

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2957
CHICAGO GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
NEAR CARROLL, IOWA, ON
DECEMBER 14, 1945

SUMMARY

Railroad: Chicago Great Western
Date: December 14, 1945
Location: Carroll, Iowa
Kind of accident: Head-end collision
Trains involved: Freight : Engine
Train numbers: 84 : Extra 737 West
Engine numbers: 757 : 737
Consist: 37 cars, caboose : Engine
Estimated speed: 40 m. p. h. : 30 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable and train orders
Track: Single; 1⁰ curve; 0.79 percent
descending grade eastward
Weather: Cloudy
Time: 5:25 p. m.
Casualties: 4 killed; 2 injured
Cause: Failure to obey meet order

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2957

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

CHICAGO GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY

February 3, 1946.

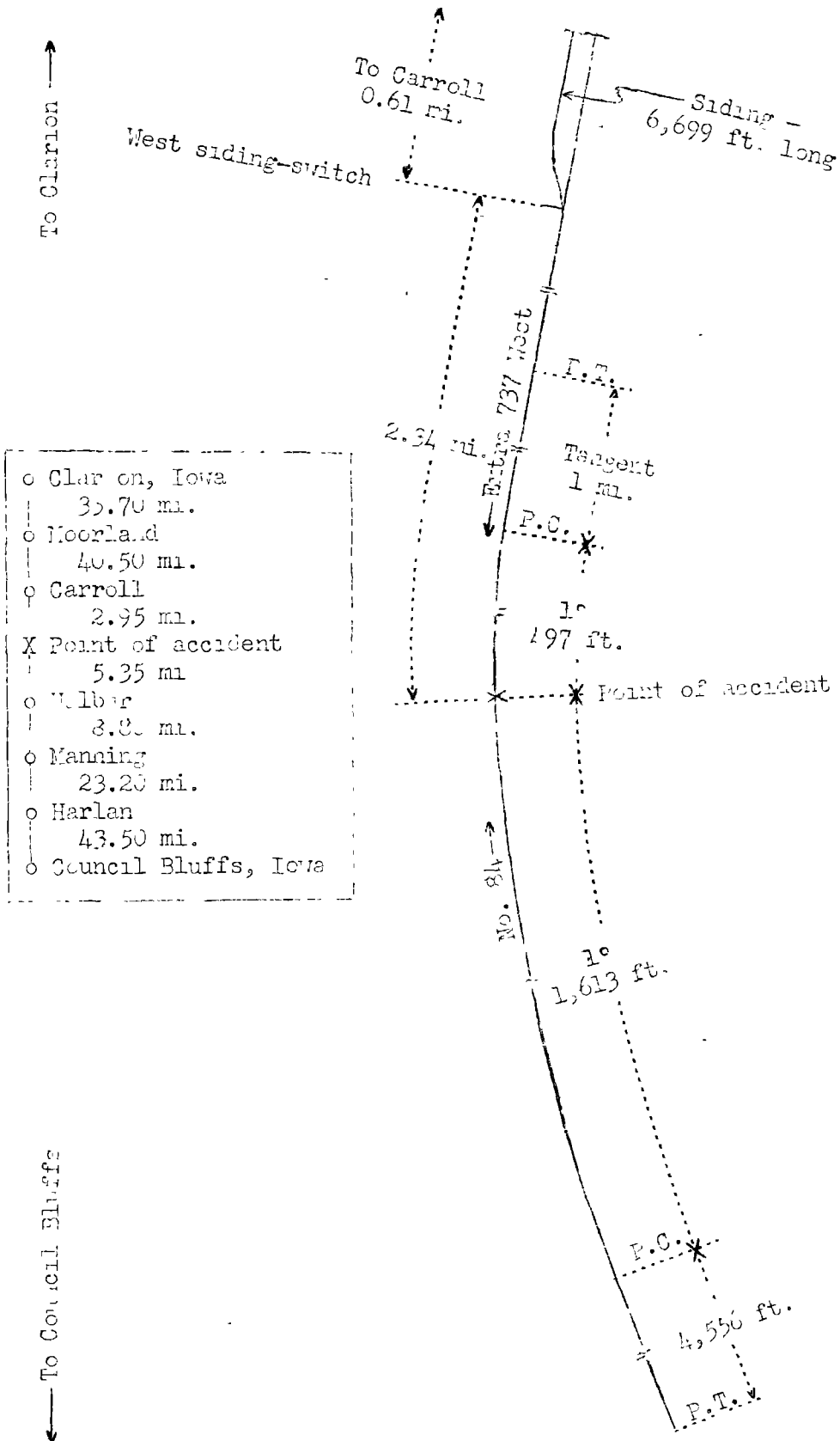
Accident near Carroll, Iowa, on December 14, 1945, caused
by failure to obey a meet order.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On December 14, 1945, there was a head-end collision between a freight train and an engine on the Chicago Great Western Railway near Carroll, Iowa, which resulted in the death of three train-service employees and one trespasser, and the injury of two train-service employees. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the Iowa State Commerce Commission.

¹Under 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.



Iav. No. 2957
Chicago Great Western Railway
Carroll, Iowa
December 14, 1945

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Minnesota Division extending between Council Bluffs and Clarion, Iowa, 160 miles, a single-track line over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. At Carroll, 83.8 miles east of Council Bluffs, a siding 6,699 feet in length parallels the main track on the north. The west switch of this siding is 3,222 feet west of the station. The accident occurred on the main track 2.34 miles west of the west siding-switch at Carroll. From the west there is a tangent 4,556 feet in length, which is followed by a 1° curve to the right 1,613 feet to the point of accident and 497 feet eastward. From the east there is a tangent about 1 mile in length, which is followed by the curve on which the accident occurred. The grade is 0.78 percent descending eastward.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

71. A train is superior to another train by right, class or direction.

Right is conferred by train order; class and direction by time-table.

Right is superior to class or direction.

* * *

75. Extra trains are inferior to regular trains.

90. * * *

Trains must stop clear of the switch used by opposing trains taking siding.

208. * * *

* * *

A train order must not be sent to a superior train at the meeting point if it can be avoided. When an order is so sent, the fact will be stated in the order and special precautions must be taken to insure safety. (See Rule 211 (a).)

* * *

211 (a). When a train order restricting the superiority of a train is issued for it at point where such superiority is restricted, the train must be brought to a stop before delivery of the order; * * *

220. Train orders once in effect continue so until fulfilled, superseded or annulled. * * *

FORMS OF TRAIN ORDERS.

A.

Fixing Meeting Points for Opposing Trains.

(1) * * *

No 15 Eng 509 meet Extra 850 east at B

* * *

Trains receiving these orders will run with respect to each other to the designated points and there meet in the manner prescribed by the rules.

C.

Giving Right Over an Opposing Train

* * *

(2) Extra 855 east has right over No 3 Motor 1009 F to A.

The regular train must not go beyond the point last named until the extra train has arrived, unless directed by train order to do so.

* * *

E.

Time orders.

* * *

(3) No 1 Eng 932 wait at H until nine fifty nine 9 59 am for No 2 Eng 928.

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 is 40 miles per hour and for light engines, 35 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

At Harlan, 40.3 miles west of Carroll, the crew of No. 84, an east-bound second-class freight train, received a clearance form, and copies of train orders No. 69 and No. 74 reading in part as follows:

69

* * *

No 84 eng 757 wait at Halbur
until five fifteen 515 PM and
Carroll six one 601 PM for Lite
extra 737 West

74

Lite extra 737 West has right
over No 84 eng 757 Moorland to
Halbur

Moorland and Halbur are, respectively, 40.5 miles east and 8.3 miles west of Carroll. At Manning, 17.1 miles west of Carroll, the crew received a clearance form, and copies of train order No. 86 reading as follows:

Lite Extra 737 West got this
order hold main track meet No
84 eng 757 at Carroll

No. 84, consisting of engine 757, 37 cars and a caboose, passed Manning at 4:49 p. m., 5 hours 4 minutes late, passed Halbur at 5:15 p. m., 5 hours 10 minutes late, and while moving at an estimated speed of 40 miles per hour it collided with Extra 737 West at a point 2.34 miles west of the west siding-switch at Carroll.

At Clarion, 76.2 miles east of Carroll, the crew of Extra 737 West, a west-bound engine, received a clearance form and a copy of train order No. 69. At Moorland, 40.5 miles east of Carroll, they received a clearance form and a copy of order No. 74, and at Carroll a clearance form and a copy of order No. 86. This train, consisting of engine 737, departed from Clarion at 3:10 p. m., departed from the station at Carroll about 5:10 p. m., passed the clearance point of the west siding-switch at Carroll, where it was required to wait unless No. 84 was into clear on the siding, and while moving at an estimated speed of 30 miles per hour it collided with No. 84.

The engines of both trains and the first 9 cars of No. 84 were derailed and damaged.

The weather was cloudy at the time of the accident, which occurred about 5:25 p. m.

The engineer and the fireman of Extra 737 West, and the front brakeman of No. 84 were killed. The engineer and the fireman of No. 84 were injured.

Discussion

The crews of both trains held copies of train order No. 74, which gave Extra 737 West right over No. 84, an east-bound second-class train, from Moorland to Halbur, and copies of train order No. 86, which established Carroll as the meeting point for these trains. Under the rules, Extra 737 West was required to stop clear of the west siding-switch at Carroll unless No. 84 was into clear on the siding. These trains collided at a point 2.34 miles west of the west siding-switch at Carroll.

As No. 84 was approaching the point where the accident occurred the speed was about 40 miles per hour. The engineers and the front brakeman were maintaining a lookout ahead. Because of embankments adjacent to the track and track curvature in this vicinity, the view of the track ahead was restricted to a distance of about 200 feet. The first the employees on the engine were aware of anything being wrong was when the engineer saw smoke at a distance of about 250 feet. Then the engineer moved the brake valve to emergency position, but the collision occurred before the train could be stopped.

The crew of Extra 737 West consisted of an engineer and a fireman. This train stopped in the vicinity of the train-order office at Carroll about 4:55 p. m., in compliance with a stop indication displayed by the train-order signal. Soon afterward, the fireman went to the train-order office and, about 5:03 p. m., the operator delivered to him a clearance form and copies of four train orders, of which one was train order No. 86. In addition, the operator delivered to the fireman a message, issued by the train dispatcher, which contained the information that No. 84 had passed Manning at 4:45 p. m., and permission for Extra 737 West to pull by the west siding-switch at Carroll and enter the siding to permit No. 84 to use the main track. The operator said the fireman read the orders and indicated that he understood them. Two brakemen, who were members of the crew of a freight train that was on the siding in the vicinity of the east switch, boarded engine 737 as it was moving westward from the station. One of the brakemen said he asked the engineer where Extra 737 West would meet No. 84. At that time

the engineer was reading the train orders and he stated to the brakeman that Extra 737 and No. 84 were to meet at Carroll. The brakemen alighted from engine 737 a considerable distance east of the west siding-switch, and they did not observe whether the engine stopped in the vicinity of the switch. The engineer and the fireman of Extra 737 West were killed in the accident. After the accident, copies of the train orders held by the crew of this train, including a copy of train order No. 86, were found in the wreckage.

Trains are operated in this territory by timetable and train orders only. This accident might have been prevented if an adequate block system had been in use, since Extra 737 West would not have been permitted to enter the block occupied by No. 84, an opposing train.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to obey a meet order.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this eighth day of February, 1946.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.