade westward

Weather: Clear

Time: 8:30 a. m.

Casualties: 2 injured

Cause: Failure properly to control speed of
train moving within yard limits

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO. 3645

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

BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAIL ROAD COMPANY

September 16, 1955

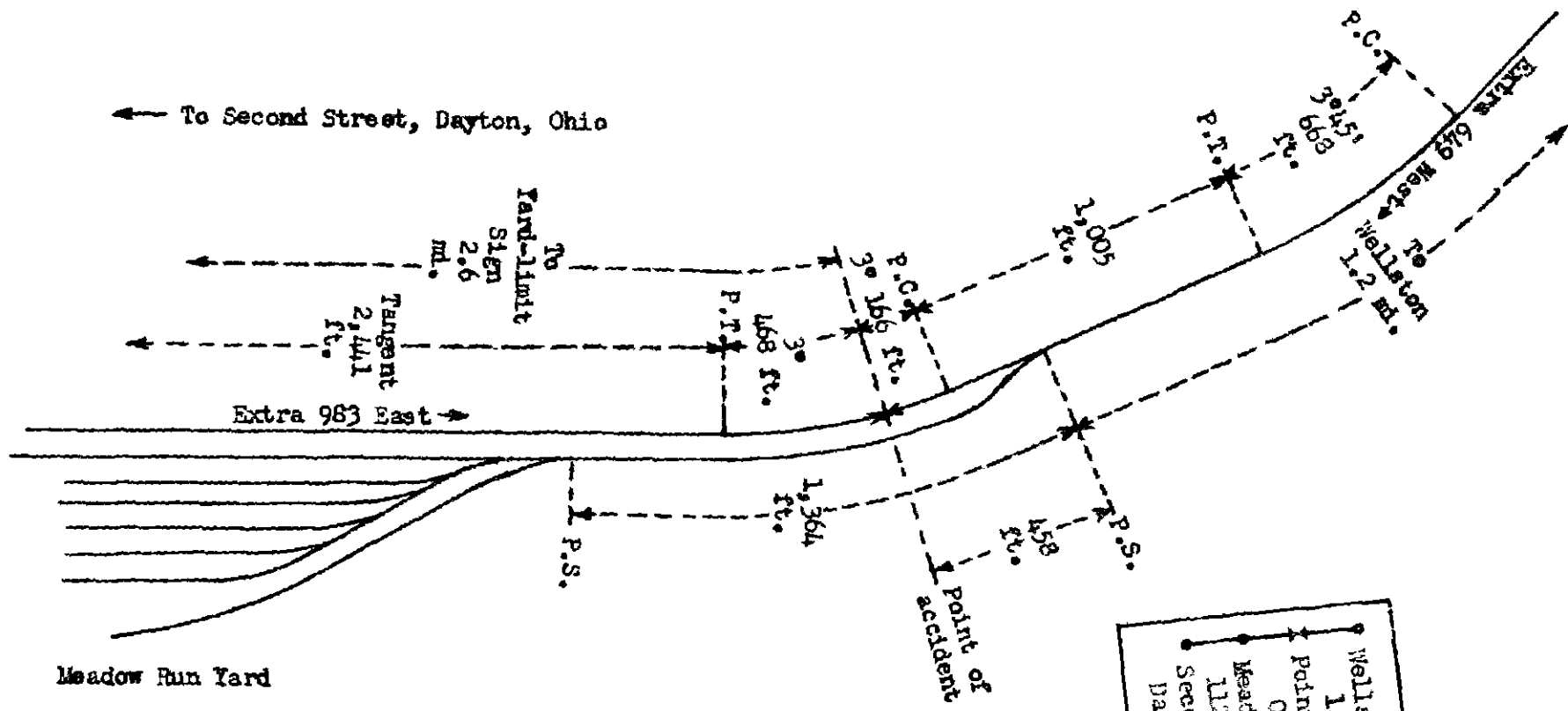
Accident near Wellston, Ohio, on July 25, 1955, caused
by failure properly to control the speed of a train
moving within yard limits.

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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

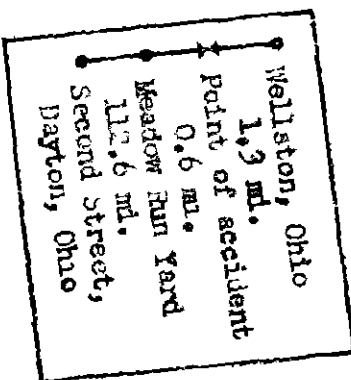
CLARKE, Commissioner:

On July 25, 1955, there was a head-end collision
between two freight trains on the Baltimore and Ohio Rail
Road near Wellston, Ohio, which resulted in the injury of
two train-service employees.

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



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Report No. 3645
 Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road
 Near Wellston, Ohio
 July 25, 1955

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Toledo Division extending between Wellston and Second Street, Dayton, Ohio, 114.5 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line, over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. At a point 1.2 miles west of Wellston a lead track diverges from the main track toward the south. This track parallels the main track from the east switch to a point 1,364 feet west of the switch. West of the latter point the lead track connects with the east ends of the tracks of Meadow Run Yard. Yard limits extend between Wellston and a point 3.9 miles westward. The accident occurred on the main track within yard limits at a point 458 feet west of the east lead-track switch at Meadow Run Yard. From the east there are, in succession, a 3°45' curve to the right 668 feet in length, a tangent 1,005 feet, and a 3° curve to the right 166 feet to the point of accident and 468 feet westward. From the west there is a tangent 2,441 feet in length and the curve on which the accident occurred. The grade is 0.34 percent ascending westward at the point of accident.

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

52. When cars are pushed by an engine, except when switching or making up trains in a yard, a trainman must be located on the front of the leading car.

93. Yard limits are indicated by yard limit signs.

On single track within yard limits, the main track may be used, clearly first-class trains as prescribed by the rules and protecting against second-class trains. Trains other than first and second class will move within yard limits prepared to stop unless the main track is seen or known to be clear.

* * *

In the vicinity of the point of accident the maximum authorized speed for freight trains is 20 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

Extra 649 West, a west-bound freight train, consisted of Diesel-electric unit 649 and a caboose. This train departed from Wellston about 8:20 a. m. and stopped at a point 458 feet west of the east lead-track switch at Meadow Run Yard. Immediately afterward it was struck by Extra 983 East.

Extra 983 East, an east-bound freight train, consisted of Diesel-electric units 983 and 983X, coupled in multiple-unit control, and a caboose. The locomotive was headed westward and was coupled to the west end of the caboose. This train entered the main track at a point 4,898 feet west of the east lead-track switch at Meadow Run Yard, and while moving eastward at an estimated speed of 10 miles per hour it struck Extra 649 West.

Extra 649 West was moved eastward about 10 feet by the force of the impact. The front end of the locomotive was slightly damaged. The caboose of Extra 983 East was derailed and was somewhat damaged. The east end of Diesel-electric unit 983X was slightly damaged.

The conductor and the flagman of Extra 649 West were injured.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 8:30 a. m.

Diesel-electric unit 649 is of the switcher type. Diesel-electric unit 983X is a booster, or "B", unit and is not equipped with a control compartment. Diesel-electric unit 983 is a lead, or "A", unit. It is equipped with a safety-control feature actuated by a pedal. At the time of the accident it was coupled to the west end of unit 983X and the control compartment was at the west end. The total length of the two units coupled is 100 feet 8 inches.

Discussion

When the accident occurred the crew of Extra 619 West was en route from Wellston to Meadow Run Yard to handle a train from the latter point. As this train was approaching the point where the accident occurred the engineers were in the control compartment of the locomotive. The members of the train crew in the caboose. Because of curvature of the track and vegetation north of the track the enginemen's view of the track west of the point of accident was materially restricted. The engineer said that when the locomotive was in the vicinity of the lead-track switch or a short distance west of the switch he saw Extra 983 East approaching at a distance which he thought was about 500 feet. He also saw that there was no one on the east platform of the caboose. He immediately applied the independent brake and sounded a warning on the pneumatic horn. He then saw that Extra 983 West was not stopping, and he made an emergency application of the brakes. The flagman of this train was so seriously injured in the accident that he could not be questioned during this investigation. The other members of the crew all said that their train approached the point of accident at a speed of about 10 miles per hour and that it had stopped before the collision occurred.

The crew of Extra 983 East arrived at Meadow Run Yard with a train from Dayton. After yarding the train they turned the locomotive, coupled it to the west end of their caboose, and departed for Wellston with the locomotive pushing the caboose. As this train was approaching the point where the accident occurred the engineer was in the control compartment at the west end of the locomotive. The members of the train crew were in the caboose. The conductor said that he was maintaining a lookout in the direction of movement from inside the doorway. All members of the crew except the front brakeman estimated that the speed was about 10 miles per hour. The front brakeman said that he was engaged in clearing the caboose and had not noticed the speed at which the train was moving. He said that as the train approached the point of accident he

glanced out and saw Extra 649 West approaching. He immediately called a warning and then alighted from the east end of the caboose. He said he attempted to open the back-up valve on the platform of the caboose as he passed. He thought the trains were about 120 feet apart at the time he alighted. The conductor did not see Extra 649 West until approximately the same time that the brakeman called the warning. He thought that at this time the trains were about 140 feet apart. The flagman alighted from the west end of the caboose, and he said that from this location it appeared that Extra 649 West was still in motion when the collision occurred. At the time of the accident the fireman, a qualified engineer, was operating the locomotive. He said that as the train was approaching the point of accident he was maintaining a lookout ahead and the track within his range of vision was clear. Several seconds before the collision occurred his foot slipped off the pedal of the safety-control feature and his attention was distracted momentarily. He then heard the sound of the pneumatic horn of the locomotive of Extra 649 West, and he immediately made an emergency application of the brakes. He said the collision occurred a few seconds later and before he could obtain a view of the opposing train. The opposing train was not visible from the engineer's location on the south side of the control compartment.

This accident occurred within yard limits. Under the rules of this carrier governing operation within yard limits, Extra 983 East was required to be prepared to stop unless the main track was seen or known to be clear.

Cause

This accident was caused by failure properly to control the speed of a train moving within yard limits.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this sixteenth day of September, 1956.

By the Commission, Commissioner Clarke.

(SEAL)

HAROLD D. McCOY,
Secretary.