INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2873

THE CHESAPEAKE AND OHIO RAILWAY COMPANY

REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT

NEAR HINTON, W.VA., ON

FEBRUARY 17, 1945

SUMMARY

Railroad:	Chesapeake and Ohio	
Date:	February 17, 1945	
Location:	Hinton, W.Va.	
Kind of accident:	Rear-end collision	
Trains involved:	Freight	: Passenger
Train numbers:	Extra 2721 East	: 16
Engine numbers:	2721	: 305
Consist:	80 cars, caboose	: 6 cars
Estimated speed:	Standing	: 40 m. p. h.
Operation:	Signal indications	
Track:	Double; 1°45' curve; 0.03 percent ascending grade eastward	
Weather:	Raining	
Time:	8:35 a. m.	
Casualties:	1 killed; 3 injured	
Cause:	Failure properly to control speed of following train in accordance with signal indications	

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2873

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

THE CHESAPEAKE AND OHIO RAILWAY COMPANY

April 7, 1945.

Accident near Hinton, W.Va., on February 17, 1945, caused by failure properly to control the speed of the following train in accordance with signal indications.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION[1]

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On February 17, 1945, there was a rear-end collision between a freight train and a passenger train on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway near Hinton, W.Va., which resulted in the death of one employee and the injury of three passengers.

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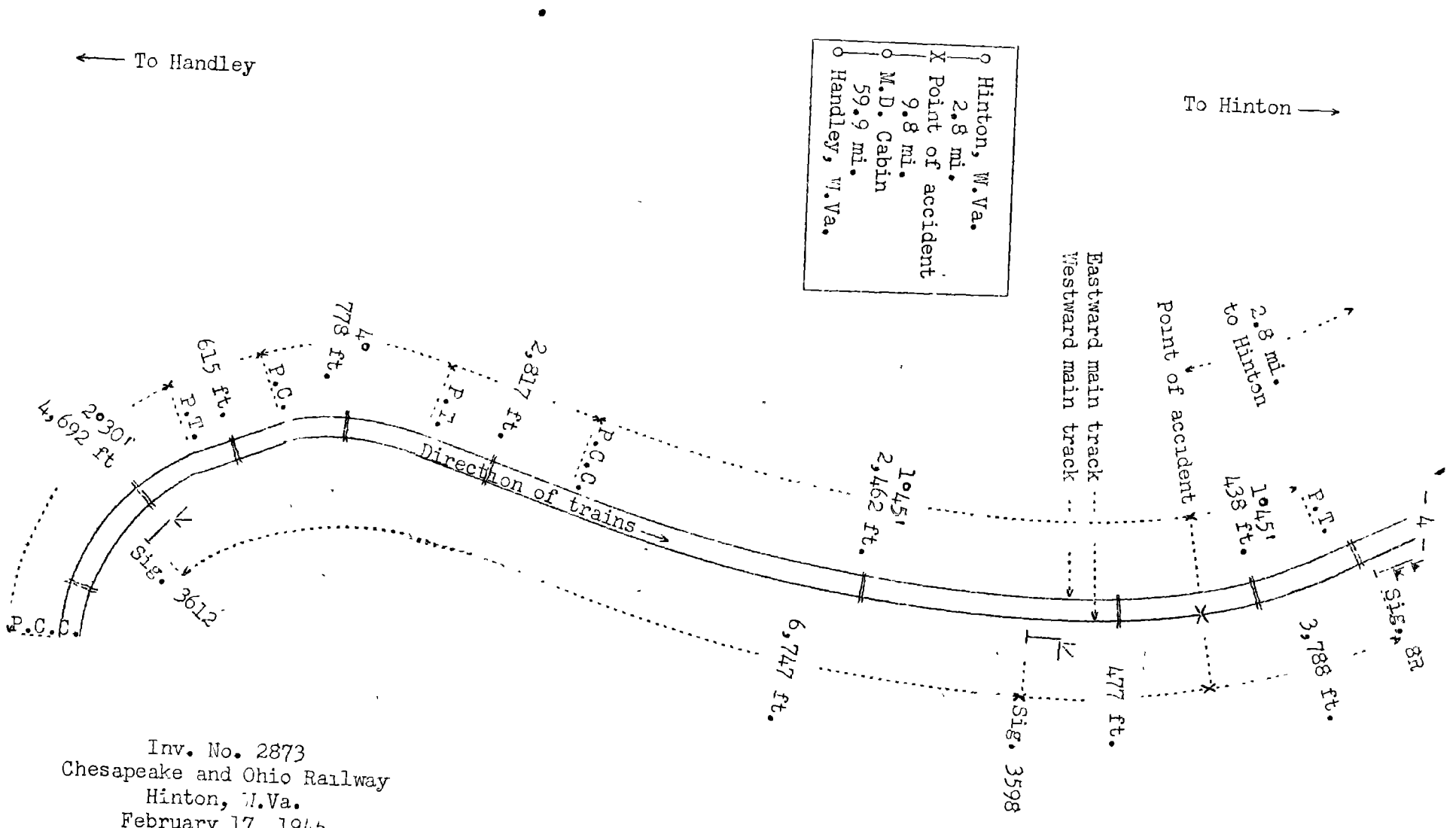
[1]Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Commerce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the Commission to Commissioner Patterson for consideration and disposition.



Inv. No. 2873
Chesapeake and Ohio Railway
Hinton, W.Va.
February 17, 1945

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Hinton Division designated as the New River Sub-division and extending eastward from Handley to Hinton, W.Va., 72.5 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this was a double-track line over which trains moving with the current of traffic were operated by signal indications. The accident occurred on the eastward main track at a point 2.8 miles west of the station at Hinton. From the west there were, in succession, a compound curve to the right 4,692 feet in length, the maximum curvature of which was 2°30', a tangent 615 feet, a 4° curve to the right 778 feet, a tangent 2,817 feet, and a compound curve to the left, the maximum curvature of which was 1°45', extending 2,462 feet to the point of accident and 438 feet eastward. The grade for eastbound trains was ascending, successively, 0.21 percent 5,400 feet, 0.07 percent 2,000 feet, 0.21 percent 1,800 feet and 0.03 percent 67 feet to the point of accident and a considerable distance eastward.

Automatic signals 3612 and 3598 and semi-automatic signal 8R, governing east-bound movements on the eastward main track, were, respectively, 7,234 feet and 477 feet west and 3,788 feet east of the point of accident. These signals were of the color-light type and were continuously lighted. The involved aspects and corresponding indications and names of these signals were as follows:

Signal	Aspect	Indication	Name
3612	Yellow, with number plate	Prepare to stop at next signal, train exceeding medium speed must at once reduce to that speed.	Approach
3598	Red, with number plate	Stop; then proceed in accordance with Rule 509-* * *-C	Stop and Proceed
8R	Red-over-red	Stop	Stop

Operating rules read in part as follows:

Definitions

* * *

Medium Speed.--One-half maximum authorized speed, but not to exceed 30 miles per hour.

* * *

Restricted Speed.--Proceed prepared to stop short of train, obstruction, or anything that may require the speed of a train to be reduced.

* * *

27. * * * the absence of a signal at a place where a signal is usually shown, must be regarded as the most restrictive indication that can be given by that signal, * * *

* * *

34. All members of train and engine crews must, when practicable, communicate to each other by its name the indication of all signals affecting the movement of their train.

35. The following signals will be used by flagmen:

* * *

Night signals--A red light,
A white light,
Torpedoes and
Fusees.

99 (a). When a train stops under circumstances in which it may be overtaken by another train, the flagman must go back immediately with flagman's signals a sufficient distance to insure full protection, placing two torpedoes, and when necessary, in addition, displaying lighted fusees. * * *

* * * Except in emergency * * * fusees and torpedoes will not be used by trainmen in automatic block signal territory. * * *

* * *

When day signals cannot be plainly seen, owing to weather or other conditions, night signals must also be used. * * *

509 (a). When a train is stopped by a Stop-signal it must stay until authorized to proceed;

* * *

C. When a train is stopped by a Stop and Proceed Signal, it may proceed at once at restricted speed.

517 (a). In fog or stormy weather when signals cannot be plainly seen, the signals must be approached cautiously so that enginemen and trainmen can see and correctly interpret the indications.

The maximum authorized speed for passenger trains was 60 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

Extra 2721 East, an east-bound freight train, consisting of engine 2721, 80 cars and a caboose, passed M.D. Cabin, 12.6 miles west of Hinton and the last open office, at 6:55 a. m., and stopped about 7:13 a. m. at signal 8R, which displayed stop. About 1 hour 22 minutes later the rear end of this train was struck by No. 16.

No. 16, an east-bound passenger train, consisted of engine 305, three baggage cars and three coaches, in the order named. All cars were of steel construction. This train departed from M.D. Cabin at 8:18 a. m., 33 minutes late, passed signal 3612, which displayed approach, passed signal 3598, which displayed stop-and-proceed, and while moving at an estimated speed of 40 miles per hour it struck Extra 2721 East about 477 feet east of signal 3598.

The caboose and the rear six cars of Extra 2721 East, and the engine of No. 16 were derailed and damaged.

It was raining at the time of the accident, which occurred about 8:35 a. m.

The conductor of Extra 2721 East was killed.

Discussion

About 1 hour 22 minutes after Extra 2721 East stopped, in compliance with the stop indication displayed by signal 8R, its rear end was struck by No. 16. Soon after Extra 2721 stopped, the flagman was informed by telephone that, because of a derailment east of the location of his train, Extra 2721 would not be permitted to proceed beyond signal 8R to enter yard tracks of Hinton Yard until about 8:30 a. m. Then the flagman proceeded westward a distance of about 1,000 feet to furnish flag protection. He first saw the approaching train about 2,250 feet distant, and he was giving stop signals with a lighted red lantern and a lighted white lantern when the engine of No. 16 passed him. Under the rules governing operation in automatic block-signal territory on this line, the display of lighted fusees or the placing of torpedoes on the rail was not required unless an emergency existed. The flagman

of Extra 2721 said that in his opinion no emergency existed that required the use of fusees or torpedoes. He thought the flag protection furnished his train was sufficient.

As No. 16 was approaching the point where the accident occurred the headlight was lighted, and the throttle was in drifting position. The brakes had been tested and had functioned properly en route. The engineer said that he was maintaining a lookout ahead but, because of trailing smoke, he did not see the indication displayed by signal 3612, and he told the fireman he had not seen this signal and asked him if he had seen its indication. The fireman said that he was in the coal compartment of the tender when the engine was in the vicinity of signal 3612, and he understood the engineer to say this signal displayed proceed, and he therefore called, "clear signal" to the engineer. Soon afterward the fireman returned to the left side of the engine cab. Because of trailing smoke, neither the engineer nor the fireman saw the indication displayed by signal 3598. When the engine was about 500 feet west of the point where the accident occurred the fireman saw the preceding train and called a warning. The engineer immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position, but the collision occurred before the train could be stopped. The enginemen were familiar with the location of the signals involved. They understood that, when signals cannot be plainly seen, the speed of the train must be controlled in such manner that they are able to see the indications. The speed of No. 16 was about 40 miles per hour throughout the territory where the enginemen said they were unable to see the indications displayed by the signals involved. In tests after the accident the signals functioned properly.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure properly to control the speed of the following train in accordance with signal indications.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this seventh day of April, 1945.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.

(SEAL)