

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2937  
THE DELAWARE, LACKAWANNA AND WESTERN  
RAILROAD COMPANY  
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT  
AT TAYLOR TANK, PA., ON  
SEPTEMBER 29, 1945

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SUMMARY

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Railroad: Delaware, Lackawanna and Western  
Date: September 29, 1945  
Location: Taylor Tank, Pa.  
Kind of accident: Rear-end collision  
Trains involved: Freight : Yard engine with cars  
Train number: Extra 1230 North :  
Engine numbers: 1230 : 245  
Consist: Engine 566 in : 27 cars, cabooses  
tow, 32 cars,  
cabooses  
Estimated speed: Standing : 10 m. p. h.  
Operation: Operating rules and special instructions; yard limits  
Track: Double; 11°10' curve; 0.914 percent ascending grade northward  
Weather: Clear  
Time: 1:45 a. m.  
Casualties: 1 killed; 1 injured  
Cause: Failure to provide flag protection for preceding train and failure properly to control speed of following yard engine moving within yard limits

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2937

IN THE MATTER OF MAKING ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORTS  
UNDER THE ACCIDENT REPORTS ACT OF MAY 3, 1910.

THE DELAWARE, LACKAWANNA AND WESTERN RAILROAD COMPANY

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November 14, 1945.

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Accident at Taylor Tank, Pa., on September 29, 1945, caused by failure to provide flag protection for the preceding train and by failure properly to control the speed of the following yard engine moving within yard limits.

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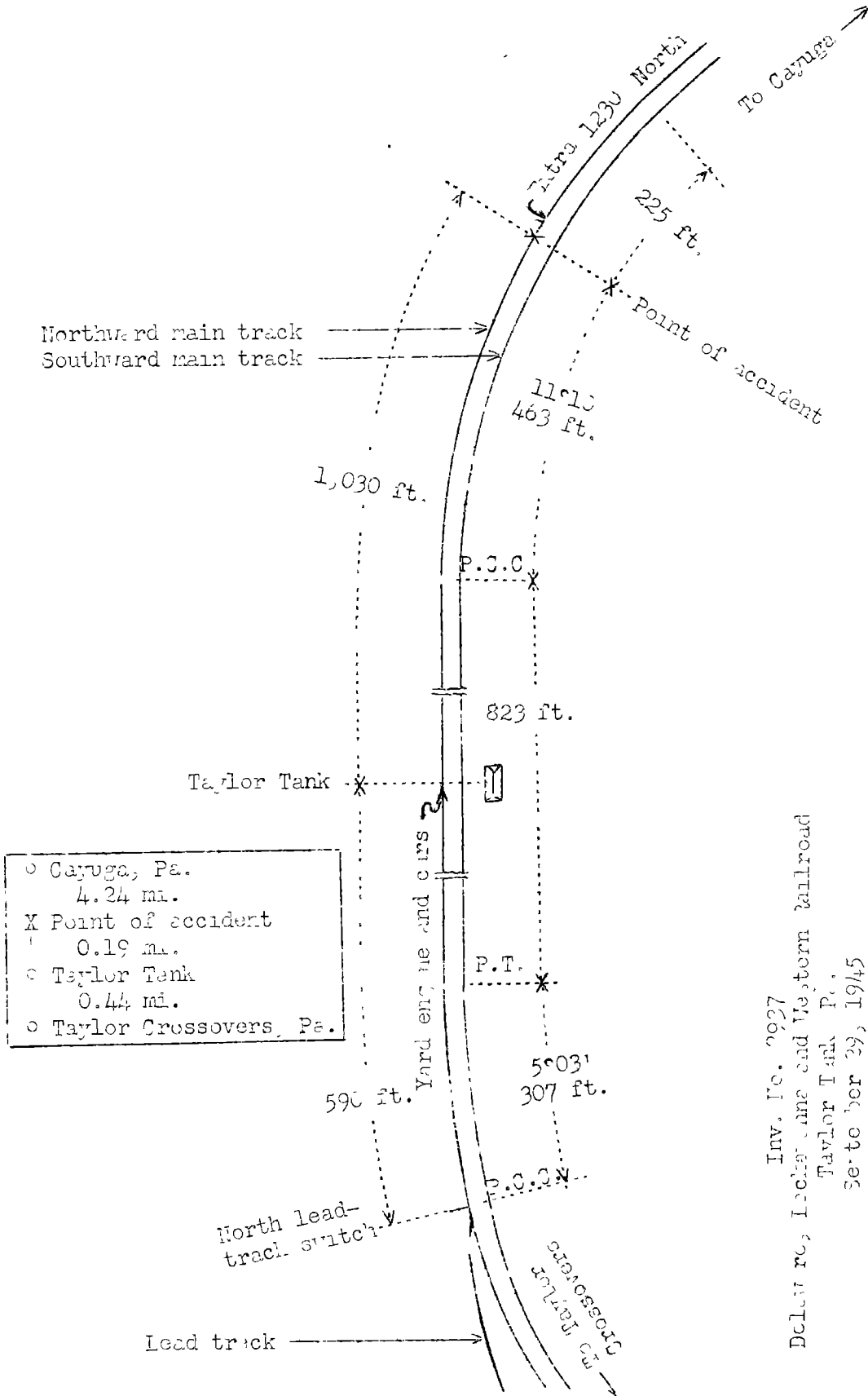
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION<sup>1</sup>

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On September 29, 1945, there was a rear-end collision between a freight train and a cut of cars being pushed by a yard engine on the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad at Taylor Tank, near Scranton, Pa., which resulted in the death of one employee, and the injury of one employee.

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<sup>1</sup>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.



Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Keyser Valley Branch which extends between Taylor Crossovers and Cayuga, Pa., 4.87 miles, a double-track line over which movements with the current of traffic are authorized in accordance with operating rules and time-table special instructions. There are no time-table schedules in effect, and there is no block system in use. The current of traffic is to the left. The accident occurred within yard limits on the northward main track 0.63 mile north of Taylor Crossovers, at a point 1,030 feet north of the station at Taylor Tank. From the south there are, in succession, a compound curve to the right 307 feet in length, the maximum curvature of which is  $5^{\circ}03'$ , a tangent 823 feet and a compound curve to the right, the maximum curvature of which is  $11^{\circ}10'$ , extending 463 feet to the point of accident and 225 feet northward. The grade is 0.914 percent ascending northward.

The north switch of a lead track about 1,000 feet long, which connects the northward main track and the south ends of the tracks of a freight classification yard, located to the west of the main tracks, is 590 feet south of the station at Taylor Tank.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

DEFINITIONS

\* \* \*

Restricted Speed--Prepared to stop short of train, obstruction, or anything that may require train to stop. \* \* \*

\* \* \*

24. When cars are pushed by an engine except when shifting or making up trains in yards, a white light must be displayed on the front of the leading car by night.

93b. Within yard limits, yard engines and extra trains will proceed at restricted speed expecting to find the tracks occupied.

\* \* \*

99. 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 fuses. When recalled and safety to the train will permit, he may return.

When the conditions require, he will leave the torpedoes and a lighted fusee.

\* \* \*

103. When cars are pushed by an engine, except when snifting or making up trains in yards, a trainman must take a conspicuous position on the front of the leading car \* \* \*. When signals from the trainmen cannot be seen from the engine, the movement must be stopped until the way is known to be clear.

Note--The exception covers the making and breaking up of trains only, and not extended movements within yards.

Time-table special instructions provide that flag protection in accordance with Rule 99 is required for all trains in the territory involved.

#### Description of Accident

Extra 1230 North, a north-bound freight train, consisting of engine 1230, engine 566 in tow, 32 cars and a caboose, in the order named, was stalled on the ascending grade on the northward main track about 1:30 a. m., with the rear end 1,030 feet north of the station at Taylor Tank. About 15 minutes later the rear end was struck by a cut of cars which was being pushed by yard engine 245.

Yard engine 245, headed northward, was pushing a cut of 27 loaded coal cars and pulling a caboose. This movement entered the northward main track at the north lead-track switch and was moving at an estimated speed of 10 miles per hour when it struck Extra 1230 North.

The caboose, the rear car and the rear truck of the second rear car of Extra 1230, and the most northerly car being pushed by yard engine 245 were derailed. The caboose of Extra 1230 was demolished.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 1:45 a. m.

The flagman of Extra 1230 was killed, and the swing brakeman was injured.

The underframe of the caboose of Extra 1230 was of steel and the superstructure was of wood.

#### Discussion

The rules of this carrier governing operation within yard limits provide that all movements must be operated prepared to stop short of a train or an obstruction. Rear-end protection against following movements is required. When cars are being pushed by an engine, a trainman must take a conspicuous position on the forward car and, if signals from the trainman cannot be seen by the enginemen, movement must be stopped immediately. All surviving employees concerned so understood.

Extra 1230 North stalled on the ascending grade immediately north of Taylor Tank and stopped about 1:30 a. m., with the rear end standing 1,620 feet north of the north lead-track switch. About 15 minutes later, after yard engine 245, pushing 27 cars and pulling a caboose, had entered the northward main track at the north lead-track switch, this movement struck Extra 1230 North.

Soon after Extra 1230 North stopped, the conductor proceeded toward the front of the train to ascertain the cause of the delay. The conductor and the front brakeman were in the vicinity of the engine when the collision occurred. The conductor said that when his train stopped the marker lamps were lighted and displayed red to the rear. The flagman and the swing brakeman were in the caboose. The swing brakeman said he understood that flag protection was required against following movements in this territory, but neither he nor the flagman took any action to provide such protection. The swing brakeman jumped from the caboose just before the collision occurred. The flagman was killed.

Immediately prior to the accident, yard engine 245 had assembled a cut of 27 cars ahead of the engine, and a caboose was coupled to the rear of the engine. It was intended for this movement to proceed northward on the northward main track a distance sufficient for the rear end to clear the north lead-track switch, then proceed southward on the northward main track. When the movement was started one brakeman was on the front end of the forward car, the other brakeman was on the seventh car ahead of the engine and the conductor was in the vicinity of the north lead-track switch. The conductor gave

a proceed signal, which was relayed to the engineer by the brakemen. When the movement entered the northward main track both brakemen alighted in the vicinity of the north lead-track switch. Soon afterward, the engineer closed the throttle and was preparing to stop the movement when the rear end cleared the switch. The engine was on the lead track about 200 feet south of the north switch when the collision occurred. If a trainman had remained on the forward car of this movement, as required by the rules, it would have been possible for him to see the preceding train in time to give proper signals for the engineer to stop the movement.

The accident occurred within yard limits, and, under the rules, the following movement was required to be operated in such manner that it could be stopped short of a train or an obstruction.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to provide flag protection for the preceding train and by failure properly to control the speed of the following yard engine moving within yard limits.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this fourteenth day of November, 1945.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,  
Secretary.