

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2993
COLUMBUS AND GREENVILLE RAILWAY COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
AT WINONA, MISS., ON
MAY 13, 1946

SUMMARY

Railroad: Columbus and Greenville
Date: May 13, 1946
Location: Winona, Miss.
Kind of accident: Derailment
Train involved: Mixed
Train number: 109
Engine number: 506
Consist: 16 cars
Estimated speed: 20 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable and train orders;
yard limits
Track: Single; 4°20' curve; 0.343 percent
ascending grade westward
Weather: Clear
Time: 5:50 p. m.
Casualties: 1 killed
Cause: Switch in yard limits having been
left open and train entering it
at excessive speed

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2993

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

COLUMBUS AND GREENVILLE RAILWAY COMPANY

July 24, 1946.

Accident at Winona, Miss., on May 13, 1946, caused by
switch in yard limits having been left open and
train entering it at excessive speed.

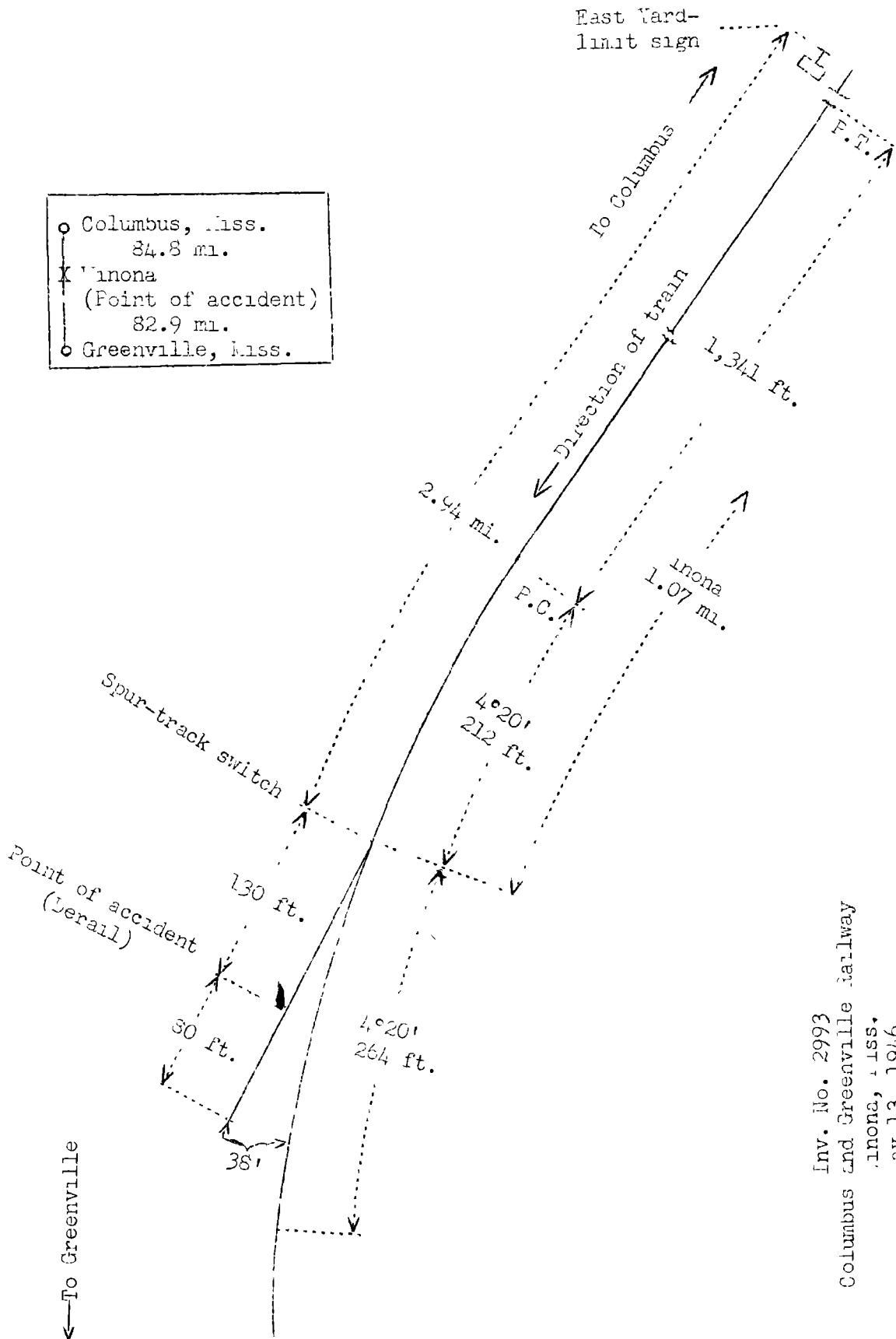
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On May 13, 1946, there was a derailment of a mixed
train on the Columbus and Greenville Railway at Winona,
Miss., which resulted in the death of one employee.

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

○ Columbus, Miss.
 84.8 mi.
 X Vinona
 (Point of accident)
 82.9 mi.
 ○ Greenville, Miss.



Inv. No. 2993
 Columbus and Greenville Railway
 Vinona, Miss.
 May 13, 1946

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

The Columbus and Greenville Railway is a single-track line extending between Columbus and Greenville, Miss., 167.7 miles, over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. Within yard limits at Winona, 84.8 miles west of Columbus, there is a spur track 210 feet in length on the north side of the main track. Entry to the spur track is made through a No. 10 turnout. The switch is facing-point for west-bound movements, and is 2.94 miles west of the east yard-limit sign, 1.07 miles west of the station and 0.54 mile east of the west yard-limit sign. A hand-operated block-type derail is located adjacent to the north rail of the spur track and 130 feet west of the switch. The normal position of the derail is in derailing position. The accident occurred on the spur track at the derail. From the east on the main track there is a tangent 1,341 feet in length, which is followed by a 4°20' curve to the left 212 feet to the spur-track switch. The grade is 0.843 percent ascending westward.

The spur track is practically tangent, and at the west end it is 38 feet horizontally distant from the main track. It is laid on a fill about 10 feet high, and at the west end there is a car-stop consisting of about 2 cubic yards of earth. The turnout consists of 80-pound switch points, frog and rails laid on 73 switch ties. It is fully tieplated, single-spiked, provided with rail anchors and 4-hole angle bars, and is ballasted with cinders to a depth of 6 inches. The angle of the switch is 1°40'17" and the angle of the frog is 5°43'29". When the switch is lined normally a green circular target 18 inches in diameter is displayed at right angles to the track. When the switch is lined for entry to the spur track a red arrow-shape target is displayed at right angles to the track.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

DEFINITIONS.

* * *

Fixed Signal--A signal of fixed location indicating a condition affecting the movement of a train.*

* * *

*Note--The definition of a "Fixed Signal" covers such signals as * * * yard limits, switch, * * * for displaying indications that govern the movement of a train.

93. Within yard limits the main track may be used without protection against second and inferior class trains. Second and inferior class and extra trains must move within yard limits prepared to stop within one-half the range of their vision, unless the main track is seen or known to be clear.

Description of Accident

No. 109, a west-bound second-class mixed train, consisted of engine 506, a 2-8-2 type, 13 freight cars, 1 baggage car, 1 mail-baggage car and 1 coach, in the order named. The passenger-equipment cars were of steel-underframe construction. This train departed from the station at Winona at 5:45 p. m., 4 hours 55 minutes late, and while moving within yard limits at an estimated speed of 20 miles per hour it entered the spur-track switch, struck the derail, which was in derailing position, and the engine, the tender and the first car were derailed.

The engine continued in line with the spur track, ran through the earthen car-stop, dropped off the end of the fill, stopped with the front end 264 feet west of the switch and leaned toward the north at an angle of 15 degrees. The tender, remaining coupled and practically in line with the engine, telescoped the left side of the cab. The front truck of the first car was torn loose and the body of the car was suspended upon the rear end-sill of the tender. The derailed equipment was badly damaged.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 5:50 p. m.

The engineer was killed.

Discussion

No. 109 was moving within yard limits at Winona at a speed of about 20 miles per hour when it entered the spur-track switch, which was lined for entry to the spur track, struck the derail, which was in derailing position, and the engine, the tender and the first car were derailed.

Immediately after the accident examination disclosed that the spur-track switch was lined and locked for entry to the spur track. The operating rod was bent downward about 3 inches below its normal alinement, the south switch-point was about 3/4-inch from the stock rail and the north switch-point was open about 4 inches. The south switch-point bore marks on the stock-rail side indicating that prior to the accident the switch had been lined for entry to the spur track and the switch had been trailed through by an east-bound movement. The section foreman in charge of the territory involved said that during the morning on the day of the accident his force was engaged in cleaning and oiling switches in this territory. About 9 a. m.

the foreman unlocked the spur-track switch. One member of his force operated the switch several times and another member lubricated the switch plates. After this work was completed the foreman instructed the member of his force who operated the switch to lock it in normal position. Soon afterward, the section force departed eastward on their track motor-car, and these employees thought the switch was in normal position at that time. No member of the section force was again in the vicinity of this switch until after the accident occurred. Between the time the switch was handled by the section force and the time the accident occurred, the only movement in that vicinity was an east-bound train which passed over the switch about 12:30 p. m. No member of the crew of that train observed the position of the switch.

As No. 109 was approaching the spur-track switch, the enginemen were in the cab of the engine and the members of the train crew were in the rear car. The fireman said that, soon after the train departed from the station at Winona and until the engine reached a point about 100 feet east of the spur-track switch, he was engaged in tending the fire. Then he looked ahead but, because the boiler of the engine obstructed his view, he was unable to see the spur-track switch. The first he knew of anything being wrong was when the engine entered the turnout. Then the engineer closed the throttle and placed the brake valve in emergency position, but the derailment occurred before the train could be stopped. The brakes of this train had functioned properly at all points where used on route. Because of the curve to the left the view of the spur-track switch from the right side of a west-bound engine was materially restricted. The engineer was killed in the accident. The members of the train crew were not aware of anything being wrong until the brakes were applied in emergency. Under the provisions of the yard-limit rule, No. 109 was required to be operated in such manner that it could be stopped short of a train, an obstruction or a switch not properly lined.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by a switch in yard limits having been left open and a train entering it at excessive speed.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-fourth day of July, 1946.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.