

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2766  
THE CARBON COUNTY RAILWAY COMPANY  
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT  
NEAR COLUMBIA, UTAH, ON  
JANUARY 22, 1944

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SUMMARY

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Railroad: Carbon County  
Date: January 22, 1944  
Location: Columbia, Utah  
Kind of accident: Head-end collision  
Trains involved: Engine and cars : Engine and cars  
Engine numbers: Diesel-electric : Diesel-electric  
262-1 262-2  
Consist: 15 cars : 26 cars, caboose  
Speed: Standing : 15-25 m. p. h.  
Operation: Yard  
Track: Single; tangent; level  
Weather: Clear  
Time: 5:10 p. m.  
Casualties: 2 killed; 1 injured  
Cause: Failure of Carbon County Railway  
Company to provide operating  
rules for the movement of its  
trains and engines

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2766

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

THE CARBON COUNTY RAILWAY COMPANY

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February 29, 1944.

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Accident near Columbia, Utah, on January 22, 1944, caused  
by failure of the Carbon County Railway Company to  
provide operating rules for the movement of its  
trains and engines.

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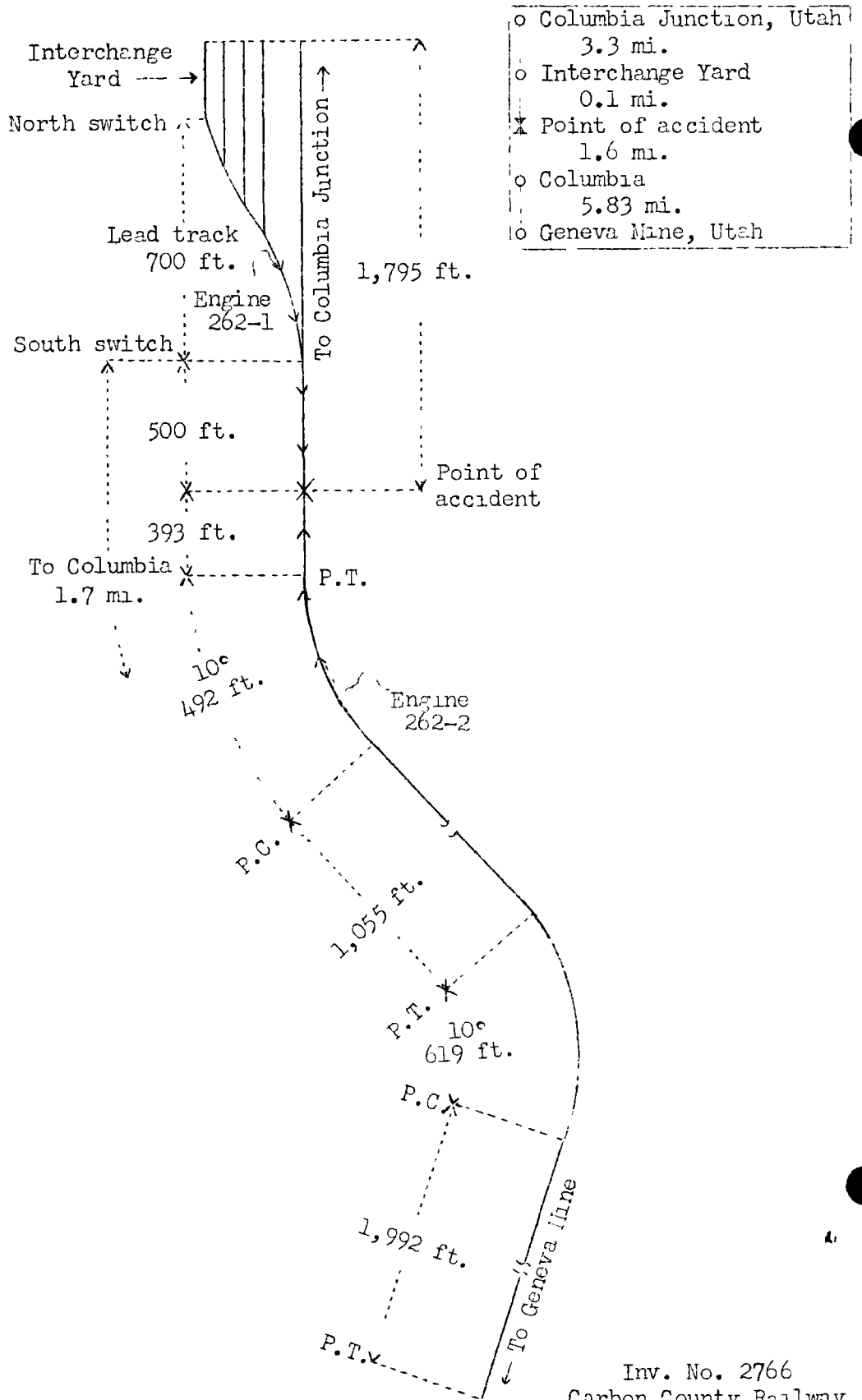
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION<sup>1</sup>

PATTERSON, Chairman:

On January 22, 1944, there was a head-end collision  
between two engines on the Carbon County Railway near  
Columbia, Utah, which resulted in the death of two employees  
and the injury of one employee.

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<sup>1</sup>Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Com-  
merce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the  
Commission to Chairman Patterson for consideration and dis-  
position.



- o Columbia Junction, Utah 3.3 mi.
- o Interchange Yard 0.1 mi.
- X Point of accident 1.6 mi.
- o Columbia 5.83 mi.
- o Geneva Mine, Utah

Inv. No. 2766  
Carbon County Railway  
Columbia, Utah  
January 22, 1944

### Location of Accident and Method of Operation

The Carbon County Railway was a single-track line extending between Columbia Junction and Columbia, Utah, 5 miles. The entire line was within yard limits. Interchange Yard, a freight classification yard, paralleled the main track on the west between points 1.7 and 2.2 miles north of Columbia. A lead track about 700 feet long connected the south end of Interchange Yard and the main track. The accident occurred on the main track 500 feet south of the lead-track switch. From the south there were, in succession, a tangent 1,992 feet, a 10° curve to the left 619 feet, a tangent 1,055 feet, a 10° curve to the right 492 feet and a tangent 393 feet to the point of accident and 1,795 feet beyond. The grade for north-bound trains varied between 2 percent and 1.475 percent descending about 1.5 miles, then there was a vertical curve 400 feet, followed by level track 800 feet to the point of accident and a considerable distance beyond.

A single-track line owned by the Defense Plant Corporation and operated by the Carbon County Railway extended southward from Columbia to Geneva Mine, 5.83 miles.

### Description of Accident

Diesel-electric engine 262-1 was engaged in switching operations at Interchange Yard. This engine, headed northward and coupled to the south end of a cut of 15 cars, moved southward from the lead track to the main track. It had just stopped when it was struck by engine 262-2 about 500 feet south of the lead-track switch.

Diesel-electric engine 262-2, headed northward and coupled to the north end of a cut of cars consisting of 26 loaded cars and a caboose, was en route from Geneva Mine to Interchange Yard. While it was moving at a speed of 15 to 25 miles per hour it collided with engine 262-1.

The force of the impact moved engine 262-1 northward about 340 feet. The first three cars of the cut of cars coupled to this engine were derailed and stopped on the east side of the main track and parallel to it. The fourth car telescoped the front end of engine 262-1 a distance of about 10 feet. The front end of engine 262-2 was slightly damaged.

From an engine moving in either direction in the vicinity of the point where the accident occurred, the view of an engine approaching from the opposite direction was restricted to a distance of about 400 feet, because of embankments adjacent to the track and track curvature.

It was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 5:10 p. m.

The engineer and a switchman of engine 262-1 were killed. A switchman of engine 262-2 was injured.

### Discussion

During switching operations engine 262-1 entered the main track at the south end of Interchange Yard, and while it was backing southward engine 262-2 was seen approaching from the south. Engine 262-1 stopped, and an attempt was being made to reverse the movement when the engine was struck by engine 262-2. Engine 262-2 was moving on the main track, and was en route from Geneva Mine to the north end of Interchange Yard. The surviving members of the crew of engine 262-1 said they understood that all trains and engines moving on the main track in this territory were required to be operated in such manner that they could be stopped short of a train or an obstruction. The members of the crew of engine 262-2 said they understood that flag protection was required to protect movements from the yard tracks to the main track. The lack of a common understanding resulted in the movements being made in such manner that a collision occurred.

The investigation disclosed that prior to December 16, 1943, engines and crews of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad, which connected with the line of the Carbon County Railway at Columbia Junction, were used to perform service on the line of the Carbon County Railway, and movements on this line were governed by the operating rules of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad. During the afternoon of December 13, 1943, operating officials received notice that at 12:01 a. m., December 16, the Carbon County Railway Company would assume operation of the line of the Defense Plant Corporation. The train and engine employees who were working on the latter line were hired by the Carbon County Railway Company. The employees concerned in this accident, except one switchman, had performed service on the line of the Carbon County Railway since December 16. These employees had not been furnished books of operating rules, and had not been examined. The general manager said he orally instructed each employee that the entire line was within yard limits, and that the operation was governed by yard rules. Written instructions concerning the method of operation had not been issued. A supply of books of operating rules had been ordered, but had not been received at the time this investigation was completed. If a proper method of operation had been prescribed to govern movements on this line, and if the employees concerned had been properly instructed concerning the method of operation, this accident could have been averted.

About one month after the accident occurred the investigation disclosed that two bulletins under date of January 31, 1944,

had been issued specifying that the speed limit on this railroad was 12 miles per hour, and that the entire line was within switching limits. Books of rules and regulations of the operating department were received from the printer on February 24. These rules do not mention switching limits nor prescribe method of operation of trains and engines within switching limits. Several of the train and engine employees were questioned as to their understanding of the method of operation in effect under these rules, and their replies indicated the same lack of common understanding as was disclosed immediately following the accident. In order to prevent another similar accident, the operating officials should immediately take necessary action to prescribe adequate operating rules and to obtain among the officials and employees a common understanding of the rules.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure of the Carbon County Railway Company to provide operating rules for the movement of its trains and engines.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-ninth day of February, 1944.

By the Commission, Chairman Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,  
Secretary.