

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2893

ERIE RAILROAD COMPANY

REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT

AT GOSHEN, N. Y., ON

JUNE 1, 1945

SUMMARY

Railroad: Erie
Date: June 1, 1945
Location: Goshen, N. Y.
Kind of accident: Side collision
Train involved: Passenger : Cut of freight cars
Train number: 8 :
Engine number: 2943 :
Consist: 16 cars : 5 cars
Speed: 45 m. p. h. : Standing
Operation: Signal indications
Track: Double; tangent; 0.25 percent
ascending grade eastward
Weather: Misting
Time: 10:35 p. m.
Casualties: 1 killed; 8 injured
Cause: Derailed freight car fouling
adjacent main track immediately
in front of an approaching train

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2893

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

ERIE RAILROAD COMPANY

July 9, 1945.

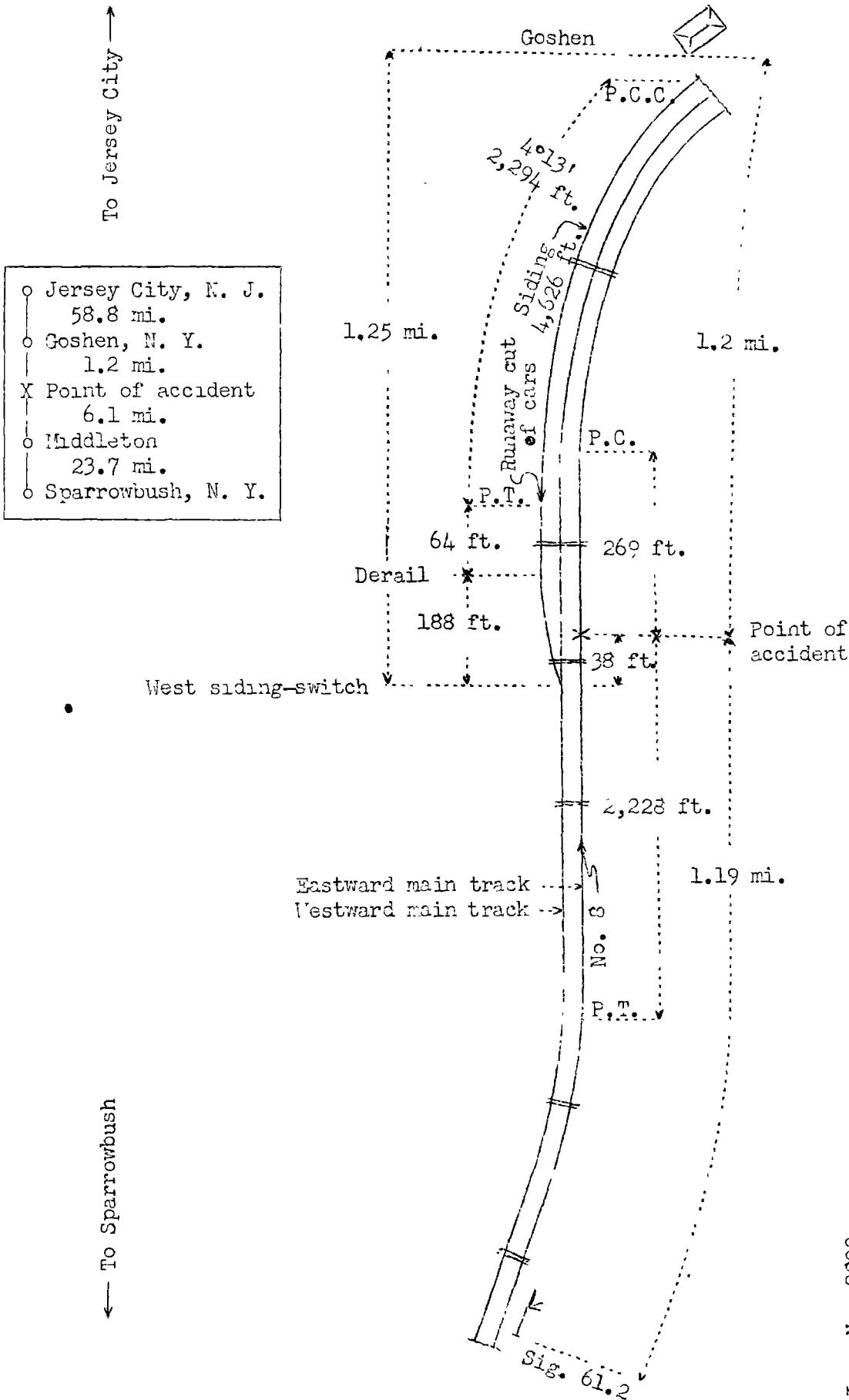
Accident near Gosnen, N. Y., on June 1, 1945, caused by
a derailed freight car fouling an adjacent main
track immediately in front of an approaching train.

1
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On June 1, 1945, there was a side collision between a passenger train and a derailed freight car on the Erie Railroad near Goshen, N. Y., which resulted in the death of one employee, and the injury of seven passengers and one employee. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the New York Public Service Commission.

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.



- o Jersey City, N. J.
58.8 mi.
- o Goshen, N. Y.
1.2 mi.
- X Point of accident
6.1 mi.
- o Middleton
23.7 mi.
- o Sparrowbush, N. Y.

Inv. No. 2893
 Erie Railroad
 Goshen, N. Y.
 June 1, 1945

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the New York Division extending eastward from Sparrowbush, N. Y., to Jersey City, N. J., 89.8 miles, a double-track line over which trains moving with the current of traffic are operated by signal indications. The accident occurred on the eastward main track 29.8 miles east of Sparrowbush, at a point 1.2 miles west of the station at Goshen. Within yard limits a siding 4,626 feet long parallels the main tracks on the north. The west switch of this siding connects with the westward main track at a point 38 feet west of the point of accident. From the west on the eastward main track there is a tangent 2,228 feet to the point of collision and 269 feet beyond. The grade on the eastward main track is 0.25 percent ascending eastward. From the east on the siding there is a compound curve to the left 2,294 feet long, having a maximum curvature of $4^{\circ}13'$, which is followed by a tangent 64 feet to the clearance point, then there is a turnout to the left 188 feet to the switch of the westward main track. The grade on the siding varies between 0.61 and 1.18 percent descending westward, and is 0.99 percent at the fouling point.

A hand-operated block-type sliding derail is located on the north rail of the siding at a point 188 feet east of the west switch. The normal position of this derail is for derailing. The derail is provided with a low stand, and is operated by a two-position lever mechanism, which is mounted in a housing for the locking of the derail lever in fixed positions.

Automatic signal 61.2, governing east-bound movements on the eastward main track, is located 1.19 miles west of the point of accident.

Description of Accident

Extra 1739 West had assembled a cut of five loaded cars, and about 10:15 p. m. placed them on the east end of the siding. Soon afterward these cars ran westward about 4,400 feet on the descending grade and became derailed at the west end of the siding. The second car, a hopper car loaded with coal, turned over and stopped on its side between the main tracks, where it fouled the eastward main track. About 10:35 p. m. this car was struck by No. 8.

No. 8, an east-bound first-class passenger train, consisted of engine 2943, a 4-6-2 type, five milk cars, one baggage-express car, two coaches, one dining car, six milk cars and one coach, in the order named. The fifth to ninth cars, inclusive, and the eleventh, twelfth and sixteenth cars

were of steel-underframe construction, and the remainder were of all-steel construction. This train departed from Middleton, 7.3 miles west of Goshen and the last open office, at 10:25 p. m., 3 minutes late, passed signal 61.2, which displayed proceed, and while moving at an estimated speed of 45 miles per hour it collided with the car that fouled the eastward main track. The engine-truck wheels were derailed to the right 5 feet east of the point of collision and continued in line with the track 648 feet, then the south rail overturned and the general derailment occurred. The engine and tender, remaining coupled, stopped down a 12-foot embankment on their right sides, south of the main tracks and practically parallel to them, with the front end of the engine 1,304 feet east of the point of collision. The first to tenth cars, inclusive, and the front truck of the eleventh car were derailed. The first five cars stopped at various angles to the tracks and at the rear of the engine. The sixth to eleventh cars remained in line with the eastward main track. The engine and the first six cars were badly damaged. The derailed hopper car was demolished by the impact of the collision.

The weather was misty at the time of the accident, which occurred about 10:35 p. m.

The engineer of No. 8 was killed, and the fireman was injured.

Discussion

About 10:15 p. m. Extra 1739 West, which at that time consisted of a caboose and engine 1739, in the order named, assembled a cut of five loaded cars ahead of the caboose, then shoved them into clear on the east end of the siding. Before this latter movement was made, the flagman applied hand brakes on the fourth and fifth cars. The front brakeman gave a lantern signal for the engine to close the slack against the first car to enable him to uncouple the caboose from the first car. Then the engine, remaining coupled to the caboose, proceeded eastward to other tracks in that vicinity and performed other switching service. About 10:30 p. m., when engine 1739, shoving a cut of six cars, returned to the east end of the siding to pick up the cut of five cars, the crew discovered that the cut of five cars had run away on the descending grade. Engine 1739, shoving the cut of six cars, proceeded westward to overtake the cut of five cars before it reached the derail at the west end of the siding. Because of darkness, this movement was made slowly while the crew maintained a lookout. However, before the movement had reached the west end of the siding, the five cars had become derailed. The second car fouled the eastward main track and was struck by No. 8 before the crew of Extra 1739 could take action to provide protection.

As No. 8 was approaching the point where the accident occurred, the speed was about 45 miles per hour, the throttle was slightly open, the headlight was lighted and the engine men were maintaining a lookout ahead. Signal 61.2 displayed proceed for this train. The fireman first observed by the reflection of the headlight the cut of cars on the siding from a distance of 2,000 feet. At that time he did not observe whether they were moving, and his attention was momentarily distracted by ascertaining the level of water in the boiler. A moment afterward he again looked ahead and saw at a distance of about 200 feet that a car was fouling the eastward main track. He immediately warned the engineer, who placed the brake valve in emergency position and closed the throttle, but the collision occurred before the speed was reduced. The brakes of this train had been tested and functioned properly en route.

The investigation disclosed that the first car of the cut had derailed to the north in the manner for which the derail was designed, then moved diagonally northward and dropped off the ties within a distance of 27 feet. This car continued on the roadbed about 150 feet and stopped down the embankment to the north. However, when the wheels of this car struck the derail, the derail housing was broken and the derail block was pulled far enough to drop off the rail. The second car was not derailed at the derail, but followed the turnout some distance and was deflected toward the main tracks when the first car was sliding down the embankment to the north. The second car overturned to the south and stopped between the eastward and the westward main tracks. The top of the car faced southward and its lading of coal was dumped on the eastward main track. Apparently the collision between the engine and the car, together with coal piled on the eastward main track, caused the engine truck to be derailed. The engine-truck wheels followed the line of the track about 650 feet, then the south rail was overturned outward and the general derailment occurred.

The hand brakes of the two most westerly cars of the cut of five cars were applied manually without the aid of a brake club. No other brake was applied. The first car at the west end was equipped with a hand brake having gears adjacent to the brake wheel, and the second car was equipped with a vertical-shaft type hand brake. Members of the crew of this train said that the application of these two brakes provided sufficient resistance so that it was necessary to work steam on the engine while the cut was being shoved into the east end of the siding. At that point the grade is 0.61 percent descending westward. According to the front brakeman, when he uncoupled the caboose from the cut of cars there was no indication that these cars were in motion. The flagman and the front brakeman considered the application of two hand brakes

to be sufficient to hold five cars on the grade. During this movement the conductor was checking cars on other tracks and was not aware of anything being wrong until after the accident occurred. After these cars were left at the east end of the siding, a period of about 20 minutes elapsed before the collision occurred. According to the fireman of No. 8, the car fouled the eastward main track immediately in front of his train. Evidently, the cars started to move westward when they were detached from the caboose and moved slowly on the descending grade, which varied between 0.61 and 1.18 percent descending throughout a distance of about 4,400 feet, and gained sufficient momentum for the operating stand to be broken when the first car was derailed.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by a derailed freight car fouling an adjacent main track immediately in front of an approaching train.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this ninth day of July, 1945.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.