

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF SAFETY CONCERNING AN
ACCIDENT ON THE DELAWARE, LACKAWANNA & WESTERN RAILROAD
AT EDWARDSVILLE, PA., ON APRIL 13, 1933.

June 7, 1933.

To the Commission:

On April 13, 1933, an engine with a caboose making a back-up movement collided with a cut of cars on the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad at Edwarsville, Pa., resulting in the death of 1 employee and the injury of 1 employee.

Location and method of operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Scranton Division which extends between Scranton and Northumberland, Pa., a distance of 80.35 miles, in the vicinity of the point of accident this is a double-track line over which trains are operated by time table, train orders, and an automatic block-signal system. The yard limits of Kingston embrace the town of Edwarsville, and the accident occurred on the east-bound track at Edwarsville at a point about 500 feet west of the switch leading to the siding of the Atlantic Refining Company. Approaching the point of accident from the west, the track is tangent for a distance of approximately 484 feet, followed by a 3° curve to the left 653 feet in length, tangent track for a distance of 324 feet, a 3° curve to the right 763 feet in length, tangent track for a distance of 320 feet, and a 2° curve to the left 321 feet in length, the accident occurring on this latter curve at its western end. The grade is level.

The movements made at the time of and just prior to the occurrence of the accident were within automatic block territory, but between two successive signal locations, so that the signals were in no way involved. A cross-over connecting the two main tracks is located 2,304 feet west of the point of accident, and the yard-limit board is located 1,400 feet west of the cross-over.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred between 10:55 and 11 p.m.

Description

Switch engine 337 with 10 empty tank cars, in charge of Drill Foreman Russell, departed west-bound from the Kingston yard office about 10:20 p.m., in a back-up movement on the east-bound track,

REPORT OF THE STATIONER OF THE BUREAU OF RAILWAYS CONCERNING THE
ACQUISITION OF THE RAILROADS IN THE STATE OF TEXAS
OF 1911-1912

To Atlantic Refinery

References

On April 15, 1953, an engine was removed from the engine room of the ship and was found to be in good condition. The engine was found to be in good condition and was found to be in good condition.

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en route to the Atlantic Refining Company plant in order to leave the empty cars for loading and to move some loaded cars. Ten loaded cars were placed on the east-bound track just west of the clearance point of the switch; engine 337 then placed the empty cars on the refinery track and had returned to the main track preparatory to picking up the loaded cars when they were struck by the caboose of extra 2234.

West-bound extra 2234, in charge of Conductor Donnelly and Engineman Detrick, arrived at 9:45 p.m. and had instructions to yard their train in the Woodward colliery, located on the north side of the west-bound track at Edwardsville; the caboose was left on the west-bound track while this was being done. Engine 2234 then picked up the caboose, proceeded west of the cross-over connecting the main tracks, backed through the cross-over to the east-bound track, and was en route eastward to the Kingston yard office when the caboose collided with the cut of cars while traveling at a speed variously estimated to have been from 4 to 10 miles per hour.

None of the equipment was derailed, but the caboose was practically destroyed; the rear of the tender of engine 2234 was slightly damaged. The employee killed was one of the brakemen of extra 2234.

Summary of evidence

Drill Foreman Russell stated that when he placed the loaded cars west of the switch they were protected by a red lantern on the rear platform of the rear or west car. After finishing the work in the plant his engine returned to the main track and was about to be coupled to the loaded cars when the collision occurred. Foreman Russell was walking toward the rear end of the cars when he saw the approaching extra about 25 car-lengths distant and immediately gave a stop signal which in his opinion could have been seen by anyone on the leading end of the caboose. There were white lanterns on the platform, but he was unable to state whether or not the markers were lighted and at no time did he see any one on the caboose, nor did he see stop signals given by any one on the caboose. He estimated the speed of the train to have been 8 or 10 miles per hour and thought the tank cars were moved a distance of about 2 or 3 car lengths as a result of the impact.

Conductor Donnelly, of extra 2234, stated that after the cars in his train were left at the Woodward Colliery the engine was coupled to the caboose and he saw Brakeman McAndrew couple the air hose and open the angle cocks. The engine and caboose then proceeded through the cross-over, stopped for Brakeman McAndrew to board the caboose, and then backed a few car lengths to the point where Flagman Munley boarded the caboose, and continued at a speed of about 4 miles per hour until the occurrence of the accident. Conductor Donnelly stated that the flagman stayed

... of ... at ...
... outside ... and ... were inside,
... and the ... of anything ... when he heard the
... a warning, he ran toward the west door of the car
... but did not quite reach it before the collision occurred. It did
not occur to him to apply the brakes, although he stated that he
would not have had time even if he had thought about it. Conductor
... further stated that it was dark, but he thought he could
of have seen a red light at a distance of about 50 car lengths; he
also said that immediately the switch engine would be found
... on the ... track and that it was his own duty
to have been riding in the ... where he would supervise the
movement and apply the brakes when it became necessary to do so.
... stated that after applying the brakes on the
cars as they were dropped off at the ...
of collision he walked over to the ... track and boarded the
caboose when it came along, at a point 1,000 feet past the
point of accident. He set down his lantern on the platform, took
down the ... and placed them inside of the caboose, turned
around and picked up his lantern, and in looking ahead he saw a
red light about 500 feet distant. Flagman ... said he at once
gave the engineman a slow signal, but as he did not respond he
gave him a stop signal, and when the engineman still failed to
respond he opened the caboose door and called to the man inside;
he then stepped down on the step, gave two or three signals to
... and jumped off. He estimated the speed as having been 8 or
10 miles per hour.
... Engineer ... stated that when Flagman
... the ... the Flagman gave him a proceed signal.
He was backing up at a speed of 6 or 8 miles per hour and he was
looking back out of the ... but did not receive any signals
from the ... until he heard the flagman say out and then saw
his dark across the ... track with his white lantern. He
immediately applied the brakes and closed the throttle, and
... that they traveled a distance about equal to the length
of the ... and the caboose between the time the flagman called
out and the time of the collision. While the back-up movement was
being made ... was busy getting more coal and getting
... over the ... and was in the tender at
the time of the accident.

... stated that engine 2284,
... from ... to
... and with the engine coupled to a ... running back-
ward at a speed of 4 miles per hour on level track, the con-
ductor in ... applied in emergency would stop it within 20
... at a speed of 12 miles per hour, with the same condi-
... it would stop within a distance of about 75
... and ...

Conclusions

This accident was caused by the failure of Conductor Donnelly and Flagman Munley, of engine 2234, to maintain a proper lookout and see that the track was clear ahead.

General instructions contained in the time table provide that within yard limits, yard engines, second class, and extra trains will proceed under control expecting to find tracks occupied. Conductor Donnelly, instead of placing himself in the cupola of the caboose where he could supervise the movement and also be in a position to apply the brakes if necessary, which he said was his duty, remained in the lower part of the caboose and did not know there was anything wrong until a few seconds before the accident occurred.

Flagman Munley took down the markers and finally looked ahead and saw the red light on the standing cars when it was about 500 feet distant; he said he then gave a slow signal to the engineman, followed by several stop signals, but the engineman did not respond. If that was the case, he should have applied the brakes himself, for it was his duty to see the obstruction in time to take whatever steps might be necessary to prevent an accident. The flagman's statements, however, are not borne out by the statements of others; the engineman stated that he was looking back constantly during this back-up movement and at no time did he see any signals from the caboose, and Foreman Russell, in charge of the cut of cars, stated that he watched the approaching train for a distance of about 25 car lengths and saw no stop signals being given.

Respectfully submitted,

W. P. BORLAND,

Director.

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