

## INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF SAFETY CONCERNING AN  
ACCIDENT ON THE DENVER AND SALT LAKE RAILWAY AT UTAH  
JUNCTION, COLO., ON SEPTEMBER 18, 1933.

January 8, 1934.

To the Commission:

On September 18, 1933, there was a head-end collision between a switch engine and a passenger train on the Denver and Salt Lake Railway at Utah Junction, Colo., which resulted in the injury of 2 passengers, 5 employees, and 3 persons carried under contract.

Location and method of operation

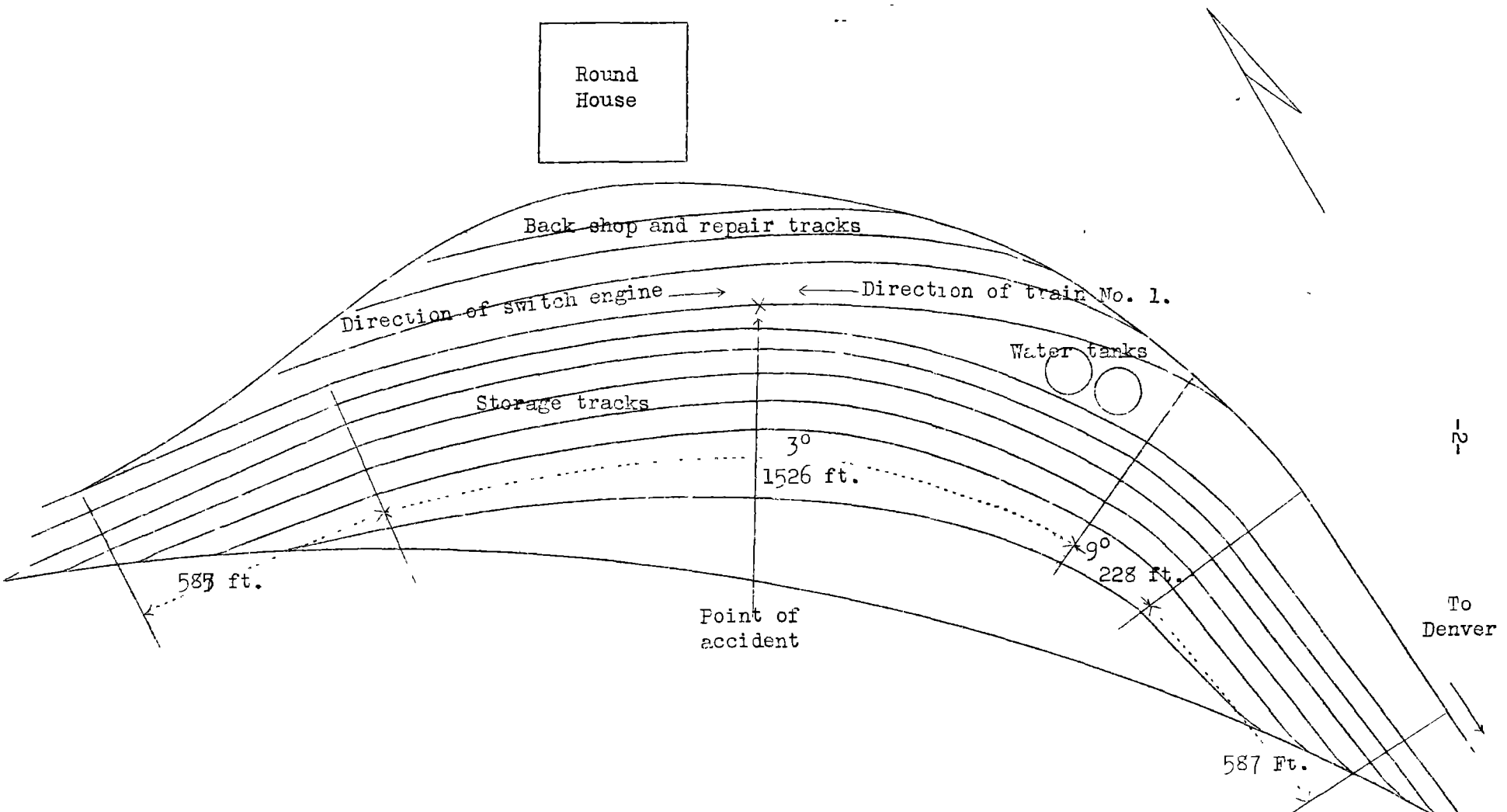
This accident occurred on Sub-division 1, which extends between Denver and Tabernash, Colo., a distance of 65.98 miles, and is a single-track line over which trains are operated by time table and train orders, with a block rule contained in the time table special instructions which reads as follows:

All trains and yard engines operating between Denver and Utah Junction will move under absolute block authority, secured from the train dispatcher, and the block must be cleared promptly after movement has been completed.

This accident occurred on the main track at about the center of the yard at Utah Junction. Approaching the point of accident from the east, there is a 2° curve to the left 1,466 feet in length, followed by tangent track for a distance of 587 feet and then a compound curve to the left consisting of a curvature of 9° for a distance of 228 feet and 3° for a distance of 1,526 feet, the accident occurring on this compound curve at a point 775 feet from its western end; approaching from the west, the track was tangent for a distance of 585 feet, followed by the curve on which the accident occurred.

Back shop and car repair tracks are located on the north side of the main track, while on the south side are located storage tracks, and at the time of the accident a freight train composed entirely of high cars was standing on track 1, which parallels the main track on the south, and limited the view to approximately 350 feet.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 8:54 a.m.



-2-

Inv. No. 1856  
 Denver & Salt Lake Railway  
 Utah Junction, Colo.  
 Sept. 13, 1933

### Description

West-bound passenger train no. 1 consisted of 1 mail and baggage car, 1 baggage car, 1 coach, and 1 parlor cafe car, in the order named, hauled by engine 300, and was in charge of Conductor Reddin and Engineman Anthony. At Denver the crew received block order no. 31, giving them the right to proceed to Utah Junction. This train departed from Denver, 3.8 miles from Utah Junction, at 8:40 a.m., on time, and collided with switch engine 401 while passing through the yard at Utah Junction at a speed estimated to have been 8 or 10 miles per hour.

East-bound switch engine 401, in charge of Engine Foreman Martin and Engineman White, was proceeding on the main track from the west end to the east end of the yard when it collided with train no. 1 while moving at a speed variously estimated to have been between 4 and 15 miles per hour.

Both engines were badly damaged and all the cars in the passenger train sustained slight damage, but none of the equipment was derailed except one pair of wheels of the passenger engine. Among the employees injured were the fireman, conductor, and brakeman of the passenger train and the engineman of the switch engine.

### Summary of evidence

Engineman Anthony, of train no. 1, stated that before leaving Denver he received a train order directing him to meet extra 201 at Utah Junction, and also block order giving him the right to use the block between Denver and the west switch at Utah Junction. After passing the Colorado and Southern crossing, located about 1 mile east of the point of accident, he sounded the meeting-point signal and next sounded the station whistle, and on proceeding into the yard the fireman stated that extra 201 was there in the clear. Engineman Anthony stated that he had snut off the engine and was drifting at a speed of about 15 miles per hour, and on passing the water tanks, about 550 feet east of the point of accident, he sounded a warning whistle signal, and after proceeding a short distance the fireman called to him to stop. He immediately applied the air brakes in emergency, and applied the sanders, and on leaning out of the window he was able to see engine 401 a few car lengths distant; the brakes took hold immediately and the speed was reduced to 8 or 10 miles per hour at the time of the accident. Engineman Anthony further stated that the air brakes had been tested before leaving Denver, a running test was made on leaving that point, and when several stops were made en route they functioned properly. On account of injuries sustained in the accident, it was not possible to obtain any statement from the fireman of train no. 1.

Conductor Reddin, of train no. 1, estimated the speed to have been 18 or 20 miles per hour on passing the scale house at the east end of the yard and did not remember whether the speed had been reduced prior to the collision; he did not feel the air brakes apply just before the accident, stating that he did not think the engineman had time to apply them.

Engine Foreman Martin, of the switch engine, stated that when he took charge of the engine it was standing on the round-house lead just clear of the main track. He had received instructions from the yardmaster to go to the east end of the yard to the U.P. transfer and had informed the switchmen to that effect, but he could not state positively whether he told the engineman. He also was informed at the yard office that an east-bound extra freight train, which was approaching at that time, was to enter track 1; after that train had entered track 1 his own engine proceeded out on the main track, with he and Switchman Goggins on the right front footboard while Switchman Rhodes was on the left front footboard. His engine proceeded a distance of about 800 feet and was traveling at a speed of 10 or 12 miles per hour when he saw the approaching train about eight car lengths distant; he immediately gave a stop signal to his engineman and jumped off, and he thought his engine ran about four or five car lengths before the collision occurred, estimating its speed at that time to have been about 3 or 4 miles per hour. Engine Foreman Martin stated that he had entirely overlooked train no. 1, which was the only train shown in the time table on this part of the road until the arrival of train no. 2 late in the afternoon; nothing had been said about train no. 1 and on being questioned as to the time it was due at Utah Junction he fixed the time at 8:48 a.m., although he said he would have to look at the time table to make sure; as a matter of fact, train no. 1 was due at 8:54 a.m.

Engineman White, of the switch engine, stated that on receiving a signal from Switchman Goggins he backed the engine out onto the main track at 8:51 a.m., without knowing where they were going, and then received a proceed signal from the foreman. The passenger train was about three car lengths distant when he first saw it, and about the same time the foreman gave him a stop signal. He was operating the engine at a speed of 8 or 10 miles per hour, and immediately applied the independent brake in emergency, reversed the engine, and opened the sanders, and he said he thought the speed was reduced to about 4 or 5 miles per hour at the time of the accident, the engine traveling a distance of about one car length after he applied the brake. Engineman White stated that he did not have a time table in his possession on the day of the accident; he had not carried it for the last 4 or 5 days and did not remember when he last had consulted it. He also stated that he works entirely under the foreman's instructions, stating that the foreman has full authority over his engine in the yard, that he leaves the movement to be made entirely to the foreman and proceeds on his

signals regardless of rules or regulations, and assumes no responsibility to ascertain whether or not the track is clear; in road service he would not take the conductor's signals for movements over the main track unless he had authority under the operating rules, and he also considered that in road service the engineman is equally responsible with the conductor for the safety of their train. Master Mechanic Peterson, however, stated that after the accident when he asked Engineman White if he had forgotten about train no. 1 the engineman replied that he had, but at the time of the investigation Engineman White stated that he did not remember making that statement. Engineman White further stated he was thoroughly familiar with all the usual yard movements and operations and had had more than 4 years' experience in handling yard engines in the Denver and Utah Junction Yards.

Fireman Eaglen, of the switch engine, stated that just before the engineman moved the engine out onto the main track the engineman asked him for the time and he replied that it was 8:50 a.m.; he knew that train no. 1 was due at Utah Junction at 8:54 a.m. and had this in mind when they started, but he made no inquiries as he presumed that the others must have some information regarding that train, and he said nothing to the engineman about it.

Switchman Rhodes, of the switch engine, stated that he had been informed by the foreman as to the movement to be made by their engine, but made no inquiry as to train no. 1, stating that he had overlooked it. He also stated that he usually carries a time table with him, but on the day of the accident he did not have it.

Switchman Goggins, of the switch engine, was riding on the front footboard as his engine proceeded eastward, moving at a speed he estimated to have been between 10 and 15 miles per hour, and while he felt the air brakes apply just as he jumped off the engine, he did not think that the speed was materially reduced at the time of the accident. Switchman Goggins stated that the foreman appeared to be in great haste to leave the west end of the yard, and it was his opinion that the foreman wanted to reach the east end before the engine of the freight train cut off and started back down the main track to the west end of the yard, as that engine would have preference over his own engine. He did not think of train no. 1 himself, and said that they work entirely under the foreman's orders, although it was the responsibility of the entire crew to know where train no. 1 was at the time they were using the main track. Switchman Goggins stated that he had not been in the employ of this company for the past year until about 12 days prior to the occurrence of the accident, at which time he was employed as a switchman, and he had not obtained a time table. He had been in the employ of this railroad on this district and at the Utah Junction yard in the past for a period of

about 11 years, and had last been examined on the operating rules about 10 or 11 years previously, at which time he was employed as a fireman. Switchman Goggins further stated that the method of procedure on the day of the accident was not the usual practice; he had worked with two other foremen since coming back to work and they had obtained a line-up of trains and informed him relative thereto.

After the investigation General Superintendent Johnson stated that he had received a letter from Yardmaster Fenn, dated September 25, in which the yardmaster said he examined Switchman Goggins on the book of rules on September 2, 1933.

Car Inspector Murphy stated that he made the air-brake test on train no. 1 before it left Denver and that he rode the train to Utah Junction. The brakes functioned properly en route and he thought they were applied in emergency about one car length before the collision occurred.

#### Conclusions

This accident was caused by the fact that the crew of switch engine 401 overlooked the scheduled time of a first-class passenger train.

The rules provide that yard engines must move at restricted speed within yard limits and must be clear of the main track not less than 5 minutes before the time of any first-class train.

The evidence indicates that some of the members of the crew of the yard engine, among them the engineman, did not have a time table with them for ready reference, and they seemed to be uncertain as to the time train no. 1 was due at Utah Junction, although it was the only first-class train which they had to clear. Engineman Foreman Martin and the two switchmen admitted that they completely overlooked it, the fireman thought some of the others might have some information concerning the train, and Engineman White claimed that he operated entirely under the foreman's instructions, taking no responsibility for the movement of his train; nothing was developed to support Engineman White's contention and under the rules he is equally responsible with the conductor for the safe movement of his engine.

The evidence indicates that the employees were lax in properly observing and obeying the operating rules, in being in possession of time tables, and in their general regard for safety in operation. The existence of such a condition seldom is anything but a reflection of inadequate instruction and supervision upon the part of responsible officers of the operating department, and it is recommended that prompt and energetic measures be taken at once to remedy this situation.

Respectfully submitted,  
W. P. BORLANT,  
Director.