

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2477
THE GEORGIA RAILROAD COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
AT CAMAK, GA., ON
JANUARY 2, 1941

SUMMARY

Railroad: Georgia

Date: January 2, 1941

Location: Carak, Ga.

Kind of accident: Rear-end collision

Trains involved: Freight : Freight

Train numbers: Extra 200 East : 210

Engine numbers: 200 : 326

Consist: 32 cars, caboose : 50 cars, caboose

Speed: Standing : 12-35 m. p. h.

Operation: Timetable and train orders;
yard limits

Track: Single; 3° left curve; grade level

Weather: Cloudy

Time: About 4:25 p. m.

Casualties: 1 killed; 3 injured

Cause: Accident caused by failure
properly to control speed of
following train while moving
within yard limits

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2477

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

THE GEORGIA RAILROAD COMPANY

February 13, 1941

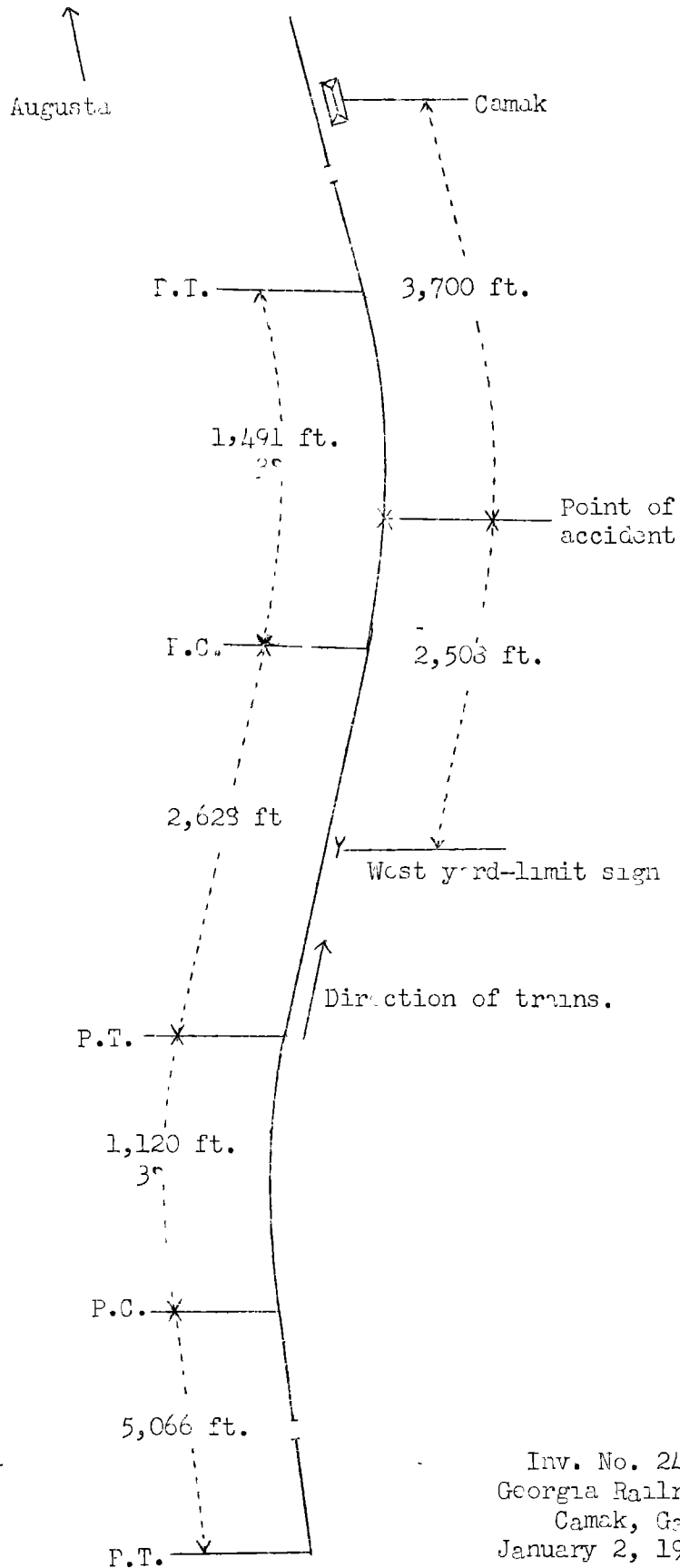
Accident at Camak, Ga., on January 2, 1941, caused by
failure properly to control speed of following train
while moving within yard limits.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On January 2, 1941, there was a rear-end collision
between two freight trains on the Georgia Railroad at Camak,
Ga., which resulted in the death of one employee, and the
injury of three employees.

¹Under 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	Augusta, Ga.
	46.85 mi.
o	Camak
	(Point of Accident)
	3.70 mi.
o	Norwood
	25.55 mi.
o	Union Point
	94.77 mi.
o	Atlanta, Ga.

Atlanta

Inv. No. 2477
 Georgia Railroad
 Camak, Ga.
 January 2, 1941.

Location and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the railroad designated as the Main Line which extends between Atlanta and Augusta, Ga., a distance of 170.37 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders; there is no block system in use. Time-table directions, which are east and west, are used in this report. The accident occurred within yard limits at a point 3,700 feet west of the station at Camak. As the point of accident is approached from the west there are, in succession, a tangent 5,066 feet in length, a 3° curve to the right 1,120 feet, a tangent 2,328 feet, and a 3° curve to the left 1,491 feet; the accident occurred on the latter-mentioned curve at a point 594 feet from its western end. The grade for east-bound trains is, successively, 0.50 percent ascending 400 feet, 0.20 percent ascending 400 feet, 0.50 percent ascending 600 feet, level 400 feet, 0.60 percent descending 1,000 feet, 0.50 percent descending 800 feet, and level 400 feet to the point of accident.

The west yard-limit sign is located 6,208 feet west of the station; the accident occurred at a point 2,508 feet east of this sign.

Special instructions of the current timetable are as follows:

RULE 93 REVISED:

Yard limits are indicated by yard limit boards and the locations are also shown in current time table.

Within yard limits the main track may be used, protecting against first class trains.

Second and third class and extra trains must move within yard limits under full control and prepared to stop unless the main track is seen or known to be clear. When the view is obstructed additional precautions must be taken.

Responsibility in case of accident will rest with the approaching train.

5. Yard Limits are established at * * *, Camak, * * *.

The maximum authorized speed for freight trains on the main track is 40 miles per hour; however, within the city limits of Camak it is 25 miles per hour.

The weather was cloudy at the time of the accident, which occurred about 4:25 p. m.

Description

Extra 200, an east-bound freight train, with Conductor West and Engineman Almand in charge, consisted of engine 200, 31 loaded cars, 1 empty car, and a caboose. This train departed from Union Point, 28.25 miles west of Camak, at 2:49 p. m., according to the train sheet, passed Norwood, 3.70 miles west of Camak and the last open office, at 4:01 p. m., and stopped on the main track at Camak about 4:07 p. m., with the caboose standing 2,508 feet east of the west yard-limit sign; about 18 minutes later the caboose was struck by No. 210.

No. 210, an east-bound second-class freight train, with Conductor Jook and Engineman Fortee in charge, consisted of engine 326, 47 loaded and 3 empty cars and a caboose. This train departed from Hulsey, 122.12 miles west of Camak, at 12:05 p. m., according to the train sheet, 2 hours 20 minutes late, passed Norwood at 4:18 p. m., 1 hour 23 minutes late, passed the west yard-limit sign at Camak and while moving at a speed of 19 miles per hour, as shown by the speed-recorder, collided with the rear end of Extra 200.

The caboose of Extra 200 was demolished. The rear four cars were derailed and stopped, badly damaged, at various angles to the main track. Engine 326 was derailed and stopped upright across the track leaning at an angle of 30 degrees; the pilot, the engine truck, the smoke-box and the cab were demolished. The left front end-frame was bent and the back section of the main engine-frame was broken on the right side; the lower water-column connection and steam pipes at the turret were broken off. The tender of engine 326 was derailed and stopped, badly damaged, upright and in line with the track; both trucks were detached. The first four cars were derailed and stopped, badly damaged, at various angles to the track. The front truck of the fifth car was derailed. The wreckage was confined within a distance of 135 feet.

The employee killed was the engineman of No. 210, and the employees injured were the fireman and the front brakeman of No. 210 and a road foreman of engines who was on engine 326.

Summary of Evidence

Engineman Almand, of Extra 200, stated that his train stopped on the main track at Camak at 4:07 p. m. The first car had been set out and the engine was returning to the train when the accident occurred. Although the weather was cloudy at the time of the accident, which occurred about 4:25 p. m., visibility was not materially restricted. He said that within yard limits second-class, third-class and extra trains must move under control and be prepared to stop unless the main track is seen or known to be clear. His train was not required to furnish flag protection against any but first-class trains.

The statements of Fireman Pratt and Front Brakeman Lavigno, of Extra 200, practically corroborated the statement of Engineman Almand.

Conductor West, of Extra 200, stated that when his train stopped in Camak yard he instructed the flagman to light the markers, and the conductor proceeded to the front end of his train. Although the weather was cloudy, visibility was not materially restricted. The accident occurred at 4:24 p. m. He understood that within yard limits trains may use the main track, protecting against first-class trains.

Flagman Denny, of Extra 200, stated that after his train stopped in Camak yard he lighted the markers. He realized that No. 210 was following his train closely; however, he was not required to furnish flag protection against that train, and he expected it to approach and to move within the yard limits at Camak under control. He and a car inspector heard an east-bound train approaching. The flagman, becoming alarmed that the approaching train was moving too fast to stop short of the caboose, ran toward the train and waved a red handkerchief. The headlight of the approaching train was lighted. The flagman stated that he reached a point on tangent track 12 to 15 car lengths to the rear of his caboose when the engine of No. 210, moving at a speed of 30 miles per hour, passed him. His flagging signals were not acknowledged and the brakes of No. 210 were not applied. He saw the engineman of No. 210 on his seatbox and his hand was on the throttle. The flagman said that he furnished flag protection only as an extra precaution.

Car Inspector Rollins stated that he was in the vicinity of the caboose of Extra 200 when he heard No. 210 approaching. He stated that the flagman of Extra 200 had reached a point about 4 pole spaces to the rear of the caboose on tangent track when the engine of No. 210 passed him. The inspector heard the

flagman shout to someone on the engine of No. 210 to jump. The brakes of that train were not applied prior to the collision. He stated that the markers on the caboose of Extra 200 were lighted.

Road Foreman of Engines Bullington stated that at Atlanta a terminal air-brake test was made on No. 210 and the brakes functioned properly en route. As the train approached the point where the accident occurred he was on the left seatbox, behind the fireman, maintaining a lookout ahead. When the engine was about 1,800 feet west of the west yard-limit sign at Camak the train was moving at a speed of 40 or 45 miles per hour and the engineman was using a drifting throttle. At this point he warned the engineman to reduce speed and the engineman made a 3 or 4-pound brake-pipe reduction. When the engine was near the west yard-limit sign he again warned the engineman, who made another 3 or 4-pound brake-pipe reduction. When the engine was about 470 feet east of the west yard-limit sign he saw the rear end of Extra 200, shouted to the engineman to stop, and crossed over to the right side of the cab; the engineman made a 5 or 6-pound brake-pipe reduction. At this time the road foreman of engines saw the flagman waving stop signals and the engineman applied the brakes in emergency. The road foreman of engines jumped off the engine a few seconds before the collision occurred. He stated that the train was moving at a speed of about 30 miles per hour at the time of the collision. The weather was cloudy but visibility was not restricted. He understood that second-class, third-class and extra trains must approach and move within yard limits prepared to stop, that responsibility in case of accident rests with the approaching train, and that Extra 200 was not required to furnish flag protection against No. 210. He stated that he considered Engineman Partee a capable and efficient employee; however, on occasions he had observed that, preparatory to stopping his train, this engineman would delay longer than other enginemen the braking of his train. The engine was in good mechanical condition, the headlight was lighted, and, although the rails were wet when the brakes were applied, the driving wheels did not slide. Oral examinations on operating rules were conducted in July, 1937. He considered a speed of 40 or 45 miles per hour excessive when a train is approaching yard limits, and it was his opinion, based on observation, that it was not customary for enginemen to operate trains within yard limits at such excessive speed.

Fireman Filman, of No. 210, practically corroborated the statement of Road Foreman of Engines Bullington.

Front Brakeman Grenade, of No. 210, practically corroborated the statements of the road foreman of engines and the fireman but added that it was not unusual for his train to approach and to move within Camak yard at a speed of 40 or 45 miles per hour.

Conductor Cook, of No. 210, stated that for the past 8 years he had been regularly employed on trains operating on this schedule. As his train, moving at a speed of 40 miles per hour, approached the point where the accident occurred, he was in the caboose. When the caboose was near the west yard-limit sign the brakes on the train became applied and soon afterward another brake application was made; then the train stopped abruptly. He was not alarmed about the speed of his train as it approached Camak yard, because it was usual for trains to approach this yard at such speed. He stated it was customary for the engineman involved to delay longer than other enginemen the braking of his train. This was the first instance since he had been on this schedule that there was a train in Camak yard ahead of his train. He understood that second-class, third-class and extra trains must move within yard limits prepared to stop unless the main track is seen or known to be clear. It was customary for other enginemen with whom he had worked to operate trains within Camak yard in a manner similar to that followed in this instance. In the past 8 years he had never been criticized by the officials for permitting enginemen to operate trains at excessive speeds within Camak yard.

Flanagan Ragsby, of No. 210, stated that his train approached Camak yard at a speed of 40 miles per hour. He was not alarmed about the speed of his train because it was customary for other trains on which he had worked to approach and to move within Camak yard at similar speed. The train stopped abruptly about 4:23 p. m. He did not know of any instance prior to this that the main track in Camak yard had been occupied by another train. He understood that second-class, third-class and extra trains must move within yard limits prepared to stop unless the main track is seen or known to be clear and that a train is permitted to occupy the main track, protecting only against first-class trains.

Master Mechanic Miller stated that he removed the automatic and independent brake-valves from engine 326 and tested them; they functioned properly. The locomotive was in good mechanical condition and there was no indication of driving wheels having been sliding.

Assistant Trainmaster Cooper, who was in the telegraph office at Camak at the time of the accident, stated that although the weather was cloudy, visibility was not restricted. It was his opinion that the accident was caused by failure to control the speed of No. 210 properly while it was moving within yard limits. He thought the employees involved were thoroughly familiar with operating rules. Oral examinations on operating rules were conducted in July, 1937.

Superintendent of Transportation Williams stated that the policy of the railroad company is to stress the importance of Rule 93 and, in his opinion, all employees involved thoroughly understood the requirements of that rule. Bulletins concerning operating rules are issued to employees currently and are consolidated and reissued each year.

According to the timetable, at the time of the accident the next first-class train due at Camak was scheduled to leave that station at 12:33 a. m.

Observations of the Commission's Inspectors

The Commission's inspectors observed that from the firemen's side of an approaching east-bound engine the point where the accident occurred can be seen a distance of 2,150 feet; from the engineman's side of an approaching east-bound engine this point can be seen a distance of only 131 feet. The tape removed from the speed-recorder device with which engine 326 was equipped indicated that engine 326 was moving at a speed of 43 miles per hour west of the west yard-limit sign and 19 miles per hour at the time of collision.

Discussion

According to the evidence, Extra 200 East stopped on the main track in Camak yard at 4:07 p. m., with its caboos standing at a point 2,500 feet east of the west yard-limit sign, and about 18 minutes later the caboose was struck by No. 210, a second-class train, which was moving at a speed of 19 miles per hour, according to the speed recorder with which the engine was provided.

The rules governing operation within yard limits on this railroad provide that trains may use the main track, protecting against first-class trains; also, that second-class, third-class and extra trains must move under full control and be prepared to stop unless the main track is seen or known to be clear. The preceding train was not required to furnish flag protection, as there was no first-class train due for several hours, but the

following train was required to enter the yard limits under full control; nevertheless, the following train struck the preceding train at a relatively high rate of speed. Because of track curvature, the rear end of the preceding train could be seen from the right side of the engine of the following train a distance of only 131 feet, but employees on the left side of the engine cab could see it a distance of 2,150 feet. Weather conditions did not restrict visibility. The brakes on the following train functioned properly en route. According to the statements of the road foreman of engines who was on the engine of the following train, and the fireman and the front brakeman, this train was approaching the west yard-limit sign at a speed of 40 or 45 miles per hour; during this time and after the train entered the yard limits the engineman was warned several times by the road foreman of engines to reduce speed, and in response the engineman made three light brake-pipe reductions and then an emergency application. Why the engineman did not make heavier brake-pipe reductions instead of the three light reductions is not known, as he was killed in the accident. Under the circumstances the road foreman of engines should have taken positive action to insure that the speed of the train was controlled properly.

There was considerable evidence introduced to the effect that the manner in which the following train was operated was similar to the manner other trains had been operated through the yard limits involved and that seldom a train was found occupying the main track within these yard limits when trains operating on the schedule of No. 210 approached; however, all the employees interrogated understood the provisions of the yard-limit rule. Oral examinations on operating rules were conducted in July, 1937, and, according to the statement of the superintendent of transportation, bulletins concerning operating rules are issued frequently and great stress is placed upon the yard-limit rule. The manner in which the following train was operated within the yard limits involved, as well as other freight trains previously, indicates that the methods used by this carrier have not obtained obedience to the yard-limit rule. Responsible officials should immediately adopt necessary measures to procure the strict obedience to all operating rules.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure properly to control the speed of the following train while moving within yard limits.

Dated at Washington, D.C., this thirteenth day of February, 1941.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.

(SEAL)